THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Adolescent-Family and Friend Negotiation of Moral Meaning

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
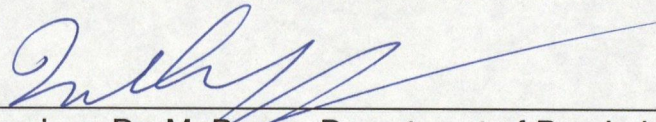
PROGRAMME IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

CALGARY, ALBERTA

SEPTEMBER, 1995

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
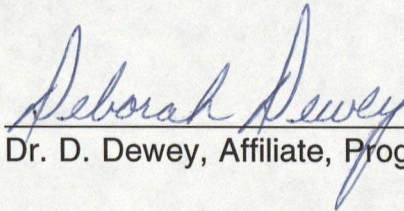
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Adolescent-Family and Friend Negotiation of Moral Meaning" submitted by Wilma Dawn Lacey in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.
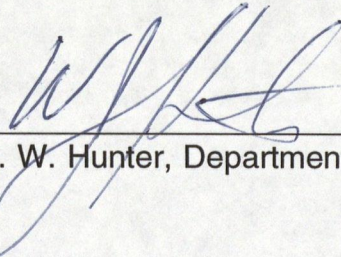
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines negotiation strategies involved in defining everyday sociomoral issues. Moral development research has focused on the development of cognitive structures (Kohlberg, 1975) or on information thought to be inherent within the environment (Turiel, 1983). Both underestimate the importance of social interaction in the co-construction of sociomoral meaning. Sixteen adolescents, ages 13 to 18, discussed current events with their parents. A subset of 10 adolescents discussed similar issues with two friends. Respondents ascribed different meaning to topics, and judgments changed during social debate. Parents suggested that personal and societal views of sociomoral issues change over time. A content analysis of the discussions revealed 8 strategies used during discussions, including appeals to personal rights/freedoms, autonomy, justice, welfare, obligations, morals, personal relevance, and regulation. Peer groups discussed issues on an experiential level, and parents provided a political and cultural context as a basis for discussion. Results were interpreted as supporting a social constructionist approach.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Brent, whose love, support, and sense of humour has kept life in perspective.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Current research into the nature and course of moral development has its roots in the classic work of Jean Piaget (1965) and is dominated by cognitive moral developmental theorist Lawrence Kohlberg (1976). Within a Piagetian cognitive-developmental framework, moral development has been presented as proceeding through a sequential series of stages by which the maturing child comes to think in increasingly abstract ways about moral matters. Kohlbergian methodology uses a standard set of hypothetical "justice" dilemmas to look for evidence of the cognitive deep structures that are understood to define a universal stage sequence of justice reasoning development. When examining influences on stage development, parents and peers have been studied as possible sources of stimulation (e.g., Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983). However, Kohlberg suggested that no one individual, group, or institution has a special role in influencing moral development.

Importantly, both Piaget and Kohlberg focused on the cognitive restructuring that they believed occurred with development, and did not discuss how children recognize moral rules and distinguish them from other social information in the world around them. More recently, Turiel and colleagues (Nucci, 1981; 1985; Nucci & Nucci, 1982; Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Smetana, 1985, 1989) have developed an information processing model of moral development that attempts to explain how social information is differentiated into moral,

social-conventional and personal domains. Using simple vignettes of social transgressions that are assumed to represent each of the three domains (e.g., hitting, using the wrong bathroom, choice of music), Turiel and colleagues conducted a plethora of research establishing the criteria by which these domains may be distinguished. Their belief is that these three domains basically exhaust the universe of possible social, regulatory domains.

Miller and colleagues (e.g., Bersoff & Miller, 1993; Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990) have further suggested that the American culture emphasizes individual autonomy and freedom of choice. As a result, they suggest a fourth domain, namely "personal-moral", which is defined as behaviours governed by objective obligations but not legally regulated. This category may be applied exclusively by Americans "to reflect Americans' ambivalent attitudes towards social responsibilities (Miller et al., 1990, p. 45), and appeals to the commitment to meet the needs of dependent others and the commitment to personal liberties. It would include the assertion that it is the agent's own business whether or not to fulfil social responsibilities (e.g., "I feel abortion is morally wrong but its up to the individual"). However, Miller's fourth domain almost suggests a full circle (e.g., from moral to social conventional to personal and, again, to moral), and it may be that this is not so much a fourth domain as a statement about how the domains are interwoven in actual social interaction.

Within the information processing theory body of research examining domain distinctions, over 40 studies have shown that even children as young as

5 years of age differentiate simple social transgressions into the predicted domains. Having separated the variables and assessed the domain parameters using hypothetical prototypical cases, Turiel and colleagues turned to more multifaceted or complex hypothetical social issues, including abortion, homosexuality, pornography, and incest (Smetana, 1984; Turiel, 1983; Turiel, Hildebrandt, and Wainryb, 1991). Problematically, the results of these studies suggest that judgments on prototypical vignettes do not predict judgments on more realistic, complex social issues (Turiel, Hildebrandt, & Wainryb, 1991). The distinction between domains turned out to be less clear, and judgments were often varied and inconsistent. For example, Smetana (1982) found that deliberation by high school and college students over abortion may include judgments from a moral perspective (harm to the unborn child), a social-conventional perspective (contributing to the welfare of society by controlling unwanted children) or a personal perspective (a matter of personal choice). Further, individuals may define such an act as a moral issue, but suggest that it is neither obligatory to others nor even agree that the act should be legally sanctioned. That is, arguments presented suggest that individuals judge such an act as morally wrong according to their own beliefs, but feel that their own beliefs should not be imposed on others (not obligatory to others nor controlled by government).

Both cognitive-developmental and information processing theories underplay the importance of the social environment in moral development.

However, over the past decade there has been increased interest in the way in which individuals express and represent their moral experiences through language and the importance of social discourse in the development of social meaning (e.g., Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987; Tappan, 1989; Youniss, 1980). This relatively new view is premised on the general theoretical assumption that the number and composition of the perceived categories of social knowledge are not simply given in social reality. Rather, they are worked out in the context of ongoing social interaction. What this implies is that morality is not embedded within the individual's cognitive structures nor intrinsic within the environment. Rather, issues become defined as "moral" through social negotiation and debate, as ideas and judgments are presented and challenged by others in the social environment, including challenges by parents and peers.

To date, most moral development research relies on standard Kohlbergian hypothetical dilemmas as stimuli to measure respondents' position within the stages of moral development. However, current thought suggests that we must work to better understand the social negotiation processes by which real issues come to be discussed in moral, social conventional and personal terms. While this is important in gaining a deeper understanding of social influences on child and adolescent moral development, it has been virtually ignored in the literature (Pekarsky, 1983).

The main purpose of this thesis is twofold. First, this study hopes to

address this gap in the moral development literature by exploring the social

negotiation process as employed by family and peer groups as they enter into

discussions about current sociomoral issues. It is thought that this is best done

by presenting issues that are novel to the respondents, rather than use old and

familiar issues, in order to observe the processes involved in both the initial

conceptualization of the issue and in defining the relevant implications of the

issue. Second, this study will explore qualitative differences between family and

peer groups as they discuss similar issues.

The introduction will be presented as follows. Before discussing the current

literature on social interaction and moral development, the literature examining

cognitive moral developmental approaches will be discussed in more detail. It

will be argued that models that suggest morality is embedded within individual

cognitive structures are inadequate when discussing the role of the social

environment in the development of morality. As well, a more detailed critique of

the information processing model proposed by Turiel and his colleagues will

also be outlined. It will be argued that claiming that individuals find particular

social meanings inherent within social events is unrealistic in everyday, complex

social situations. Such meaning, it will be argued, is more complicated than the

three or four types posited by Turiel and Miller. Rather, the meaning of events

must be constantly negotiated, checked, and verified through ongoing social

interaction. Finally, it will be argued that the meaning is worked out and co-

constructed through discussion and debate. The literature relating to

adolescent social competency and parent and peer discussions on sociomoral dilemmas will then be outlined. The importance of social interaction with parents and peers in moral development was recognized in the early theoretical writings of Jean Piaget. This literature will now be reviewed.

<div align="center">Cognitive Developmental Theory</div>

Piaget and Constructivism

In his book Moral Judgment of the Child, Piaget (1965) proposed a stage model of moral development. Piaget believed that a child's moral development was characterized in two broad stages; one in terms of adult constraint or heteronomous morality, and the other in terms of mutual respect or autonomous morality. From ages 4 to 9, a child's view of morality is dominated or constrained by the authority of adult figures. Within this context, moral rules are viewed as sacred, immutable, and imposed by higher authorities that demand unilateral respect. By age 10, the child moves into moral autonomy and cooperation, where rules are interiorized and generalized, and a new consciousness develops on the basis of cooperation with peers and later on, with adults (Crittenden, 1990). The transition from one stage to the next is typified by a series of "decentrations" in which the child develops cognitive flexibility and perspective-taking skills.

Piaget stressed that the child's experience of reciprocity with peers, in relative independence from adult constraints, gives place to the experience of engaging in moral judgments and decisions in a society of equals (Crittenden,

1990; Youniss, 1980). He further defined moral maturity as cooperation with

others as equals, acceptance of individual responsibility, flexibility and openness

to different points of view, and the entering of intermoral commitments by

choice of agreement in the spirit of fairness and cooperation. Interestingly,

these principles are also viewed as the essence of democracy (Kohlberg,

1976). Piaget portrays democracy as the peak of historical evolutionary

development. By this, the development of a political system is marked by the

extent to which social arrangements, being founded on the cooperation and

mutual consent of equals, escape the constraints of past generations. Thus,

Piaget's theory of morality, which moves from a morality of constraint to a

morality of cooperation, re-creates his concept of the historical emergence of

democracy.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Piaget influenced the works of cognitive moral developmentalist Lawrence

Kohlberg. Elaborating on Piaget's two-stage theory, Kohlberg proposed a

complex and elaborate six-stage model that is to be understood in the same

way that we are to view Piagetian stages of logical cognitive development. The

six stages are condensed into three levels of moral development, namely pre-

conventional, conventional, and post-conventional, with each level more

philosophically and morally sophisticated than the previous level.

In the lowest "Preconventional" level (Stages 1 and 2), egoism dominates.

Young children define the meaning of "rightness" and "wrongness" in terms of

the subjective feelings of the self. Specifically, moral judgments are oriented to punishment. During the intermediate "Conventional" level (Stages 3 and 4), older children and adults judge issues as "wrong" or "right" by considering the collective feelings of others, where there is an orientation towards maintaining the rules of social groups and society. Finally, the third and highest "Post-Conventional" level (Stages 5 and 6), adopts the philosophy of Rawls (1971), emphasizing justice as the universal basis for all possible moral concerns, including rights (equality of human rights, respect for dignity of human beings as individual persons), duties, obligations, and responsibilities (Miller, Bersoff, & Harwood, 1990; Saltzstein, 1991). Thus, the Conventional level defines morality as conforming to the expectations of others and maintaining social order. The Post-conventional level consists of moral principles that stand above the feelings of the self or the demands of others, based on acting in accordance with shared or sharable standards, rights and duties (Hoffman, 1988).

Within Kohlberg's complex theory, his general claims are as follows: 1) stages constitute qualitatively different ways of thinking about the same problems (relating to justice); 2) stages are 'structured wholes' with an underlying thought organization; 3) stages form an order of increasingly differentiated and integrated structures; 4) stages form an invariant sequence in individual development, moving progressively from less to more integrated structures, and 5) hold that moral development is universal and is not

substantially affected by social class, culture, or gender differences (Colby &

Kohlberg, 1987).

A noteworthy feature of this three-level theory is that optimal moral

understanding is equated with the Postconventional level of thinking. Kohlberg

argues that the Postconventional level of understanding is rationally preferable

to the conventional level, and suggests that it begins to emerge at late

adolescence. Kohlberg maintains that with the development of processes of

rational reasoning (e.g., Piaget's formal operation reasoning) and exposure to

an engaging multiplicity of viewpoints, the individual will automatically move

towards what is most rational. What is most rational is, for Kohlberg,

Postconventional reasoning.

Three aspects of Kohlberg's theory are particularly important to the rational

behind the current thesis. First, Kohlberg classifies children's "moral level" on

the basis of their responses to stories or hypothetical moral dilemmas (see

Table 1). For example, the classic "Heinz's dilemma" goes 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 in the same town had recently discovered. The drug
> was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging $4,000 for a small
> dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he
> knew to borrow the money and tried every legal means, but he could only
> get together about $2,000, 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 having tried every legal means, Heinz gets
> desperate and considers breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for
> his wife. (Colby and Kohlberg, 1987)

Table 1.

