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WITHIN AN ADOLESCENT DETENTION FACILITY

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MORAL JUDGMENTS OF RESPONSIBILITY
WITHIN AN ADOLESCENT DETENTION FACILITY


By


Lila Rucker




A THESIS




Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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# ABSTRACT

## MORAL JUDGMENTS OF RESPONSIBILITY
## WITHIN AN ADOLESCENT DETENTION FACILITY

By

Lila Rucker

According to Kohlberg's Cognitive-Developmental Theory of Moral Reasoning, decisions to do what is morally right are based upon an individual's developmental level of moral reasoning and the normative structures of the environment within which those decisions are formulated. To test this theory, 62 incarcerated male youths were required to resolve two sets of real-life dilemmas which were centered around the issues of rules, communication, caring, and feeling accepted by others. Dilemmas were written so that one set was situated within an adolescent detention facility setting and the other set was situated outside. Analysis revealed a statistically significant difference, with lower moral reasoning orientations utilized in the resolution of detention facility dilemmas. The implications of the findings for changing the environment within detention centers are discussed.

Two months after this project was completed, a young male adolescent hanged himself at the facility from which this data was gathered.

Whatever useful information is gleaned from this endeavor is dedicated in the memory of his young life to all of us who had a hand in that death and, who, for whatever reason or at whichever level of bureaucracy or citizenry we stand, were unable to respond to his desperate pleadings in volume sufficient for him to hear.

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CHAPTER 1

Background

When we consider the fact that the length of incar-
ceration at "temporary" detention facilities for certain
adolescents awaiting either adjudication or placement in
rehabilitative facilities can range from two to six or even
more months, legitimate questions regarding the quality of
that detention period must arise.

Detention, by its very nature, is a function of the
social environment within which it occurs, the term "social
environment" having been defined by Moos and others as the
"quality of the collective norms and valuing attitudes which
characterize a social group" (Power & Higgins, 1980, p. 1).
That environment is created not only by the people who
comprise that group but more so by their interaction with
organizational factors existent therein (Power & Higgins,
1980, p. 2).

Furthermore, as Moos contends, "the social environment
within which an individual functions has an important impact
on his attitudes and moods, his behaviors, his health and
over-all sense of well-being, and possibly even his ultimate
personal fate" (Moos, 1976, p. 324). Learning, for example,
happens only when a child feels valued and is valued (Satir,

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1972, p. 13), when he/she feels to be a connected part of the human race (Rogers, 1975, p. 6). Feelings of self worth can only flourish in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated and mistakes are tolerated (Satir, 1972, p. 26). Dramatic health-related effects have been demonstrated to result when a person has been made to know that he/she is cared for and loved, is esteemed and valued, and belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation (Cobb, 1976, p. 300). Piaget and Kohlberg (Stewart, 1975, p. 96) believe that a sense of belongingness and group unity are of extreme importance for cognitive and moral development.

Similarly, responsible living is a skill which adolescents who find themselves incarcerated have typically not yet grasped. Defined as the ability to fulfill one's needs in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs, a responsible person does that which gives him/her a feeling of self-worth and a feeling that he/she is worthwhile to others (Glaser, 1965, p. xi). Self-worth, on the other hand, is best learned when one is enabled to view and to develop his/her own identity (Rogers, 1975, p. 7), and fundamental to that development is a finely tuned understanding by another individual (Rogers, 1975, p. 7) and direct, clear, specific, congruent and leveling communication (Satir, 1972, p. 114). When people fully communicate, agrees Wertham (Wertham, 1966, p. 57), they do

not resort to violence. It is when people do not communicate that they do not know each other. People, in turn, who do not know each other can be stirred up to hate.

Consideration of the interplay between the forces existent within a given social environment is important, particularly within a necessarily coercive environment such as an adolescent detention facility. If, for example, nine out of a total 11 adolescents on a unit barricade themselves as a group in response to some event on their unit, legitimate questions regarding the social environment and resultant group norms existent therein must be addressed; i.e., 1) Would such a barricade have occurred if the adolescents had learned to expect and to rely upon open lines of communication between themselves and staff as the appropriate manner in which to deal with conflicts? 2) Had grumbling forceful resolution to conflicts typically been reinforced on that unit in the past, rather than clear, calm, direct discussion? 3) Group unity and cohesiveness is a powerful force. What was it within this environment which invited and/or encouraged adolescents to focus that force against the perceived authority rather than in harmony with it? 4) Similarly, why the need to form a group to protest? Was the voice of a single individual typically disregarded or discounted? What did a dissenting individual have to do to be heard? 5) The act of barricading in and of itself connotes an attempt to achieve some sort of previously unattainable or unperceived safety. What was it within this

unit that induced feelings of insecurity? Wertham (1966, pp. 1-2) suggests that "before anybody starts violence, many others must have prepared the ground. The aggressor is not the only, and sometimes not even the chief, transgressor. He comes on stage and fires the shot, but the script has been written long before. One single actor does not make a play."

Returning to our example, let us say for the sake of argument that upon investigation, it was discovered that the barricading adolescents had learned over a period of time that those individuals on their unit who acted out most persistently, vocally, and abusively were the ones who in the long run got not only more individual attention but special privileges. More specifically, four of the adolescents interviewed reported that they had learned of a theft perpetrated by one of their peers, had taken it upon themselves to track down the stolen money, and had taken the money and their findings to the staff and Counselor X, the person from whom the money had been stolen. Much to their chagrin, however, upon approaching both the staff and Counselor X, they were reprimanded for having "stuck their noses into something that wasn't any of their business." Furthermore, they felt that they had been "put down" and made to feel foolish and as though they themselves were somehow guilty of something. By doing what they had perceived as the "right thing," something which would gain them good graces since it was in direct accord with the unit

rule for no stealing, they instead gained animosity and displeasure from the people whom they had wanted to please, the people who had daily authority over their lives.

Clearly, these adolescents were living in an atmosphere of dual standards; the rules demanded one set of behaviors yet, their peer, the "thief," broke all of the rules most of the time and got special treatment. Now he had stolen money, a crime for which two of them had been incarcerated, and they, not he, had been found wanting. Frustrated, confused, and in an act of defiance in response to what they perceived as an unjust atmosphere in which they were forced to compromise their own needs, the youths pooled their energies and barricaded themselves, daring the staff and administration to prove them wrong.

Who was "guilty" and of what is this situation? Through the eyes of the staff and Counselor X, the "thief" was an individual whose needs, due to an extensive and prolonged history of brutal abuse, were enormous, immediate, and insatiable, thereby justifying and almost demanding special attention, care, consideration and privileges, particularly when those needs manifested themselves in misguided forms of negativity. Through the eyes of his peers, however, the "thief" was an individual who consistently broke all or most of the rules, acted negatively most of the time, and in spite of and perhaps because of it, got special treatment.

Justice as defined by Kohlberg (Kohlberg, Kaufmann, Scharf & Hickey, 1975) is the fairness with which conflicts are resolved. Was justice served when all who had participated in the barricading incident were placed in isolation for five days? At any time, were the real underlying concerns which the adolescents perceived as grossly unjust and which pervaded their living space dealt with? Was there a mechanism on that unit for the staff to even become aware of the adolescents' concerns, much less to deal with them in a responsible, just manner? And by far more importantly, what implicit lessons regarding effective communication, equitable versus expedient problem resolution, fairness, and caring, all of which impact directly upon one's sense of self-worth as well as one's ability to cope, had these "authority figures," representing not only themselves and the adolescent detention facility but simultaneously and unequivocally "adults in general" and "acceptable mature behavior," modeled and reinforced in this interchange with highly impressionable, confused adolescents?

These questions center around the issue of social environment and its effects upon and relationship to the learning and teaching of judgments of moral responsibility. If "moral" is defined as making a decision for what is right in order to resolve some conflict (Kohlberg, Kaufmann, Scharf & Hickey, 1975, p. 247), "moral atmosphere," then, becomes that context in which the decision for what is right

is formulated and/or acted upon (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984).

Only recently have researchers begun to examine moral atmosphere (Kohlberg, 1970; Kohlberg, Scharf & Hickey, 1972; Scharf, 1973, Kohlberg, Wasserman & Richardson, 1975; Kohlberg, Kaufmann, Scharf & Hickey, 1975; Kohlberg, Scharf & Hickey, 1975; Power & Reimer, 1978; Power, 1979; Kohlberg, 1981; Jennings & Kohlberg, 1983; Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984; Durkheim, 1925/1961). Kohlberg and Candee (1984), for example, contend that between a "judgment of rightness or justice and a situational decision to act morally," (i.e., "Should I join in the barricade?"), a critical link exists; e.g., the sense of responsibility which one feels toward that particular situation. That sense of responsibility, in turn, is dependent upon two factors; 1) an individual's developmental stage of moral reasoning ability, and 2) the moral features of the situation in which that individual is functioning (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1985).

Judgments of moral responsibility, then, which an incarcerated adolescent makes regarding whether or not to join his/her peers in a barricading incident are clearly dependent not only upon his/her own developmental abilities to reason morally but also upon the moral features of the detention facility within which that decision is formulated. The moral features of a detention facility are the group norms existent within the institution which are perceived by the adolescents as enhancing the possibilities for certain

types of behaviors to emerge, while impeding the possibilities for others.

The purpose of this research is to examine conditions existent within an adolescent detention facility which are conducive to the perception of the adolescents incarcerated therein that certain forms of problem resolution are within reach, while others are not. In the process of this examination, the reasoning utilized by adolescents to resolve various moral dilemmas, some dilemmas being situated within an adolescent-detention-facility setting and others being situated elsewhere, will be ascertained.

As a backdrop for this examination, however, it is important to remember that the behavior of incarcerated adolescents is, in fact, characterized quite correctly and frequently as being behaviors which have not resulted from sound judgment. Victims of abnormal rearing (Helfer, 1974), these adolescents are groping, trying to figure out ways in which to gain the attention, recognition, love, and respect which are essential for survival and which few have experienced on a consistent, if ever, basis. They blunder time and again, knowing full well that what they are doing isn't working, yet having no idea how to "fix it."

Studies have shown that there is a correlation between child abuse and later deviate behavior (Alfaro, 1978). Howell (1980, p. 307) points out that as reported by Glueck and Glueck in 1950, "many of the youngsters who become involved in delinquent behavior in their teens are the same

youngsters who might have been identified as children receiving neglectful or abusive family care in their younger years."

Coming from homes in which parents so often seek relief from chronically dismal situations by turning to alcohol or drugs, these children are caught in chaotic, inconsistent worlds in which adults often take the role of children (Helfer, 1980), communication is indirect and vague, rules are inflexible and inhuman (Satir, 1972), and society is something of which to be cautious and for which to blame. Home life is often a rigid, closed system where distortion of reality and incorrect labeling of behavior is the norm; children often subjugate their own needs in order to fulfill roles in the family system that have been vacated by adults, thereby impeding the development of their own self-esteem and the mastery of their own environments (Brown and Sunshine, 1982).

Prior to beginning this research, the researcher led group activities and group discussions for female adolescents who were incarcerated within the same detention facility from which the male subjects for the project were chosen. Based upon information divulged during these discussions, it is this researcher's sense that many, if not most, of the adolescents incarcerated in that facility are caught in the vicious cycle of the chaotic, inconsistent worlds described above since the adolescents often 1) reported having been passed around to different

relatives' homes and, therefore, felt unwanted; 2) were unable to "really talk" to their parent(s); 3) sometimes had been introduced to the use of drugs, including alcohol, marijuana, LSD, and cocaine, by their fathers or their mother's boyfriend(s); 4) talked about occasions of abuse and/or attack by mothers, fathers, stepfathers or mother's boyfriends, and 5) described resolutions to conflicts at home as being violent confrontations rather than calm discussions.

Not only did most of the adolescents who were in the discussion groups report having brothers, sisters, and/or cousins who were either also incarcerated at that time or who had been released, but many of them reported that their parents had themselves been incarcerated at this same detention facility as youths, and some reported having parents or other family members who were currently in county jails or state prisons.

While it is not the function of adolescent detention facilities to rehabilitate, it is this researcher's contention that because of the extremely negative home milieu of which these adolescents are typically products, the responsibilities of facilities with a sole mandate for detention are greatly magnified. Forced by the very nature of their work into close proximity with these adolescents, employees within detention facilities are forced to function, whether they like it or not, in the critical capacity of role models. Functioning not only as agents of

the juvenile justice system, but, more importantly, as representatives of our society, the behavior of these adults should epitomize "mature" or "acceptable adult" behavior. These adults should, at the very least, possess skills which enable them to consistently and dependably model the ability to make sound, just judgments in the resolution of conflicts. Additionally, what is gained, or more appropriately, what is lost, if the functioning of adults within an adolescent detention facility results in the creation of an environment within that facility which is perceived as being little or no different from the negative home environment from which the typical adolescent who finds him/herself incarcerated therein has come, environments wherein; 1) rules are rigid, non-negotiable and everlasting; 2) communication is indirect, vague, and not really honest; 3) feelings of self-worth are either low or nonexistent; and, 4) society is something of which to be cautious and for which to blame? This study will examine these questions.

A discussion of those factors which are essential to the development of an ability to make responsible judgments for what is right is presented in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

Judgments of Moral Responsibility

An adolescent's ability to make sound judgments of
moral responsibility, i.e., to make decisions for what is
right in the resolution of moral dilemmas, is dependent upon
1) that adolescent's developmental stage of moral reasoning
ability as well as 2) the moral features of the situation in
which he/she is functioning (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg,
1984).

Contrary to popular belief, moral dilemmas are not the
sole propriety of religious conservatives or "do gooders"
but rather are something with which each of us is faced on a
daily basis. Moral dilemmas range from, "Should I eat this
last piece of chocolate cake when I know it was saved for
Grandma?," to "Why should I scrub out the tub after my bath
when nobody else ever does?," to "Why shouldn't I take this
old lady's purse since she's always so grouchy?," to "How
can I purchase this lettuce when I know that it was
harvested in spite of boycotting farm workers who are
struggling for their very existence?" Fortunately research
(Stewart, 1975) suggests that individuals make judgments to
resolve moral dilemmas at increasingly more mature levels as

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they progress through the developmental stages of moral reasoning.

## Developmental Stages of Moral Reasoning

To facilitate an understanding of the developmental stages of moral reasoning ability, Stewart (1975) made a distinction between those human behaviors which are appropriately identified as development and those which are more appropriately identified as growth. Much of what we call growth, according to Stewart (1975, p. 31), can be classified as content, i.e., the specific, observable acts of human behavior. Stewart cites within this category such behaviors as the growth in vocabulary, the memorization of multiplication tables, and similar acquisitions. Since there is no structural change involved in these tasks, structure here being defined as the patterns of thought organization which underly observable human acts or actions (Stewart, 1975; Gardner, 1972), it is growth rather than development which has occurred.

Development, on the other hand, as Stewart continues, is qualitative change in structure. Whereas growth is reversible (one can forget how to spell a word or how to do the multiplication tables), development is irreversible. Furthermore, Stewart contends, development is unidirectional, orderly, progressively differentiated, increasingly articulated, and hierarchically integrated (Stewart, 1975, p. 32).

Similarly, Stewart has made a distinction between development and learning since developmentalists conceive of learning as a function of (Maier, 1969) and dependent upon development (Stewart, 1975). Central to this concept are two major points. Firstly, true learning can only happen if a child is given an opportunity to experience, to "construct and invent rather than merely repeat and copy" (Piaget, 1970, p. 714). About this, Piaget specifically stated that, "...each time one prematurely teaches a child something that he/she could have discovered him/herself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely" (Piaget, 1970, p. 715). At the same time, however, Piaget quickly pointed out that "this does not mean that the teacher should not devise experimental situations to facilitate the pupil's invention" (Piaget, 1970, p. 175). Consequently, Piaget perceives the role of the teacher/ educator as an "organizer/mentor stimulating initiative and research" (Piaget, 1972, p. 16) while he sees the learner as an "active constructor" (p. 16), an "experimenter or investigator who modifies his concepts of the world as a result of his actions upon it and his observation of the consequences" (Gardner, 1972, p. 77).

Secondly, children cannot simply learn by reinforcement but must have "appropriate underlying cognitive structures that will permit the assimilation of events by encouraging necessary accommodation" (Stewart, 1975, p. 33). In other words, "for a deeper form of learning involving true

understanding and independent application of the knowledge to other situations, the child's cognitive structures must be sufficiently developed to permit meaningful processing of the data" (Stewart, 1975, p. 32).

The implications of these distinctions become important when agents of the juvenile justice system become concerned with how best to impart to adolescents the ability to make and act upon sound judgments of moral responsibility, how best to teach and reinforce the skill of how to make decisions for what is right. Unlike vocabulary or multiplication tables, moral reasoning is a cognitive structure and reflects a developmental level; for that reason it can neither be memorized nor coerced into being. In a real sense, a child has to "grow into" moral reasoning, to experience it in order for it to become a real and integrated part of him/herself. Just as we would be asking the impossible to expect a child to walk who had neither learned to crawl nor to balance standing on two legs, we ask the impossible when we expect a child who is functioning developmentally at one stage of moral reasoning to be able to function at some higher stage of moral reasoning simply because we demand it. Conversely, we would be asking the absurd to ask a child who has finally learned to walk to revert back to crawling or immobility.

Gibbs (1982) points out that as a general frame of reference, what is observed in the process of moral reasoning development is an individual's changing

perspective of the relationship between his/her own self and society's rules and expectations. It then becomes obvious why a child who is functioning at a lower developmental stage of moral reasoning is unable to understand the need to change his/her behavior in order to suit some other person's point of view. Ouderkirk (1980/1984, pp. 324-325) suggests, for example, that a teenager who is prone to stealing from roommates and who is in Stage 2 instrumental orientation will not respond to a Stage 5 appeal to other's rights from the child care worker. It is not because the youth disagrees or refuses to listen, or listens and then rejects the appeal to other's rights. He does not respond because he <u>cannot</u> <u>understand</u> the appeal. Instead of making the Stage 5 appeal, the worker would do better with a Stage 3 approach since research indicates that a person understands the reasoning of all previous stages and the reasoning of not more than one stage beyond his/her own stage... What this factor means is that if we want a person to move forward in terms of his/her moral development, then we must present the issues involved in a moral problem to that person only in terms of the next higher stage... Research findings strongly indicate that the individual prefers the next stage."

