

Moral Development and SES: A Retrospective

* Mohammad Rifky Eassa

- **Ph.D. in Psycholinguistics, Kentucky University 1978. U.S.A.**
 - **Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, Kuwait University.**
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Abstract

This paper reviews most of the literature comparing SES and stages of moral judgment. It mainly deals with studies conducted within the conceptual framework of Piaget and Kohlberg. General results have reported some kind of relationship between SES and some aspects of moral development. A positive correlation seems to exist between lower SES and indices of lower level of moral development; while middle class children show higher scores on moral assessment devices.

This conclusion has been expected and accepted along with Kohlberg's stated hypothesis that the middle class individuals move faster and farther in moral judgment. Most of the studies conducted recently have pointed out the absence of this relationship. These findings have called for the issue to be reevaluated; a theme that this paper has shouldered.

Methodological difficulties related to the topic are stated. Moral development evaluation and subjects' categorization are still soft areas that need reconstruction. Defining social class may encompass different variables, such as parental attitudes, child - rearing practices, values, income and expenditure, educational level, residential areas, and the like. The situation is suggestive of potential interaction between variables. Moreover, reanalysing collected data reveals some contradiction, or at least loss of significance. This phenomenon may either reflect the diminution of class differences, over the past two decades, in values and practices; or cast doubts on the validity of the conceptual relationship; or suggest the inappropriateness of the assessment devices. General implications for future consideration are cited.

Introduction:

The purpose of this paper is to survey the literature in order to determine whether a relationship exists between level of moral judgment and socio - economic status (SES). This question is based on the statement of Lawrence Kohlberg that although all children move through the same stages of moral development, and in the same order, the middle - class child moves faster and farther. Therefore, the middle - class child is at a higher level of moral development than the lower - class child given other judgments held consistent. (Kohlberg, 1968).

The paper has been divided into several sections in order to facilitate the reader in understanding what is meant by moral development, the theories on which it is based, how it has been measured, and what conclusions one might draw from the literature regarding this issue. It is assumed that the reader has a basic knowledge of Piaget's theory of cognitive development.

Theoretical Framework:

Piaget's Theory and Method of Measurement:

In 1932, Jean Piaget published a book titled **The Moral Judgment of the Child**, in which he proposed that moral judgment was a developmental process and that as a child matured, the basis of his moral judgment changed. Piaget viewed moral development as a progression from judgment based on external authority and a rigid interpretation of rules to a morality of cooperation and judgment based on social consideration and a flexible interpretation of rules.

Although this indicates only two stages, four elements can be concluded from his work (Kay, 1969). This is based on Piaget's conclusions that there seem to be two moralities. The first is moral constraint by the adult (punishment) in the egocentric child which leads to heteronomy and moral realism (i.e. rules orientation); the second is cooperation (reciprocity) and leads to autonomy (equity). The child progressed through four stages of moral development in an invariant sequence much as he passed through stages of cognitive development. In addition, it was necessary that the child reached a particular stage of cognitive development before he could reach a certain moral stage. For example, the cognitive limitations imposed on a child who had not yet reached concrete operations, would also prevent him from moral development beyond the authoritarian stage (Kay, 1969).

Just as Piaget's work attaches ages at which children enter a new stage of cognitive development, there are approximate ages at which a child enters each successive moral stage. The chart below attempts to compare Piaget's stages of cognitive and moral development.

Cognitive Stage	Moral Stage	Age
Sensorimotor	egocentric	0-2 or 3
Preoperational	authoritarian	2 or 3 to 7 or 8
Concrete operations	reciprocal	7 or 8 to 11 or 12
Formal operations	equity	11 or 12 to 14 or 15

One of the principal characteristics of the sensorimotor stage is egocentrism. Therefore for a child in this cognitive stage, moral would be egocentric. A preoperational child is conforming to rules and authority, but most important, he has not mastered the cognitive concept of reversibility. Therefore, by definition, he could not be at the reciprocal stage of moral development which requires concrete operations. Finally, a child cannot make equitable moral judgment depending on the particular situation until he can think abstractly and logically (formal operations).

To summarize, moral stages - and cognitive stages emerge concurrently and, according to Piaget, at particular chronological ages.

Piaget's research was based on interviews with about one hundred Swiss children of Primary school age from lower status homes. His report is divided into four parts. In part one he discusses the attitudes of children to the rules when playing marbles. This section is based on observation rather than experimental research. From these observations however, he formulated his general theory that there were two - types of morality, heterogenous and autonomous.