Kohlberg's Six-Stage Model

Stage	Level and Description	Example regarding Heinz Dilemma
Level I. Preconventional Morality		
1	Punishment Orientation Complication to avoid punishment	"If he steals the drug, he might go to jail."
2	Naive Reward Orientation Compliance with rules to get rewards, sharing in order to get returns	"He can steal the drug and save his wife, and he'll be with her when he gets out of jail."
Level II. Conventional Morality		
3	Good Boy/Good Girl Orientation Conformity to rules that are defined by others' approval/disapproval	"People will understand if you steal the drug to save your wife, but they'll think you are cruel and a coward if you don't."
4	Authority Orientation Rigid conformity to society's rules, law-and-order mentality, avoid censure for rule-breaking	"It is the husband's duty to save his wife even if he feels guilty afterwards for stealing the drug"
Level III. Postconventional Morality		
5	Social-Contract Orientation More flexible understanding that we obey rules because they are necessary for social order, but the rules could be changed if there were better alternatives	"The husband has a right to the drug even if he can't pay now. If the druggist won't charge it, the government should look after it."
6 .	Morality of Individual Principles and Conscience Behaviour conforms to internal principles (justice, equality) to avoid self-condemnation, and sometimes may violate society's rules.	"Although it is legally wrong to steal, the husband would be morally wrong not to steal to save his wife. A life is more precious than financial gain."

Second, Kohlberg founds his model on cognitive <u>deep structures</u> and rules that define "justice operations" and stages of moral judgment (Tappan, 1990, p. 249). Third, this model is based on interactions between organismic structuring tendencies and the structure of the outside world. Judgment is dependent on opportunities for role-taking and may include both parent and peer discussions as a source of stimulation (e.g., Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983). However, because of his grounding in cognitive-developmental theory, Kohlberg suggested that no one individual, group, or institution had special importance in promoting moral development. That is, even parents or peers have no direct or necessary role to play in children's moral development.

Although cognitive developmental theories have attempted to illustrate the cognitive restructuring of social information, they do not speak to <u>how</u> children identify and differentiate moral rules from other social rules. Further, both Piaget and Kohlberg have assumed that moral judgments apply to all forms of social behaviour, and have within their models, fused the moral and social-conventional domains, treating the reliance on social convention as an immature form of morality. However, more recently, researchers (e.g., Nucci & Turiel, 1978) have focused less on cognitive structures as a source of social meaning and more on the intrinsic characteristics of social information itself. By this view, social information is not so much interpreted (as Piaget would suggest) as it is recognized for the type of information that it is understood to definitively represent.

Information Processing Theory

Domain Distinctions and Prototypical Events

Over the last decade, Turiel and his colleagues (e.g. Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Smetana, 1988) have challenged the notion that morality emerges or develops out of the conventional domain. Rather, they propose an information processing-based model which holds that intrinsic characteristics of social information are recognized by individuals and classified into three autonomous domains, each with its own distinct developmental history. One helpful way to conceptualize their theory is to imagine Kohlberg's three-level theory on its side (Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987). Instead of three levels of understanding, there are three independent domains of understanding, namely personal, conventional, and moral. Turiel and his colleagues suggest that the moral, conventional, and personal domains are discrete and autonomous, each have their own developmental history, and are easily recognizable and distinguished by early childhood. Domain development is influenced by qualitatively distinct types of social interactions within different classes of events. Therefore, domains are developed by the stimulation or the highlighting of inherent differences among different types of social knowledge.

Research has focused on identifying the characteristics inherent in social information that help differentiate domains. Influenced by Kohlberg's definition of morality, Turiel, Nucci, and Smetana defined moral events as issues related to objective obligations concerning harm, justice, rights and the welfare of

others. In contrast, conventions are defined as actions that are right or wrong by virtue of social consensus. Influenced by the works of Searle (1969) and Lewis (1969) and their conceptions of social convention, the distinction between the two domains has been summarized as follows:

> Conventions are part of constitutive systems and are shared behaviours (uniformities, rules) whose meanings are defined by the constituted system in which they are embedded. Adherence to conventional acts is contingent on the force obtained from socially constructed and institutionally embedded meanings. Conventions are, thus, context-dependent and their content may vary by socially constructed meanings. While morality also applies to social systems, it is not constitutive of or defined by existing social arrangements. In this perspective on morality, prescriptions are characterized as unconditionally obligatory, generalizable, and impersonal insofar as they stem from concepts of welfare, justice and rights. (Turiel, Killen, and Helwig, 1987, pp. 169-170)

Finally, the personal domain is understood to be distinguished from both the moral and social conventional domains in that it involves acts that have no effect on others (see Table 2). As mentioned, a large portion of the research conducted by Turiel and colleagues was directed at establishing whether or not children could give evidence of the criterion necessary to distinguish the three domains.

Criterion Development

As suggested, Turiel and colleagues believe that there are intrinsically moral and social conventional events, and that even young children quickly come to distinguish those events that inherently possess a moral quality from

Table 2.

Turiel's Information Processing Theory*

Domain A	Domain B	Domain C
Moral	Conventional	Personal
justice, harm, rights, welfare	social uniformities and regularities, food, clothes, forms of address, sex roles	psychological states, personal tastes and preferences
Domain Criteria Rational Universal Unalterable Objective Self-Constructed More serious	Domain Criteria Arbitrary Relative Alterable Consensus-based Socialized Less serious	Domain Criteria Arbitrary non-contingent of rules or authority

*From Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller (1987)

events whose rightness or wrongness are a matter of social consensus. During the past decade, over 40 studies have been conducted to establish the content of moral versus conventional events. Initial investigations included eliciting judgments and justifications of experimentally constructed, hypothetical non-complex or "prototype" vignettes from adults and children. The vignettes were constructed so as to reflect each distinct domain. Typical moral transgressions include child hitting and hurting another child, stealing, or not sharing; conventional transgressions include some aspect of social organization (e.g., clothing styles, forms of address, sexual practices), and personal stimuli include choice of music and friends.

Results suggest that children will judge moral transgressions as more serious than social-conventional transgressions (Smetana, 1985) or more obligatory and more unalterable than conventional rules (Arsenio & Ford, 1985). Thus, as outlined in Table 2, the following domain criteria is proposed: 1) moral prescriptions are judged as obligatory, non-contingent of specific social rules or authority, non-alterable, impersonal and generalizable; 2) conventions are judged to be legitimately regulated but not obligatory, nor contingent on aspects of rules of social organization; and 3) issues within the personal domain are judged neither obligatory nor legitimately regulated. While results appear consistent when using simple transgressions or "prototypical" vignettes, this is not the case when eliciting judgments on more complex social issues.

Domain Distinction and Complex Issues

Having assessed the criteria used to distinguish domains using simple hypothetical transgressions, Turiel and colleagues used more complex, "multifaceted" issues (e.g., hanging with friends that parents don't approve of, wearing punk clothes, abortion, homosexuality, pornography, and incest) to examine how established criteria are applied to more typical real life social situations (Smetana, 1984, 1988; Turiel, 1983; Turiel, Hildebrandt, and Wainryb, 1991). Results from the studies suggest that the distinctions between domains were less clear, and judgments were often varied and inconsistent. For example, Smetana (1982) found that deliberation by high school and college students over abortion included judgments from a moral perspective (harm to the unborn child), social-conventional (contributing to the welfare of society by controlling unwanted children) or personal (a matter of personal choice). Further, individuals judged an act within the social convention or moral domain, yet justified their selection with a mixture of domain rationale (Smetana, 1988). In a discussion of "domain mixtures", Smetana (1983) notes that an event she classified as conventional could be reinterpreted as moral. For example, a child addressing a teacher in front of the whole class by her first name (social-conventional transgression) could be interpreted as morally wrong due to psychological insult or unfairness to others.

Such results are problematic as the goal of this body of research is to clarify the boundaries by which social information is categorized. However,

when viewing complex issues, the boundaries are not so distinct. This suggests that domain boundaries may not exist within the typically complex social environment. Similar confusion with domain distinctions can be observed with Smetana's work the area of parent-conflict.

Domain Discrepancy and Family Conflict

Smetana (e.g., 1991) proposed a domain approach to the study of family conflict. She hypothesizes that conflicts between adolescents and parents are a result of differences in domain classifications of social issues. For example, dating may be judged within the personal domain by an adolescent while the parents may judge it as a social conventional or moral issue. Smetana (1989) examined arguments and counterarguments made by adolescents and their parents about family conflicts by using both a structured interview and an open discussion format. Adolescent respondents were first asked to generate issues of conflict that they had with their parents. They were then asked for their justifications for the act's permissibility or wrongness, and their perception of their parents' judgment of the same. Families were then instructed to discuss three issues of family conflict and to work towards a resolution.

Results of this study suggest that both that adolescents' and the parents' justifications for conflicts differed significantly in interviews when compared with justifications used within the context of family interactions. For example, there were more references to morality (e.g., welfare, obligation, appeals to fairness), nonsocial negative consequences to the child (eg., personal health), and to

practical needs in social interaction in on-going discussion than in the interview format. Smetana also suggests the following:

> adolescents' and parents' reasoning about family conflict in individual interviews is both conceptually similar to and yet different from their reasoning in family social interactions. Adolescents and parents ascribe different meanings to issues of family conflict, and their different interpretations are articulated, elaborated, and modified in family discourse" (p. 293).

What Smetana falls short of saying is that the meaning of the family conflicts is first formed or changes during social interaction. What this implies is that social meaning is not intrinsic within the event itself, rather social meaning is co-constructed through social interaction. Therefore, conflict is not the result of differences in domain classification on social issues between parents and their children, rather conflict is the actual negotiation process involved in co-constructing the social meanings of complex social issues.

An interesting study was presented by Walton (1985), who examined the effects of social interaction of parents and peers on judgments made by elementary school children of blameworthiness. Within a naturalistic setting, Walton reported that much of the social interaction involved a negotiation between the participants to determine how the situation was to be defined. The meaning of a situation was "a matter of negotiation among interactants to establish a shared meaning" (p.728). Further, Walton concluded that in contrast to developmental theories that have tried to identify an endpoint to mature moral development (e.g., Kohlberg's post-conventional level), defining issues through social negotiation is a life-long process. This can be seen in the

following passage:

> Because we constantly interact with new partners and encounter new situations, the socialization of judgmental criteria must be a life-long process in which members of various groups are constantly engaged. It is not so important that children learn what particular criteria must be considered. Rather they must learn the negotiation process by which they will establish with co-interactants which judgment criteria are to apply in each new situation. (Walton, 1985, p. 728)

The concept of the co-construction of social meaning has its theoretical roots in the theory of moral development proposed by Piaget, but goes beyond his cognitive-constructivist theoretical approach. This will now be discussed.

Social Construction of Sociomoral Meaning

Over the last decade, research in moral development has flourished (e.g., Berkowitz, Gibbs, & Broughton, 1980; Cooper & Ayer-Lopez, 1985; Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Kruger, 1992; Kruger & Tomasello, 1986; Tappan, 1989, 1990, 1991). Specifically, there has been increased interest in the social nature of morality and the constructive nature of language. While cognitive-developmental research on moral development has focused of discussions on hypothetical moral dilemmas, the processes of how controversial issues come to be discussed and debated in moral terms has largely been ignored. It has been suggested that the construction of social meaning involves both inner and social discourse (Shotter, 1993). That is, individuals do not necessarily have well-formed and orderly thoughts about issues. Orderly formulation is something that is "developed in a complex set of temporally conducted negotiations between themselves, their feelings, and those to whom they must

address themselves" (p. 108). The negotiation process involves a "back-and-forth process" (p. 108) in which the speakers attempt to express themselves and their listeners attempt to understand, with each speaker having his or her own historical and cultural influences. Therefore, moral discourse involves expressing ideas that are socially acceptable within the social community. Speakers are challenged as to the social appropriateness of their realizations and understandings.

In a similar thesis, Pekarsky (1983) argues that typically, individuals come across a novel situation that creates an "irritation of doubt" that may not initially appear as a "moral dilemma". That is, the speaker comes across a situation in which he or she has no clear understanding of all the defining characteristics of the issue and has not thoroughly thought out the potential consequences of the issue. In such novel situations, both internal and external debate may run a variety of directions that may have nothing to do with morality. As a consequence of this uncertainty, part of the deliberation process is an attempt not so much to solve a clearly articulated, well defined "moral dilemma" as it is to understand the problem. Again, not all problems take shape as conflicts among competing moral claims, and if they do assume this shape, it does not follow that it is accepted at face-value without first trying to duck or dissolve apparent conflict.

Importantly, this process has virtually been ignored in the literature on moral development. Rather, negotiation has been examined in terms of

adolescent development and the examination of the relative influences of

parents and peers on cognitive restructuring. As an initial step towards

correcting this relative oversight, the literature on social negotiation strategies

and their influence on adolescent competency will first be outlined, followed by

a discussion of parent and peer influences on moral development. .