## Emergence of Moral Reasoning:

From the cognitive-developmental point of view, moral reasoning emerges through a process of development that is neither direct biological maturation nor direct learning in

the usual sense (Kohlberg, 1972). Termed equilibration rather than learning by Piaget (Piaget, 1964), the hypothesis here is that the development of cognition or active thought, of which moral reasoning is a subset, is facilitated by discrepancies between what a person expects and what he/she actually experiences in the way of incoming, unfamiliar events (Kohlberg, 1972, p. 5).

In an effort to find and maintain equilibrium when faced with input which is discrepant or imbalancing, the human mind constructs and reconstructs reality. To facilitate both stability and flexibility during the process (Stewart, 1975, p. 52), underlying cognitive structures which, defined earlier, are the patterns of thought organization which underly overt, observable human acts or actions (Stewart, 1975; Gardner, 1972), are integrated and reintegrated at higher stages of development. These cognitive structures are viewed as providing the rules for processing either new information or new experience (Kohlberg, 1972).

This is not to suggest, however, that in light of equilibration structural development is unaffected by other biological factors. On the contrary, Piaget postulated three major factors which contribute to structural development; i.e., 1) genetic emergence, organismic growth, and organic maturation; 2) experience, and 3) social transaction. Maturation of the nervous system, for example, primarily determines the range of potentialities and opens

up new possibilities for development by giving access to structures which could not be evolved before these possibilities were offered. Furthermore, factors such as exercise, experience and social interaction must intervene if possibilities are to become actualities (Stewart, 1975, p. 45).

As important as these factors are, however, Piaget insisted that they are incomplete without equilibration. It was his contention that development comes from the organism's continuous need to change, to adjust, and to adapt to new conditions, changed relationships, unfamiliar perceptions, and other imbalance. In this sense, the child is an active participant with the environment rather than a passive observer/recipient (Stewart, 1975, p. 50).

For Dewey and Piaget, this cognitive-structural component characterizes all development including social and emotional values (Kohlberg, 1972, p. 5), and for Kohlberg (1969), stages which meet the criteria of structural reorganization are found not only in social and emotional values but also moral values. Focusing specifically on moral reasoning, Kohlberg redefined and validated the Dewey-Piaget stages of moral development.

Cognitive-Developmental
Theory of Moral Judgment:

Describing his theory as "referring to a set of assumptions common to the moral theories of Dewey and Tufts (1932), Mead (1934), Baldwin (1906), Piaget (1932), and

himself," Kohlberg contended that all these theorists have "postulated a) stages of moral development representing b) cognitive structural transformations in conceptions of self and society. All have assumed c) that these stages represent successive modes of 'taking the role of others' in social situations, and hence that d) the social-environmental determinants of development are its opportunities for role-taking. More generally, all have assumed e) an active child who structures his perceived environment, and hence, have assumed f) that moral stages and their development represent the interaction of the child's structuring tendencies and the structural features of the environment, leading to g) successive forms of equilibrium in interaction. This equilibrium is conceived as h) a level of justice, with i) change being caused by disequilibrium, where j) some optimal level of match or discrepancy is necessary for change between the child and the environment" (Stewart, 1975, p. 52).

Variously referred to as the Cognitive-Developmental Theory of Moralization, the Cognitive-Developmental Theory of Moral Judgment, or Moral Development (Stewart, 1975), Kohlberg's theory posits that there must be a sequence of moral stages in the development of moral reasoning for the same basic reason that there are cognitive or logico-mathematical stages (Kohlberg, 1972a); i.e., that stages are the natural consequence as underlying patterns of thought

realign themselves to accommodate to incoming, unfamiliar, imbalancing events and experiences.

To test his theory, Kohlberg built on Piaget's interview techniques and devised standard moral dilemmas sufficient to stimulate disequilibrium in the tested individual's thinking process. Tapping what he called classical moral judgment, Kohlberg's classical dilemmas were and are primarily dilemmas of justice requiring the resolution of a conflict between opposing social norms (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984), each norm being embodied within the context of the dilemma by a character's plight. The resolution of the conflict, then, requires "reference to a principle, such as the utilitarian principle of the greater good or the justice principle of equal respect for each person" (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984, p. 77). Additionally, classical dilemmas are assumed to reflect an individual's highest moral competence or the highest level at which he/she is able to understand moral principles since probe questions are developed to elicit responses regarding what someone should do as opposed to what they would do (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984). The classic "Heinz" dilemma utilized by Kohlberg is as follows: "In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist was charging 10 times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick

woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz gets desperate and considers breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife" (Muson, 1979).

Utilizing similar moral dilemmas and their resultant discussion questions, Kohlberg's mounting empirical data have revealed that stages of moral development seem to be 1) structured wholes or organized systems of thought and that individuals are consistent in level of moral judgment, 2) that under all conditions except extreme trauma, moral developmental stages seem to form an invariant sequence, movement seems always to be forward, never backward, individuals never seem to skip stages, and movement seems always to be to the next stage up, and that 3) stages seem to be hierarchical integrations, i.e., although thinking at a higher stage includes or comprehends within it lower-stage thinking, there is a tendency to function at or prefer the highest stage available (Stewart, 1975).

Evidence for the hierarchical organizations of stages is provided by cross-sectional (Kohlberg, 1964; Rest, Davison & Robbins, 1978), longitudinal (Kohlberg, 1973; Kuhn, 1976; Rest et al., 1978), and experimental (Rest, Turiel & Kohlberg, 1969; Turiel, 1966) studies with U.S.

subjects (Nisan & Kohlberg, 1982). Support for the universality claim is provided by cross-sectional studies in Kenya (Edwards, 1975), Honduras (Gorsuch & Barnes, 1973), the Bahamas (White, 1975), India (Parikh, 1975), and New Zealand (Moir, 1974). However, as Nisan and Kohlberg (1982) point out, "universality is properly tested by longitudinal studies of individuals in different cultures. In one such short-term longitudinal study, White, Bushness, and Regnemer (1978) assessed the level of moral judgment in Bahamian pupils over two or three consecutive years. Their results support the hypothesis that moral judgment advances with age (at least through the first three stages)... Turiel, Edwards, and Kohlberg (1978) did a longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis of moral judgment among village and city subjects in Turkey. The sequential advance in each individual was found." Nisan and Kohlberg (1982) elaborated the study of Turiel et al. (1976) and supported the claim for structural universality in moral judgment. A longitudinal study in Israel (Snarey, Reimer & Kohlberg, 1983) seems to indicate that kibbutz findings are consistent with a structural model of moral development (Nisan & Kohlberg, 1982).

While results of all previous studies of moral judgment have not completely supported the strong stage claim, Jennings, Kilkenny, and Kohlberg (1983, p. 283) point out that "it has not been clear whether the anomalies represent a failure to fit of the strict stage model to moral judgment

development, confusions in the conceptual definitions of the stages, or problems in the validity of the measure." Consequently, reanalysis of Kohlberg's 1956-1968 and 1968-1976 longitudinal data was completed with a subsequent refinement of the scoring methodology (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969; Colby & Kohlberg, 1981). The resultant Standard Issue Scoring System reportedly confirmed Kohlberg's claim that "anyone who interviews children about moral dilemmas and follows them longitudinally in time will come to the three levels (six stages) of moral judgment and no others" (Jennings, Kilkenny & Kohlberg, 1983, p. 288).

Having said this, some psychologists have begun to question Piaget's notion of a "stage" theory altogether, claiming that it is too vague and incomplete. Bandura (1977) and others, for example, contend that while there may be an increasing use of reasoning characteristic of higher stages as children develop, evidence of age trends is not enough to validate stage theories. This controversy will no doubt rage for many years to come.

If one accepts Kohlberg's notion of cognitive developmental stages, an important point to be reiterated is that, as far as Kohlberg is concerned, developmental stages are structural stages. As Stewart (1975, p. 35) points out, "stage and structure are so intimately related that neither has meaning without the other, and therefore, structure and development are likewise intimately related. Structure

exists in terms of stage development and stage sequence is development through structural transformation."

Described below are Kohlberg's developmental stages of moral reasoning. In order to reveal the underlying structural differences among the various stages, two variables will be considered at each stage, i.e., 1) the perspective from which an individual views his/her relationship with society, and 2) content questions applicable to the resolution of moral issues which can be answered from the perspective of that stage. For our purposes, we shall use the questions, "What is right?," "Why do what is right?," and "Why uphold the law?" To achieve an overview of each stage which is as comprehensive as possible, we have integrated the work of several authors (Kohlberg, 1972; Stewart, 1975; Lickona, 1976; Kohlberg, Kaufmann, Scharf & Hickey, 1975):

STAGE 1:

(Approximate earliest age 5 or 6; 7 to 8 likelier)

At Stage 1, the punishment and obedience orientation, solutions to moral issues are heteronomous or subject to another's laws or rules. Functioning from an ego-centric point of view, individuals at this stage cannot relate two points of view simply because they do not consider the interests of others nor do they recognize that others' views differ from their own. Actions, therefore, are considered because of their physical ramifications rather than in terms of psychological interests of others, and there is a

confusion of authority's perspective with one's own. Consequently, <u>what is right</u> clearly is 1) to avoid breaking rules backed by punishment, 2) obedience for its own sake, and 3) avoidance of physical damage to persons and property. One does what is right simply to avoid punishment and the superior power of authorities. Laws are seen as simple labels; breaking the law would result in punishment.

## STAGE 2:

(Approximate earliest age 7 to 8; 9 to 10 likelier)

At Stage 2, the meeting needs and fair exchange orientation, solutions to moral issues are viewed from a reciprocal "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" point of view. Having moved now into a concrete <u>individualistic</u> perspective, the individual is aware that everybody has his/her own interest to pursue. Since these pursuits conflict, right is therefore relative. Consequently, <u>what is right</u> is viewed as 1) following rules when it is to someone's immediate interest, 2) acting to meet one's own interests and needs and letting others do the same, and acknowledging what is fair, an equal exchange, a deal, or an agreement. <u>One does what is right</u> simply to serve one's own needs or interests in a world where one has to recognize that other people have their interests, too. Laws are seen as intentions of lawmakers; breaking laws would result in loss to self.

STAGE 3:

(Approximate earliest age 10 to 11; 11 to 12 likelier)

At Stage 3, the interpersonal conformity orientation, solutions to moral issues revolve around pleasing, helping, gaining the approval of, or impressing others. Having moved forward from a concrete individualistic orientation of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours," the individual now perceives him/herself in relationship with other individuals. He/she is aware of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations which take primacy over individual interests. There is an ability now to relate others' points of view through the concrete exhortation of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" by putting oneself in the other person's shoes. Only now are individuals able to feel guilt because, until now, they had been unable to perceive the victim's needs and feelings. What is right is viewed as 1) living up to what is expected by people close to oneself or what people generally expect of a person in one's role as son, father, friend, etc., and 2) "being good" is important and means having good motives, showing concern about others, and keeping mutual relationships such as trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude. One does what is right because of 1) the need to be a good person in one's own eyes as well as others', 2) one's caring for others, 3) a belief in the Golden Rule, and 4) a desire to maintain rules and authority that support stereotypical "good" behaviors. At this stage, laws relate prosocial or helping motives and conduct;

breaking laws is considered to be selfish, deceitful and will make others think badly of the lawbreaker.

## STAGE 4:

(Approximate earliest age 12 to 14; 14 to 16 likelier)

At Stage 4, the social system and conscience orientation, solutions to moral issues are concerned mainly with meeting agreed upon obligations or following rules of society to preserve order. Moving beyond a "good boy"/"good girl" stance, the individual is now able to take the point of view of the system that defines roles and rules and considers individual relationships vis-a-vis their place within the system. What is right is perceived as 1) fulfilling the actual duties to which you have agreed, and 2) contributing to society, the group, or the institution. Laws are to be upheld except in extreme cases where they conflict with other fixed social duties. One does what is right 1) to keep the institution as a whole going, 2) to avoid the breakdown in the system "if everyone did it," and 3) to meet one's defined obligations of conscience. From this perspective, laws protect specific rights, practices, and institutions which are necessary for the continuation of the social system. Breaking laws undermine various rights, engender disrespect for the law and can lead to social instability.

STAGE 5:

(Approximate earliest age early 20's; mid-late 20's likelier)

At Stage 5, the social contract or utility and individual rights orientation, moral issue solutions derive from the perspective that moral behavior is determined by universal ethics and principles of justice. At this stage, the individual makes a clear effort to define moral values and principles that have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or persons holding them and apart from the individual's own identification with the groups. The individual considers both moral and legal points of view yet begins to recognize that they sometimes conflict and therefore finds it difficult to integrate theory. What is right is being aware that people hold a variety of values and rules are relative to one's group. These relative rules should usually be upheld, however, the interest of impartiality and because they are the social contract. Some nonrelative values and rights such as life and liberty, however, must be upheld in any society and regardless of majority opinion. One does what is right with a sense of obligation to law because of 1) one's social contract to make and abide by laws for the welfare of all and for the protection of all people's rights; 2) a feeling of contractual commitment, freely entered upon, to family, friendship, trust, and work obligations; and 3) concern that laws and duties be based on rational calculation of overall utility, "the greatest good for the greatest number." From

this perspective, laws protect fundamental human rights against infringement by others. Breaking laws is generally unacceptable since they are made with common agreement but they may be broken if they violate fundamental human rights.

STAGE 6:

(Approximate earliest age late 20's; 30's or later likelier, if at all)

At Stage 6, the universal ethical principles orientation, the perspective is of a moral point of view from which social arrangements must derive; persons are perceived as ends in themselves and must be treated as such. What is right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles that appeal to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical. Particular laws or social agreements are usually valid because they rest on such principles. When laws violate these principles, one acts in accordance with the principle. Furthermore, principles are universal principles of justice, the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons. One does what is right due to a belief as a rational person in the validity of universal moral principles and a sense of personal commitment to them.

Research seems to suggest that cognitive developmental level is a major determining factor in sequential changes of stage and that "individuals go through the stages at

different rates, achieve the stages at different times, and may or may not pass beyond a given stage (Stewart, 1975, pp. 357-58). Of course, the cognitive developmental level is a major determining factor in these sequential changes. According to Piaget, cognitive development is a prerequisite, for example, of a social role-taking perspective, i.e., the ability to take the perspective of either oneself or another individual. Stewart (1975, p. 57) contends that "one cannot make Stage 2 'You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' moral judgments unless he/she has discovered the reciprocity involved in taking the perspective of self and others, which cannot be understood unless he/she has attained the level of concrete operations involving the development of cognitive reciprocity and reversibility." Kohlberg (Stewart, 1975, p. 52) speaks directly to this when he makes the point that stages represent successive models of "taking the role of others" in the social situations, and hence that the "social-environmental determinants of development are its opportunities for role-taking."

If we look to the final stages of moral development, we find the first references to universal ethics and principles of justice. Kohlberg's conception, however, is not that justice is the culmination of the moral reasoning developmental process but rather that justice, or the ability to resolve conflicts more justly or fairly, occurs because one is able to take the role of others and feel the conflict from their point of view. Consequently, as Stewart

(1975, p. 4) points out, "progression through the stages constitute a developmental advancement from lower moral judgment to higher moral judgment in the sense that higher, or better, means the capability of understanding and solving more complex problems and for providing more adequate resolutions for moral dilemmas or conflicts." Additionally, justice occurs all along the developmental path, but at higher levels it is a "more equilibrated form of justice than is lower level justice and it is rooted in more equilibrated structures" (Stewart, p. 54). Equilibrium, then, Kohlberg contends (Kohlberg, 1972b), is conceived as a level of justice.

As one traces the course of moral reasoning development, it becomes obvious very quickly that reasoning and subsequent actions can vary greatly across stages. Since developmental stages are structural stages, patterns of behavior or consistent ways of looking at life provide clues regarding an individual's stage of moral development which in turn can provide clues regarding how best to interact when things "go wrong" or how best to facilitate rather than to impede growth.

### Moral Features of Adolescent Detention Facility

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the ability of adolescents to make sound judgments of moral responsibility is dependent not only upon their respective developmental stages of moral reasoning ability but also upon the moral features of the situation in which they are

functioning. It is the moral features of the detention facility within which incarcerated adolescents function which is the focus of this section.

Incarcerative institutions, whether for juveniles or adults, tend to develop characteristic moral atmospheres of their own, atmospheres which may either stimulate or retard moral growth (Jennings & Kohlberg, 1983, p. 35; Kohlberg, 1970, 1976; Kohlberg et al., 1975; Kohlberg, 1981; Reimer & Power, 1978). It is precisely this concern over the enhancement or impedance of growth and development, be it social, emotional, or moral, that is implicit, one would imagine, within administrators' desires that individuals leave detention facilities at least no worse than when they arrive.

Jennings and Kohlberg (1983) have reported three features of moral atmosphere vis-a-vis institutions (Jennings & Kohlberg, 1983, p. 35), i.e., 1) institutional rules, norms or justice structures have a definite stage from the point of view of the average member of the institution (Kohlberg, Hickey & Scharf, 1972; Kohlberg, Kaufmann, Scharf & Hickey, 1975); 2) the moral atmosphere reflects peer groups' shared or collective norms and can be revealed in either group meetings or the resolution of hypothetical dilemmas about issues requiring group norms (Jennings & Kohlberg, 1983); and 3) moral atmospheres may stimulate moral growth (Kohlberg, 1970; Kohlberg, 1976; Kohlberg, Wasserman & Richardson, 1975). Accordingly, then,

in order to evaluate the developmental stage of an institution's moral atmosphere, one can evaluate each individual member's perception of the ways in which dilemmas within that institution are typically resolved. To do this, one can administer practical moral dilemmas based on real-life issues applicable to the daily life or routines within that institution, the "secret of the dilemmas' power being to provoke structurally significant reflection" (Gibbs, 1982, p. 44).

Leming (1973) originally tried this approach of utilizing practical rather than classical Kohlbergian moral dilemmas. Suspecting a difference between the protestations of what a person should do as opposed to what one would do to resolve a moral conflict, Leming (1973) devised what he called practical or real-life dilemmas. As he expected, when students were tested utilizing both classical and practical dilemmas (1976), he found that practical judgment (I would do this or that) was systematically lower than classical judgment (I should do this or that) (Higgins, powers & Kohlberg, 1984, p. 78).

Higgins, Power and Kohlberg (1984, p. 78) interpreted Leming's results as corresponding with the "common sense expectation that classical moral judgment taps highest competence, the moral 'high road,' whereas practical, real-life moral judgment is more likely to reflect the 'low-road'...performance, that is, real-life moral decisions."