In parts two and three, he reports the rules of telling children stories which require them to make moral judgment; the two distinct forms of morality and the progression towards internalization of rules with age is discussed. Piaget explains that these two systems may co-exist at the same age in the same child but they do not synchronize. The First system begins to develop first and the second gradually takes over the first. This occurs when the child deems motive and intention to be more important than the act itself. In part four he discusses the somewhat philosophical question of how a truly autonomous person can live in a society which must be regulated by law and stabilized by a legal structure.

At this point, a brief description of each of Piaget's four stages of moral development may be helpful.

1. Egocentric - the child views his environment as an extension of himself. He believes that this environment is available for his very whim and he understands it only in terms of his own demands. Finally, he acts in terms of avoidance of punishment.
2. Authoritarian - this stage is characterized by submission to authority. He realizes that rules originate from some external source rather than from within himself. He believes rules are absolute and unbreakable and he judges morality solely in relation to the rules.
3. Reciprocal - rules are seen as having been created by society and they should be respected because they preserve society. The child is able to understand how another feels and puts himself in his place. He also feels that if something is done for him, he must do something similar for the donor. This could involve either positive or negative acts, i.e. sharing—fighting.
4. Equity - there is an orientation towards altruism based on concern and compassion. Situational factors and attenuating circumstances are considered and judgment is reached on this basis.

Kohlberg's Theory and Method of Measurement:

In 1958, Kohlberg completed his doctoral dissertation in which he defined six stages of moral development which fall into three major levels of development (Kohlberg, 1972).

Level I - Preconventional:

Stage 1. Punishment and obedience orientation, impulsive, fearful, absolutistically oriented to hedonistic rewards and exchange.

Level II - Conventional

Stage 3. Good boy - good girl orientation, conforming oriented to interpersonal relations and approval of others.

Stage 4. Authority orientation: conscientiousness, duty, rules

Level III: Postconventional

Stage 5. Social contract, legalistic orientation: autonomous, rationally

oriented to social contract and social welfare.

Stage 6: Universal ethical principle orientation: integrated or principled, oriented to universal human ethical principles. In addition, there is a **stage 0** which is characterized as presocial, amoral and egocentric.

The stages emerge from the interaction of the child with his social environment. The first four stages, in particular, are related to age and I.Q. and may reflect cognitive development. Therefore, moral development is seen as the result of an interaction between the cognitive stage and social experiences. The stage change in moral judgment can be interpreted as successive acquisitions or internalisation of the moral concepts of the culture. The higher modes are reorganizations of lower types of thought rather than merely being added to them. It is not just a simple stamping in of the external rules of the culture through verbal teaching, punishment, or identification (Kohlberg, 1963).

Although Kohlberg's theory is based to a large extent on Piaget's theories of cognitive and moral development, it differs in several ways:

1. Kohlberg emphasizes the importance of the child's interaction with others much more than Piaget.
2. The level of moral development, while related to age, is also related to social class.
3. While for Piaget, a fifteen - year old would be at the highest level of moral development, according to Kohlberg this stage would not be reached before age twenty - five if ever, in addition, Kohlberg places the average adult at stage 3 or 4 (Conventional level).

For his original research Kohlberg interviewed seventy-two boys aged ten to sixteen years. He used stories and interviews methods similar to those used by Piaget, but related to higher issues. From these interviews he was able to define his six stages. Since then, he has compared children by sex, peer group, social class, and nation and stage-typed them into one of the six stages based on their responses to moral dilemmas.

The Problem Stated:

Hypothesis for there being a relationship between moral stage and SES:

Kohlberg's recent work indicates that age and IQ determine cognitive development and therefore level of moral development at least through stage 4. In his earlier work, however, he indicates that while moral development is greatly related to age it is also related to social class / and

peer group participation much more than IQ (Kohlberg, 1963b). He explains the apparent contradiction by stating that the IQ seems to be the variable most correlated with early moral development. Terminal stage, however, is more determined by social experience; (Kohlberg, 1969).

He feels that class differences probably indicate the effect of social participation and experience on moral development. Specifically, he has found that the children involved in more extensive social participation (the middle - class children) were on the whole more mature in moral judgment (Kohlberg, 1974). He also hypothesizes that the retardation in this aspect may be due to lack of power in the responsibility for laws, schools, and the like. The individual's position in society does, to a large extent, determine his interpretation of laws.