Adolescent-Parent Interaction

Research in the area of adolescent-parent interaction has been premised

on the assumption that the young and old are engaged in continual and heated

conflicts that pit adolescent energy and idealism against parental wisdom and

realism (Montemayor, 1983). However, more recent views suggest that parents

and peers provide unique and overlapping influences on moral development.

Cooper & Ayers-Lopez (1985) suggest that parent-child relationships function in

a broader network of social relationships with links to community, school, and

work environments. Families influence peer systems by their choice of

neighbourhoods, schools, churches, and the types of social clubs they

encourage. Further, older adolescents assert that their parents and friends

tend to share similar values rather than have incompatible values systems .

(Youniss, 1980).

Research in the area of identity formation suggests that although the

parent-child relationship is renegotiated during adolescence, the family

relationship is important as a basis of identity formation and social competence

(Cooper & Ayer-Lopez, 1985; Cooper & Grotevant, 1987; Grotevant & Cooper,

1985, 1986). Adolescents move toward separateness prior to adulthood while

being simultaneous pulled to remain connected to family. Specifically,

communication patterns in discussions between parents and children are linked

to measures of adolescence competence. Grotevant and colleagues developed

the Family Interaction Task, where the all family members plan a two-week

vacation. Individual discourse was analyzed, focusing on themes of individuality

and connectedness. They found that the co-occurrence of individuality and

connectedness in family relations contributes to the adolescent's ability to

explore identity-related choices and coordinate multiple perspectives.

Individuality includes self-assertion (community point of view) and separateness

(express differences between themselves and others). Mutuality demonstrates

sensitivity to views of others and permeability, defined as responsiveness or

openness to views of others. Within the moral development literature, parent,

as well as peer discussions have been used as stimuli for moral stage

development.

Parent-Peer Influences on Stage Development

Within the cognitive moral developmental field, researchers have been

interested in examining the facilitation of cognitive stage development through

the influence of peer and parent discussions (e.g., Berkowitz, Gibbs, &

Broughton, 1980; Berkowitz & Gibbs, 1983; 1985; Damon & Killen, 1982;

Kruger, 1992; Kohlberg, 1976; Walker & Taylor, 1991). Berkowitz and

colleagues have attempted to identify features of discussions that influenced

moral development. Using content analysis, the authors identified a series of "transacts", which appear to be similar to therapy microskills (e.g., requests for feedback, paraphrasing, and clarification). Using Kohlbergian dilemmas and focusing on cognitive restructuring and stage development, the investigators suggest that challenging and reasoning through the discussion partner's judgments facilitates moral stage development.

Using transactive analysis, Kruger and colleagues (e.g., Kruger & Tomasello, 1986) examined the differences between mother-child dyads and friend-dyads. Results suggest that discussions are qualitatively different between groups. Parent-child discussions about sociomoral dilemmas produce more sophisticated moral reasoning than children paired with friends (Kruger, 1992). The conversation between mother and child typified a question-answer conversation, where mothers urged the child to enter into the discussion by asking questions and the children provided answers. However, when discussing issues with friends, the target child operated on their friend's logic, and engaged their friends more often by producing transactive questions, or challenging their partner's ideas and requesting feedback. As mentioned, such literature uses Kohlbergian hypothetical moral dilemmas. It does not investigate parent and peer influences on adolescent judgments in real life situations.

Current Study

Although the literature suggests that families are potentially important sources from which to explore values and morals, little research has looked at

how parents talk about morality with their adolescent children. Ironically, most parents feel that raising good and decent children is a central challenge of parenthood. Childhood "is a particularly malleable period, and it is the period of life when enduring social skills, personality attributes, and social orientations and values are laid down" (Maccoby, 1992, p. 1006). However, research on parent-child negotiation generally focuses on family conflict, and suggests that families with adolescent children are more likely to discuss minor conflicts over everyday details of family life, such as school work, social life and friends, home chores, disobedience, and disagreements with siblings and personal hygiene, rather than conflicts over moral issues such as sex, religion, or drugs (e.g., Montemayor, 1983; Smetana, 1991). This study will attempt to begin to fill this gap in the literature and provide some insight into the relative influence of parents and peers in the conceptualization of and judgments about sociomoral issues.

To reiterate the hypothesis, it is suggested that morality is not embedded within cognitive structures nor is it intrinsic within social events, rather moral meaning is co-constructed through social discourse. To date, studies have examined families discussing non-moral issues (e.g., Family Planning Tasks) in relation to identity exploration. Further, research in moral development has typically used hypothetical moral conflicts, and focused analysis on cognitive restructuring. However, no study to date has examined family and peer discussions to follow the process of how social issues, not externally identified

as "moral" issues, are formed socially. Therefore, the current investigation will include an exploratory study that attempts to identify this process.

Further, the literature also suggests that interesting group differences may be found when examining parent-adolescent and friend discussion groups. In order to accomplish this, differences in group discussions will be explored qualitatively. Qualitative exploration will be useful as it is of interest to explore what is going on <u>between</u> people. As this is a new area of research and nobody has directly studied this process to date, a qualitative approach provides a worthwhile approach to begin to look in this direction.

<u>Research Questions</u>

1. The general goal of this study will be to observe families in discussions about complex, current, socially salient issues to begin to identify how the conceptualization of social issues is influenced by social interaction. It is suggested that parents will have a broader, more historical, cultural context in which to formulate their ideas.

2. The second goal is to observe peers in similar discussions. It is suggested that judgments will be influenced by social interaction, and opinions will be formed, changed and maintained socially as group members challenge each other.

3. A third goal of this study is to examine the influence of social negotiation on adolescent judgments. This will be done through a qualitative look at the arguments presented in both family and peer discussion groups. It is

suggested that as a result of the co-construction of social meaning, the adolescent will incorporate arguments made in the first discussion group into the second discussion group.

CHAPTER TWO: PILOT STUDY

Methods

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, a small pilot study was conducted to work out a number of methodological issues. First, the feasibility of tracing the construction and negotiation process involved in the conceptualization of complex topics was explored. A second goal was to explore possible thematic patterns emerging in the data. Third, the investigator wanted to get a sense of how long respondents needed to discuss one topic in order to get a codable transcript. In order to be useful to the coders, the transcript would have to include elaboration on opinions and challenges by group members rather than a superficial exchange of views. Fourth, several questions around the actual stimuli were explored, including 1) how many topics would be necessary to provide adequate stimuli for both genders and across age groups, and 2) what would be the most efficient form of stimuli presentation.

Respondents

Two male adolescents (referred to as "target adolescents"), ages 15 and 17, living at home and attending junior high or high school, were recruited through mutual acquaintances and asked to participate in two discussion groups. Ideally, one group would include the target adolescent and two friends of similar age and gender, and a second group would include the target adolescent and both parents. The parent and peer group discussion groups

occurred on separate days to minimize fatigue to the target adolescent. In order to explore how the topics were dealt with in both groups, the target adolescent was required to discuss at least one topic in both groups.

GROUP 1   GROUP 2

Family Group   Peer Group

Father--Mother--Target Adolescent   Target Adolescent--Peer 1--Peer 2

Materials

Topic selection. Providing stimuli that would appeal to adults and teens over an age range of 13 years to 18 years of age proved to be a challenge. The goal was to capture novel, current social issues that would be salient to both adolescents and adults. Over a one-month period, the thesis author searched through local newspapers and news magazines. Care was taken to collect articles that were balanced, which excluded opinion pieces depicted in editorials or letters to the editors.

A total of 17 newspaper articles were chosen, which focused on the following topics: 1) gay pastors in the United Church, 2) a court case advocating the right to die (euthanasia), 3) steroid use in teens, 4) violence in schools and the connection to violence in the media, 5) discrimination against women in golf clubs, 6) discrimination and City Councilman, 7) local Member of the Alberta Legislature petitioning to have Of Mice and Men banned from school curriculum, 8) animal rights groups protecting the use of animals at the Calgary Stampede rodeo, 9) abortion clinics in third-world countries, 10) capital

punishment, 11) fines against stores for selling cigarettes to minors, 12) experiences of gay teens, 13) City Council discussion of establishing legal curfews for teenagers, 14) raising drinking age and driving age, 15) religious fundamentalism, 16) condoms placed in tuxedos for Grade 12 graduation, and 17) parent concerned about celebrating Halloween and its negative religious connotation. Three complete sets of the actual 17 newspaper articles were assembled; one for each member of the discussion group.

Consent forms. Setting up this complex group design was a challenge. All adolescents participating had to receive parental consent. When the target adolescent recruited a friend, his name and phone number was passed on to the thesis author. The thesis author contacted the friend and introduced herself and described both the goals of the research project and the ethics of psychological research. Specifically, it was emphasized that they would be talking about current events in confidence, without parents or the investigator involved in the conversation. Confidentiality, voluntary consent; freedom to withdraw, and anonymity were outlined. The adolescent was told that the conversation would be either audio or videotaped, and details of how the tapes and transcripts would be confidentially handled were discussed. As well, the thesis author repeated the above process with the friend's parents in order to receive parental consent. It was emphasized to the parents that discussions within the group would be confidential, within limits, but the family would be able to receive a summary of the general results of the study if interested.

In summary, consent was obtained by all <u>individuals</u> participating as well as parental consent for all adolescents. Finally, the thesis author was prepared with referral services for family or individual counselling in case any concerns arose during the study.

<div align="center">Procedure</div>

The 17-year old target adolescent participated in both parent and peer discussion groups, with two days between group meetings. However, he could only recruit one friend to participate within the one-month time frame. Further, the 15-year old target adolescent could not recruit any friends to participate. The thesis author continued with the two-person peer group in order to - investigate the feasibility of using dyads. Although the thesis author accepted reports that many of their friends were on holidays (pilot work was done during July), male peer groups continued to be a problem in the main study, which will be addressed in detail below.

All conversations were conducted in the target adolescent's home. It was stressed that respondents would need a quiet area of the house, free from distractions (e.g., telephones, younger children) for at least 90 minutes. The first group to meet was the 17-year old target adolescent and both parents (Family 1). The group initially met with the thesis author. At that time, the contents of the consent form were discussed and the consent form was signed. One parent filled out a demographic sheet and then all three respondents were given individual folders containing the actual newspaper articles. They were

instructed to read each article and then as a group, select two or three articles that they would find interesting to discuss. Once topic selection was complete, the target adolescent was instructed to fill out a sheet indicating whether or not he had discussed the topic with his mother and his father, and rating on a 1 to 5 scale the degree of importance that topic was to the teen (see Appendix A).

The group was then instructed to discuss each article for a minimum of 15 minutes. The thesis author left the room, leaving the group to start the tape recorder when they were ready to begin. At the end of the study, a 15 minutes debriefing session occurred with the entire group and thesis author to ensure that no potential harm (e.g., conflict, clinical issues) came up during the discussions. Further, the investigator spent 5 minutes alone with the target adolescent to provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns that he may have felt uncomfortable bringing up in front of his parents. Finally, the investigator encouraged feedback on possible methodological changes for the main study.

After a two-day break, the 17-year old target adolescent and one friend met with the thesis author. Again, the consent form was discussed and the friend produced a copy of the parental consent form, which had been confirmed by telephone on a previous occasion. The group was given the same instructions as above. In addition, the target adolescent was asked to choose one topic that he had discussed with his parents, as well as rate the importance of each issue discussed using a scale similar to that described above. Again, after the study was completed, the thesis author sat with the group for a debriefing

period, including feedback on methodology.

In total, the three groups discussed 11 topics, with the euthanasia, and Homosexuality and the Church topics discussed by more than one group. A summary of issues discussed by groups can be seen on Table 3. Family 1 took approximately two hours to complete the entire study, including 75 minutes of actual discussion. Family 2 took approximately 90 minutes, including one hour of discussion. The peer group discussed three issues in 30 minutes.

Respondent Feedback

The openness of the members to provide critiques of the methodology was an important feature of the pilot study. The parents stated that they enjoyed the opportunity to talk as they rarely sat down as a family to discuss anything. Further, they suggested that they were surprised at how little they had actually discussed any of these specific issues with their sons, even though they thought all were relevant and important. In fact, the families reported that none of these issues had been discussed as a group. Importantly, the parents and both the 17-year old boys reported that they had established strong opinions on many of the topics. The 17-year old boys reported that they had discussed some of the issues at school (e.g., abortion, capital punishment, homosexuality, and religious tolerance). This feedback was important as the thesis author was trying to choose issues novel to the individual as well as the group. Therefore, for the main study, long-standing controversial social issues would be avoided.

Table 3.