Along these same lines, a comparable study utilizing both classical and practical moral dilemmas was performed at the Cheshire Reformatory for men in Connecticut (Scharf & Hickey, 1973). These researchers found that inmates consistently scored higher on classical dilemmas; i.e., "of the 16 inmates characterized Stage 3 in the classical dilemma, for example, 11 were rated at Stage 2 on the prison dilemmas. Inmates tended to see relationships with other inmates in Stage 2 institutional terms. Inmates were seen as "'ripping each other off,' 'ratting on their friends,' and 'punking weaker inmates'" (Kohlberg, Scharf & Hickey, 1972, p. 6).

Higgins, Power, and Kohlberg (1984, p. 81) interpreted these findings to mean that the "Stage 2 practical reasoning of the prisoners with Stage 3 competence in classical moral judgment was more a function of the prison environment than of the prisoners' personalities." They characterized the "real environment of prison guards and inmate peer groups as a Stage 2 environment or moral atmosphere" and concluded that "inmates' Stage 2 practical judgments were a realistic adaptation to it."

Focusing, then, on the moral atmosphere component of practical moral judgment, Higgins, Power, and Kohlberg (1984) completed an extensive evaluation of the moral atmosphere of three alternative democratic high schools as compared to three traditional high schools. Hypothesizing that students' practical judgments of moral responsibility

would derive from their perception of the moral atmosphere of the school, they demonstrated that moral atmosphere does, in fact, impinge upon judgments of moral responsibility in prosocial or helping behavior.

It appears that an adolescent's ability to make sound moral judgments is inextricably tied to his/her own developmental level of moral reasoning as well as the moral atmosphere in which those judgments are made. The methodology utilized in this project to ascertain the relationship between these two factors evidenced within an adolescent detention facility is discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

"Moral," as defined in Chapter 1, means making a
decision for what is right in order to resolve some conflict
(Kohlberg, Kaufmann, Scharf & Hickey, 1975, p. 247). "Moral
atmosphere," then, is the context in which that decision is
formulated and/or acted upon (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg,
1984) and is reflected in group norms. Group norms, in
turn, enhance the possibilities for certain types of
behaviors to emerge while impeding the possibilities for
others.

Furthermore, the sense of responsibility which an
individual feels regarding whether or not to act in response
to his/her own judgment of rightness or justice in any given
situation is dependent upon 1) that individual's develop-
mental stage of moral reasoning ability, and 2) the moral
features of the situation in which he/she is functioning
(Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984; Kohlberg & Candee, 1984).
If that situation is indeed an institutional setting, not
only do the rules, norms or justice structures existent
within that institution have a definite stage from the point
of view of the average member thereof (Kohlberg, Hickey &
Scharf, 1972; Kohlberg, Kaufmann, Scharf & Hickey, 1975),

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but also those institutional rules, norms or justice structures can be revealed by identification of the peer groups' shared or collective norms (Jennings & Kohlberg, 1983).

To tap adolescents' perceptions of the norms existent within an adolescent detention facility, an "interview analysis" of 62 incarcerated male adolescents was made. This method, borrowed from Higgins, Power and Kohlberg (1984), was designed to reveal information regarding an upper level of moral reasoning competency yielded from hypothetical moral dilemmas for each subject and a "real-life" performance level of practical moral reasoning ability.

Recalling Leming's (1973) findings as reported in Chapter 2, the stage score of subjects' judgments of moral reasoning ability tends to be lower when resolving practical, real-life, descriptive (I would do this) type of dilemmas rather than when resolving hypothetical, prescriptive (I should do this) type of dilemmas. Additionally, the work of Scharf and Hickey (1973) supported Leming's findings in that they found that inmates tended to score lower on practical, prison-appropriate dilemmas than on classical, hypothetical, other-than-prison appropriate dilemmas.

It is this researcher's sense that the moral atmosphere existent within adolescent detention facilities is not unlike the moral atmosphere existent within prisons. For

that reason and based upon the previously cited research, this researcher hypothesized that if incarcerated adolescents were given an opportunity to resolve two sets of practical, real-life dilemmas, i.e., one set situated in an adolescent detention facility and the other set situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting, scores on the practical dilemmas which were situated in the adolescent detentional facility setting would be lower than scores on the practical dilemmas situated elsewhere. Similarly, it was hypothesized that if presented with hypothetical, unfamiliar dilemmas, i.e., "Should Henry steal the drug to save his wife?," these same adolescents would tend to score higher on the hypothetical dilemma resolutions than on either of the two sets of practical dilemma resolutions.

To test these hypotheses, three developmental stage scores of moral reasoning ability were ascertained for each of 62 incarcerated male adolescents. Each of the adolescents were required to resolve one set of hypothetical dilemmas and two sets of practical dilemmas, one situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting and the other situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting.

Mean scores were calculated for each of the three groups of dilemmas and the t-test of significance was then utilized to determine whether or not any differences between the mean scores were sufficiently large to suggest real

differences in the adolescents' perceptions of the three groups of moral dilemmas rather than mere chance differences that might have been reflected due to sampling error.

For purposes of the significance testing, the following three comparisons were made: 1) practical dilemmas situated in an adolescent-detention-facility-setting were compared to practical dilemmas situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting, 2) practical dilemmas situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting were compared to hypothetical dilemmas, and 3) practical dilemmas situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting were compared to hypothetical dilemmas (Table 4, page 87).

Correlation coefficients were then computed to examine any possible relationships existent between the means of the three groups of moral dilemmas and the various adolescent-related variables of age, number of prior times incarcerated at the adolescent detention facility, and seriousness of current charge (Table 5, page 89).

### Sample

Subjects for this study were 62 male adolescents who were incarcerated in a Midwestern adolescent detention facility. Although a total of 80 adolescents was interviewed, only 62 of those interviews were utilized in the data analysis. Of the 18 unusable interviews, six of the interviews had not been completed because the adolescents had been released unexpectedly early from the detention facility, and twelve of the interviews did not

reveal scorable responses on at least one of the six dilemmas comprising the total interview set. Gibbs and Widaman (1982, pp. 54-56) identified unscorable responses as being "bare evaluations, tautologies, comments, fragments, word salads, disclosures or anecdotes, bare opinions, practical suggestions, or exhortations" rather than actual justificatory responses which were being sought.

The researcher had originally planned to do intensive study of dilemma scoring procedures prior to initiating the interviews. Due to unexpected time and schedule conflicts, however, intensive study of the scoring procedures was not possible until after the four-month interviewing period was finished. In hindsight, it seems that this approach might inadvertently have proven to be an effective control against one of the major criticisms of oral interviews, i.e., that of "leading" or "biasing" subjects' responses. In this instance, the researcher asked the questions, recorded answers, and asked appropriate probe questions. While 15% (12) of the original interviews were rendered unscorable and therefore unusable due to this process, and an additional 7.5% (6) were found to be incomplete and unusable, the remaining 62 interviews which were utilized represents 41% of the average population of 150 which is present at the detention facility at any given time. For this reason, the sample size of 62 seems more than adequate.

Too, analysis of the 12 interviews which were deemed unscorable did not reveal any hidden patterns which might be

suggestive that all adolescents at any particular point in the developmental scale failed to provide scorable answers. On the contrary, when scores were computed utilizing the five scorable dilemmas rather than the six considered to be the minimum allowable for inclusion into the data analysis, SRMS scores ranged from 225 to 316, representing scores from Stage 2, Stage 2(3), Stage 3(2), and Stage 3.

## Gender

While adolescent populations within incarcerative facilities typically include females, females were not included in this study for a nontheoretical reason, i.e., the researcher was conducting group activities with the females at the detention facility at the time that this project was being completed. Since the leadership of the groups was on a volunteer basis and was initiated by the researcher, it was not considered to be an integral part of the institutional program reflective of administrative priorities and was, therefore, not representative of typical facility-initiated programming.

From a theoretical standpoint, it is regrettable that females were not included in the study since Morash (1983, p. 388) points out, "to the extent that girls hold a different status in adolescence than do boys and/or are socialized differently, they may progress at different rates through the stages of moral development." Additionally, as Lyons (1982) has reported, males tend to respond more in the rights orientation and females more in the care orientation

but that a majority of both males and females show use of both orientations. For these reasons, inclusion of females in the study would have added important and informative material.

As far as adequate sample representation of adolescents within detention facilities, however, the researcher feels that omission of females from the sample did not greatly damage the generalizability of the results to other detention facilities since the majority of the adolescent population within such facilities is male. Research (Trojanowicz & Morash, 1983) has revealed, for example, that girls, except for status offenses and substance abuse, typically have lower incidents of all types of delinquency. Furthermore, girls are particularly unlikely to engage in very serious offenses, including violence against other people (Feyerharm, 1981). In a 1981 statistical classification compiled for a three-month period from juvenile detention facilities in Michigan, Bynum and Hoffman (1981) reported sex by type of offense. Their data revealed the involvement of 484 females as compared to 2128 males, a male-to-female ratio of almost 5 to 1. Similarly, current 1984 monthly statistical information taken from the adolescent detention facility at which this research was completed reveals a typical male-to-female ratio of 5 or 6 to 1.

Random Selection:

The researcher invited only those youngsters who had been incarcerated for a minimum of eight days to participate

in the project. It was thought that incarcerated adolescents would have a fairly good idea about the rules, regulations, and dynamics existent within the facility by the eighth day since that length of time would include week days and at least one weekend.

To identify those adolescents who had been in the detention facility for a minimum of eight days and to select a randomized sample from those so identified, the researcher collected daily records of admission from the Intake Officer at the detention facility. Each single date of admission revealed from zero to several names of newly admitted adolescents. On each day of testing, the researcher took the admissions sheet which was dated eight days earlier, rolled one die, and invited the youngster whose name appeared on the line which corresponded to the number revealed on the die. If the youngster had already been released or was unavailable (i.e., was with a nurse, social worker, or in court, etc.), the procedure was repeated until a youngster was identified who was willing to at least meet with the researcher to find out what was wanted.

Each adolescent so identified was then interviewed. At that time, it was explained that the research was being done to find out how and why "kids think about the world in which they live." The researcher explained that any information obtained during the project would be kept confidential, that the answers given had nothing to do with the duration of the adolescent's stay at the detention facility, and that no one

at the facility would know what answers he had given. The researcher reminded the adolescent that if he did not wish to participate, he could decline the invitation.

During the interviews, the actual name of the detention facility at which these adolescents were incarcerated was utilized when any reference to the facility was necessary, as in the preliminary explanation paragraph and also in the resolution of the practical dilemmas. For purposes of confidentiality, however, that name has been replaced in this report by utilization of either "adolescent detention facility" or detention facility."

Typically, there were sufficient names on any given date of admission from which to choose names. If, however, there was either an insufficient number from which to choose or those chosen did not wish to participate, the researcher either tested no one that day or chose names from a previous day's list. Names were never chosen from lists that would indicate that a youngster had been in the facility longer than 12 days, giving a four day leeway. Names were never chosen for adolescents who had been in the facility for fewer than eight days.

The researcher was occasionally unable to do any testing on a particular day since the auditorium, the testing site, had to be utilized for an assembly or other group activity. In those instances, the unutilized names would be considered in the roll of the die on following days if there were shortages.

Permission for access to the adolescents for evaluative purposes was granted by the principal of the fully accredited school program which was housed within the detention facility. Personnel from that office went beyond the call of duty in their gracious cooperation with the researcher by arranging for the back and forth transfer of the 80 adolescents, each having been seen three or four times over the four-month interviewing period.

## Evaluative Instruments

Evaluative instruments utilized in this study included the following:

1) Sociomoral Reflection Measure (SRM) (Gibbs & Widaman, 1982). (See Appendix A for test of SRM booklet utilized.)

2) General practical moral dilemmas written by the researcher with consultation from Ann Higgins, Ph.D., researcher on the Cluster School moral atmosphere project (reported in W. Kurtines & J. Gewirtz (Eds.), Morality, Moral Behavior, and Development. (See Appendix B for text of dilemmas.)

3) General practical moral dilemmas presented by John Gibbs, Ph.D. at the 1984 meeting of the Association for Moral Education entitled, The Institution as a Moral Agent. (See Appendix B, Problem Four.)

Sociomoral Reflection Measure (SRM):

The SRM is a production-task measure of moral reasoning in which subjects must express their thinking with respect to moral dilemmas and associated normative values (Gibbs & Widaman, 1982, p. xiii). The essence of each dilemmas is the pitting of two equally truistic values, e.g., life and law, against each other. Consequently, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers and each answer contributes to the development of a moral stage profile.

The SRM is comprised of two separate sets of two problems or hypothetical dilemmas each, the sets being designated Form A and Form B. Form A was utilized in this study. (See Appendix A for the test of Form A.)

Eight norms are covered by the SRM. Each of the Forms A and B has two dilemmas, the first of which elicits responses for five of the total eight norms and the second of which elicits responses for the remaining three.

The norms covered by the SRM are as follows:

1) Affiliation (marriage and friendship)

2) Life (as a right or value)

3) Law and property (consequences of breaking the law and functions which law serves for people)

4) Legal justice (deterrence and role responsibilities)

5) Conscience (lawbreaking out of conscience factor in judicial decisions)

6) Family affiliation (children helping and obeying their parents and parents keeping their promises to their children)

7) Contract (keeping a promise)

8) Property (right to property)

The SRM was developed by John Gibbs and Keith Widaman and is a sequel to the Standard Issue Scoring Method developed by a Harvard team of which Gibbs was a member. Gibbs assisted in validating the Standard Issue Scoring Method against 20-year American longitudinal data and 10-year longitudinal data from Turkey and Israel. Building from this, he developed the SRM, an open-ended instrument which is much easier to administer and score than the Harvard method yet "retains the qualitative nature of responses lost in Jim Rest's (1979) multiple-choice recognition test (the Defining Issues Test)" (Gibbs & Widaman, 1981, Foreword). Kohlberg (Gibbs & Widaman, 1982, Foreword) reports that "the SRM reports a correlation of .85 with the Standard Issue Scoring method in an age-hetero-geneous sample, and a correlation of .50 with an age controlled sample. Given the test-retest reliability of both instruments (higher for the Standard Issue Method), these correlations represent considerable concurrent validity of the SRM."

Gibbs and Widaman (1982) report that psychometric evaluation of the SRM revealed that the parallel-form reliability was comparable to its test-retest reliability;

i.e., exact modal agreement percentages were acceptable: (mean of 71; modal agreement within one stage was 100 percent) and SRMS correlations were in the 70's and 80's (.90 and .87, respectively) for the entire age-heterogeneous samples).

Criterion-related and construct validity of the SRM have been investigated. Based on parallel-form adminis- tration of the SRM and the Standard Issue Scoring Moral Judgment Interview (MJI), modal stage agreement of 75.4 and 100 percent of the modal discrepancies were within one modal stage. The correlation of the two tests was .85 (Gibbs & Widaman, 1982).

Essentially, Gibbs and Widaman (1982, p. 16) report that "the SRM indices are based on stage or stage- transitional assessments of the subjects' evaluation justification of the eight norms...briefly, modal stage is the stage most heavily represented among the stage ratings. The Sociomoral Reflection Maturity Score (SRMS) is the arithmetic average of the norm ratings multiplied by 100."

One of the major assets of the SRM is its self-training aspect. To utilize the Standard Issue Scoring Method, a researcher must attend an intensive training program at Harvard. Because of the self-training aspect of the SRM, interrater reliability received particular attention in psychometric evaluation. Comparing highly trained, trained, and self-trained testers, good interrater reliability was achieved.

Gibbs and Widaman (1982) estimate that self-training requires at least thirty hours of study and practice, advisedly distributed over a span of four to eight weeks. This researcher spent two weeks prior to interviewing becoming familiar with the SRM. After the interviews were completed, the researcher spent eight intense weeks studying the SRM before scoring any tests.

After an initial twenty interviews were scored, the researcher sent those interviews to a second scorer at Gibbs' Ohio State University program for interrater reliability scoring. Gibbs and Widaman (1982, p. 57) set forth minimal standards for acceptable interrater reliability. Utilizing those standards, the below tabulation reflects Gibbs' minimal interrater reliability standards as compared to the interrater reliability between this researcher and a second scorer from Gibbs' program:

|  | Minimal Acceptable Standards | Agreement between Researcher and Second Scorer |
|---|---|---|
| Modal stage agreement within a one-stage interval | 100% | 100% |
| Exact modal stage agreement | 67% | 79% |
| SRMS correlation | .70 | .64 |
| Mean absolute SRMS discrepancy | 25 points | 25 points |
| Global agreement within a one-third interval | 80% | 80% |
| Exact global stage agreement | 50% | 74% |

While Gibbs and Widaman set the minimal acceptable levels of interrater reliability for SRMS correlation at .70, the researcher contends that the fact that all other measures were well above the minimal required, the .64 SRMS correlation is close enough to the minimal requirement of .70 to be considered non-detrimental to the over interrater reliability.

Gibbs and Widaman (1982) report that the SRM has been administered to individuals as young as 8 and estimate the reading level at fourth grade.

## Practical Moral Dilemmas:

The concept of assessing the moral atmosphere with an open interview focused directly at the moral features of a setting is new. Developed by Higgins, Power and Kohlberg (1984) to tease out "the fixed property of an individual's moral competence" from the moral features or moral atmosphere of the situation as they both interact to influence moral judgment, the techniques of utilizing additional probe questions with practical dilemmas to assess the moral atmosphere has been actually used in only one study (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984).

In a telephone interview with one of the authors, Ann Higgins, Ph.D., Harvard University, Dr. Higgins stated that the validity of the moral atmosphere concept and its assessment has been demonstrated by her co-author, Clark Power, Ph.D., in a longitudinal analysis of the moral atmosphere of the Cluster School, one of the schools

included in their extensive research project (Higgins, Power & Kohlberg, 1984) in which the moral atmosphere as perceived through the eyes of the students of three alternative democratic high schools was compared to the moral atmosphere as perceived through student eyes of three traditional high schools.

Dr. Higgins reported that at this time, reliability cannot be addressed due to the newness of the technique. She went on to state that the interview technique "does not have nor can it meet the criteria about tests." Rather, it is a "qualitative interview composed of theoretical interview material and a coding scheme. It is an interpretative task." While it is not supported by "tight statistical data," she added that its "strength is a theory that has potential for understanding the group home." Because this theory makes sense and the interview has been used in the Higgins, Power and Kohlberg (1984) study, this researcher developed, with the assistance and consultation of Dr. Higgins, an interview in the form of practical dilemmas.