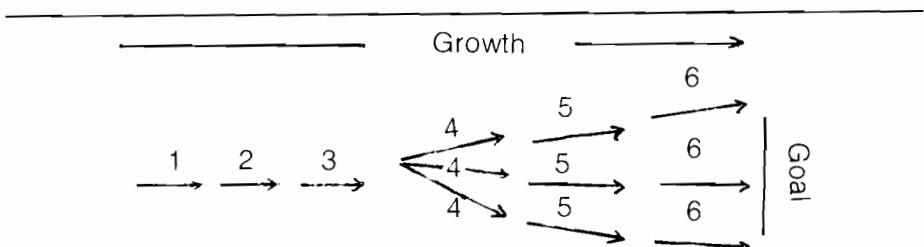
He has also found earlier intentionality oriented judgments for the middle-class child. However he believes these are not class difference in values but rather differences in cognitive development and social stimulation. Within each class the more intelligent child at each age is more intentional. In other words, if IQ is held constant there is still a difference by class but it is not as great.

The Problem under Consideration:

According to Simpson (1974), because of the need to survive in a particular culture, members are taught certain beliefs and values which are not likely to be counteracted later. But the question is whether we should move to counteract the working class values just because they deviate from the middle - class values; i.e. If an individual is stage 4, should we be trying to make him a stage 5 or 6? Three issues seem relevant to this question:

1. the individual may have to think at the conventional level in general and perhaps at stage 4 in particular to survive in his culture.
2. There may be different stable modes of moral development but with different ends as a result of different cultural factors.

the following chart indicates this concept:



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3. The concepts may be defined differently by different groups. I.e. the working class defines equity as economic not social. Perhaps in the lower class, the person who defines equity in economic terms rather than social ones is the true morally developed person in that culture.

Research Studies Using Piagetian Method:

Durkin (1959a) studied children from a lower class urban area in the United States in order to determine whether there was a difference in moral level in lower class and middle class and middle class children. Her sample included approximately 75% Negroes. She rated her subjects on one of three levels which are equivalent to Piaget's: stage 2 (authority), stage 3 (reciprocity), and stage 4 (equity). She found that stage 4 orientation increased with age but was not related to IQ. Stage 2 was used more frequently in grade 5 than in grade 2 and reciprocity (stage 3) was used at grade 8 more than at any other grade. She concluded that her results are inconsistent with the age level trends found by Piaget. Considering that:

1. reciprocity is developing between ages 7 and 12, therefore we might expect this to be the model type of behavior at grade 6.
2. Stage 2 is developing between ages 3 and 7 or 8 and therefore we might expect to find this stage dominating at grade 2.

Yet we cannot accept this interpretation as it is without indicating that the cumulative aspect of experience makes progression at the early stages slower than later on, especially for a sample like that of Durkin's. This might account for stage 2 use at grade 5 and stage 3 use at grade 8 especially for the lower IQ group. For this reason it appears that her data may not contradict Piaget's age level trends.

Durkin (1959b) also studied middle class children and found that they accepted reciprocity (stage 3) less frequently with each age. A problem here is that she was confusing aggressive behavior and reciprocity. In her study with lower class Durkin presented only one story. "Van hit Ben. What should he do?" Nevertheless, in her study of middle class children she did not use a story about physical aggression. This may have made a difference in her results. Again her conclusion that reciprocity decreasing with age is inconsistent with Piaget, appears to be a misinterpretation of Piaget. As stage 4 (equity) develops, we expect reciprocity (stage 3) to decrease. Stage 3 may increase up to a certain age and dominate at that age, but then it would decrease as a higher stage replaces it. A third study by Durkin (1959c) (again with middle class subjects) resulted in reciprocity increasing to grade 5 and then decreasing. This again

appears consistent with Piaget. At grade 8 her Subjects' (stage 2) (tell authority) responses increased. This telling response may be a result of reasoning to tell rather than conformity however and therefore evidence of equity (stage 4). When she compared Piaget's lower class sample with her lower class sample, she found no age differences. This would support the notion of the middle class progressing through the stages at a faster rate. The validity of this comparison across generations and nations appears questionable however.

Boehm and Nass (1962) attempted a systematic study of influence of social class on children's responses to Piagetian moral stories. Their sample included 102 children from the upper lower (working) class and upper middle class. They ranged in age from 6 to 12 years. They classified each child into one of three stages authoritarian, reciprocity, and equity, on the basis of his responses to stories. The only significant variable they found was age. However, there was a trend for the working class children to be concerned with material values rather than the motivation of an act. Interaction of gender and class revealed that middle class girls were more concerned with the underlying motives for an aggressive act rather than the act itself (intentionality VS. objective responsibility).