Issues Discussed by Groups in Pilot Study

Group	Issue
Family group 1	Sue Rodrequez and Euthanasia
	Capital Punishment
	Abortion Clinics in Third World Countries
	Gay Ministers in United Church
	Religious Fundamentalism
Peer group 1	Sue Rodrequez and Euthanasia
	Satanism and Halloween
	Gay Ministers in United Church
Family group 2	Steriod use by Teens
	Discrimination against women on Golf Courses
	Sue Rodrequez and Euthanasia
	Animal Protests at Calgary Stampede
	Gay Teens
	Media Violence

The peer group reported that they had difficulties carrying on a conversation on one topic for 15 minutes as they tended to agree on the subject. A quick look over the transcripts suggested that the two adolescent boys in the peer group did not attempt to debate the possible implications for the issue. Rather, they judged most of the associated issues involved with the specific topic as a person's personal choice. These transcripts were relatively short compared with parent discussion groups. Further, both adults and adolescents suggested that ongoing discussions would be easier with three in a group. Finally, all respondents suggested that there should be fewer issues to choose from and pointed out similarities among issues (e.g., religion, homosexuality). In terms of topic presentation, the respondents suggested that some time could be cut from the study if the thesis author condensed the newspaper articles to highlight the important points made in the article.

Organization of the Data

To prepare for analysis, all tapes were transcribed verbatim by the thesis author. All names were deleted and all speakers were identified with M, F, T, for mother, father, and target adolescent in family discussion groups, and PT and P1 for target adolescent in peer group and peer 1. Further, each transcript was coded by family or peer group (e.g., F1 and F2 for family 1 and family 2; PG1 for peer group 1). Each code was matched to demographic information on a separate sheet. Three copies were prepared for each interview; one for the thesis author, her supervisor, and the original that was kept in a secure area as

a back-up. The length of the transcripts were approximately two pages per issue. Although concepts were developed enough for the initial study, the thesis author noted that it would be important to emphasize to the respondents that she was interested in the development of ideas. Respondents would be encouraged to discuss two or three topics in total within the allotted time.

Content Analysis

A content analysis was performed on the pilot data. Content analysis refers to a variety of techniques for making inferences from text. Waltz, Strickland & Lenz (1991) report several features of content analysis that makes it a useful approach in this study. First, it can be used for inductive, theory-building techniques, where themes and categories describing the data evolve during the analysis. Second, it can also be used for deductive, theory-testing techniques applicable to statistical analysis. Third, this approach can be applied to information written as text that allows exact replay of the original communication, including tape-recordings of communication. Forth, the procedure is designed to achieve relative objectivity by incorporating rules for examination of recorded information which allows for replicability of the analysis. Fifth, the procedure is systematic in that criteria are consistently applied in selecting and processing the content to be analyzed. Importantly, content analysis is a common analytical approach in the moral development literature and is used by Turiel and colleagues. Since the goal of the present thesis is to critique Turiel's domain approach, continuity of data analysis was thought to be

appropriate for this thesis.

Three basic elements involved in content analysis are: 1) deciding what the unit of analysis will be, 2) developing a set of categories, and 3) developing the rationale and illustrations to guide coding into categories. Analysis of the transcripts from the pilot study incorporated these guidelines. Although it was noted that the topics would change in the main study, the existing literature provided appropriate rational for deciding a unit of analysis. Second, it was thought that the pilot data could provide some evidence for the feasibility of identifying negotiation patterns, even though many participants claimed to have worked out their arguments prior to the discussion. Finally, any common themes that appeared in the initial data would be noted. More formal analysis, including reliability and validity, will be addressed in the main study.

Unit of analysis. Waltz et al. (1991) suggest that careful selection of a unit of analysis is essential if "unitizing reliability" is to be achieved. This refers to "consistency in the identification of what is to be categorized across time and/or judges" (p. 303). Reliability can be increased by: 1) reducing the inference needed to identify the unit to be coded, 2) greater specificity in delineating units, and 3) the ability of the data to be examined repeatedly. Further, stability reliability and reproducibility reliability require clear rules for assigning units into categories. These concepts were considered during the analysis of preliminary pilot data.

Within the moral development literature, moral discussion analysis has

been growing out of group discussion techniques. For the purposes of the current research, the work by Turiel (1983) provides an appropriate framework, which identifies a unit of analysis as: 1) a judgment or stance taken by a respondent on a particular issue, and 2) the respondent's justification for that judgment. For example, on the topic of abortion, a respondent may judge abortion as wrong and provide a justification (e.g., abortion is murdering a human being). An example of a unit of analysis would include a respondent's statement "I think that abortion is wrong, it is murder". The thesis author was particularly interested in the justifications presented by the respondents for their positions as these would reflect the conceptualizations of the issues and hopefully provide thematic patterns.

The transcripts were broken down by justifications, with all non-related discourse, such as "ums" or requests for repetition or clarification, such as "pardon" or "what does that mean", ignored. Further, any strong deviation from the main topic would not be coded. As in many conversations, individuals are often interrupted before getting their entire point across. Therefore, care was taken to connect justifications to the original judgments when the rational was carried through the conversation.

Developing categories. Each transcript was read and reread by the thesis author. First, each respondent (e.g., F,M,T) was colour coded to make each portion of the argument easier to identify. It was noted how each speaker initially conceptualized the issue. This was commonly expressed in the form of

general statements or general questions (e.g., this is a parenting issue; I guess the general issue is, who decides about these things). Second, judgments and justifications of each respondent were highlighted (e.g., I think this issue is wrong because it should be their choice, not the government's). Third, for each respondent, the arguments produced were followed throughout the transcript to identify any changes in position. Fourth, the target adolescent responses were followed across groups in order to get a sense of qualitative aspects of the discussion groups.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Topic Complexity

Initial readings of the transcripts suggested that respondents readily admitted to the complexity of the topics discussed and the difficulties of making absolute judgments. Individuals made initial judgments within very narrow contexts. However, once challenged by group members, many had difficulties working through the implications to their original judgments. During the following debate, the family struggled with their initial judgments when presented with alternative contexts and challenges from other group members.

F   I believe in capital punishment... I firmly believe that anyone who kills somebody while committing a crime, like if you break into a 7-11 or house, or if you kill a police officer or a jail guard, that should be a capital offense. I have very strong feelings like that and I don't care, and the other articles here about violence and youths, that gets on the gray edge of it, but certainly for adults 18 and over...

T   Well, my own view is that even if it were put in place, it wouldn't necessarily solve anything. Like, I personally believe it wouldn't solve anything by killing another person. Like I said before...I believe in the

virtues of it, where it [religion] says "none but the Lord shall take a life"...

F   You don't believe in an eye for an eye?

T   No!, but...well, I guess I do. I guess I can't really say I would be lying if I said I don't believe in an eye for an eye, cuz if someone hit me I'd certainly would hit back, but it's not going to solve a whole lot just by killing another person...it comes down to choice again. Does this person have the right to try to be rehabilitated again?

M   There are so many different areas in this issue, too. I would say I am pro-capital punishment, but yet as a person with a quick temper...

F   That's not what I said...a crime of passion is different...it just occurs because of a certain set of circumstances that are there at a particular time. What I am talking about is when a person takes a gun or knife and walks into a store or house to rob it....

M   I know if you were Clifford Olson and I was your mother, of course I wouldn't want it.

F   Rules have to be the same for everybody...if a murder is committed while a crime is being committed...those types of crimes are not crimes of passion or like getting into a bar room fight, those are other issues... That is one that I have very strong opinions on...I guess I have never really been vocal on that.

T   Well, I guess the way I was brought up, well actually, since you are for it (capital punishment)... well, you had more of an influence in that, like, your dad worked in the pen, but myself, I never really had any influence one way or another. It has been based on my own opinions and the environment I have been brought up in, the Catholic school, kind of everyone has the right (to life) and no one can depict that right... although it is an oxymoron considering the person I'm saying that for took another life.

M   You are sticking up for the murderer, but you are still young that you are still forming opinions on those things, and your mind is a lot more open...

Each member had a different conceptualization of what the associated issues were when discussing the topic of capital punishment. The father defined "the issue" as a matter of punishing those who commit intentional murder. The son

defined it as an issue of reducing crime and conceptualized it in terms of a specific religious moral principle and individual rights. Finally, the mother agreed with capital punishment on some level, but had trouble making an absolute judgment, suggesting that she conceptualized the issue in more than one context (e.g., crimes of passion, personal family member).

Interestingly, when examining the adolescent's attempts to deal with his father's challenge on his apparent conflict of applying religious principles to this issue, we get a glimpse at what Shotter (1993) described as the construction of social meaning involving inner social discourse. In this case, the adolescent has developed a more orderly view of the right to life, but has a more vague and unordered "feelings" or "sense" of the issue in the form of "an eye for an eye". Through social interaction, the family tries to work out meaning for the adolescent. While the father points out contradictions in his son's arguments, the mother initially attributes her son's level of maturity as a reason why his views have not been solidified and appear contradictory. Ironically, the mother, herself, struggles with her own judgments. The father appears clear in his view of capital punishment in cases of intentional murder, yet less clear on alternative implications, such as teenage murders or crimes of passion. He suggests that those are "other issues" and maintains his original argument.

When examining a respondent's judgments across issues, the thesis author identified changes in judgments that were contradictory. While the father in the previous transcript made a case of absolute arguments for capital punishment

for intentional murder, this same father suggested that there is a problem when people try to categorize issues within discrete domains. When trying to conceptualize the issue of establishing abortion clinics in third world countries, he struggled with the defining characteristics of the issue, and suggested that making absolute judgments is a futile proposition when discussing complex social issues.

F   There are issues, it is not just this one, and I not sure whether this issue is here is prochoice or prolife or if the issue is jumping on bandwagons and saying it is one way or the other, because I think you can sit and there is always an exception to the rule, and I would think there is too much energy arguing the absolutes.

In summary, the adult respondents suggested that these issues were complex and less amenable to absolute judgements. This appears to contradict Kohlberg, who suggested a developmental endpoint, where moral maturity moves from a personal, less principled stance, to more a mature view that includes general absolute judgments based on justice. The data supports the notion that social debate about complex social issues is open to ongoing social negotiation that extends into adulthood.

Development of Morality

Within the transcripts, respondents spontaneously discuss the "evolution" or development of morality over time. Specifically, they reflect on how personal judgements, as well as societal judgments, of sociomoral issues have changed over time. When discussing the issue of setting up abortion clinics in a third world country, this mother reported that her initial reaction to abortion has

changed over time.

M   This Henry Morgantaler issue has been ongoing for along time and it is something that initially that I was shocked at his brazenness and his out-and-out condoning of abortion and almost pushing it. Yet, as I have grown and have my own family, I am a prochoice, that I don't believe that it is anyone's right but a woman...

Similarly, the father reflected on changes in his judgements, as well as societal changes, over views of homosexuality.

F   Probably my attitude has changed over the last 25 years since I've been out of high school... people used to think they could identify gays by the way the person talked and certain gestures, but now we know better and know that's not the case... and I think as society recognizes that more and more...

F   You know, that is something else that has changed. Twenty years ago, homosexuality was something that was never talked about and it was almost like a bad disease, and now we know better and know that is not the case...and you know right now you look at the United States and the armed forces, ... and the rights they have and again, it goes back to when we were talking about discrimination against women... minorities and what your sexual orientation is... it's an evolutionary thing again.

Similarly, within a peer discussion regarding homosexuality and the church, the respondents reflected on the clashes between the Catholic church and societal views of the role of women in the church and on homosexuality. The two boys suggested that societal views have changed.

P1   I don't see anything wrong with it.... It's their right...
The Catholic church won't [acknowledge gay/women's rights]...the Pope doesn't realize he's the same guy as he was in the 14th Century!

In summary, the preliminary pilot transcripts provide data is problematic for both Turiel and Kohlberg. First, Turiel suggests that meaning is inherent within

the issue itself. However, with these typically complex, real-life social issues, respondents suggest that complex social issues cannot be easily sorted into discrete domains once they are negotiated from a non-complex situation (e.g., capital punishment for intentional murder) to a more complex issue with many outreaching implications (e.g., crimes of passion, minors that murder, religious views of right to life, failed justice system). Further, it does not appear easier for those who Kohlberg may view as cognitively sophisticated. Rather, adult respondents appear to struggle with "absolute" judgments, and reflect on how the meaning of sociomoral issues changes over time. However, results are more support of a social constructionist view, that suggests that sociomoral meaning is worked out socially.

<u>Group Comparisons</u>

A second goal of the pilot study was to explore the feasibility of identifying differences between peer and family groups. Although there was only one peer group, preliminary transcripts suggest that the arguments made within the parent discussion groups were incorporated into the peer discussions. In the initial discussion about a case in front of the Supreme Court of Canada with the request to the right to die, a summary of the family's judgments were as follows:

M   If I were stricken with a terminal disease or something, I would want to die. I would want to die with dignity and I would not want my family to be charged with murder because they helped me.

T   It's choice again, the government deciding once again...

M   There is no real law. It's like murder. There is no precedent.