## Practical Moral Dilemmas--
## Moral Atmosphere:

To determine adolescents' perceptions of the atmosphere existent within an adolescent detention facility, four practical, real-life moral dilemmas were developed around the issues of rules, communications, caring and feeling accepted by others. These issues were chosen based upon

Virginia Satir's recognition resultant from her lifelong experience as a family therapist that the key factors which differentiate troubled families from nurturing families revolve around the issues of rules, communication, feelings of self-worth, and links to society (Satir, 1972, p. 3). Whereas troubled families have 1) rigid, inhuman, nonnegotiable and everlasting rules; 2) indirect, vague, and not really honest communication; 3) low feelings of self-worth; and 4) fearful, placating, and blaming links to society, nurturing families have 1) flexible, human, appropriate rules which are subject to change; 2) direct, clear, specific, and honest communication; 3) high feelings of self esteem; and 4) open and hopeful links to society (Satir, 1972, pp. 3-4).

Given these practical dilemmas, the task of each adolescent was to report what he thought the other adolescents at the detention facility would do or think regarding various aspects of their resolution and to then justify why he believed that to be true. Such an explanation or justification reveals, according to Higgins, Power and Kohlberg (1984), the level at which people within an environment perceive how they must function in order to survive within that environment. In other words, as adolescents explain why they think that their peers at the detention facility will act in a certain way, they are responding to and reflecting the norms which they perceive to exist within that environment and which, in turn, enhance

the possibility for certain types of behaviors to emerge while impeding the possibility for others.

In a general sense, scoring of the practical dilemmas was similar to that utilized in the SRM. After the interviews with the adolescents were completed, 10 interviews were sent to Dr. Higgins for scoring. After that scoring had been completed and those interviews returned to the researcher, those scored interviews were utilized as a study guide for scoring the remaining interviews. Gibbs and Widaman's SRM manual (1982) was also utilized as a reference.

Due to unexpected scheduling conflicts, interrater reliability for the moral atmosphere section of the study was unable to be completed.

## Interview Sessions

Evaluation of each adolescent was completed if possible on his eighth day of incarceration with the adolescent detention facility. Each adolescent who had been identified by the researcher as a potential subject for the study was called from his classroom by the school office personnel and was taken by the researcher from the school office into the auditorium for interviewing. After the interview was completed, the adolescent was returned to the school office.

The completion time for the entire interview, i.e., all six dilemmas plus initial explanations, varied from two to three hours, depending upon the adolescent's attention span. Some adolescents lost interest within 30 minutes and asked

to come back at a later time to work; others were able to work for over an hour without a break. The researcher did not allow sessions to extend beyond 60 minutes, however, since after that length of time, the task became too tedious for both the adolescent and the researcher. An effort was made not to exhaust any single adolescent; if his initial interview was in the morning, he was not invited back to do further work until that afternoon or the following day. Most adolescents completed the entire six-dilemma interview in three to four thirty-to-forty-five minute sessions.

Since many youth who find themselves incarcerated have minimum reading skills, the researcher made the decision to conduct the interviews orally by telling the dilemmas to each adolescent in story fashion. After the researcher had finished telling the story, or dilemma, the adolescent was required to repeat it back to ensure the researcher that he had heard all the pertinent information. This also set a tone of dialogue and interaction between the researcher and adolescent. The researcher then read questions orally which pertained to the dilemma and copied verbatim the adolescent's responses. (Having previously worked as a secretary, the researcher possesses speedwriting skills.)

After each adolescent had agreed to participate in the study, the researcher attempted to get a gross idea of his reading level by administration of the San Diego Quick Assessment screening test. Since these were gross approximations, the actual results were not compiled. A

large percentage of the adolescents, however, had minimal reading skills.

Many of the youths who participated in the study were current classmates or were celled on the same unit with other adolescents who also participated in the study. The researcher was not concerned with the possibility that adolescents might discuss the dilemmas among themselves since there are no right or wrong answers to the dilemmas. The significant information is the justification which is reflective of the developmental level of the underlying cognitive structures. Furthermore, each of the six dilemmas was followed by several questions, the total for all dilemmas being 116. It would have been highly unlikely that any adolescent could remember all of the questions and all of his justifications and relate all of that to a peer. Even if he could remember and did relate part of it, scoring of each dilemma took into account all the questions pertaining to various aspects of the dilemma, thereby revealing a fairly distinct profile of the individual's thinking.

Analysis of the data gleaned from the completion of the 62 interviews is reported in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4


Data Analysis

At the time of this study, the following demographics
were revealed:

Age:

Ages of the adolescents interviewed ranged from 12
years, 6 months to 17 years. The sample included three
12-year-olds, two 13-year-olds, twelve 14-year-olds,
twenty-one 15-year-olds, twenty-two 16-year-olds, and two
17-year-olds.

Parents:

Prior to being arrested, the majority of the youngsters
interviewed had been living in single parent households in
which that parent was unemployed, for whatever reason, i.e.,
66% (41) reported that their father was not in the home. Of
the 79% (49) who reported that their mother was the only
parent in the home, 70% revealed that she was not working.

Siblings:

The adolescents in this sample ranged from being an
only child to have nine brothers and/or sisters. The
largest percentage (24%) had only one sibling, with 17%
having two siblings. The percentages reported for having

three, four, or five or more siblings were 6.5%, 13%, and 16%, respectively.

Current charges:

The majority of the adolescents included in this sample had been charged either with crimes against property (38.7%) or crimes against individuals (37.1%). The charges for crimes against property included breaking and entering (22.6%), unlawful driving away stolen vehicle (12.9%), receiving stolen property (1.6%), and larceny (1.6%). The more serious charges against individuals included unarmed robbery (8.1%), armed robbery (11.3%), violation of drugs/narcotics (4.8%), assault and battery (8.1%), and murder (4.8%).

Eight percent of the sample had been charged with carrying a concealed weapon.

Eight percent of the sample had been charged with minor offenses including violation of curfew (1.6%), truancy from home or school (1.6%), shoplifting (3.2%), and purse snatching (1.6%).

Of the youths who reported having been incarcerated more than once, 79% reported prior charges which were against people while 53% reported prior charges which were against property.

## Moral Judgments of Responsibility

Three developmental stage scores of moral reasoning were ascertained for each of the 62 adolescents interviewed.

Each of the adolescents was required to resolve one set of hypothetical dilemmas and two sets of practical dilemmas, one practical dilemma being situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting and the other practical dilemma being situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting.

Developmental stages of moral
reasoning utilized in the
resolution of hypothetical
moral dilemmas:

The focus of this project is on the relationship between the moral atmosphere existent within an adolescent detention facility and the moral reasoning utilized by adolescents incarcerated therein. For that reason, an in-depth analysis of the hypothetical moral dilemmas and the various stages of reasoning utilized by the adolescents in the resolution of those dilemmas will not be made. Suffice it to say that of the two sections which comprise this portion of the researcher's hypothesis, one section was supported by the data while the other was not.

Data supportive of
researcher's hypothesis:

The data supported that portion of the researcher's hypothesis which predicted that if incarcerated adolescents were presented with three sets of moral dilemmas, the adolescents would tend to score lowest on those dilemmas which were situated within an adolescent-detention-facility setting (see Table 4, page 87). In other words, scores on

hypothetical dilemmas as well as scores on practical dilemmas which were situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting were significantly higher than scores for dilemmas which were situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting.

## Data non-supportive of researcher's hypothesis:

The data did not support the researcher's hypothesis that incarcerated adolescents would tend to score higher on hypothetical dilemmas than on dilemmas which were situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention facility setting (see Table 4, page 87). As a matter of fact, the data reflected the exact opposite; i.e., incarcerated adolescents tended to reflect significantly higher levels of moral reasoning on practical dilemmas which were situated away from an adolescent-detention-facility setting than on hypothetical dilemmas Possible explanations for this are discussed later in this chapter.

## Developmental stages of moral reasoning utilized in the resolution of practical moral dilemmas:

For purposes of this study, four practical dilemmas were developed around the issues of rules, communications, caring, and feeling accepted by others. Each of the four dilemmas was presented twice to each adolescent, first with the dilemma being situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting with each adolescent being

required to answer various questions not only about how he would resolve the dilemma, but why he would resolve it in his particular fashion. Under this condition, as presented in Table 1, page 61, a profile of the adolescents' moral judgments regarding the resolution of rightness and responsibility issues can be ascertained as well as the stage scores at which those judgments were made. (See Appendix C for a brief description of the distinction between judgments of rightness and judgments of responsibility.)

The adolescents were then asked to imagine that while everything else about the dilemma which they had just resolved remained the same, the location of the dilemma was now moved to the adolescent detention facility. Individual questions asked under this condition required the adolescent to answer how he thought other adolescents within the adolescent detention facility would resolve the dilemma and why he thought they would resolve it in that particular manner. This condition, as presented in Table 2, page 71, provides a profile of how the adolescents thought their peers within the adolescent detention facility would make judgments of rightness and responsibility as well as stage scores at which the adolescents reasoned when judging their peers.

Referring now to Table 1, page 61, an examination is made of the moral judgments which the adolescents made vis-a-vis rightness and responsibility issues when resolving

## TABLE 1

### Adolescents' Moral Judgments with Regard to Rightness and Responsibility Issues in An Other-Than-Adolescent-Detention-Facility Setting

| Question | N | Response In Percentages | | | *Unsc | Moral Reasoning Developmental Stage | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | Other | | 1 | 1/2 | 2 | 2/3 | 3 | 3/4 | 4 |
| **PROBLEM ONE:** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Does Milton have a responsibility not to break the rules his mother has about drugs? | 62 | 100.0 | | | 21.1 | | 8.0 | 25.8 | 38.7 | 4.8 | 1.6 | |
| Is it right for Milton to break his mother's rule to help Alex? | 62 | 3.2 | 96.8 | | 4.8 | 11.1 | 11.3 | 25.9 | 37.2 | 9.7 | | |
| If you were Milton, would you break a rule to help a friend? | 62 | 9.7 | 87.1 | 3.2 | | | | | | | | |
| **PROBLEM TWO:** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Does Tony have a responsibility to talk to his teacher in a nice way to let her know that he didn't do whatever she thinks he did? | 62 | 98.4 | 1.6 | | 11.3 | 4.8 | 6.5 | 37.1 | 16.1 | 21.0 | 3.2 | |
| Is it right that Tony's teacher has accused Tony of something and thrown him out of class without talking to Tony about it first? | 62 | | 100.0 | | 4.9 | 1.6 | | 41.9 | 25.8 | 25.8 | | |
| If you were Tony, would you try to talk to your teacher? | 62 | 64.5 | 32.3 | 3.2 | | | | | | | | |
| **PROBLEM THREE:** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Is it right to be kind to other people and to let them know that they are cared for? | 62 | 96.8 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | | 29.1 | 41.9 | 25.8 | | |
| If you were Andrew, would you do whatever you could to help Martel feel cared for? | 62 | 91.9 | 6.5 | 1.6 | | | | | | | | |
| **PROBLEM FOUR:** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Does Joe have a responsibility to not break the windows? | 62 | 93.5 | 6.5 | | 4.8 | 8.1 | 12.9 | 41.9 | 17.8 | 12.9 | 1.6 | |
| Is it right for the kids to laugh at Joe and call him a chicken because he won't join them and break the windows? | 62 | 8.1 | 91.9 | | 6.5 | 14.5 | | 25.8 | 33.9 | 19.3 | | |
| If you were Joe, would you join the kids and break the windows after they started calling you names? | 62 | 1.6 | 88.7 | 9.7 | | | | | | | | |

*Unscorable

Percentage may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

practical dilemmas situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting.

## Practical Dilemmas: Other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting

### Problem One: Rules

The moral dilemma presented in Problem One pitted the temptation for Milton to break his mother's rule regarding no drugs in the house against a plea from his buddy to hide some marijuana at Milton's home just for one night. (See Appendix B, Page 127, for the text of Problem One.)

Discussion:

When asked if it was Milton's responsibility not to break the rules his mother had about drugs in the house, 100% of the adolescents stated, "Yes." To reach this decision, 38.7% of the adolescents reasoned at the Transitional Stage 2/3 (read two three, not two-thirds, implying a transitional stage between the Stage 2 meeting needs and fair exchange or "I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine" orientation and the Stage 3 interpersonal conformity orientation where an individual's orientation is no longer towards the external or physical ramifications of his/her actions but is now focused more towards relationships and with pleasing and/or being accepted by others). At Transitional Stage 2/3, orientations toward desires and needs (i.e., he wants, needs, likes to keep her rules) begin to give way to a recognition of the ramifications of his relationship with his mother.

Typical justifications at the Transitional 2/3 stage were "he loves his mother and wants to help her," which has moved beyond a Stage 2 orientation to one's own needs and desires wherein Milton would have "wanted some of the drugs for himself" or "not wanted to get in trouble." Other Stage 2/3 justifications for Milton having a responsibility to keep his mother's rules included "cause Milton has got to listen to his mama before he listens to his friend" or "she thought she could trust him," where the term "trust" implies moving into a Stage 3 orientation to relationships.

Justifications from Stage 1, the lowest developmental stage represented in the resolution of this dilemma, reflected reasoning which was subject to someone else's laws or rules in which the orientation was to punishment and obedience. Such justifications included, "If he breaks the rules, he'll get in trouble," or "He won't break his mother's rules because it's not right," or "He won't break the rules because it's his mother."

One of the 16-year-old adolescents who towered above most of the others in the reasoning he utilized throughout his entire interview, and, who, incidentally was incarcerated for this his first offense on charges of intent to do great bodily harm to an individual, reasoned at a Transitional Stage 3/4 (read three four, not three-fourths). At this stage of reasoning, one is no longer simply obeying others' dictates but is concerned mainly with meeting agreed upon obligations or following rules of society to preserve

order. Moving beyond the good boy/good girl stance of Stage
3 wherein one is preoccupied with pleasing others, what is
right is beginning to be perceived as 1) fulfilling the
actual duties to which one has agreed, and 2) contributing
to society, the group, or the institution. The concern here
is not to please others but to live up to one's obligations
or duties. Laws or rules are to be upheld except in extreme
cases where they conflict with other fixed social duties.

Such Transitional Stage 3/4 moral reasoning ability
seems incompatible with the behavior exhibited by this
adolescent when he attempted to do great bodily harm to
another person, the act for which he was incarcerated. The
researcher did not question any of the adolescents about the
details of their individual cases, and, therefore, when
this youngster confided in the researcher that he had done
that of which he was accused, he was not questioned beyond
what he offered spontaneously. Had he been questioned,
however, he might have revealed higher level reasoning to
justify his act. What if, for example, the man who he
attacked had been for many years severely battering this
adolescent's mother? This adolescent could have justified
an attack on such a person not as an attempt to harm that
individual as much as an attempt to save his mother's life.
He could have seen his act as his obligation to protect her,
Stage 4 reasoning. On the other hand, he could have simply
lost control and make a stupid decision to attack someone
after a neighborhood quarrel to get even, a Stage 2

justification. Research has suggested, however, that people are fairly consistent in their reasoning and prefer to function at their highest capability (Ouderkirk, 1980, 1984). For this adolescent, then, the researcher would suspect a scenario similar to the former, rather than the latter, with regard to his attack upon another individual.

The Transitional Stage 3/4 reasoning utilized by this adolescent regarding the question of Milton's having a responsibility to keep his mother's rules was reflected in his statement that, "The rules that his Mom set in the house keep order and protect him, and it is Milton's responsibility to carry out those rules." This same youngster, when asked if it was right for Milton to break the rules to help Alex reasoned from a Stage 3 level that, "If he breaks the rules, then he's the one to blame"; i.e., "His mother will lose trust in him and he's the one caught with the bag." This adolescent's reasoning typifies that utilized by all of us in the sense that the reasoning we utilize can vary across different types of dilemmas and across time as we react, sometimes under stress, sometimes not, to our everchanging environment.

The greatest percentage (37.2%) of his peers, however, while agreeing that it was not right for Milton to break his mother's rules to help a friend, justified their responses from Transitional Stage 2/3, ranging from an affiliative concern of, "I'd listen to my mother before I'd listen to my friend," or "He should do what his mother says and not what

his friend says," to empathic role-taking with a response of "If he helps Alex, Alex will probably come to depend on him again, and that's wrong because Alex shouldn't depend on people all the time to do his dirty work for him."

When asked to step into Milton's shoes and to decide whether they would break the rule to help Alex, 87.1% stated, "No." Consistent with his earlier Stage 3 reasoning, one adolescent stated, "I would tell him no drugs, and if he keeps on asking me, he'd be losing the friendship; I'd think of him as less of a friend for even asking me since he knows the rules of my house." The paramount concern for this adolescent was his concern for the underlying responsibilities of a relationship. More typically, however, his peers reflected a Transitional Stage 2/3 concern to abide by the mother's rules rather than Alex's demands, as indicated in the 100% agreement that Milton has a responsibility to keep his mother's rules.

## Problem Two: Communication

The dilemma in Problem Two pitted the responsibility one feels to abide by whatever it is that authority figures tell us to do against the responsibility one has to speak up for one's self when one has been accused of doing something he/she did not do. (See Appendix B, page 130 for the text of Problem Two.)

Discussion:

One hundred percent of the adolescents interviewed felt that Tony, who had just been ordered out of his

classroom, has a responsibility to talk to his teacher in a nice way to let her know that he didn't do whatever it is she thinks he did. In this instance, the greatest percentage (37.1%) of the adolescents justified their reasoning at a Stage 2 meeting needs and fair exchange orientation. Typical justifications here included, "All he wanted was the dictionary," or "If you talk louder, she ain't going to pay no attention or listen to what you say," or "If he talks in a nice way, maybe she'll think he didn't do anything."

Other justifications included a Transitional Stage 1/2 (read one two, not one-half) which reasoned that Tony had a responsibility to talk to his teacher in a nice way "so he won't get in trouble." Another adolescent functioning at Transitional Stage 3/4 reasoned that, "You should respect adults and talk to them in a nice manner regardless of what the situation is."

Similarly, 100% of the adolescents stated that it was not right that Tony's teacher accused him of something and has thrown him out of class without talking to him about it first. While reasoning again ranged from 4.9% at Stage 1 where "it's wrong" to 25.8% at Stage 3 with justifications such as, "She should at least hear his side of the story and get an explanation before she comes to a conclusion," the greatest percentage (41.9%) reasoned with a Stage 2 fair exchange orientation with justifications such as, "You don't

take it out on somebody just cause of the way you feel," or "She don't know if he did it or not."