The middle class boys were more concerned with the act as were both boys and girls of the lower class. This would indicate difference by class for girls but not boys. In attitudes towards lying, middle class boys and girls were similar as were lower class girls. Lower class boys, however, felt lying was justified.

In a second study using the same method, Boehm (1962) compared gifted and average six to nine year old children from middle and lower classes. He found that the gifted children as a whole and the middle class children as a whole matured at an earlier age than average or the lower class, making distinctions between intention and outcome. Also, there was difference between the gifted and average middle class than the gifted and average, lower class on intentionality. The working class gifted and average, however, showed earlier poor reciprocity and adult independence.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1962), there is a trend for class differences to be narrowing. He mentions as evidence several studies all of which used Piagetian stories to measure moral judgment. Among early studies, he cites Lerner's study which indicates a significant difference in 1937. He also points out results from MacRae 1954 and Kohlberg 1958 showing lower but still reliable positive relationship.

He reanalyses Durkin's data (1959) from two studies and finds a significant difference at ($P. 05$) in favor of an authoritarian orientation to morality in lower class children. He finally cites Boehm (1961) which shows no significant difference showing a trend in the predicted direction.

Hoffman and Saltzstein (1967) studied 800 middle and lower class urban children and interviewed most of their middle class parents in order to determine the effects of parental method of discipline on moral development. The mothers were classified into three types by disciplinary practices; power assertion, ignoring, and appealing to guilt by referring to the consequences of an act. It was difficult to compare classes because the parents of the lower class children were not interviewed. Instead, the children's statements were used to determine parental practices. The mother's discipline method was more related to the child's level of moral development in the middle class family. The authors hypothesized several reasons for this:

1. Lower class mothers more often work full-time.
2. There is more interaction with others in lower class families because of large family size and less physical space.
3. The father is the ultimate disciplinarian in the lower class families. (Bronfenbrenner, 1958 is cited in support of this statement).
4. Lower class children are encouraged to spend more time outside the home.

Kay (1969) still believes that moral judgment depends not only on the individual's age and personality but also upon his social status. He cites several earlier works to support this. Harrower in 1934 and Lerner in 1937 indicated that social class and moral judgment do correlate. Both tested children using Piaget's stories and felt they had controlled for such things as IQ. Lerner found that upper class children showed an earlier decrease of moral realism than lower class children. However, he also found that the higher level of moral judgment was due to aspects of the parent's behavior. Parkley (1945), Hollingshead (1949) Mcknight (1950), and MacRae (1950) also found relationship between SES and moral judgment.

The results showed a significant difference by race for blacks; subjective intent replaced objective outcome at a later age (7 compared to 12). It appeared that the cognitive shifts and resulting moral judgment stages occurred later in blacks. The authors had no information on social class, IQ., or socialization practices of the parents any or all of which could have affected the results.

A study using the Piagetian method was conducted by Weiner and

Peter (1973). They attempted to determine whether there was a cognitive- developmental trend in development of achievement and moral judgment. Their sample included 300 subjects ages 4 to 18 equally divided by sex and race for each year level. All were basically of the same social class.

A research project (Johnston, 1980) investigated the relationship between moral judgment and moral behavior in fifteen fifth grade students. Moral judgment was assessed through a Piagetian type moral judgment questionnaire, moral behavior was evaluated through observational studies of the mature and immature behaviors of these students within the school settings. Other variables, age, sex, SES, and academic achievement were also investigated in terms of their relationships to moral judgment and moral behavior. It was hypothesized that age, SES, and academic achievement would be positively correlated with both factors of moral development. However, results from this study showed no significant correlation between SES and any other variable.

Research Studies Using Kohlberg's Method:

Fodor (1969) compared Negro and white male adolescents using the Kohlberg interviews. His sample included 25 socially disadvantaged Blacks who were enrolled in a special program at a small college in Minnesota and 25 whites selected at random from the city directory. The subjects were matched on age and IQ. He found no significant difference in moral judgment scores between the two groups. Moral judgment as a function of mother's educational level was significant. The lack of difference by social class may be due in part to the "Socially disadvantaged". Blacks enrolled in the special program may be more achievement-oriented and upward bound than other "Socially disadvantaged" Blacks for what ever reasons.

The subjects were also given the **Cornell Parent Behavior Description** which measures 14 dimensions of parent behavior. The instrumental companion - ship (IC) score was the only one significantly related to moral judgment. (IC) is defined as willingness of the mother to assist the child in various learning activities. Those low in IC were high on moral judgment.