F   There is no precedence. I guess the risk of that is, where does it end? One person has this disease. O.K., that's fine. And another has that disease...If I get a bit of arthritis in my hands or a bad back and I can't play hockey any more, is life not worth living? I am sure that is the whole issue... you allow this one and that what and what is the next step?

T   Isn't there the issue with religion, again? The Catholic church is, again, pro-life... committing suicide is a sin.

Within the family discussion group, the father and mother argued about the dangers of setting a legal precedence, while the father talked about problems with defining what disease you would allow within this proposed change in legislation. The mother brought in arguments about personal dignity and the welfare of her family. Finally, the adolescent discussed personal choice versus government regulation and the consequences of moral ethics of the Catholic Church.

Interestingly, the influence of the social negotiation between parents and the adolescent can be identified in the peer group. The friend (P1) began the discussion with a personal choice argument, similar to the view the target adolescent took with his parents. The target adolescent's initial approach to this discussion incorporated the arguments made by his parents.

P1   I think that she should be allowed to kill herself if she wants. That's my opinion. I think they should have the right to do what they want with their lives, and if they want to end it, then that's fine. Each to their own.

PT   Do you think that should be for everything? Like, this lady is doing it is because she is dying and she is going to be totally dependent. Do you think that...isn't the reason that they are taking this to court is because there is no legal precedence for it, so if they say this is o.k. because of this, but then it would set a precedence, but where would it stop? Like if

someone has something that is not terminal, do you think that they should?

P1   I think it is their choice, I think they have the right to do it. I don't know what the courts can do because as soon as someone makes a law, they change it. There are so many exceptions.

PT   It shouldn't have to become a law, it should be the choice a person's choice or right to do what they want.

P1   You can't really make that into a law because there are so many exceptions.

Although the target adolescent does not necessarily change his initial judgments made in the parent group, the results of the negotiation with his parents creates discussion about the ambiguity or complexity of the issue within the peer discussion group. Again, both agree that the issues associated with these topics are complex and suggest that drawing discrete boundaries is difficult "because there are always exceptions". Results are more readily explained by a constructionist approach, which suggests that boundaries are fluid as they are constantly co-constructed socially.

Thematic Patterns

A preliminary exploration of common patterns and themes was extrapolated from the transcripts. As transcripts were read, the thesis author wrote out conceptual labels in the transcript margins describing the underlying theme to judgments and justifications provided by each respondent in the group. Interestingly, the respondents spontaneously made connections between issues. For example, one adolescent reported that he believed that "you make your own destiny, you pave your own future because you have choices". He

was noted to say "this is about personal choice again", and "this, again, is about the government trying to control your life". Other connections made by other respondents included "this is another parenting issue, where parents ought to be responsible for their kids", "this, again, is an issue about who is responsible", and "like discrimination against women, this issue on homosexuality is about discrimination and fairness".

An initial list of justifications were made and reviewed by both the thesis author and her supervisor. As a result the following themes were outlined: 1) consideration of individual rights and freedom of choice 2) fairness and equality; 3) consideration of the welfare of others/society; 4) discussing who is responsible or obligations; 5) explaining how they come to their judgments in terms of their personal morals and what influenced their morality; 6) effectiveness or necessity of establishing laws and the consequences of regulating behaviour; 7) difficulties of trying to establish regulatory laws that requires drawing boundaries on complex social issues, and 8) maturity and being responsible for one's own actions and moral choices. Preliminary justification groupings are summarized on Table 4.

Table 4.

Initial Thematic Conceptualizations from Pilot Data

Justifications	General Conceptualization	Initial Themes
-rules the same for everyone -it's wrong to discriminate	This is about discrimination	equality fairness
-I think you should have your own right to do what you want with your own body -It should be the person's choice	Does this interfere with personal freedoms	individual choice
-the person suffers and shouldn't be forced to have a baby -we should protect animals -using them could save our lives	Who suffers?	welfare .
-people should be responsible for their own actions -parent should be responsible -people in power have a responsibility to treat women with respect	Who is responsible for regulating behaviour?	obligations responsibility
-I believe in the virtues "none but the Lord shall take a life" -it's the environment and parental influence	What moral principles influence my judgments?	moral values
-there are always exceptions to that rule -try to make things into absolutes and there are always exceptions -You can't make laws because there are so many exceptions	What are the consequences of trying to legally regulate?	problems with social regulation
-educate; rehabilitate; punish -establish new social attitudes	How do we stop unwanted behaviour?	social regulation

-teens are still young and forming opinions -I've change my views over the last 30 years -we need a paradigm shift to radically change views	What we view as wrong is dynamic. Personal, as well as societal views, change over time.	establishing cultural norms
-you hope that your child will evolve into someone who knows right from wrong -older kids know that cartoons aren't real	What is the goal of socializing teens?	moral autonomy

<u>Validity</u>

Although validity will be addressed in the main study, data-related validity, that is, how well the data analysis method represents the information inherent in the available, was initially explored in the pilot data. Researchers using content analysis of justifications in the area of moral development have reported similar category selections to those found in the present study. Kohlberg (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987) and Turiel (1983) conceptualized morality in terms of justice, fairness, welfare, and obligations. Smetana (1991) proposed 16 categories based on judgements and justifications by respondents judging simple vignettes and discussions of family conflict (see Table 5). Similarly, other investigators (e.g., Kahn, 1992) have developed similar descriptive labels to categorize moral judgments. Preliminary themes from the pilot data were compared to those categories presented by both Smetana (1991) and Kahn (1992) (see Table 6). Similarities suggest that this thesis author was picking up on relevant information in this data set. However, new topics will be chosen for the main study, and methodological revisions will be discussed below.

In summary, the pilot data provided interesting and encouraging preliminary findings. The openness of the respondents provided interesting insights into important methodological changes that could make the main study less arduous for the group. The investigator would re-evaluate the issues selected and consult with school psychology graduate students for relevant issues concerning adolescents and their families. Further, the thesis author would condense and

summarize newspaper articles onto one summary sheet. As for the number of respondents in each group, it was thought that three members would be ideal, but if single parents were interested in participating or if adolescents were eager to participate with one friend, they would not be screened out.

Table 5.

Justification Categories for Family Conflict (Smetana, 1991)

Justification Category	Justification Descriptions
MORAL- welfare	interests of others
MORAL - Obligation	feelings of obligation (duty)
MORAL - Fairness	balance of personal rights
SOCIAL CONVENTIONAL (SC) - Appeal to authority	approval of authority figures or existence of rules/laws
SC-social nonconformity	negative consequences of going against group
SC-social coordination	need for social organization, including expectations between persons, role expectations and status differences
SC-custom or norms	social customs
SC-punishment avoidance	negative reactions by others
SC-responsibility	need to be personally responsible for own behaviour
PSYCHOLOGICAL - interpersonal	appeal to affective bonds
PSYCHOLOGICAL - dispositional	reference to personality traits
PSYCHOLOGICAL - egoistic	personal preferences with notion of the need to regulate act
PSYCHOLOGICAL - unintentional	appeal to unintentional nature of act
PERSONAL - autonomy/individuation	rebellious behaviour, autonomy seeking
PERSONAL - personal choice	personal preferences
PRUDENTIAL	practical needs, personal comforts

Table 6.

Comparisons of Initial themes with Justifications used by Smetana (1991) and

Kahn (1991)

Pilot Categories	Justifications Smetana (1989)	Justifications Kahn (1992)
1) Individual rights; 2) equality	MORAL-rights	Justice
Welfare of others/society	MORAL-others' welfare	1) other's welfare 2) agent's welfare
Role Obligations -individual -parental -societal	1) MORAL-obligations 2) SOCIAL CONVENTIONAL- a) social coordination b) responsibility	Mitigating justice circumstances
Moral Values	PSYCHOLOGICAL: dispositional	
Social Regulation	SOCIAL CONVENTIONAL- a) appeal to authority b) social coordination PERSONAL-autonomy	Authority
Cultural/personal Norms	SOCIAL CONVENTIONAL- Custom or norm	Authority
Moral Autonomy	SOCIAL CONVENTIONAL- Custom or norm	Agent-centred

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Main Study

Sample Selection

A detailed and concerted effort was made to recruit a broad and diverse group of respondents. Notices requesting volunteers were placed with the following: 1) city-wide public libraries, 2) a large teaching hospital in the city of Calgary, 3) church bulletins and newsboards of all denominations, 4) a large telephone company in the City of Calgary, 5) the University of Calgary, including staff lounges, mature students society, campus newspaper, 6) two major papers in the City of Calgary plus community newspapers, 7) radio and television community news bulletins, 8) local community centres, pool and leisure centres, YMCAs, and 9) a local family agency. As well, the thesis author contacted leaders of community youth organizations (e.g., Guides, Venture Club, Church Youth Groups) and arranged to attend meetings to recruit subjects. Finally, subjects were recruited from the Psychology Department subject pool.

The recruitment process itself provided insight into the lives of many families in the community. First, most families contacted reported that they never sat down with their child to talk about such issues. This was attributed to many things, including lack of time or feeling uncomfortable discussing personal or sensitive issues as a family. Second, most could not imagine talking about one topic for 15 minutes. Most reported that comments and opinions were

generally made while watching the news or walking out the door, but issues were never discussed indepth. Many reported that any serious talks occurred in the car, and joked that the investigator should send them on a family drive. Third, many families did not want to talk about potential controversial issues around a "psychologist". Many mothers were concerned about the impression that the family would make or the potential for family conflict. Finally, many fathers refused to participate, despite encouragement from mothers and children.

In terms of the teenagers themselves, many girls were willing to talk to their friends, however, refused to participate in family discussions. Many of the younger girls were very self-conscious and found the topics "too embarrassing". In contrast, boys appeared more willing to participate in parent groups but refused to participate in peer discussion groups. Boys above the age of 15 repeatedly told the investigator that "boys don't talk about stuff like that...they talk about sports or stupid stuff" or just "do stuff" together. Therefore, many boys over the age of 15 reported that when trying to recruit friends, their friends would think the idea was "stupid" or could not see the point. Many older boys were interested in participating in peer discussions until it was clarified that it had to be male friends. Interestingly, older boys suggested that if they did talk about important issues, they tended to talk to girlfriends and mothers. The thesis author began to slowly realize why many of the major studies looking at parent-child interactions used mother-preadolescent daughter dyads! In

summary, despite the interesting response patterns recorded, it was a disheartening to realize the complexity of current family life. Many thanks goes out to those families and adolescents who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in this study.

Respondents

Family groups. The respondents in this study were 16 families (15 adolescent-father-mother triads, one mother-daughter dyad) recruited from the two major cities in the Province of Alberta. The age of the mothers ranged from 33 to 66 with a mean age of 42.5, and the age of the fathers ranged from 32 to 61 years with a mean age of 44. All 16 target adolescents were in junior high or high school, and included 11 females and 5 males. The female adolescents ranged in age from 13 to 17, with a bimodal distribution peaking at ages 13 and 16. The male adolescents ranged in age from 13 to 18, with a mean age of 15. Interestingly, many families who participated had some previous involvement with psychology and had some understanding about research. Family occupations included health services (43%), business (38%), and women working at home (25%), a teacher, policeman, welder, bus driver, and a telephone operator. Family demographics are summarized on Table 7.

Peer groups. A subset of 10 target adolescents from the family groups and 19 friends participated in the peer discussion groups. There were 8 female groups, ranging in age from 13 to 17 years (8 triad groups and 1 dyad group).

Table 7.

Family Group Demographic Variables

#	Teen Age	Gender Teen	Mom Age	Mom Occupation	Dad Age	Dad Occupation	Rel
01	13	F	43	health	*	*	Prot.
02	13	F	46	student	32	student	Prot
03	18	M	41	student	40	psychologist	prot
04	16	F	45	psychologist	49	business	Jew.
05	13	F	36	operator	39	bus driver	Prot
06	13	F	42	home	44	business	Prot.
07	13	M	33	home	33	student	Morm.
08	14	M	47	student	54	business	Cath.
09	16	F	45	psychologist	50	psychologist	Prot.
10	16	F	66	home	61	welder	Prot.
11	17	F	41	health services	44	police	Prot.
12	16	F	41	home	47	psychologist	Morm.
13	17	F	46	land sales	53	business	Prot.
14	14	M	42	counsellor	42	teacher	Cath.
15	14	F	42	secretary	41	doctor	Prot.
16	18	M	44	nurse/home	50	geologist	Prot.

* No father in discussion group

Two male target adolescents, ages 13 and 14, participated in 2 peer triad groups. All friends participating were the same gender and grade as the target adolescent, and within one year in age. Demographic information for peers 1 and 2 are summarized on Table 8.