When asked to stand in Tony's shoes and to decide whether or not they would try to talk to the teacher after she has ordered him out of the classroom, one-third of the adolescents (32.3%) said that they would not, typically reasoning that they would simply make her madder and get deeper into trouble. Two-thirds (64.5%) said that they would try to talk to her, reasoning that "I wouldn't want her to holler at me for no reason," feeling justified in refuting an unjust charge.

## Problem Three: Caring

The dilemma presented in Problem Three pitted the universal need to feel cared for, particularly when we've dropped the ball, made a mistake, or are in an unfamiliar surrounding, against the reality of the punitive purposes for which youth are incarcerated in an adolescent detention facility. (See Appendix B, page 133, for the text of Problem Three.)

Discussion:

When asked if it is right to be kind to other people and to let them know that they are cared for, 96.8% of the adolescents stated, "Yes." The largest percentage (41.9%) justified their response at Transitional Stage 2/3, 29.1% at Stage 2, and 25.8% at Stage 3. The typical Transitional Stage 2/3 response included justifications such as, "If you care for somebody, it will help them solve their problems,"

or "Everyone would like to have friends and be cared about even if you is in detention." Stage 2 reasoning included justifications such as, "You'd want other people to do the same for you," or "Everybody wants to be cared for," or "If you be kind to somebody else, somebody else be kind to you." Stage 3 reasoners stated, "...so he'll know he got friends and people that loves him."

## Problem Four: Feeling accepted by others

Problem Four pitted the desire of a teenager to go along with and to be accepted by his friends who want to break the windows out of a neighborhood store against the responsibility the teenager feels about not doing something when he knows that it is wrong. (See Appendix B, page 136 for the test of Problem Four.)

Discussion:

Nearly all (93.5%) of the adolescents interviewed stated that Joe had a responsibility not to break the windows out of the store. The largest percentage (41.9%) justified this response with Stage 2 reasoning stating that, "Since the old lady had been nice to them, they would be nice to her." Most of the adolescents (91.9%) felt that it was not right for Joe's friends to laugh at Joe and call him a chicken just because he didn't want to go along with them. While 25.8% justified this with Stage 2 reasoning that, "They don't like other kids calling them names," or "He don't want to break the windows," and 19.3% justified their

response with Stage 3 reasoning such as, "They should respect his integrity not to even want to do that because it's wrong," or "They should have the respect not to hurt him," the greatest percentage (33.9%) justified their response with Transitional Stage 2/3 reasoning such as, "He's not a chicken; he just don't want to do anything to hurt anybody else that's been nice to him."

### Practical Dilemmas: Adolescent-detention-facility setting

Turning now to Table 2, page 71, an examination is made of the moral judgments adolescents made regarding dilemmas which were situated within an adolescent-detention-facility setting.

### Problem One: Rules

When asked, "Would most of the kids here think it is right for Milton to break the rules to help his friend?," 56.5% answered, "Yes." The Stage 2 level of reasoning at which the majority (59.7%) of the adolescents justified their feelings is very significant here. The typical Stage 2, "If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" response was, "It is right for Milton to break the rules here because he would want some of the marijuana," or "They would want Milton to do the same for them." The most typical Stage 2 response for the 38.7% who stated that it would not be right for Milton to break the rules was, "It's not right cause they don't want to get put on ice [isolation]."

TABLE 2

Adolescents' Moral Judgments with Regard to
Rightness and Responsibility Issues in
An Adolescent-Detention-Facility Setting

| Question | N | Response In Percentages | | | *Unsc | Moral Reasoning Developmental Stage | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Yes | No | Other | | 1 | 1/2 | 2 | 2/3 | 3 | 3/4 | 4 |
| **PROBLEM ONE:** Would most of the kids think it is right for Milton to break the detention facility rules to help his friend? | 62 | 56.5 | 38.7 | 4.8 | 9.7 | 11.3 | 4.8 | 59.7 | 9.7 | 3.2 | | |
| **PROBLEM TWO:** Would kids think that it is right for people to try to talk with each other here to solve problems? | 62 | 41.9 | 48.4 | 9.7 | 8.0 | 11.3 | | 45.3 | 30.6 | 4.8 | | |
| Would adults think it is right for people to try to talk with each other here to solve problems? | 62 | 83.9 | 4.8 | 11.3 | 19.3 | 8.1 | 1.6 | 11.3 | 25.8 | 33.9 | | |
| **PROBLEM THREE:** Would most of the kids here think it is right to help Martel feel cared for? | 62 | 38.7 | 43.5 | 17.7 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 1.6 | 37.1 | 48.4 | 6.5 | | |
| Would most of the adults here think it is right to help Martel feel cared for? | 62 | 12.9 | 67.7 | 19.4 | 12.9 | 16.1 | | 11.3 | 33.9 | 24.2 | 1.6 | |
| Does the unit leader have a responsibility to help boys on the unit feel cared for? | 62 | 69.4 | 29.0 | 1.6 | 16.1 | 17.7 | | 9.7 | 37.1 | 19.4 | | |
| Do the boys on Martel's unit have a responsibility to help Martel feel cared for? | 62 | 53.2 | 45.2 | 1.6 | 3.3 | 4.8 | | 25.8 | 40.3 | 25.8 | | |
| **PROBLEM FOUR:** No questions asked. | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Unscorable
Percentage may not sum to 100.0 due to rounding.

The next most frequent justification revealed moral reasoning developmental Stage 1, the punishment/obedience orientation. The typical response at this stage did not consider it right for someone to break the rules to help a friend at the detention facility since "both could end up on ice," reflecting no "want" or "desire" as in Stage 2 reasoning.

## Problem Two: Communication

When asked, "Would kids think it is right for people to try to talk with each other here to solve problems?," the responses were fairly evenly split with 48.4% perceiving that the other adolescents would not think it is right to talk and 41.9% perceiving that the other adolescents would think it is right to talk. Again, the largest percentage (40.5%) of the justifications were Stage 2 with the typical response being "No, other kids wouldn't think it is right to talk because they'd rather fight than solve anything," or "No, they like to fight," or "No, they don't want to talk," or "Yes, they don't want to fight." Thirty percent, however, responded with Transitional Stage 2/3 reasoning, the justifications at this stage including, "Kids here don't talk because other kids don't care about too many people; they'd rather fight it out," or "Yes, they think it is right to talk so no one will get hurt and they can straighten out the problem."

Problem Three: Caring

In response to the question, "Does the unit leader have a responsibility to help boys on the unit feel cared for?," surprisingly only 69.4% of the adolescents replied, "Yes." The Transitional Stage 2/3 justifications which represented the largest percentage (47.1%) of responses included, "Yes, that is like their parents while they're in here; they are the ones taking care of them." The most typical "No" response was, "They supposed to but they don't care."

In response to the question, "Do the boys on Martel's unit have a responsibility to help Martel feel cared for?," again, only 53.2% replied, "Yes." Again, justifications from Transitional Stage 2/3 were most prevalent (40.3%) and included such responses as, "Yes, it's just like its they home for the time being, like they're brothers," or "Yes, so they can live with each other; they should all look out for each other." The typical Stage 2 response, representing 25.8% of the adolescents, was "No, it's not my birthday, why should I care?," or "Nobody done nothing special for me on my birthday, why should I do anything now?"

When asked, "Would adults think it is right for people to try to talk with each other here to solve problems?," 93.9% of the adolescents answered, "Yes" with 33.9% justifying that response at Stage 3 and 25.8% reasoning at Transitional Stage 2/3. Stage 3 justifications included, "Adults think it is right to talk with each other for the kid's safety and for their own," or "They feel that children

should start figuring out their own situations on their own." Transitional Stage 2/3 responses included, "Instead of letting them argue, the adults can help," or "They would rather you talk to each other than them having to put you on ice." The one Stage 4 justification was, "They're obligated to do it; it's their job."

When asked, "Would most of the kids think it is right to help Martel feel cared for on his sixteenth birthday when he has had no visitors for four months?," a situation not too unlike that of some of the adolescents participating in this study, only 43.5% answered, "Yes." The majority of the justifications in response to this question reflected Transitional Stage 2/3 reasoning stating, "Yes, most of the kids would think it is right because they'd feel sorry for him," or "Yes, they would want the same thing done to them." The typical Transitional Stage 2/3 justification for a "No" response was, "No, cause some kids just think about their own self and don't care about nobody else."

When asked, "Would most adults here think it is right to help Martel feel cared for?," 67.7% responded, "Yes." The greatest percentage (33.9%) of the justifications to this question was at a Transitional Stage 2/3 with justifications including, "Yes, so he'd feel better about himself on his birthday." Stage 3 justification, representing 24.2% of the responses, included such reasoning as, "They'd be more mature and understanding of the situation."

Eleven percent of the youngsters justified their responses at a Stage 1 level, reasoning that, "No, it is not their job to care."

### Moral Atmosphere of Adolescent Detention Facility

A compilation of the adolescents' perceptions of certain norms existent with the adolescent detention facility as reflected in their resolution of practical dilemmas situated therein is presented in Table 3. Consideration of these perceptions along with the moral judgments previously presented in Table 2 reveals what has been identified earlier as the moral atmosphere of that facility; i.e., the environment within that setting which enhances the possibilities for certain types of behaviors to emerge while impeding the possibilities for others (Table 3, page 62).

### Problem One: Rules

Recalling from Table 2, page 71, 56.5% of the 62 adolescents interviewed thought that most of the other kids at the detention facility would think it is right for Milton to break the rules at the detention facility to help a friend. Furthermore, as reflected in Table 3, 67.7% of the adolescents thought that the other adolescents at the facility would fully expect a person to break the detention facility rules to help a friend, and the majority of the adolescents predicted that the adolescents at the detention facility would be neither surprised (77.6%) nor disappointed

**TABLE 3**

Adolescents' Perceptions of Norms
Existent Within Adolescent Detention Facility

| | | Response in Percentages | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Yes | No | Other |
| **PROBLEM ONE:** | | | | |
| Would kids expect a person to break the rules here to help a friend? | 62 | 67.7 | 17.7 | 14.5 |
| Would kids be surprised if another kid here broke a rule to help a friend? | 49 | 20.4 | 77.6 | 1.6 |
| Would kid be disappointed in other kids here if they broke a rule to help a friend? | 40 | 32.5 | 52.5 | 15.0 |
| **PROBLEM TWO:** | | | | |
| Do you think that kids here would generally give each other a chance to explain a situation before accusing each other of something? | 62 | 25.8 | 72.6 | 1.6 |
| Do you think that kids here would give Tony a chance to explain a situation before accusing him of something? | 62 | 28.5 | 72.6 | 1.6 |
| Do you think that adults here would give Tony a chance to explain a situation before accusing him of something? | 62 | 50.0 | 38.7 | 11.2 |
| Do kids expect other kids here to talk about problems to solve them? | 62 | 11.3 | 71.0 | 17.7 |
| Would kids be surprised if people here didn't try to talk about problems to solve them? | 53 | 15.1 | 75.5 | 9.4 |
| Would kids be disappointed if people here didn't try to talk about problems to solve them? | 36 | 22.2 | 63.9 | 13.9 |
| **PROBLEM THREE:** | | | | |
| Would kids here really do whatever they could to help Martel feel cared for? | 62 | 25.8 | 54.8 | 19.3 |
| Would adults really do whatever they could here to help Martel feel cared for? | 62 | 58.1 | 16.1 | 25.8 |
| Would kids be surprised if other kids here didn't care about each other? | 47 | 8.5 | 87.2 | 4.2 |
| Would kids be surprised if adults here didn't care about kids? | 45 | 33.3 | 60.0 | 6.7 |
| Would kids be disappointed if other kids here didn't care about each other? | 45 | 8.9 | 86.7 | 4.5 |
| Would kids be disappointed if adults here didn't care about kids here? | 35 | 34.3 | 62.9 | 2.8 |
| **PROBLEM FOUR:** | | | | |
| Would kids expect adults here to make fun of kids? | 58 | 12.1 | 77.6 | 10.3 |
| Would kids be surprised if kids here made fun of each other? | 52 | 5.8 | 92.3 | 1.9 |
| Would kids be disappointed if kids here made fun of each other? | 38 | 26.3 | 68.4 | 5.3 |
| Would most of the kids think it is fair to call someone names here to get them to do something? | 62 | 46.8 | 40.3 | 12.9 |

(52.5%) if other adolescents at the facility broke a rule to help a friend.

While these results are not surprising since we might expect the ties and expectations of a friendship to transcend the expectations of certain authority figures, particularly in a setting such as a detention facility, it is revealing to examine the justifications given by these adolescents as to why they thought their peers would think it is right for a fellow adolescent to break the rules to help a friend. Recalling from the discussion of Table 2, 59.7% of the adolescents justified their response at a Stage 2, "If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" orientation. Stage 2 justifications included, "They'll hide it [break the rules] cause they want some," or "Kids break the rules here to help a friend if they get something out of it," or "If kids don't help their friends here, nobody will have anything to do with them."

The next most frequent (11.3%) justification revealed Stage 1 reasoning with a punishment/obedience orientation. The typical response at this stage did not consider it right for someone to break the rules to help a friend since both adolescents could "end up on ice." Other justifications reflective of Stages 3 and 4, respectively, included, "They've been through it all and they understand the responsibility for one friend to another friend," and "They feel that they are trapped and it is their duty to help a friend."

Each of the 62 adolescents interviewed was asked what he perceived to be the most important reason at the detention facility for not breaking a rule to help a friend. While the exact percentage of responses was not computed, most, if not all, of the adolescents replied that it was the possibility of getting caught or getting into trouble that kept them from breaking the rules. This reasoning is reflective of a Stage 1 orientation to punishment and obedience.

Since the adolescents identified this as the most important reason for not breaking the rules at the detention facility, it is clear that the primary reason fostered and reinforced within that setting for doing the right thing with regard to rules, i.e., for making sound moral judgments vis-a-vis keeping or breaking rules, is not representative of higher stages of moral reasoning such as Stage 3, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," Stage 4, "For the sake of order, meaningful interactions, dealings or functionings," or even Stage 2 "If you're good to me, I'll be good to you," but rather it is representative of reasoning at the lowest possible rung on the developmental ladder, a Stage 1 concern with avoiding punishment and/or being blindly obedient.

We will recall from Table 2 that the majority (59.7%) of adolescents used Stage 2 reasoning to justify their perception that most of the other adolescents at the detention facility would think it is right to break the

rules at the detention facility to help a friend. Similarly, the majority (37.2%) used Transitional Stage 2/3 reasoning to justify their belief that it is right in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting for Milton not to break his mother's rules.

It is obvious that the largest percentage of these adolescents are able to understand higher levels of moral reasoning vis-a-vis the rightness of not breaking rules since they used higher levels spontaneously to support their own personal views. Since they are capable of understanding and even utilizing more advanced, mature reasoning when confronted with rightness issues as reflected in their resolution of the above discussed moral dilemmas, what is being gained, or more appropriately, what is being lost by creating an environment within an adolescent detention facility to which adolescents react and, in order to survive, function at a level which is two full stages below their functioning capability?

## Problem Two: Communication

Examining the developmental level at which adolescents justified their perceptions about whether or not the other adolescents within the detention facility would think it is right to talk with each other to resolve problems, 49.1% utilized Stage 2, exchange/instrumental reasoning. At this level, wants, desires, and needs are paramount. Consequently, Stage 2 reasoning was used as justification both by those who thought it was not right to talk to resolve

problems as well as by those who thought it was right to talk to resolve problems. Typical Stage 2 responses demonstrate how this is so; i.e., "It is right to talk cause they want to be friends," or "It is right to fight cause some kids like to 'dog' or 'beast' other kids," or "It is right to talk because some kids don't want to fight."

Two of the adolescents quoted in the above examples, i.e., "It is right to talk cause they want to be friends" and "It is right to fight cause some kids like to 'dog' or 'beast' other kids," may possibly be starting to move from Stage 2 to Transitional Stage 2/3 reasoning. While these adolescents see the other adolescents as being mainly concerned with their needs and desires, i.e., "...they want to" and "Some kids like to...," they are both beginning to recognize that their desires have to do with their interactions with others, albeit "dogging" or "beasting" on the one hand and being friends on the other.

The awareness of such movement up the developmental ladder of moral reasoning ability is of great significance when agents of the juvenile justice system create moral atmospheres or environments within detention facilities wherein moral judgments or decisions for what is right are being formulated constantly.

As reflected in Table 2, there was almost an equal split between adolescents within the facility who thought that other adolescents within the facility would think it is right to talk to resolve problems as compared to those who

thought it was not right to talk. Interestingly, however, as revealed in Table 3, page 76, 71% of the youngsters did not actually expect kids to talk, and furthermore, 76.9% would not be surprised and 67.6% would not be disappointed if other adolescents did not talk to resolve problems between each other at the detention facility. Additionally, 72.6% of the adolescents felt that adolescents at the detention facility would not generally give each other a chance to explain a situation before accusing each other of something.

When asked what the adolescents at the detention facility would do instead of talk with each other to resolve problems, 100% stated that they would either "fight" or "want to fight." When asked, "What would kids think if people here didn't try to figure out problems by talking about them?," the typical response was, "Nothing." This should not be totally surprising, however, since when asked, "Do you think that adults here would give Tony a chance to explain a situation before accusing him of something?," nearly 40% of the adolescents answered, "No," utilizing mostly Stage 2 reasoning to justify that response suggesting that, "If you don't talk to me, I'm not going to talk to you."

## Problem Three: Caring

With regard to the adolescents' perceptions of caring existent within the detention facility, it is interesting to note that while adolescents were again fairly evenly split

between those who thought other adolescents would think it is right as opposed to those who would think it is not right to help a fellow youth feel cared for at adolescent detention facility, only 17.2% actually expected kids at the facility to care about each other. Additionally, an overwhelming 87.2% thought adolescents would not be surprised and 86.7% thought they'd not be disappointed if adolescents at the facility did not care about each other. Only a little more than half (54.8%) thought that adolescents would really do whatever they could to help a cohort feel cared for.

The researcher asked each adolescent to describe what a caring person does or how a caring person acts. Their perceptions were reflective of their respective developmental stages of moral reasoning. Examples are as follows:

Stage 1: "They be nice, bring popcorn, or let us watch programs."

     "...share candy, play games..."
     "They obey the rules."