Fleishman's study (1974) found a positive correlation between the level of moral judgment and SES, in accordance with Kohlberg's assumption, taken in general terms. However, SES was significant as an independent variable for moral judgment only when comparing high - class subject

with the other two, while non - significant for differences between middle and lower classes. The main factor in SES was father's occupation. These findings are replicated by Saili (1975) using Iranian subjects.

A study (De Costa, 1980) was designed to examine by sex, socio - economic status, race, and school, the verbal responses of selected groups of young children to moral dilemmas. a second purpose was to compare and contrast the verbal responses against data trends conforming to the cognitive developmentalists theoretical expectations. An instrument to measure developing moral opinion was developed incorporating modifications and alterations of piaget's and Kohlberg's compatible theories of moral development. Two schools were chosen as a source pool from which 58 children ages five, six, and seven, were randomly picked. Test and retest sessions, with six to seven months intervening time, involved the same Piagetian tasks and moral dilemmas. Interactions of sex school, race, and SES were also tested. Findings showed trends suggestive of higher levels of sophistication in the responses of white subjects compared to black subjects. Trends are somewhat indicative of greater moral growth in the middle class group when compared to the lower socio - economic group. However, trends rather than statistical significances constituted the findings. School and SES were nearly the same variable. Nevertheless, no statistically significant findings attributable to race, sex, SES, or school emerged. Age was the only significant factor determined.

In another study (Newton, 1984), intelligence quotient, SES, school achievement were studied to determine if there was a correlation between these variables and the stage of moral development in young children, ages seven to ten (N.120). Kohlberg's moral judgment interviews were used. Results indicated that IQ., SES, and achievement were not significantly correlated with stage of moral development in younger children ages seven to ten.

Kohlberg's method reconstructed:

Kohlberg's work can be considered the most influential and systematic extension of Piaget's theory and method. Its conceptual foundation lie in the cognitive - developmental model advocated by Piaget. Moreover, the assessment device used by Kohlberg has its roots in Piaget's "Clinical method". Since its appearance in 1958, Kohlberg's paradigm for the development of moral judgment has generated a great deal of research. One might feel that it has outweighed the model that furnished its conceptual framework. Yet, despite its demonstrated heuristic value,

Kohlberg's model has not been without its shortcomings. A systematic review of the published research literature suggests that there are several conceptual and methodological problems with that approach; (Kurtins & Greif 1974; Dickstein, 1979; Murphy & Gilligan, 1980; Essa, 1983, Rest, et al, 1978). Most of the problems center around two main points; viz, the absence of direct evidence for the basic assumptions of the theory, and the derivation, administration, and scoring of the model's primary measurement device.

New trends for studying development of moral judgment have come to the scene; while Structural - developmental researchers have stated a vast review and evaluation of the empirical utility of the model, and the evaluation technique. Rest's Defining Issues Test has gained much of the light and Kohlberg is trying to restore it through continuous revision and reconstruction of his own technique. The Defining Issues Test (D.I.T.) is an objective test for the development of moral judgment; Although it is based on Kohlberg's approach and still uses his stories as stimuli, it uses a rather different technique in categorizing persons. Instead of asserting a disjunctive scale in which modes of reasoning characterizing higher stages successively displace modes of reasoning characterizing lower stages, the D.I.T. seeks for unidimensional hierarchical ordering. It searches for the principled morality score in subject's answer as an index for morality. The appearance of D.I.T. has stimulated a vast amount of empirical as well as statistical research.

Research on moral development using D.I.T. has provided us with no precise information about relationship between SES and moral judgment, Rest reanalysed his data and found that among 9th and 12th grade sample classified according to SES level, there seems to be a slight tendency for higher average D.I.T. scores. These results were reached through grouping from different studies conducted by him and his associates. Other individual studies containing measures of SES for individual subject report correlations with D.I.T. scores. In a study conducted by Cauble (1976) (cf. Rest, et al, 1977) the researcher used Hollingshead's two factor index of SES for the families of college students and found a correlation of .35 (n. 190) with D.I.T. The same SES index was used on adult sample in another study (Coder, 1975) findings showed a correlation with the D.I.T. of .38 (n. = 21). Nevertheless such relationship between the two variables remained a territory of both empirical and theoretical dispute. Since educational level is a major determinant of Hollingshead's index and the adult's own SES was measured in the Coder study and not that of their parents (as in the other studies), this correlation of SES with D.I.T. indicates essentially the same thing as the relation of education and the D.I.T. McColgan (1974) (CF Rest, et al, 1977) used the

Duncan Scale of Father's occupation as an index of SES, and obtained a correlation of .11 for delinquent boys and .19 for predelinquent and control groups boys. Since the range of SES was not very large in McColgan's samples, these correlations may be attenuated. Rest and his associates (1974) found a correlation of .02 using the Duncan index for junior highs and a correlation of .17 using father's or mother's education to index SES.