<u>Materials</u>

<u>Consent form.</u> The consent forms were similar to those described in the pilot study. In summary, the form included a brief description of the purpose of the study and a standard series of ethically required statements, including voluntary participation and confidentiality. All respondents were told that the conversations would be audiotaped, and possibly videotaped. Respondents were told that audiotapes would be transcribed by a confidential secretary and that all tapes would be kept in a locked cabinet.

<u>Topic rating sheet.</u> In order to check if the topics chosen by the thesis author were relevant to adolescents and their families, each target adolescent was asked to rate each topic on a 1 to 5 scale on level of importance, with 1 being "very important" and 5 being "very unimportant".

<u>Topic selection.</u> Over a two-month period, the thesis author reviewed local newspapers for current, controversial issues that may be new to most respondents in the study. A tentative list was reviewed by two school psychology graduate students working with adolescents and three adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17. Three additional topics were suggested, including education and jobs for adolescents, sexual harassment in schools,

Table 8.

Peer Group Demographic Variables

Group	Age Peer 1	Religion Peer 1	Age Peer 2	Religion Peer 2
P04	16	Protestant	15	Catholic
P05	14	Protestant	14	None
P06	13	none	13	none
P07	13	Catholic	13	Protestant
P08	13	Protestant	13	Protestant
P09	16	Catholic	16	Catholic
P10	16	none	*	*
P11	17	Protestant	17	Muslim
P13	17	Protestant	16	Protestant
P15	14	Protestant	14	Protestant

* no peer 2 in discussion group

and violence in schools. Through continued discussion between the thesis author and her supervisor, a final list of 8 current issues was developed. All 8 newspaper articles were summarized and written up on an " Topic sheet" (see Appendix B). Topics included: 1) a member of the Alberta Government trying to ban the book <u>Of Mice and Men</u> from the school curriculum because of using Jesus Christ and God in a negative way, 2) City of Calgary looking at legal curfews for teenagers, 3) increased school violence and the influence of the media on adolescent behaviour, 4) school board refusing to pay for upgrading for high school students once they graduate from grade 12, 5) store owners fined for selling cigarettes to minors, 6) accessibility to condoms, 7) idea of increasing the legal ages of both drinking as well as driving, and 8) sexual harassment in schools.

Finally, the respondents were given the choice of picking a third issue not on the list. This was done for two reasons. First, it was thought that groups might provide interesting new issues, thus providing the thesis author the opportunity to observe ongoing negotiation patterns. Second, it was thought that it would guarantee that the groups would have at least one issue that was important or salient to them.

<u>Procedure</u>

Some respondents were contacted by telephone while others contacted the thesis author in response to advertising. If appropriate, the thesis author explained how she obtained the potential participant's name and telephone

number. She provided a brief description of the study, the expectations of each group member, and an overview of research ethics (e.g., confidentiality, voluntary participation, freedom to withdraw at any time). Respondents were told that they would need 60 minutes of uninterrupted time and were given the choice of conducting the study in their own home or in a study lab at the university. This option was important as families often had younger children and needed an option of either finding a quiet place at the university or a way to reduce childcare costs by staying home. Further, many adolescents felt more comfortable about discussing issues at the university in order to avoid being overheard by adults. Finally, the respondents were asked to consider some issues that they would like to discuss as a group. Specifically, they could choose something that they had not discussed as a group but felt would be interesting and important.

Family discussion groups. The thesis author reviewed the ethics forms with respondents. Each respondent was asked to fill out demographic information and then read the topics sheet. The target adolescent filled out the rating sheet indicating whether or not any of the 8 issues had been discussed with either parent, and rated all 8 issues on a 1 to 5 scale indicating the level of importance. A standard set of instructions was read to the group. To summarize, the group was asked to pick two issues from the list and think of an optional third issue that was not on the list. The thesis author instructed the group to discuss each issue for at least 15 minutes. The group was informed

that the discussion would be audiotaped and that a confidential secretary would transcribe the tapes (in order to avoid using each other's names if they so chose). At the end of the discussion, all respondents participated in a 15 minute debriefing session. In addition, the adolescent was seen individually. The thesis author had a list of referral agencies in case of problems. All conversations were audiotaped, and all groups participating at the university were videotaped to help differentiate speakers.

Peer discussion groups. Peer discussion groups were conducted in a similar way to the family groups. The investigator collected all parental consent forms (all had been confirmed by telephone) and then went over individual consent forms. Demographic information was collected for each respondent. In addition, the target adolescent answered the following question: "Why did you choose these people to participate with you?".

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

<u>Discussion Topics</u>

The 26 groups produced a total of 112 transcripts. Thirty-five transcripts were dropped for the content analysis for a number of reasons. First, many peer groups did not talk about the topics provided by the thesis author but rather discussed related topics (e.g., birth control, abortion, smoking, drinking). Second, peer groups often discussed personal matters and gossiped about other peers. The gossip served the purpose of exchanging judgments about someone's unacceptable moral conduct and as a method of sharing their own set of morals. However, for the purpose of this study, these discussions were not codable. Third, some transcripts were too short to code. Finally, the optional topics chosen by respondents were topics similar to those used in the pilot study (e.g., abortion, homosexuality, sexuality and birth control). It rapidly became clear that these topics were chosen because the respondents had already worked out the issues for themselves. Therefore, little actual discussion occurred and as a result, these transcripts were not included in the content analysis.

In total, 77 transcripts were used in the content analysis, including 30 peer discussions and 47 family discussions. A breakdown of the topics by group can be seen on Table 9. Ten adolescents participated in both family and friend discussion groups. A total of 17 topics were discussed within both parent and peer groups. The time elapsing between discussion groups varied from one

Table 9.

Number of Issues Discussed by Group

Issue	Family Groups	Peer Groups
Banning Books	8	3
Legal curfew	8	6
Media/School Violence	6	4
Education/Jobs	7	4
Cigarette Fines	3	3
Access to Condoms	6	4
Legal Ages	4	2
Sexual Harassment	5	4
TOTAL ISSUES	47	30

day to three weeks. Five peer groups were run before the parents groups, and five family groups were run before peer groups.

Results from the rating sheets suggest that the thesis author was able to choose novel and socially relevant discussion topics. The target adolescents gave the topics an overall rating of "relatively important", with a mean of 2.22 (SD=1.28). Of the topics discussed, the target adolescents reported that 47% had been discussed with mothers and 25% with fathers. However, these percentages are suspect as an examination of the transcripts suggests that only one had been discussed. It may be that the adolescents were indicating that they had discussed drinking, smoking, education, using condoms or birth control with their parents, but not in the context of the presenting topic. It may also be that they were aware of their own and their parents' position without having to discuss them at length. A total of 17 topics were discussed within both parent and peer groups. The time elapsing between discussion groups varied from one day to three weeks. Five peer groups were run before the parent groups, and five family groups were run before peer groups.

When asked why they had chosen these particular peers to participate, 80% reported that they had asked their best friends, and 100% reported that they had chosen friends that would be serious, would give their own opinions honestly and not just fool around. It appears that the adolescents were very thoughtful in their approach to the study.

Analytic Approach

The analytical procedures followed the approach developed in the pilot study. A content analysis was performed on the transcripts. This included four general steps. First, 20% of the transcripts were read for themes. Second, themes were refined. Third, the thesis author established reliability and validity, and fourth, the developed thematic set was applied to the entire data set.

Organization of the Data

The thesis author reviewed all audiotapes to check for identifying features that may have compromised confidentiality. All discussions were transcribed verbatim but with any identifying features removed. Each target adolescent was coded with a number from 1 to 16 and identified by group. For example, F04 and P04 indicated that the same target adolescent (number 04) participated in a family discussion group (F04) and a peer discussion group (P04). Further, each speaker was identified as M, F, T, PT, P1, P2, for mother, father, target adolescent in family group, target adolescent in peer group, peer 1 and peer 2. After transcription, the thesis author reread each transcript along with either the audiotape or videotape (if available) to check for accuracy.

Initial readings of the transcripts were made to determine what parts of the transcripts were codable. As in typical discussions, conversations often strayed into associated areas. The thesis author used her judgment to decide if the arguments were linked to the original idea or if the respondents were discussing an unrelated topic. For example, if the issue of 'Access to Condoms' moved on

to a debate over the effectiveness of birth control or attendance to a high school prom, or if "legal curfews" moved to a discussion on capital punishment, all judgments about general birth control, the prom, or capital punishment were ignored.

Theme Development

Using methodology developed and described in the pilot study, 20% of the transcripts were read and reread by identifying judgments and justifications made by each respondent participating in the discussion group. Initial readings consisted of placing an identifying label in the margin of the transcript (e.g., welfare, responsibility) for reach respondent. Words or statements that had similar meaning were then categorized together. Category labels and appropriate thematic groupings were worked out between the thesis author and her supervisor. Initial thematic groupings were similar to those outlined in the pilot data. Specifically, judgments focused on democratic ideology (e.g., individual rights and freedoms, equality and fairness, welfare), accountability, morality, and general enforcement of societal values. In addition to the themes found in the pilot study, the thesis author added an eighth category, labelled "personal". The final themes set included: 1) role obligations, 2) individual rights and freedoms, 3) Justice, 4) welfare, 5) autonomy, 6) values and morals, 7) personal, and 8) social regulation. A coding manual that included the thematic label and detailed descriptions and examples was developed in order to apply these themes to the rest of the data set (see Appendix C).

Coding

The goal of the thesis was to identify changes in judgments throughout the negotiation process. Therefore, the thesis author was interested in identifying a change in the use of themes rather than how many times a respondents relied on any one theme. Within the transcript, each respondent's arguments were followed throughout the discussion, and the appropriate thematic label was applied to the argument according to the manual. For each theme, the respondent either received a 1 if he or she referred to the theme or a 0 if he or she did not refer to the theme during the course of the discussion. For example, if a father reported that he thought the issue was wrong because it was harmful to the child, the father would be credited for using a welfare argument. If the father continued to make reference to welfare arguments, he would receive credit only once for using a welfare theme as the argument would be considered a continuation of his current position. On the other hand, if he responded with another theme, such as "well, I agree, it does interfere with a person's right to choose", the father would then be attributed with the use of a second thematic category, namely rights and freedoms.

Reliability

All 77 transcripts were coded by the thesis author. To determine coder reliability, 20% of the protocols were randomly selected and independently coded by a second coder. Protocols represented all issues and both peer and family groups. Inter-rater reliability was defined to be the quotient of the

number of agreements divided by the total number of judgments. Transcripts were cut up into judgments with associated justifications and then coded by thematic content. Coding was completed within a one-month period, with the reliability checked weekly to avoid observer drift. Inter-rater reliability ranged from 75% to 95%, with an average of 89%. This level of reliability is consistent with that reported in other coding manuals in the moral development literature (e.g., Colby and Kohlberg, 1987).

A third coder, who was blind to the goal of the study and to the literature on moral development, was recruited to independently assess thematic content. The coder was given 20% of the transcripts and was told to identify three things. First, the coder was asked to note general conceptualizations of each issue for each respondent. Second, as reliability is affected by ease of identifying codable units, the coder was asked to identify judgments and justifications for each respondent and provide an arbitrary label for the justification. Finally, the coder was asked to note any common patterns seen to emerge. Results showed that the coder identified the following four general ideas: 1) it is difficult establishing absolute rules, 2) it is difficult to decide where personal responsibility ends and societal responsibility begins, 3) people want freedom of choice, and 4) does the means justify the ends? The fourth conceptualization referred to ongoing debates around approaches to regulating behaviour (e.g., education, legal sanctions). There was 100% agreement on themes identified from the current data as well as themes from the pilot study.

General labels provided by the independent rater included: 1) freedom of choice, personal choice, 2) fairness, social injustice 3) promotion versus prevention, 4) values and morals, 5) welfare, 6) personal relevance, 7) maturity (will push to do what they want to do no matter what the law), and 8) personal, parental, and societal responsibility. Inter-rater reliability was calculated for percentage agreement on identifying codable units as well as percentage agreement of thematic classifications. Percentage agreements on codable units ranged from 75% to 83%, with a mean of 79%. Percentage agreement on thematic content ranged from 82% to 100%, with a mean of 89%.

Validity

As suggested in the pilot study, a comparison of themes with those reported in the moral development literature suggests that relevant themes were identified within the current data set. The additional theme, namely "personal", was suggested by Turiel and colleagues (e.g., Turiel, 1983) as an argument presented by respondents who viewed the issue as having no consequences to anyone but themselves. Further, as detailed above, a third coder, blind to the study and the moral development literature, identified thematic content similar to that identified by the thesis author.

A detailed description of each identified theme will now be outlined. It will be argued that these themes are socially constructed. Because we live in a social world, it is necessary that we share acceptable notions of acceptable behaviour. As mature moral agents, we communicate in such a way to be

understood and accepted. These themes represent the assumptions by which we interact, and the respondents draw upon these assumptions when negotiating the meaning of everyday sociomoral issues. Therefore, by examining the emergence and refinement of thematic categories in discussions, the thesis author could identify any changes in judgments during ongoing negotiation. Although differences in the initial conceptualization of the issues and influences of social negotiation can be identified in the short excerpts to follow, the influence of ongoing social interaction will be highlighted later in the thesis.