Stage 2: "...give moral support when you need it."
     "They want you to have nice things."

Stage 2/3: "They worry about you."
     "They help you with your work."
     "They help you out if something happens."

Stage 3: "He's friendly."
     "...concerned and talk with you out of the clear blue sky."

Stage 4: "He feels obligated to reach out with friendship."

As reflected in Table 2, the most frequent stage level revealed by the justificatory responses to the caring

dilemma situated within the adolescent detention facility was Transitional Stage 2/3. At this level, justifications included, "They don't think it is right cause they really don't care," or "They don't think it is right cause they'd think he should take care of his own self," or "They think it is right to help Martel feel cared for cause they might be close."

If we compare this to the justifications for the caring dilemma situated in the other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting as reflected in Table 1, while 41.9% of the adolescents justified their belief that it is right to be kind to other people and to let them know that they are cared for at a Transitional 2/3 stage of reasoning, a sizable 25.8% justified their response with Stage 3 Golden Rule reasoning; i.e., "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Many of the adolescents, therefore, were able to understand and to utilize higher levels of reasoning vis-a-vis caring about people. Similarly, when asked, "If other kids here acted more caring towards you, would you act more caring towards them?," 100% answered, "Yes."

The stage level of this last question as posed by the researcher was a Stage 2, "If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours," and the adolescents were obviously able to understand that level of reasoning. What is the connection between the adolescents' answer to this question and their earlier perception that adolescents in the detention facility would always either "fight" or "want to fight" to

resolve problems? If the environment within the detention facility were created to model and encourage the use of higher stages of reasoning when making moral judgments in the resolution of day-to-day dilemmas, incarcerated adolescents might genuinely begin to see not that, "I won't fight you if you won't fight me," but rather, "I won't fight you because you don't fight me."

Speaking of modeling, it is important to note that when the adolescents were asked, "Do you think that adults here would give Tony a chance to explain a situation before accusing him of something?," only 50% answered, "Yes" and 38.7% answered, "No."

## Problem Four: Feeling accepted by others

While adolescents reported that other adolescents at the detention facility would be neither surprised (92.3%) nor disappointed (68.4%) if adolescents made fun of each other, less than half of them (46.8%) actually thought that such a practice is fair. Justifications for these perceptions included Transitional Stage 1/2 reasoning that, "The person kids make fun of could get in a lot of trouble," Stage 2 reasoning that, "They want to see a fight," or "They don't like people 'geeking up' fights," or Stage 3 reasoning that, "Kids expect other kids here to go along with them; if they don't, it will just make living with them more difficult."

Of the 58 adolescents responding to the question, "Would kids expect adults here to make fun of kids?," the overwhelming majority (77.6%) responded, "No."

## Hypothesis Testing

As stated earlier in Chapter 3, it is this researcher's sense that the moral atmosphere existent within adolescent detention facilities is not unlike the moral atmosphere existent within prisons. For that reason and based upon the previously cited research, this researcher hypothesized that if incarcerated adolescents were given an opportunity to resolve two sets of practical, real-life dilemmas, i.e., one set situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting and the other set situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting, scores on the practical dilemmas which were situated in the adolescent-detention-facility set would be lower than scores on the practical dilemmas situated elsewhere. Similarly, it was hypothesized that if presented with hypothetical dilemmas, i.e., "Should Henry steal the drug to save his wife?," these same adolescents would tend to score higher on the hypothetical dilemma resolutions than on either of the two sets of practical dilemma resolutions.

To test these hypotheses, three developmental stage scores of moral reasoning were ascertained for each of 62 incarcerated male adolescents. Each of the adolescents was required to resolve one set of hypothetical dilemmas and two sets of practical dilemmas, one situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting and the other situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting.

Mean scores were calculated for each of the three groups of dilemmas and the t-test of significance was then utilized to determine whether or not any differences between the mean scores were sufficiently large to suggest real differences in the adolescents' perceptions of the three groups of moral dilemmas rather than mere chance differences which might have been reflected due to sampling error.

For purposes of the significance testing, comparisons were made between 1) practical dilemmas situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting and practical dilemmas situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting, 2) practical dilemmas situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting and hypothetical dilemmas, and 3) practical dilemmas situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting and hypothetical dilemmas (Table 4, page 87).

As reflected in Table 4, the data supports the researcher's hypothesis that practical dilemmas which were situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting would be resolved at levels of moral reasoning which were significantly lower than either 1) practical dilemmas which were situated in settings other than an adolescent detention facility (Comparison I), or 2) hypothetical dilemmas (Comparison II). On the other hand, however, and as reflected in Comparison III, the data did not support the hypothesis that hypothetical dilemmas would be resolved at levels of moral reasoning which were higher than either set

Table 4

Mean Score Comparison of Dilemma Resolutions
as Utilized in t-Test of Significance

| | Practical Adolescent-Detention-Facility-Related Dilemma | Practical Other-Than-Adolescent-Detention-Facility-Related Dilemma | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Comparison I | X = 244.629 | X = 265.935 | t = 6.22  p = .000 |
| Comparison II | Practical Adolescent-Detention-Facility-Related Dilemma<br>X = 244.629 | Hypothetical Dilemma<br>X = 255.774 | t = 2.65  p = .010 |
| Comparison III | Hypothetical Dilemma<br>X = 255.774 | Practical Other-Than-Adolescent-Detention-Facility Related Dilemma<br>X = 265.935 | t = -3.03  p = .004 |

N = 62

of practical dilemmas, but, in fact, reflected moral reasoning levels which were significantly lower than the moral reasoning utilized to resolve practical moral dilemmas which were situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting, the exact opposite of what the researcher had predicted. An explanation of the failure of Comparison III to support the researcher's hypothesis will be discussed in this chapter.

This difference between the means as revealed in Table 4, page 87, is more than purely statistical. When these mean scores are translated into global stage scores, they reflect a substantively important difference in the orientation utilized by adolescents to resolve dilemmas which are situated in adolescent detention facilities. A translation of the mean scores into global stage scores of moral reasoning development ability is presented in Table 5.

In explanation of the contents of Table 5, the global stage score is a "qualitative summary label which represents the developmental vicinity in which an SRMS (the mean score) can be located" (Gibbs and Widaman, 1982, p. 53). The global score, Major-Minor Transition Stage 2(3), indicates that an individual is in transition between Stages 2 and 3 but is functioning closer to Stage 2 orientations than to Stage 3. Major-Minor Transition Stage 3(2), on the other hand, indicates that an individual is in transition between the two stages but is functioning closer to Stage 3 orientation.

TABLE 5

The Translation of Mean Scores of Dilemma Resolutions
Into Global Stage Scores of Moral Reasoning Ability

**COMPARISON I**

| Practical Adolescent-Detention-Facility-Related Dilemma | Practical Other-Than-Adolescent-Detention-Facility-Related Dilemma |
|---|---|
| X = 244.629 | X = 265.935 |
| Global = Major-Minor Transition 2(3) | Global = Major-Minor Transition 3(2) |

**COMPARISON II**

| Practical Adolescent-Detention-Facility-Related Dilemma | Hypothetical Dilemma |
|---|---|
| X = 244.629 | X = 255.774 |
| Global = Major-Minor Transition 2(3) | Global = Major-Minor Transition 3(2) |

**COMPARISON III**

| Hypothetical Dilemma | Practical Other-Than-Adolescent-Detention-Facility Related Dilemma |
|---|---|
| X = 255.774 | X = 265.935 |
| Global = Major-Minor Transition 3(2) | Global = Major-Minor Transition 3(2) |

As Comparisons I and II in Table 5 indicate, the moral reasoning which incarcerated male adolescents utilized to resolve practical dilemmas which were situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting was Major-Minor Transition Stage 2(3), indicating an orientation to utilize reasoning which was below their Major-Minor Transition 3(2) capabilities.

While the difference between these two orientations may not seem large, they are very important socially. Whereas in the Major-Minor Transition Stage 3(2) orientation individuals recognize and strive toward successful relationships with others, the Major-Minor Transition Stage 2(3) oriented individual is just becoming aware of the possibilities for something more than meeting one's own selfish needs and desires. Rather than being challenged, encouraged, and stimulated to continue in that awareness process, however, the environment within the detention facility seems to pull the adolescents in the opposite direction, reinforcing old habits and orientations in which concerns with the physical ramifications of actions and/or selfish needs have priority rather than consideration for and concern about others.

Correlational analyses computed to examine any possible relationships existent between the means of the three groups of dilemmas and the variables of age, number of prior times incarcerated at the adolescent detention facility, and seriousness of current charge are reflected in Table 6.

## TABLE 6

The Relationship of Moral Dilemma Resolutions
to Three Adolescent-Related Variables

|  | Practical *ADF Setting Dilemmas | Practical Other-Than *ADF Setting Dilemmas | Hypothetical Dilemmas |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | **A1** $r = .37$ $**p = .002$ $n = 58$ | **A2** $r = .44$ $**p = .001$ $n = 58$ | **A3** $r = .25$ $**p = .031$ $n = 58$ |
| *Number of Prior Incarcerations at Adolescent Detention Facility | **B1** $r = -.08$ $**p = .266$ $n = 58$ | **B2** $r = .03$ $**p = .407$ $n = 58$ | **B3** $r = -.01$ $**p = .459$ $n = 58$ |
| Seriousness of Current Charges | **C1** $r = .23$ $**p = .044$ $n = 57$ | **C2** $r = .18$ $**p = .092$ $n = 57$ | **C3** $r = .15$ $**p = .133$ $n = 57$ |

*Adolescent Detention Facility
$**p < .05$

Considering the variables in the order in which they are presented in Table 6, Kohlberg's longitudinal studies have revealed that as a person's age increases, so does his/her potential for developing more mature moral reasoning ability.

The data in this project are consistent with Kohlberg's findings. As reflected in Table 6, Comparisons A1, A2, and A3, relationships between age and the developmental level of moral reasoning which incarcerated male adolescents utilized to resolve three groups of moral dilemmas have been reveled to exist.

While the relationships are significant, they are not strong. In Comparison A1, for example, a low-to-moderate correlation ($r=.37$) is revealed. Though weak, this correlation is significant at an alpha level of .002. Similarly, Comparison A2 reveals a somewhat stronger, moderate correlation ($r=.44$). This correlation is significant at an alpha level of .001. Likewise, Comparison A3 reveals a negligible correlation ($r=.24$). Again, though negligible, the correlation is significant at an alpha level of .031.

Based on Kohlberg's work, we would expect these relationships to be stronger. Possible explanations for their lack of strength include poor measurement or other important variables which have not been considered in Kohlberg's theory. Multi-variate analysis is needed in which several independent variables can be considered.

Comparisons B1, B2, and B3 reflect nearly non-existent relationships between the number of times an adolescent is incarcerated within an adolescent detention facility and the level of reasoning he utilizes to resolve either hypothetical or real-world moral dilemmas.

This finding is important. As discussed in Chapter 2, the very basis upon which Piaget built his theory of cognitive development was his notion of disequilibration. As will be recalled, Piaget contends that cognitive developmental processes are stimulated to change only when events within our environments are sufficiently different, new, unsettling, or disturbing so that it becomes obvious to us that our current ways of thinking and/or acting are no longer effective, thus forcing us to reconsider, to regroup, and to try something new, different, and more mature as we struggle to find something that will work. Stated differently, this is the process of "reintegrating cognitive structures based on disequilibrating events" (Stewart, 1975, p. 52).

It is this researcher's contention that if, in fact, environments which are existent within adolescent detention facilities are no different from the typical home environments from which most adolescents who find themselves incarcerated have come (i.e., 1) environments within which rules are rigid, inhuman, non-negotiable and everlasting; 2) communication is indirect, vague and dishonest; 3) feelings of self-esteem are either low or non-existent;

and 4) society is viewed as something of which to be cautious and for which to blame) (Satir, 1972, p. 3), then based upon Piaget's premise, there should be no correlation between number of times an adolescent is incarcerated and his/her ability to reason more maturely since there is nothing different or disequilibrating between the negative home environment from which he/she leaves and to which he/she returns each time he/she is incarcerated and the negative environment into which he/she goes upon incarceration. On the contrary, the two environments seem more similar than dissimilar. If there is nothing new, if there are no unknown factors with which to contend vis-a-vis incoming stimuli, Piaget contends that the reintegration of underlying cognitive structures is not forced, and development, therefore, is not stimulated.

On the other hand, if environments within adolescent detention facilities were totally different from adolescents' home environments, this researcher contends that they might function as disequilibrating stimuli. If rules within adolescent detention facilities were flexible, human, appropriate and negotiable, if communications were direct, clear, specific and honest, if high feelings of self-esteem were nurtured, and if links to society were open and hopeful, such a novel environment might challenge adolescents incarcerated therein to rethink old ways of doing things when they found that their old learned habits of fighting rather than discussing, conning rather than

clearly communicating, manipulating rather than compromising, speaking half truths rather than speaking honestly, and/or "beasting" rather than caring about their peers didn't work in this setting. This is not to suggest that a positive, even perfect, incarcerative environment would "cure" delinquency any more than do negative, hostile, threatening environments "cure" delinquency. The difference, based upon Piaget's and Kohlberg's line of reasoning, is that positive environments enhance possibilities for development, while negative environments impede possibilities.

Referring again to Table 6, page 91, the correlation reflected in C1 reveals a negligible association between seriousness of charge and dilemma resolution when the dilemma is situated within an adolescent-detention-facility setting. This very weak association is significant at an alpha level of .044 and is suggestive that as crimes for which adolescents are charged become increasingly serious, there is the slightest tendency for the level of moral reasoning utilized by those same youngsters to be reflective of higher stages of moral reasoning.

One possible explanation for this seemingly incongruous association reflects Kohlberg's contention that reasoning on any particular level of development can be utilized to justify "good" as well as "bad" moral judgments. As adolescents move into stages of reasoning wherein one's own needs predominate, as in Stage 2, or where pleasing and

being accepted by one's peers or adult "bosses" predominate, as in Stage 3, these orientations can compel adolescents to "get all I can" or to "go along with the crowd" just as easily as they can compel them to "care for others if they care for me," or "Do unto others as I would have them do unto me."

As alluded to in the discussion of the correlation between numbers of times incarcerated and level of moral reasoning, many factors impinge upon an adolescent's behavior at any given moment in time. The greater the numbers of positive factors existent within that adolescent's environment and experiential background, the more likely is he/she to make sound judgments of moral responsibility.

As mentioned earlier, an explanation needs to be made regarding the failure of the data in this research project to support the researcher's hypothesis that adolescents would score higher when resolving hypothetical moral dilemmas as opposed to when resolving practical dilemmas. Referring again to Table 4, Comparisons II and III, page 87, the reader will note that mean scores for 1) hypothetical, 2) practical other than detention facility, and 3) practical detention facility dilemmas were 255.77, 265.94, and 244.63, respectively. As hypothesized, the hypothetical mean score was indeed higher than the practical detention facility and contrary to the researcher's hypothesis, the hypothetical

mean score was lower than the practical other than detention facility mean score.

When Leming (1973) originally did his research to determine if there is, in fact, a difference between the moral reasoning people use when resolving hypothetical as opposed to practical dilemmas, the distinction he made between the two types of dilemmas was based upon the familiarity which the subjects had with the situation; i.e., when resolving hypothetical dilemmas, people are dealing with unfamiliar situations; when solving practical dilemmas, they are dealing with familiar situations.

Those dilemmas which Leming included in the hypothetical category of his research project were Kohlberg's classic "Heinz" dilemma and two other of Kohlberg's dilemmas, one of which will be referred to as the "Joe dilemma," which "tapped issues likely to be found in the practical dilemmas, thereby providing common points of comparison between the two types of dilemmas" (Leming, 1973, p. 36).

While Kohlberg, Leming, and Gibbs and Widaman all characterize the "Joe dilemma" as being hypothetical and it, along with the "Heinz" dilemma comprise Form A of Gibbs' and Widaman's Sociomoral Reflection Measure (1982) which this researcher utilized to examine the resolution of hypothetical dilemmas in this research project, the "Joe dilemma" may not, in reality, have proven to be hypothetical or unfamiliar to the adolescents who served as subjects in this

project. As a matter of fact, about halfway through the project, one adolescent made the comment that he knew exactly how Joe felt because his father had just recently done the exact same thing to him that Joe's father was trying to pull. (See Appendix A, page 123, for the text of the "Joe dilemma.")

If this was, in fact, the case and the "Joe dilemma" was in actuality functioning more as a practical, familiar stimulus rather than the hypothetical, unfamiliar stimulus as it was intended, then to include the "Joe dilemma" on the hypothetical side of the hypothetical/practical equation was erroneous. If the hypothetical side of the equation was thought to be represented by two equally hypothetical dilemmas and, similarly, the practical side of the equation was thought to be represented by four, equally practical dilemmas, an imbalance favoring the practical side of the equation would have to occur if, in fact, one of the dilemmas which had been assumed to be hypothetical was actually practical. This would result in an equation wherein the weight of one hypothetical dilemma would have to offset the combined weight of five practical dilemmas. Stated differently, if the "Joe dilemma" was actually perceived by the adolescents as familiar and, therefore, practical, its inclusion on the hypothetical side of the equation would by definition pull down the score average on the hypothetical side since, according to the theory, people score lower on practical, real-life, "I would do this" type

dilemmas as opposed to hypothetical, "I should do this" type of dilemmas.

Implications and recommendations are set forth in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Implications and Recommendations

While it is not the function of adolescent detention
facilities to rehabilitate, their mandate to detain does not
release adults therein from the obligation to model always
the skill of how to make and act upon sound judgments of
moral responsibility.

As agents of the juvenile justice system, however, we
seem to expend all of our energies on "righting wrongs" or
preventing future wrongs rather than inviting and/or
nurturing growth or constructive change, the former of which
represents a primitive Stage 1 orientation to punishment and
obedience.  In a setting which is mandated by law to
incarcerate children, the implications of this are
important.

While it is possible, it is not probable that construc-
tive change will occur within an environment which is
negative, hostile, and threatening, an environment not too
unlike the homes into which most adolescents who find
themselves incarcerated were born, environments wherein the
major and often sole emphasis is on the punitive conse-
quences of not obeying.  In such a setting, behavior is not
stimulated to move along a continuum from "bad" to "good,"

from negative to positive, from unconscious to conscious, from unreasonable to reasoned, from unhealthy to healthy, or from noncaring to caring. Rather, such movement is thwarted.