Bergman (1984) investigated the moral judgment of five ages groups. A special attention was given to describing developmental trends in the moral judgment and seven variables, gender, years of schooling, intelligence, membership in community and school groups, SES index, church membership, voting precinct. Results showed a significant relationship between moral judgment and four variables, among them was SES index; voting precinct, church membership, and gender were not significant. Interesting enough the most powerful predictors of moral judgment scores identified in the literature - years in school, and intelligence test scores accounted only for 25 percent of the total variance of the sample. The researcher used principled morality score of applying Rest's D.I.T., and Quick Word Test as a measure of intelligence but depended on an information sheet for other variables. One of the major recommendations of the study was a reconstruction of the assessment devices indicated.

Armenoff (1984) made a study to see differences in morality with respect to residence areas. Using Rest's Defining test, Rokeah value survey, and a device for behavior observation, he made a comparison of adolescents (N.521) with respect to inferred values, moral reasoning development, group oriented behavior, and proximity to standard metropolitan areas (SMA) in Kansas, U.S.A. no differences between SMA - Proximate and SMA - Distal group were noted for D.I.T. correlational analyses indicated only a marginal relationship between the three dependent variables of the study. The presence of region, age, and sex interactions in the expression of value was suggested, as well.

Hayes & Hambricht (1984) found that SES had no significant effect on moral judgment among black adolescents from different SES levels. Socialization practices generally used in their cultures are more effective and significantly related. Such review indicates that SES has not been a very consistent and powerful correlate of the D.I.T. However, the data, that we have, have been only incidently correlated or derived from several studies with different intervening variables. Most studies try to control for SES rather than studying the relationship. The scene lacks a thorough study in which the full range of SES is studied while controlling for other variables or treating them as coveriates.

Research Using Other Methods:

Sugarman (1966) studied 540, 14 and 15 year old London boys from the lower (working) class and the middle class. He found a significant quality of the home and social class. Intellectual quality was measured by the number of books and newspapers in the home and the number of outings to plays, museums and others cultural activities. The quality of the home correlated with:

1. future vs. present orientation.
2. activism vs. passivism.
3. individualization vs. collectivism.

However, social class correlated only with future orientation since he believed this future individual orientation defined moral development, he concluded that intellectual quality of the home rather than social class determined moral level.

Another factor mentioned is that consistent parents who explain rules have responsible and autonomous children. This type of parent probably is more frequently found in the middle class. Finally, he cited Bernstein who believes that children in intellectual quality homes acquire a greater command of the language and more sophisticated thought. Therefore, they may be able to respond, at least verbally in a more morally mature manner.

Sugarman also proposed that high achievers have assumed the middle class values (probably because of the socialization effect of peers and the school). High achievement correlated positively with future orientation, activism, and individualism when social class was held constant. He indicated that value orientation might be a predictor of future class rather than present social class. He finally proposed three possible cause and effect relationships;

1. "level of achievement causes differences in values,
2. differences in values cause differences in level of achievement, or,
3. different values may be due to some third factor such as intellectual quality of the home."

Kohn (1959a) attempted to determine the relationship between social class and parental values. He interviewed the parents of 400 white fifth graders from the middle and lower classes. He found that the lower class held values that assured respectability (neatness, obedience) and that the middle class held internalized standards of conduct (curiosity, self -

control). He explained that: the middle class may things like neatness for - granted because they are easily attained and they are therefore not so concerned about them. The values that each group seen as the most difficult to achieve are seen as the most important since failure to achieve them would affect the future of the child in that social class.

He also found (1959b) that the lower class parents were more likely to respond in terms of the immediate consequences of the child's actions and middle class parents to respond in terms of their interpretation of the child's intent in acting as he does. Both classes had long range goals for their children, but they were different goals.