<div align="center">Themes</div>

Justice

This includes references to judgments relating to fairness and equality, including judgments concerning stereotyping and discrimination. Out of the 47 family discussions, justice was referred to in 30.4%, 19.5%, and 34.0% of the discussions by fathers, mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2 referred to this theme in 40%, 33%, and 44% of discussions, respectively. A summary of frequencies of responses by themes can be seen on Table 10.

Table 10.

Content Analysis for Main Study--Frequencies of Respondents by Themes

	N	%
1. Individual Rights and Freedoms		
Family Group		
Target Adolescent	47	23.4
Mother	47	12.8
Father	46	22.0
Peer Group		
Target Adolescent	30	26.7
Peer 1	30	20.0
Peer 2	25	20.0
2. Autonomy		
Family Group		
Target Adolescent	47	46.8
Mother	47	8.5
Father	46	12.0
Peer Group		
Target Adolescent	30	53.3
Peer 1	30	40.0
Peer 2	25	20.0
3. Justice		
Family Group		
Target Adolescent	47	34.0
Mother	47	19.5
Father	47	30.4

Table 10 continued

	N	%

Peer Group

	N	%
Target Adolescent	30	40.0
Peer 1	30	33.0
Peer 2	25	44.0

4. Welfare

Family Group

	N	%
Target Adolescent	47	42.6
Mother	47	55.3
Father	46	26.1

Peer Group

	N	%
Target Adolescent	30	46.7
Peer 1	30	56.7
Peer 2	25	40.0

5. Role Obligations

Family Group

	N	%
Target Adolescent	47	57.5
Mother	47	70.2
Father	46	63.0

Peer Group

	N	%
Target Adolescent	30	46.7
Peer 1	30	56.7
Peer 2	25	48.0

6. Values and Morals

Family Group

	N	%
Target Adolescent	47	46.8
Mother	47	53.2
Father	46	54.3

Table 10 continued

	N	%
Peer Group		
Target Adolescent	30	33.3
Peer 1	30	46.7
Peer 2	25	36.0

7. Personal

Family Group		
Target Adolescent	47	19.0
Mother	47	15.0
Father	46	2.0

Peer Group		
Target Adolescent	30	46.7
Peer 1	30	56.7
Peer 2	25	48.0

8. Social Regulation

Family Group		
Target Adolescent	47	36.2
Mother	47	40.4
Father	46	43.5

Peer Group		
Target Adolescent	30	40.0
Peer 1	30	33.3
Peer 2	25	44.0

The follow excerpts are representative of a justice argument:

Issue, Banning Books

M   Do you know what this one is about?

T   They were trying to ban <u>Of Mice and Men</u> because of some swear words and stuff.

M   Oh, it was more than swear words, it was very religious based. It wasn't an issue of what is good for the children.

T   That sucks. That the Christians wanted it to be banned?

M   yes.

T   <u>It's not only Christians that work in this world. Jeez!!</u>

The young adolescent (age 13) was influenced by her mother's initial

conceptualization of the topic as being a "religious-based" issue. Based on this

social exchange with her mother, the adolescent reconceptualized the issue

from an issue involving "swearing" to an issue involving a religious group

imposing their views on the general population. Through social negotiation, the

adolescent judged that imposing individual religious views onto the general

population is unfair. In the following exchange, the father examined the

implication of teenage crime on the general population and considered the

implication of such a law on the welfare of society. The adolescent suggested

that the law was unfair or discriminatory in that it was unfair for people to push

their personal beliefs onto others or to generate a law to target a specific group

of individuals (e.g., equality under the law).

Issue, Legal Curfews

F   I guess the question is if there was a particular area of town ...where there was particularly high crime rate, then the possibilities in terms of the priority of protecting civilians and property... that it may be that decided if it is only the teenagers...

T   ...<u>that's totally unfair to say, it is generalizing that teenagers...it is just the same as saying all teenagers do crime</u>.

Similar judgments could be seen in peer discussions

P1   I know it is hard to say, I know it is easy to say well, this group of people, the majority of them are committing these crimes and generalize, but when it is like when you are a member of the group and you are doing everything right and you are not breaking the law, <u>it doesn't seem fair</u>.

The theme of justice could also be seen in the following:

T   I don't think that <u>it is fair</u>, I mean, yeah, if you want to come back and finish something then it is really legitimate, I think that yea, you can come back, but I don't think that, unless you are really serious about it. I think you should have to pay. However, in terms of getting jobs, they won't hire you unless you have experience, yet you can't get a job to get experience. That's not fair.

M   It is all in who you know. You haven't got a chance of getting a job unless they know somebody.

T   I know that. We're not saying that's not true, but it's not fair.

F   It's not fair.

M   What in life is fair?

For the younger adolescent boys, arguments were less articulate. However, there is an attempt to apply the language used in Canadian culture regarding discrimination and fairness when discussing legal drinking/driving ages and legal curfews.

P1   I think we should be able to drive at age 13.

P2 No. No. I think we should be able to get our learners at age 13.

P1 Ya, that's a good idea.

PT No. No. They are talking about raising them.

P2 Raising them?

P1 That's crazy. What's the point?

P2 The older people are getting jealous that the younger people can drive better and there is <u>stereotypical people</u>.

PT Shouldn't we look at this matter from both sides?

P2 Yes, we should.

P1 Why do they raise it? Because more people, like, got into crashes.

P2 They think that every teen is bad.

PT But the teen thing, the adults have more accidents.

P1 I know a lot of impatient adults.

When examining the above transcript, the target adolescent is attempting to renegotiate the discussion from a personal understanding of the issue, that is, how it affects them personally, to a more general understanding of the implications of the issue. The target adolescent suggested that those making laws want to raise the age. As they debated the possible reasons why adults would do this, they suggested that the law is unfair as it stereotyped adolescents and made a generalized statement that all teenagers are bad. They also debated the flaws of the logic behind such a law, suggesting that it was unfair to suggest that only teens have accidents.

In the Sexual Harassment issue, many respondents discussed the injustice

of power differences between the genders.

PT   Some boys do in our school and it is embarrassing. It's not fair. It's not fair, because we don't go around saying boys are ugly; we wouldn't have the nerve. You just don't go up to somebody and make fun of them. They seem to think that they can say things that are personal.

_____

M   What do you know about sexual harassment?

T   Well, I've had my butt grabbed.

M   And you figure that's sexual harassment?

T   Schools are like that, I think it makes you feel really bad about yourself, when boys make fun of you. It isn't fair. Girls don't go around doing that.

Welfare

The welfare theme refers to the rights of individuals or society to live in safety and security. It includes justifications to how the issue may be good or harmful to self, others and society, and the need to protect the vulnerable in society (e.g., children, elderly, minorities). As mentioned above, it also includes concepts of psychological harm. Out of the 47 family discussions, welfare was referred to in 26.1%, 55.3%, and 42.5% of the discussions by fathers, mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2 referred to this theme in 46.7%, 56.7%, and 40.0% of discussions, respectively.

Within the following transcript, the mother argued that the sexual harassment that her daughter is experiencing is an infringement on her rights. However, the daughter talked about the psychological distress of being disconnected from her peers as a result of going public with sexual harassment

charges.

M   Nobody has the right to sexually harass you or harass you in any way, or make any kind of remark against your body...or sexually exploit you...what do they say?

T   "you have nice tits" and so on, and I get so fed up...

M   Nobody has the right, especially face to face, to say something like that, I find that really offensive. You need to talk to somebody about this.

T   I don't want to be a rat... All my friends are still mad at me [they say I asked for it]... I'm still depressed all the time.

In a similar peer discussion, a target adolescent expressed her concern about

the psychological consequences of sexual harassment.

P1   I know this guy, and he didn't do anything, like he'd fool around with everyone and pinch their butts as a joke, but all of a sudden this girl just out of the blue filed a report. Like, there was no reason for that, like, it has always been that way, why would it change? She can tell him to get lost. There are some girls that are little skags and like it.

PT   Well, it might hurt people's feelings when guys make stupid comments about your body.

P1   Well, it may make others feel good that guys notice them.

Interestingly, what causes harm can be an issue of negotiation. In the

following excerpt, both the mother and father take a welfare position, but

disagree on the approach protection should take.

F   ...I would like to see the drinking age raised to 19. My reasoning is the same as them trying to place condom machines in the schools. My motivation is to keep it out of the high schools. It gives them a false message by saying its o.k., and they might not have the self-esteem to stand up to the pressure.

M   I think that they should have access to protect them from getting HIV.

The fathers suggested that high school students should be protected from false

messages and pressure, while the mother suggested that children should be protected from disease. Finally, in both the issues of banning books and the influence of the media on teenage violence, the mother in the following transcript expressed her general concern about protecting young children from violence on television and from language that she feels is offensive in the school curriculum.

M   I think that society is helping to curb the amount of violence that is shown to the most impressible society, the little kids... everything goes in as a young child...it can be terrifying and it can affect them.

T   I think people can decide for themselves. It should be their choice.

M   Well, you are 18 and an adult and can base your decision on your own morals... In both these issues, I think that society has an obligation to protect the most sensitive, to protect the young people; they should not be taught to swear by the literature that they are obligated to study in school.

Individual Rights and Freedoms

The mother in the above transcript agreed with her son's assertion of his competency of being able to make "adult" decisions based on "his own morals". In other words, the mother suggested that by age 18, her son could enter into public deliberation over everyday sociomoral issues and could come up with "the right" decisions and courses of action. Individual rights and freedoms includes references to free speech, freedom of choice, and right to personal privacy. Out of the 47 family discussions, personal rights was referred to in 22.0%, 12.8%, and 23.4% of the discussions by fathers, mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2 referred to this theme

in 26.7%, 20.0%, and 20.0% of discussions, respectively. The following are

excerpts from transcripts representing this category:

Issue, Banning Books

PT My family thinks it is really stupid to ban books because I believe we have a choice. If you don't want to read a book you don't have to.

T I still believe in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. People should have the right to privacy in their home. They should have the right to do what they want as long as the people involved are consenting and in their own home.

M As soon as you have a law, then some books are banned and not others, and who makes the decision, about which books are banned? That's what scary.

M I don't think anything should be banned, even if it is really awful.

F What if it is hate against women?

M No, I don't think that should be banned either. I can't say that these people can't have their opinion because I would be a hypocrite.

The individuals in the above transcripts advocate for individual rights with

limited government involved in their choice in what they read, say publicly, or

what they chose to do in their privacy of their home. However, in terms of the

rights of adolescents, establishing competency and responsibility is problematic

to those in society who have to balance individual rights and welfare. As

suggested by a father in the following transcript, society has to decide where to

draw the boundaries for when teenagers need protection and when they should

have authority over their own behaviour.

F We have to realize "what is the influence on society of these things?" and

now we are starting to identify that. The same with condoms, you make them too easy for people, you will promote it, I think. And the same things with legal driving age and legal drinking age. At some point you have to realize where is the good cut off ... same with cigarettes.

Within the following transcript, the adolescent (age 14) takes a strong position that sexuality is a personal choice. The mother advocated the right to choose, but implied that her son had yet to develop a mature moral identity.

Issue, Condoms in Tuxedos

T   I want to have my own choice. I don't want someone saying to me....I don't want someone saying anything else to me. I just want to make my own choices.

M   Well, no, it would be your own choice, but I believe abstinence allows for you to get a sense of your own identity and who you are and allow your sexuality to develop...and when you start developing an intimate relationship....

T   or you could say sex is fun, so it is, o.k. Which is the absolute opposite of what you are saying, and I don't want to hear that. I want to have my choice and not have what I just said drummed into me and I don't want to have what you just said drummed into me.

Autonomy

Autonomy includes references of independence and appeals to age or being mature enough use one's own judgment to decide what is right and wrong. It also includes references to rebellious actions or actions taken independent of rules or authority. Out of the 47 family discussions, autonomy was referred to in 12.0%, 8.5%, and 46.8% of the discussions by fathers, mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2 referred to this theme in 53.3%, 40.0%, and 20.0% of discussions, respectively.

The following transcripts represent autonomy claims:

PT   I don't think adults should have the right to tell us our bedtime. I think we are old enough to decide when we should go to bed.

P1   I agree. I have quite a bit of freedom.

T   By the age of 18, you have formed your own opinions and you are going to do what you want anyway. You have formed your own opinions and your own morals.