The justification often cited in defense of the hostile tendencies existent within incarcerative facilities is that force, sternness, yelling or punitive threats "is all that 'this kind' of person really understands." The results of this research suggest, however, that such an assumption is erroneous and that any possibilities for movement in a positive direction along the behavioral continuum is impeded rather than enhanced in an atmosphere wherein the predominant theme is one of enmity.

The data accumulated in this research revealed that in the resolution of practical, real-life moral dilemmas centered around the issues of rules, communications, caring, and feeling accepted by others, incarcerated male adolescents reasoned for the most part at moral developmental Stage 2, Transitional Stage 2/3, and Stage 3. (See Chapter 4, Tables 1, 2, and 3, pages 61, 71, and 76, respectively.) Each dilemma was presented twice to each adolescent, first with the dilemma being situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting, and secondly with the dilemma being situated in an adolescent-detention-facility setting. A comparison between the means of the scores for the two sets of practical dilemmas revealed a statistically significant difference between the means, suggesting that

incarcerated male adolescents tended to perceive workable resolutions of practical dilemmas which were situated within an adolescent-detention-facility setting as being significantly different from resolutions which they would consider workable for dilemmas which were situated in an other-than-adolescent-detention-facility setting. (See Chapter 4, Table 4, page 87.)

The researcher interpreted these results to support the work of Higgins, Power and Kohlberg (1984) indicating that the moral reasoning utilized by adolescents to resolve moral dilemmas is dependent upon 1) each adolescent's developmental stage of moral reasoning ability as well as 2) his/her perception of the moral features of the settings in which the dilemma is situated.

The basis for this interpretation becomes more clear upon examination of the norms which were perceived by the adolescents in this study as being existent within the detention facility. Consideration of the norms will be made separately with regard to the issues of 1) rules, 2) communications, and 3) caring. (See Chapter 4, Table 3, page 76.)

Problem One: Rules

The majority of the adolescents interviewed, i.e., 56.5%, predicated that most of their peers in the detention facility would think it is right for an adolescent to break the rules at the facility to help a friend. What is of significance about this is that 59.7% of the adolescents

justified this response with Stage 2 reasoning; i.e., "If he breaks the rule to hide the marijuana, maybe I'll get some of it."

While such reasoning is no revelation to anyone who has worked with incarcerated adolescents (or other people in general, for that matter), what is of import is the level of reasoning utilized and the significance of that level to the persons within the detention facility who are charged with the responsibility of making sure that detention facility rules are not broken.

If, in fact, our goal within adolescent detention facilities is constructive rather than destructive change and our desire is that incarcerated adolescents move forward in terms of their own abilities to make sound judgments for what is right when faced with day-to-day problems, then, drawing from Piaget and Kohlberg, discussions and modeling designed to assist adolescents in the healthy resolution of any moral problem (i.e., "Should I break the detention facility rules to help a friend?") must be presented only in terms of the next higher, never a lower, stage of moral reasoning ability. Research reveals that people prefer to function at their highest capability and are able to understand the reasoning of one-half to one full stage above their own predominant level of reasoning (Ouderkirk, 1980, 1984).

What this suggests is that to create an environment within a detention facility in which the most important

reason as perceived by the adolescents incarcerated therein for not breaking rules reflects the most primitive level of moral reasoning, i.e., a Stage 1 preoccupation with punishment and obedience, rather than some higher orientation which the adolescents are able to understand and even at which they reflect the spontaneous use of in moral dilemma resolutions, then any real possibilities for constructive changes are greatly reduced, if not obliterated.

The majority of the adolescents interviewed in this project, for example, thought that it would be right for someone to break the facility rules to help a friend. Their predominant Stage 2 reasoning in support of that belief is evidence that they are capable of reasoning one full stage above the Stage 1 orientation to punishment and obedience which they perceive as being the predominant norm within this facility regarding rules.

While the stage was not calculated for the adolescents' responses to the question regarding their perception of the most important reason within the detention facility for not breaking rules, possible responses indicative of those stages most frequently represented by the adolescents themselves in their dilemma resolutions might be as follows

Stage 2: It is important to keep the rules because if you want someone else to do what you ask, you have to do what they ask.

It is important to keep the rules because you won't like yourself otherwise.

Stage 2/3: It is important to keep the rules because that person is counting on you.
It is important to keep the rules because that person trusts you.

It is important to keep the rules so that you'll get a good reputation.

Stage 3:  It is important to live up to their (or your own) expectations.

If you break the rules, it shows that you don't care about the other person.

These concerns are a far cry from the fear of punishment which 100% of the adolescents perceived as being the most important reason supported within this detention facility for making a decision for what is right regarding rules.

As stated earlier, research (Ouderkirk, 1980/1984) suggests that people prefer to function at their highest level of capacity.  What is being lost, or gained, by creating environments within detention facilities wherein adolescents are stimulated to function below their respective levels of capability?

## Problem Two: Communications

Adolescents interviewed were almost evenly split in their predictions regarding whether or not their peers in the detention facility would think it is right for people to try to talk with each other to solve problems; i.e., 41.9% responded, "Yes" and 48.4% responded, "No."  When asked, however, if adolescents at the facility would actually expect their peers to talk to solve problems, 71% responded, "No," and when asked if their peers would give each other a chance to explain a situation before accusing him of something, 72.6% responded, "No."  Similarly, adolescents

reported that they would be neither surprised (75.5%) nor disappointed (63.9%) if people in the detention facility did not talk to resolve problems.

In the main, these adolescents' perceptions regarding typical modes of problem resolution existent within the detention facility paint a fairly bleak picture of communication expectations existent within the adolescent detention facility. It is important to point out that when adolescents were asked about their perceptions of adult communications within the facility, an overwhelming majority (83.9%) of the adolescents stated that adults within the facility would think it is right to talk with others to solve problems. At the same time, however, only 50% of the adolescents thought that adults would actually give one of their peers a chance to explain a situation before accusing him of something.

The even split of the adolescents in their opinions regarding the "rightness" of talking to resolve problems could be interpreted to indicate that as a group, these adolescents are undecided at the moment regarding appropriate modes of problem resolution, and their decision could go either way. The ramifications of this are important; justifications for their opinions on the issue of communications were reflective of Stage 2 (45.3%) and Transitional Stage 2/3 (30.6%) reasoning, evidence again of a capability to understand and function at these levels of reasoning. Were these levels of reasoning nurtured within

the adolescent detention facility, perhaps their decision could be enticed to include clear, open, specific, direct, honest communication rather than physical confrontations. Stage 2 and Transitional Stage 2/3 justifications for such a decision would include, "I'll talk to you if you'll talk to me," or "I'll help you by talking if you'll help me by talking," respectively. Conversely, arguments against fighting utilizing these stages of reasoning would include, "I don't like to fight because you will only talk and not fight back," or "Why fight and hurt each other when we could talk and find out about each other?"

It is very significant that when asked if adults would think it is right for people at the detention facility to resolve problems by talking, not only did 83.9% of the adolescents respond, "Yes," but the greatest percentage of adolescents' justifications for that response (33.9%) reflected Stage 3 reasoning. Typical justifications here reflected what the adolescents perceived to be an empathic concern, i.e., "They don't want to see us fighting."

It is important to note that the adolescents on the one hand reported a perception that the adults would think it is right to talk to resolve problems, while on the other, only half of the adolescents actually expected adults to talk to resolve problems. Since the adults were not interviewed, one can only speculate about this dichotomy. Based on the fact that 58.1% of the adolescents perceived that adults at the detention facility would really do whatever they could

to help one of their peers feel cared for, it is the researcher's sense that on an occasional basis, adults attempt to "talk." On a consistent, across time, inevitable, and dependable basis, however, it seems that something within the incarcerative environment renders that communication channel either ineffective or imperceptible to the adolescents.

The majority of the adolescents interviewed predicted that their peers would fight rather than talk to resolve problems within the detention facility. The implications of this are important, particularly if we will recall Wertham's admonition that "when people fully communicate, they do not resort to violence. It is when people do not communicate that they do not know each other. People, in turn, who do not know each other can be stirred up to hate" (Wertham, 1966).

## Problem Three: Caring

Adolescents interviewed predicted that neither adolescents (43.5%) nor adults (67.7%) at the detention facility would think it was right to help a fellow adolescent feel cared for. Similarly, 54.8% predicted that their peers would not do whatever they could to help a fellow youth feel cared for. Likewise, 87.2% predicted that adolescents would not be surprised while 86.7% predicted that adolescents would not be disappointed if other adolescents at the detention facility didn't care about each other. Finally, adolescents predicted that their peers

would neither be surprised (60%) nor disappointed (62.9%) if adults at the detention facility did not care about the adolescents.

Research (Alfaro, 1978; Howell, 1980) suggests that adolescents typically arrive at an adolescent detention facility starved for the attention, recognition, love, and respect which are essential for survival and which few have experienced on a consistent, if ever, basis. Research indicates that family conflict and parental rejection are among the leading contributors to delinquent behavior (Glueck & Glueck, 1968; Rodman & Grams, 1967).

Every one of the adolescents interviewed in this project unhesitatingly assured the researcher that if other adolescents within the detention facility acted caring toward him, he would act caring toward them, a Stage 2 orientation of, "I'll scratch your back if you'll scratch mine." The implications of this for agents of the juvenile justice system are clear; i.e., the task is to provide an atmosphere within the detention facility wherein it is safe to care.

## Recommendations

The moral dilemma with which agents of both the juvenile and criminal justice systems have historically been faced is the quagmire which has resulted from the unresolved issue of "the" purpose of incarceration. While it is not the purpose of this research to resolve that dilemma, it is this researcher's contention that regardless of the

professed objective which looms behind any specific incarceration, be it punishment, prevention, restraint, rehabilitation, deterrence, education, and/or retribution, the singular societal goal of incarceration always is constructive change.

John Irwin, tenured Professor of Sociology at San Francisco State College, was incarcerated at Soledad in California for several years prior to becoming a sociologist. While his major concern is with prisons, he is convinced that it would mutually benefit both society and all offenders if all incarcerative facilities were supportive, humane environments in which self-determination, dignity and self-respect could be experienced by all therein, including prisoners, guards, and other employees (Irwin, 1980).

Far from denouncing totally the use of incarcerative facilities, Irwin charges that Americans are dishonest and foolish if we do not admit that punishment is basic in our response to crime, claiming that punishment is an essential part of the bargain we make to live by rules. If those rules are breached, particularly in a manner producing extreme harm to others, Irwin points out that we demand something be done. If nothing is done, the rules lose their meaning and persons lose their social commitment (Irwin, 1980, p. 238).

Punishment of alleged wrongdoers, be they adults or adolescent, must therefore, according to Irwin's premise,

exist in society in varying degrees. While he strongly
supports alternatives such as fines, probation, and
mandatory work in public institutions, Irwin questions
whether or not they are sufficiently punitive for crimes
such as murder, violent rape, and mayhem. Instead, he feels
that prisons are feasible in these instances because they
are punitive (Irwin, 1980, p. 239). Having said that,
however, Irwin drastically departs from the traditional
viewpoint of what prisons should be, envisioning them as a
place where rules would not be excessively mean or arbitrary
and where prisoners would be provided with resources,
meaningful options, freedom to choose and plan so that they
could pull themselves together and improve themselves.
Privacy, some educational and vocational training resources,
and voluntary systems of change (for example, individual
therapy, group therapy, TM, Yoga, or whatever prisoners
believe to be effective) would be available (Irwin, 1980,
p. 240).

Kohlberg (1975, p. 249) has suggested that "the modern
traditional prison has no aim, purpose, or ideal beyond
pragmatic custody and control" of offenders, not unlike the
mandate of adolescent detention facilities. Furthermore,
and similar to Irwin, Kohlberg contends that facilities
which ignore the basic problem of the offender's moral
relations to society and the development of his/her
self-control and responsibility are doomed to failure.

Who among us can challenge this? The failure of incarcerative institutions to reduce crime is incontestable. Recidivism rates are notoriously high. Institutions do succeed in punishing, but they do not deter; they protect the community, but that protection is only temporary (National Advisory Commission, 1973).

It seems that the major concern of adolescent detention facility administrators is that adolescents leave their facilities at least no worse than when they arrive. The crucial issue to be resolved here is whether or not adolescents can, in fact, be "temporarily" detained within an adolescent detention facility environment which is negative, threatening, and hostile and remain "no worse than when they arrived." More precisely, does detention within such an environment increase or decrease the possibilities that five years down the road the adolescents who have been released from there will be productive, healthy members of society rather than inmates in some state prison?

A recent longitudinal study which followed adolescent training school residents over a twenty-five year period provides some insights into this question. Having followed two groups of residents, one which was oriented to punitive discipline and strict rules and the other which encouraged self-government and a "community of understanding," McCord and Sanchez (1983) found that until the age of 24, the adolescents who had been incarcerated in the punitively oriented program had much higher crime rates than those who

had been incarcerated under the self-governance condition. As the youths matured past age 24, however, there tended to be less difference, with ethnicity seeming to emerge as the greatest influence on recidivism, probably, as Trojanowicz and Morash suggest, because youths in minority ethnic groups had the most difficult time locating jobs and achieving a successful status in their twenties (Trojanowicz & Morash, 1982).

While this particular study focused on training school residents, the consideration of it here is appropriate since "temporary" incarceration within adolescent detention facilities often translates in actuality to several months for a single adolescent. The obvious question still to be answered is, "How long or how often can an older child or adolescent be incarcerated within a hostile environment before negative effects begin to outweigh positive effects?" More fundamentally, however, "What are the positive effects of incarcerating children and adolescents in adolescent detention facilities?," "What are the negative effects?," and "Do the positive effects outweigh or justify the negative effects, or conversely, do the negative effects outweigh the positive effects?"

Research has demonstrated that non-stimulating environments within day-care centers can retard the intellectual and social development of children (McCartney, Scarr, Phyllis and Grajer & Schwartz, 1981). If hostility and coercion are combined with nonstimulation, common sense

suggestions that possibilities for constructive change and healthy development decrease, if not disappear.
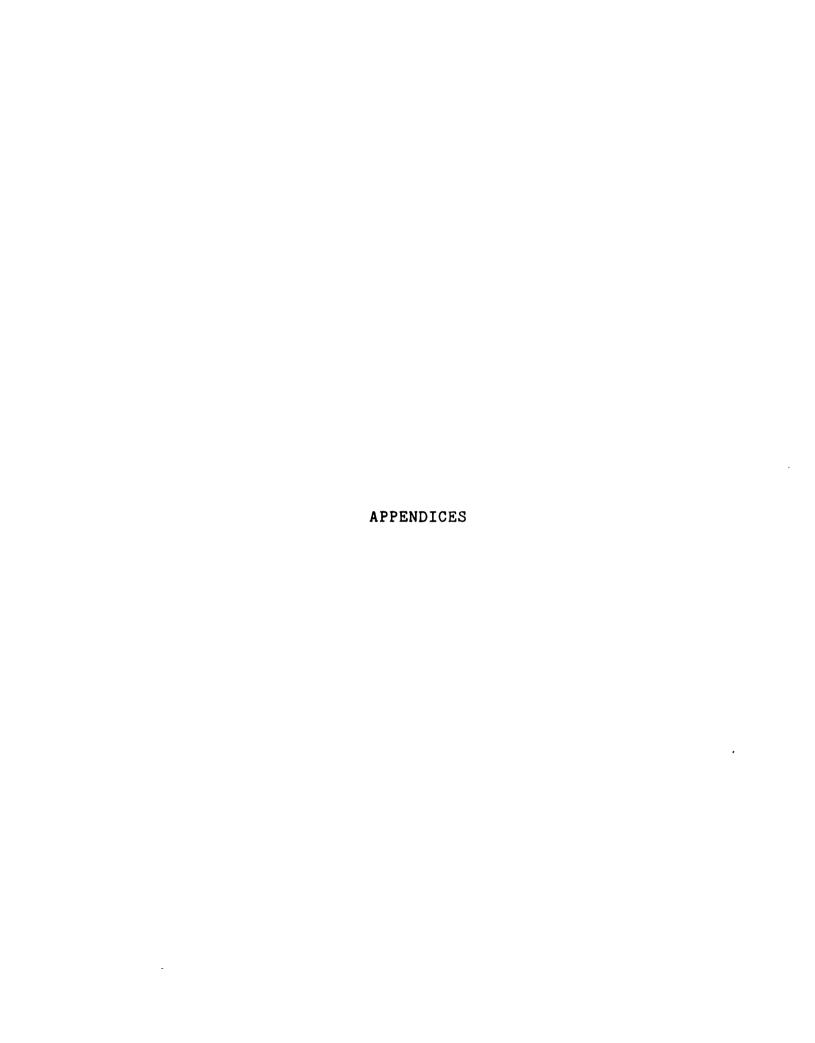
In a recent discussion with the researcher, a representative from a Midwestern Department of Social Services estimated that that within a month of release from training schools, the majority of adolescents are back "on the streets," vulnerable to and/or involved in the same behaviors which resulted in their previous incarceration(s). If such estimates are considered to reflect a failure of the juvenile justice system to "do its job," the question here is, "What percentage of the responsibility for that failure rests within the domain of detention facilities within which environments seemingly impede rather than enhance the possibility for constructive change?"

It is this researcher's contention that the successful creation of a non-hostile environment within which to detain adolescents until adjudication, placement or release is feasible and hinges upon the successful interaction between the individuals within that facility, be they adolescent, staff, teacher, adjunct professional personnel, parent, or administrator. If that interaction is to be successful, serious reconsideration needs to be given to the age-old practice of requiring adults within adolescent detention facilities to function simultaneously in the dual capacity of security guard and care giver. Such a practice places good people in the impossible situation of having to police and befriend adolescents simultaneously, the conflict in

their roles often exacerbating the confusion, anger, mistrust, and hostility which more often than not accompanies the adolescent upon his/her arrival at the facility. Additionally, adequate staffing, including sufficient numbers and training, is an absolute necessity if a non-hostile environment is to be created within adolescent detention facilities. Adequate staff training, as suggested by Ouderkirk (1980, 1984) would include training in issues such as 1) self-awareness, 2) values clarification, 3) human growth and development, 4) loss, separation and placement, 5) children, families, and child care workers, 6) building therapeutic groups, 7) activity programming, 8) developmental problems of adolescence, 9) child care and cultural differences, 10) crisis prevention/intervention, and 11) stress and burnout.