Berkowitz and Freidman (1967) hypothesized that middle class persons would be reciprocity-oriented while working class individuals would be responsibility-oriented their sample included three groups of boys ages 13 to 16. The three groups were middle Class enterprenneurial, middle class bureacuratic, and working or lower class. They found that the enterprenneurial group was oriented towards reciprocity much more and that the other two groups scored similar to each other. This result implies that what we mean by middle class should be defined. A comparison of middle class enterprenneurials and the lower class would result in a difference but the middle class bureacurates and lower class would not.

Ojemann and Campball (1974) implemented a six week educational program called "learning to decide" to see if it would raise the level of moral judgments. They included lower class fifth grader and middle class sixth graders with both-experimental and control groups in each grade. They found that the training program did make a difference in thoughtfulness used in making judgment and future oriental responses (those that emphasized long-run effects) increased while present oriented ("Me-Now") responses decreased,

They concluded that moral judgment can be influenced by planned learning experiences. Unfortunately, they used different objective measures in each grade so social classes could not be compared.

Nevertheless, it does appear that there are differences between classes. Persons in middle class appear to be at a higher stage of development according to the measures used. They appear to be more future oriented, internally controlled, and in control of their environment. These are all factors which would be traits found at the higher levels of development.

However, it seems that the more realistic orientation in the lower class may be present-orientation, external control, and lack of control of environment. If the lower class person is not oriented in this way, he may be as maladjusted in his culture as a middle class person who is present-oriented and externally-controlled be in his.

It appears also that IQ has more influence on moral judgment for the lower class but that parent behavior may be a more important factor with the middle class.

Lefond (1979) conducted a study to explore college student's moral behavior. The general focus centered on further investigation to what extent moral behavior is best understood to be a function of the individual or a function of environmental factor. Several measures were used as indices for moral behavior among them was moral reasoning. The major finding showed that moral reasoning and SES were not significantly related to any of the 12 measure of moral behavior.

Touq (1980) studied the effects of SES and Birth order on the moral development of Jordanian children, (n.154). Subjects were put in a tempting situation to study their resistance to temptation and the latency behavior as indices of moral development. Analyses of data showed that SES had a significant effect on the frequency of resistance to temptation behavior (.05) but not the latency behavior. The difference was mainly significant between the upper class and the other two but not between the middle and the lower classes.

In spite of the shortcomings considered, findings indicate that differences between classes in moral development may exist. But such differences are not present across societies, nor precisely between middle and lower classes. Moreover, the acceleration in the rate of development.

Due to intervention programs - formal or informal - may vary because of the inappropriateness of these programs rather than the inability of target persons. Thus we may recall Simpson's suggestion - previously mentioned - that we might be placing value judgment on moral judgment.

Conclusions:

A survey of the literature comparing SES and moral stage reveals several methodological difficulties. The first concerns how moral judgment is defined and how it is measured. One researcher may define it as internal control or autonomy and another as future orientation.

It has been measured by objective, open-ended interviews with parents and children. It has been measured by stage typing responses to Piagetian stories or Kohlberg dilemmas. It has been measured by administering tests intended to measure internal control or future orientation and then inferred from those scores.

Researchers (Lutwark & Hennessy, 1985) point out that the field of moral development is still conceptually and methodologically immature; thus we have to be careful in using moral development measures to evaluate individuals or labeling them.

Another difficulty is that of defining a social class. The classes have been defined on the basis of several criteria including occupation of father, educational level of parents, and income. However, the same criteria are not used consistently. When attempting to make comparisons between studies; the problems which result are obvious.

Different factors have contributed to the difficulty encountered in defining social class categorization. Rejecting previous criteria for class stratification has become a main theme in the social atmosphere. This has been a result of new tendencies. The future elite of different nations are not the traditional ones. The availability of formal education, the high rate of technological change, the increase in social awareness among people, the rise in the level of aspiration, and the shaking of some conventional values in societies have led to major breakthroughs causing old norms to be doubted, questioned, or even dispatched. Social mobility has caused malleability of boundaries especially between the two main classes of mostly all studies, viz, the middle and the working classes. A number of explanations can be considered to justify for such a phenomenon. First, it may be the result of the increase in percentage of population who may be classified as middle class in term of their earning and education but remain lower class in attitudes, behavior and interests. There is a cultural lag in many so - called middle - class adolescent to assimilate the attitudes, behavior, and values of lower - class culture and reject those which had discriminated against his family in the past. Second, there has been a weakening of middle class characteristics due to economic turmoil and inflation. Third, many of the young generation failed to meet their parents' expectations to equal or surpass them in achievement and sought other means of gratification. Fourth, there has been a steady unweakening effort to make lowclass behavior patterns fused in part with teen - age culture and dispose of higher ones, aided particularly by public education, mass and so - called cultural artistic renaissance, (Garrison & Garrison, Jr. 1975: 422).