In projecting the future of incarcerative facilities, some experts contend that "the best to be expected of institutions is that they successfully implement programs which are valuable adjuncts to treatment such as humanitarian handling of inmates, vocational and educational training, religious activities, recreational participation, and prerelease planning" (Trojanowicz & Morash, 1982). While the mandate for adolescent detention facilities is simply to "detain," we, as agents of the juvenile justice system, must determine specifically what it is that we are actually accomplishing, i.e., are we simply detaining, or are we detaining at the detriment of the very children

and/or adolescents we hope to salvage?  If the broader scope of "stopping crime" is at least one part of our mandate to detain, then we must seriously question whether or not adolescent detention facilities, as they currently function, tend to quench the fire, or fuel it.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

# APPENDIX A

## SOCIOMORAL REFLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

### Instructions

In this booklet are two social problems with questions for you to answer. We are asking the questions not just to find out your opinions about what should be done in the problems, but also to understand why you have those opinions. Please answer all the questions, especially the "why" questions. Feel free to use the backs of the pages to finish writing your answers if you need more space.

NAME: _____

AGE: _____

FATHER'S JOB: _____

MOTHER'S JOB: _____

DATE: _____

Problem One

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist wanted people to pay ten times what the drug cost him to make.

The sick woman's husband, Henry, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about half of what the druggist wanted. Henry told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or to let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No. I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So the only way Henry could get the drug would be to break into the druggist's store and steal it.

Henry has a problem. He should help his wife and save her life. But, on the other hand, the only way he could get the drug she needs would be to break the law by stealing the drug.

What should Henry do?

should steal/should not steal/can't decide (circle one)

Why?

_____

_____

_____

Let's change things about the problem and see if you still have the opinion you circled above (should steal, should not steal, or can't decide). Also, we want to find out about the things you think are important in this and other problems, especially why you think those things are important. Please try to help us understnad your thinking by WRITING AS MUCH AS YOU CAN TO EXPLAIN YOUR OPINIONS -- EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO WRITE OUT YOUR EXPLANATIONS MORE THAN ONCE. Don't just write "same as before." If you can explain better or use different words to show what you mean, that helps us even more. Please answer all the questions below, especially the "why" questions.

1. What if Henry's wife asks him to steal the drug for her? Should Henry:

steal/not steal/can't decide (circle one)

1a. How important is it for a husband to do what his wife asks, to save her by stealing, even when he isn't sure whether that's the best thing to do?

very important/important/not important (circle one)

1b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What if Henry doesn't love his wife?  Should Henry

   steal/not steal/can't decide (circle one)

2a. How important is it for a husband to steal to save his wife, even if he doesn't love her?

   very important/important/not important (circle one)

2b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What if the person dying isn't Henry's wife but instead a friend (and the friend can get no one else to help)?  Should Henry:

   steal/not steal/can't decide (circle one)

3a. How important is it to do everything you can, even break the law, to save the life of a friend?

   very important/important/not important (circle one)

3b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4a. What about for a stranger?  How important is it to do everything you can, even break the law, to save the life of a stranger?

very important/important/not important (circle one)

4b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled?)

_____

_____

_____

5.  What if the druggist just wants Henry to pay what the drug cost to make, and Henry can't even pay that?  Should Henry:

stael/not steal/can't decide (circle one)

5a. How important is it for people not to take things that belong to other people?

very important/important/not important (circle one)

5b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

6a. How important is it for people to obey the law?

very important/important/not important (circle one)

6b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

7. What if Henry does steal the drug? His wife does get better, but in the meantime, the police take Henry and bring him to court. Should the judge:

   jail Henry/let Henry go free/can't decide (circle one)

7a. How important is it for judges to go easy on people like Henry?

   very important/important/not important (circle one)

7b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What if Henry tells the judge that he only did what his conscience told him to do? Should the judge:

   jail Henry/let Henry go free/can't decide (circle one)

8a. How important is it for judges to go easy on people who have acted out of conscience?

   very important/important/not important (circle one)

8b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. What if Henry's wife never had cancer? What if she was only a little sick, and Henry stole the drug to help her get well a little sooner? Should the Judge:

   jail Henry/let Henry go free/can't decide (circle one)

9a. How important is it for judges to send people who break the law to jail?

   very important/important/not important (circle one)

9b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

## Problem Two

Joe is a fourteen-year-old boy who wanted to go to camp very much. His father promised him he could go if he saved up the money for it himself. So Joe worked hard at his paper route and saved up the $40 it cost to go to camp and a little more besides. But just before camp was going to start, his father changed his mind. Some of the father's friends decided to go on a special fishing trip, and Joe's father was short of the money it would cost. So he told Joe to give him the money Joe had saved from the paper route. Joe didn't want to give up going to camp, so he thinks of refusing to give his father the money.

Joe has a problem. Joe's father promised Joe he could go to camp if he earned and saved up the money. But, on the other hand, the only way Joe could go would be by disobeying and not helping his father.

What should Joe do?

should refuse/should not refuse/can't decide (circle one)

Why?
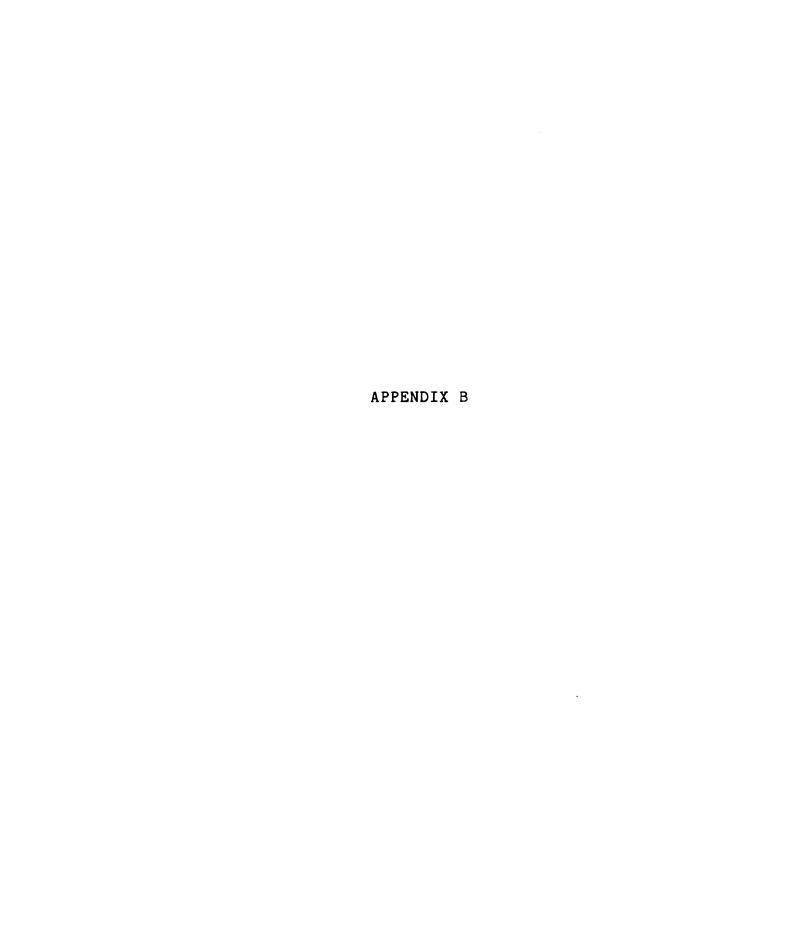
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_____

_____

_____

Let's change things about the problem and see if you still have the opinion you circled above (should refuse, should not refuse, can't decide). Also, we want to find out about the things you think are important in this and other problems, and especially why you think those things are important. Please try to help us understand your thinking by WRITING AS MUCH AS YOU CAN TO EXPLAIN YOUR OPINIONS -- EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO WRITE OUT YOUR EXPLANATIONS MORE THAN ONCE. Don't just write "same as before." If you can explain better or use different words to show what you mean, that's even better. Please answer all the questions below, especially the "why" questions.

1. What if Joe hadn't earned the money? What if the father had simply given the money to Joe and promised Joe could use it go to to camp -- but now the father wants the money back for the fishing trip? Should Joe:

refuse/not refuse/can't decide (circle one)

1a. How important is it for parents to keep their promises about letting their children keep money -- even when their children never earned the money?

very important/important/not important (circle one)

1b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2a. What about keeping a promise to a friend? How important is it to keep a promise, if you can, to a friend?

very important/important/not important (circle one)

2b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3a. What about to anyone? How important is it to keep a promise, if you can, even to someone you hardly know?

very important/important/not important (circle one)

3b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What if Joe's father hadn't <u>told</u> Joe to <u>give</u> him the money, but had just <u>asked</u> Joe if he would <u>lend</u> the money? Should Joe?

refuse/not refuse/can't decide (circle one)

4a. How important is it for children to help their parents, even when their parents have broken a promise?

    very important/important/not important (circle one)

4b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What if Joe did earn the money, but Joe's father did not promise that Joe could keep the money?  Should Joe:

    refuse/not refuse/can't decide (circle one)

5a. How important is it for parents to let their children keep earned money -- even when the parents did not promise their children that they could keep the money?

    very important/important/not important (circle one)

5b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever you circled)?

_____

_____

_____

6. What if the father needs the money not to go on a fishing trip, but instead to pay for food for the family?  Should Joe:

    refuse/not refuse/can't decide (circle one)

6a. How important is it for children to help their parents -- even when it means that the children won't get to do something they want to do?

    very important/important/not important (circle one)

6b. Why is that very important/important/not important (whichever one you circled?

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

## APPENDIX B

### PRACTICAL DILEMMAS

<u>Instructions</u>

In this booklet are questions for you to answer.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

## Problem One

Mrs. Smith thinks that drugs are very dangerous and will not allow anyone, including her son Milton, to bring them into their home.

Alex, Milton's best friend, came to see Milton and asked him to hide ten pounds of marijuana until the following night when he can sneak it out after dark. Milton and his family live in a very small apartment. There is no place other than in Milton's own room to hide the marijuana.

1. Should Milton hide the marijuana?

2. Why or why not?

3. Does Milton have a responsibility to not break the rules his mother has about drugs in the house?

4. Why or why not?

5. Does the fact that Alex is Milton's best friend make a difference?

6. Why or why not?

7. Is it right for Milton to break the rule to help Alex?

8. Why or why not?

9. If you were Milton, would you break the rule to help a friend?

10. Why or why not?

11. If you were Milton, what would your responsibility be:

    a. to your mother?

b.  What would your responsibility be to Alex?


c.  What would your responsibility be to yourself?



No matter where we live, we soon get a "feel" for the place.
We soon know pretty much the things we can and can't do there.
Like at home, for instance, we know that there are just some things
that we wouldn't even dream of doing because other people in our
family would object.  Yet, there are other things we can do that
are O.K.

The same thing holds true for the detention facility.  What if Milton
and Alex were here instead of being at home.  Let's say that Alex came
back from a temporary week-end pass and smuggled marijuana back in
with him.  He asks Milton to hide the marijuana in his room since
no one will suspect that Milton has it.

12.  Would most of the kids think that it is right for Milton
     to break the rules here to help his friend?

13.  Why or why not?


14.  Would kids expect Milton to obey the rules here and not
     hide the marijuana?

15.  Why or why not?


16.  Would the kids expect a person to break the rules here
     to help a friend?

17.  Why or why not?


18.  What would kids think if other kids here broke a rule to
     help a friend?  What would they feel?


19.  Why?


20.  Would kids be surprised if another kid here broke a rule
     to help a friend?

21.  Why or why not?

22. Would kids be disappointed in other kids here if they broke a rule to help a friend?

23. Why or why not?

24. If someone wants to break a rule here to help a friend, would some of the other kids try to talk him/her out of it?

25. Why or why not?

26. What is the most important reason here for not breaking a rule to help a friend?

27. Would kids report another kid here who broke a rule to help a friend?

28. Why or why not?

Problem Two

Tony has been at the East Side High School for three weeks. When he came to school this morning, his teacher, Ms. Washington, explained that she had a terrible headache and felt very nervous and cranky. She asked all the students to please be patient with her throughout the day since she didn't feel well and might get short-tempered.

Just before lunch, Tony was busy looking for a word in the dictionary. All of a sudden Ms. Washington yelled, "O.K., Tony, that's it!! I've told you about that! Now get out!!"

Puzzled because he has done nothing wrong, Tony yelled, "What did I do?"

Ms. Washington screamed, "See!! There you go with your smart mouth again! Get out! Don't say a word! Leave! You're always the one making trouble!!"

Tony has a problem. He knows that Ms. Washington does not feel well but she has accused him of doing something he did not do.

1. Should Tony simply do as Ms. Washington has ordered and leave the classroom?

2. Why or why not?

3. Does Tony have a responsibility to talk to Ms. Washington in a nice way to let her know that he did not do whatever she thinks he did?

4. Why or why not?

5. Is it right that Ms. Washington has accused Tony of something and thrown him out of class without talking to him about it first?

6. Why or why not?

7. Does the fact that Ms. Washington is sick make a difference?

8. Why or why not?

9. What if Tony tries to talk to Ms. Washington but she won't listen? What should he do?

10. Why or why not?

11. If you were Tony, would you try to talk to Ms. Washington?

12. Why or why not?

WHAT IF TONY IS AT THE DETENTION FACILITY INSTEAD OF EAST SIDE HIGH SCHOOL.

13. Do you think that <u>adults</u> here generally would give Tony a chance to explain a situation before accusing him of something?

14. Do you think that kids at the detention facility generally would give each other a chance to explain a situation before accusing each other of something?

15. Why or why not?

16. Would kids think that it is right for people to try to talk with each other here to solve problems?

17. Why or why not?

18. Would adults think that it is right for people to try to talk with each other here to solve problems?

19. Why or why not?

20. What would kids think if people here didn't try to figure out problems by talking about them?

21. Would kids be surprised if people here didn't try to figure out problems by talking about them.

21. Would kids be surprised if people here didn't try to talk out problems?

22. Why or why not?

23. Would kids be disappointed if people here didn't try to talk out problems?

24. Why or why not?

25. Do kids expect other kids here to talk about problems to solve them?

26. Why or why not?

27. Would kids here report someone who was not willing to talk out problems to solve them?

28. Why or why not?

Martel is a nice guy.  He has been at the detention facility for four  months and has had no visitors.  Today is his sixteenth birthday and everyone knows that no one will come even today.

1. Should the boys on the unit do anything special for Martel so that he will know on his birthday that people care for him?

2. Why or Why not?

3. Do the boys on Martel's unit have a responsibility to help each other feel cared for?

4. Why or why not?

5. Does the unit leader have a responsibility. to help boys on the unit feel cared for?

6. Why or why not?

7. Andrew is Martel's best friend.  Does Andrew have a responsibility to do whatever he can to help Martel feel cared for?

8. Why or why not?

9. Is it right to be kind to other people and to let them know that they are cared for?

10. Why or why not?

11. If you were Andrew, would you do whatever you could do to help Martel know that he is cared for?

12. Why or why not?

13. Would most of the kids here think it is right to help Martel feel cared for?

14. Why or why not?

15. Would most of the adults here think it is right to help Martel feel cared for?

16. Why or why not?

17. Would kids really do whatever they could here to help Martel feel cared for?

18. Why or why not?

19. Would adults really do whatever they could here to help Martel feel cared for?

20. Why or why not?

21. Do kids truly expect other kids here to care about each other?

22. Why or why not?

23. Do kids truly expect the adults here to care about kids?

24. Why or why not?

25. Would kids be surprised if other kids here din't care about each other?

26. Why or why not?

27. Would kids be disappointed if kids here didn't care about each other?

28. Why or why not?

29. Would kids be surprised if other adults here didn't care about kids?

30. Why or why not?

31. Would kids be disappointed if adults here didn't care abaout kids?

32. Why or why not?

33. Would kids here try to talk other kids into being and acting more caring toward e3ach other here?

34. Why or why not?

35. Would adults here try to talk kids into being and acting more caring toward other kids here?

36. Why or why not?

37. Would  kids report someone who does not act caring and kind to others here?

Problem Four

Joe is a member of a gang of teenagers who live near an old store. The store is run-down and dirty. Many of the kids who live in the neighborhood say bad things about it. One night, the gang is looking for something to do and Petey suggests that they break all the windows out of the old store. Joe says, "Hey, wait a minute. The woman who owns that store is always nice to us. Let's go to the park instead."

Petey laughs and calls Joe a yellow chicken. Soon, the rest of the kids are laughing and they all start calling Joe a yellow chicken.

1. Should Joe join the other kids and break the windows?

2. Why or why not?

3. Does Joe have a responsibility to not break the windows?

4. Why or why not?

5. What if the woman who owned the store was Joe's favorite aunt? Should that make a difference?

6. Why or why not?

7. Is it right for the kids to laugh at Joe and to call him a yellow chicken?

8. Why or why not?

9. If you were Joe, would/join the kids and break the windows after they started calling you names?

10. Why or why not?

11. If you were Joe, what would your responsibility be:

    a) to the other kids?

    b) to the store owner?

    c) to yourself?

WHAT IF JOE WERE AT THE DETENTION FACILITY?

12. What would happen if a kid tried to get another kid here to do something by making fun of him and calling him names?

13. Why?

14. If that happened to you, what would you do?

15. Would most of the kids think it is fair to call someone names here to get them to do something?

16. Why or why not?

17. Would kids be surprised if kids here made fun of each other?

18. Why or why not?

19. Would kids be disappointed if kids here made fun of each other?

20. Why or why not?

21. Would kids expect adults here to make fun of kids?

22. Why or why not?

APPENDIX C

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### DISTINCTION BETWEEN JUDGMENTS OF RIGHTNESS
### AND JUDGMENTS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Higgins, Power and Kohlberg (1984, p. 80) made the following distinction between judgments of rightness and judgments of responsibility:

Judgments of rightness consider:

1) the needs and welfare of the other as an individual,
2) the other's welfare to be a matter of a right or claim, and
3) harming the other's welfare is the major concern

Judgments of responsibility:

1) consider filling the other person's needs when a) the need is not based on a right or claim, or b) where it is a matter of enhancing that person's welfare, not just preventing harm,
2) consciously consider the involvement and implication of the self in action or in the welfare consequences to the other,
3) judgments of one's own personal moral worth take into consideration the kind of self the actor wants to be or would be if he/she failed to perform the action (judgments of blame, guilt, loss of integrity),
4) are explicitly used as a basis for action rather than rights or obligations, and
5) intrinsically value social relationships such as friendship or relationships of community as justification for performing a moral action.

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