The third major problem is the lack of control of other variables such as race, IQ, parent behavior, or academic achievement. Most studies have been conducted in the United States or England and it may not be fair to infer that results obtained in England would hold true in U.S.A. or vice versa. The difference between rural and urban populations has generally been ignored in selecting samples, even though differences by class are generally greater in rural than in urban samples (Kay, 1969).

Several intervening variables make it difficult to study only the relationship between social class and level of moral judgment. For example, measured IQ, is lower as a rule for members of lower socio-economic levels. However this measured IQ may be influenced by lack of experiences in the environment. Likewise, parent behavior tends to be correlated with social class. It is therefore possible that parent behavior has more influence than social class on moral development. Perhaps even such things as number of siblings or language ability and verbal fluency influence moral development more than SES. At least some of these influences must be controlled in order to examine if any relationship exists between, SES and moral development.

The same point has to be considered if we are to use such variable in conducting research in the third world or Arab communities. The cultural universals and particulars of these communities are based on a foundation of values different in structure and texture. Transplanting alien values or introducing systems based on them will result in loss of identity as well as increasing alienation among individuals, regardless of the seeming differences. This may lead to faking results or inducing intergenerational as well as "inter class" conflicts. One must bear in mind the distinction between adult - controlled, religious - value oriented communities and / or absolute freedom directed, secular value - oriented societies. While the first one affirms intergenerational solidarity, the other displays intergenerational rejection. Norms of distinction are far from being identical or even similar. Thus, it seems that the empirical utility of such variable has yet to be demonstrated or reconsidered and may be rejected altogether.

A final problem is that many researchers study one age level and then infer that the differences found at that level would generalize to all age groups. a methodological limitation that cannot be overlooked.

Recommendations:

Many studies have been conducted using SES as a variable of effect in determining level of moral judgment. A reconsideration of such studies

reveal that findings reached as well as paradigms inferred are questionable, or at least not decisive. Such findings are rather based on presupposed theoretical assumptions that a relatively field - dependent moral style and other characteristics of limited differentiation are likely to be prevalent in social settings which are authoritarian and conformity-oriented, using strict or even harsh socialization practices to enforce this conformance both in society and in the family. On the other hand a relatively field-independent moral style and greater differentiation are likely to dominate social settings characterized as encouraging of autonomous functioning and more lenient in their socialization practices being more permissive and rather "democratic". The assumptions attach the former setting to lower classes while attaching the second to middle classes.

These approaches need to be reevaluated in the light of the dynamic aspect of relations between generations, the fast rate of social mobility, the lack of efficiency and effectiveness of close social institutions; as well as the absence of a stable, precise, and widely accepted definition of constructs and their indices; things that are necessary for a valid, reliable comprehensive measurement and significant inferences. Objective tests may be desirable and necessary terms, and can translate these constructs into behavioral norms. However, such tests may not encompass the conceptual meaning of the construct or relate to the multi-sided experiences.

We may need a holistic approach that takes in consideration all related variables and decide on the norm of reaction among them. Another, that isolates variables in mini indices or separate factors with new labels, may be beneficial. Yet, we still have to be careful while inferring results, drawing conclusions, or generalizing findings on presupposed theoretical social paradigms that need new empirical validation.

General implications:

Considering the previously mentioned conceptualizations and methodological suggestions, several implications may follow. First any a-priori designation of a particular variable of social environmental nature as exerting influence on moral judgment is premature. Such designations must be theoretically conceptualized operationally defined, specifically assessed, and empirically based, if they are to provide clear, valid, reliable information. Second it is also of no less importance, not to assume any main effect for any such variable without considering, and accounting for, possible statistically significant variation due to interaction effect. Any intervening variable may either complement or

contradict that variable's formal impact as positively related to moral reasoning. Third, the universality of any model pertaining to human aspects must originate from a holistic conception of man and be subjected to systematic historical as well empirical investigation before considering its validity, or adopting it in different cultures. Fourth, it should be emphasized that while discovering relationships between variables is necessary, it is our responsibility to locate and find suitable explanations for them as well as to suggest and implement various techniques and strategies for positively orienting them. Fifth, considering previous research limitations, and keeping the precautions outlined above promise to give us a better understanding of a simply felt but basically complex relationship between moral reasoning and social environmental factors.

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