These adolescents suggested that moral authority should be granted by age 18. The issue of moral authority or "maturity" has been discussed theoretically as having to do with issues of autonomy (e.g., Tappan, 1991). To claim moral authority means to acknowledge one's own moral perspective and to honour (and expect that others will honour) what one thinks, feels and does, even in the face of disagreement. It further assumes responsibility and accountability for one's moral actions and is tied in with his or her moral identity. In everyday discourse, or common language, autonomy is discussed in terms of maturity and responsibility. This is clearly something to be valued because it grants people the capacity for making decisions and does not require that all of their decisions be reviewed by parents or need for laws to regulate them. Further, many adolescents reported that placing rules or laws prohibiting unwanted behaviour would only trigger adolescents to assert their moral autonomy.

Issue, Condoms

T   No matter how much you want them to stop, they aren't going to.

M   Why do you say that?

T   Maybe they just want to defy their parents.

M   to show their parents that they are more adult, do you mean?

T   yea, maybe, maybe even trying to show a little to themselves that they are old enough.

Issue, Banning Books.

T   The kids should have the right, I mean most kids who read this book are my age, like grade 11 or 12. They have brains, too. They are practically grown up; they can make their own decisions. I think I mean I know every kid my age has been subjected to swearing...that is the least of it.

Role Obligations

As mentioned above, dealing with adolescents and their families within the context of societal demands is complex. Many negotiations centre around what individuals, parents, and society should do to maintain societal norms. Role obligation refers to what individuals, parents, and society "should/should not" do or "ought to/ought not" to do. Specifically, what are the expectations of societal members, both individually and collectively? Out of the 47 family discussions, role obligation was referred to in 63.0%, 70.0%, and 57.5% of the discussions by fathers, mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2 referred to this theme in 46.7%, 56.7%, and 48.0% of discussions, respectively.

What is evident, again, is that the general expectations of a mature individual is to act in a responsible, moral manner and accept the consequences of his or her actions. Parental obligations are to protect their

children and to raise independent moral agents. The government plays a complex role that must respect the democratic principles of the individual, the family unit, and society. Specifically, what do you do when individuals or parents are not living up to societal expectations and infringe on societal rights? Within the following interaction, the son initially placed responsibility for his marks within parental authority. However, the father suggested that people may be able to guide him but that he is ultimately responsible for doing his own work. Further, the mother was unsure of how to judge this particular issue, that is, she was unsure of the contribution of school system in creating inferior education.

Issue, Education

F   What's wrong with these kids?

T   They want to go back to school to get better marks.

F   Why do they have to go back to school?

T   Because they can't get a job.

F   Why do they have to go back in the first place?

T   Because of their parents.

M   No, because they didn't do it right the first time.

F   They messed around. Who's responsibility is it to see that you get decent marks?

T   The parents?

F   Is it?

T   The teachers?

F   What about you, the parents can encourage you, but you are the one who has to do the work.

M   I personally feel that it is as much society's responsibility... well, I don't know if it is parents or society, or who is responsible, but I feel the whole school system needs to be revamped.

<u>·Personal</u>

A personal argument refers to a respondent's appeal that the issue is not relevant to his or her personal situation. This definition comes out of the work of Turiel (1983) and Smetana (1989). They suggest that the personal domains includes such judgments as "personal choice", "autonomy", and "judgments of rebellion". However, the current data suggests that personal <u>choice</u> is an appeal to the constitutional right to choose. In this thesis, a "personal choice" argument is included in individual rights. Further, as discussed above, it has been argued that the theme of <u>autonomy</u> has a common thread among many of the themes and has important meaning for adolescents, which tended to be de-emphasized by Smetana and colleagues. Out of the 47 family discussions, the personal theme was referred to in 2.0%, 15.0%, and 19.0% of the discussions by fathers, mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2 referred to this theme in 46.7%, 56.7%, and 48.0% of discussions, respectively. Excerpts from the transcripts representing this view are as follows:

M   I haven't read this book so I don't care.

T   I don't stay up that late so I don't really care, it doesn't affect me.

M   I guess this issue doesn't really matter to our family. None of us smoke, and I guess that its their lungs, so who cares?

_____

P1   No offense but I think this issue is stupid. I haven't read the book, so I don't care.

Interestingly, the personal theme was referred to relatively infrequently in family discussions when compared to peer discussion groups. The data suggests that parents are discussing issues within a broader social, cultural, and historical context, as described in the transcripts presented previous section (role obligations). In other words, as parents feel that it is part of their obligation to transmit morals and values to their children, parents do not readily accept a personal argument from their child as they see the issues as having broader implications to society or to their own individual rights and freedoms. This will be discussed in more detail below when comparing family and friend groups.

<u>Values and Morals</u>

This theme refers to judgments that directly identify issues as "moral" issues. This also includes references to cultural values and beliefs. This category includes references to factors influencing moral development and moral choice. Out of the 47 family discussions, this theme was referred to in 54.3%, 53.2%, and 46.8% of the discussions by fathers, mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2 referred to this theme in 33.3%, 46.7%, and 36.0% of discussions, respectively. The following

references typify this theme:

P1 In our culture, premarital sex is wrong. I can just look to our community for moral guidance.

P2 In our religion, premarital sex is wrong.

M   Society pushes university, it gives us the message that it is the only thing that really matters.

T   Society tells us that money is means everything.

M   I don't like the morality portrayed on television. I think television really desensitizes us to accept violence.

In many cases, issues were discussed within the above thematic categories as respondents negotiated the consequences of laws or rules. For example, respondents suggested that education may promote negative behaviour or that laws are unfair. However, there are many instances where the respondents negotiated the logistics of laws or suggest alternative solutions to the problem independent of the above themes, which would be included in the "regulation" category.

Social Regulation

This category refers to the effectiveness of rules and regulations, including formal legal sanctions. Respondents often referred to alternative solutions or flaws in the system. This theme excluded references to do with ineffectiveness of rules due to the notion of rebellion (autonomy) or negative consequences to democratic principles. Out of the 47 family discussions, the regulation theme

was referred to in 43.5%, 40.4%, and 36.2% of the discussions by fathers,

mothers, and target adolescents, respectively. Within the 30 peer discussion

groups, the target adolescent, and adolescents coded as peer 1 and peer 2

referred to this theme in 40.0%, 33.0%, and 44.0% of discussions, respectively.

The following represents justifications due to problems with the rule itself,

including problems with enforcement:

Issue, Banning Books

P1   What's the point of banning books?

PT   It would take a lot of money and kids wouldn't be reading it anyways. It
     would save money for the School Boards.

P1   If you didn't want that book, it would cost you some money to break the
     contract.

Issue, Media and Violence

P1   Maybe they would make the worse shows at a later time....I think they
     should do something like call you and ask do you want this? and if you can
     say, say yes or no.

Issue, Legal Ages

F   I would like to see the drinking age in Alberta increased to 19. It is the
     lowest in Canada and it would be good to have it consistent across the
     provinces.

Issue, Cigarettes

F   I think the problem is a practical one. How are they going to run to every
     store? I just don't think the police have the time to enforce it.

T   I think the problem is not...like it won't change if you say selling cigarettes
     to any kid is illegal and even if they don't sell them, the law is not going to
     stop the problem.

M   But if you are caught smoking, do you think that would stop it?

T   Oh yea, I think that is what they have to do. The buying rule is stupid.

F   If I give them to you, it is not selling, so its no penalty. Like, the crime is selling, and if I give it to you, then there is no crime.

T   I think they have to make the actual act illegal.

In summary, respondents relied on 8 strategies when examining the associated issues with the 8 topics. Discourse influenced by democratic rights permeates the discussions and shapes how these sociomoral issues are viewed. Respondents generally agreed upon the basic assumptions necessary for social organization. Specifically, competent and responsible adults should be free to make their own decisions. However, in order to be moral agents, they should act responsibly towards others and take responsibility for their own actions. Allowances are made for those who are thought to be incompetent. The above examples also demonstrate the complexity of establishing legal sanctions. Many transcripts included debates around the effectiveness of proposed laws or the feasibility of enforcing a proposed law. As well, many questioned the social and personal relevance that the issue had on their lives. Finally, respondents generally examined parental obligations when children need protection or when children do not act in a socially appropriate way. Both parents and adolescents readily admit that the role of parents is to raise moral, autonomous adults who are competent to make responsible decisions. However, society struggles with the issue of granting adolescents the right to participate in society as an adult, or granting them "moral autonomy" (Tappan, 1991).

Social Negotiation

During discussions, respondents used a variety of themes during on-going negotiation. The total number of themes referred to across issues ranged from 1 to 6 themes for target adolescents (mean=3.01, S.D.=1.2), from 1 to 6 for mothers (mean=2.6, S.D.=1.2), and from 1 to 5 for fathers (mean=2.5, S.D.=1.3). In peer discussions groups, the number of themes referred to ranged from 1 to 5 for target adolescents (mean=2.9, S.D.=1.3), from 1 to 6 for peer 1 (mean=2.9, S.D.=2.4), and from 1 to 6 for peer 2 (mean=2.5, S.D. 1.3). Social negotiation can be traced through changes in themes in both friend and family groups. In the following transcript, both the target adolescent (age 13) and Peer 2 disagree with legal curfews and debate both the premise of such a law and the role of parents and society in monitoring behaviour. Each respondent referred to a number of themes during this discussion.

P1 I think that it is fair that kids should have to be in bed. (justice)

P2 I don't.

P1 well, off the streets

PT no way.

P2 I don't think that it's right for the government to say that you have to be in at this time because it's like they are controlling you. (role obligations, government)

PT The government should have <u>no</u> control. (role obligations, government)

P2 And if you are going to live your own life, then you are going to have to learn to take responsibility. And if you want to be out that late, then you should be out that late. (personal obligations, rights)

P1 But I can see their point, because of accidents and most of the break-ins have been at night by teenagers. (welfare, society)

PT no!

P2 It's not by teenagers and if people want to be outside then they are going to go no matter what the law says. (autonomy)

PT What if you want to go out on a date or late show?

P2 It should be up to your parents to decide, but you should be mature enough and responsible enough to be able to know when you have to go home.(parental obligations/autonomy)

PT It's your parents' choice. I think midnight is a fair curfew. It should be your opinion and your parents opinion. If you are out having a good time, then phone them and let them know you want to stay out later. I think that's the fairest way of doing it. (obligations/Justice)

P2 They can't stereotype, saying that we're all going to do bad things if we are out. (justice)

P1 Bad stuff could still happen to us, but...It's your freedom of choice.... But if you are out late, you could get raped. (welfare/rights)

PT That's not likely if you are out on a date and know the guy and your parents know him.

P1 I guess as you say, maybe some don't have as much self control. (personal obligations)

PT It's probably because that's how they were brought up. (morality)

P2 [the law] will probably get teens madder and madder that they can't go out and they will go out anyway. (autonomy)

PT There should be no legal curfews.

P1 Ya, I guess it is the general feeling that it's between you and your parents. (obligations, personal versus parental)

Peer 1 moves from considering the negative consequences of teenage

behaviour on society to personal welfare to considering the infringement of

individual rights and freedoms. Her final judgment entertains the idea of removing curfews out of the legal realm to the responsibility of parents and the individual adolescent. What is clearly evident in this short exchange is the diversity of themes that are used to debate this topic.

Changes in judgment can also be seen in family discussions. In the following, the parents try to move the adolescent from his original strong stance to entertain the implications of the issue on democratic principles. It is also interesting to note that as the focus of the discussion changes, the mother begins to change her position to almost contradict herself at the end.

Issue, Banning books

T   I don't care, I will read what I want, it is my God given right.

M   What if it is bad, like pornography?

T   so?

M   Should those kinds of books which are really filthy... as far as I am
concerned, is something like this okay where it is disrespectful or attacks
the dignity of another person, usually a female or child. So; that's banned,
I think.

T   I don't care about those books. I don't read them so they don't bother me.

M   What about your art books...Let's say that you weren't allowed to bring your
art books to school because they have nude pictures in them, what do you
think about that?

T   I wouldn't care. I would bring it as often as I wanted just to tic them off.

M   Well, this is different. It says it has swears in it. Does that matter?

T   no.

F   This guy, who is a member of the government who is trying to have books

removed, maybe we should try and remove him.

M This all started with Hitler... he burned all books..mostly philosophy and religious books.

T What would the philosophy books say?

M It would say how to think, what to value in life, and only what he wanted to value.

F So this MP guy wants you to read the things that don't use swear words in it.

T In other words, he's a Hitler

M&F NO!

M We don't know that but he is starting on the path, when you start restricting like that.

F He wants to control what you read, somewhat.

T I think that in each classroom, the parents should decide themselves.

M I think you can't really have a parent telling a class. You'd have 30 parents having 30 different opinions....I guess I think that children should be raised to appreciate what is good and what isn't according to the training from the parents to begin with, so when you get there you are going to know that certain things aren't very nice and certain things are, and you will totally make those decisions for yourself.

F He is kind of religious, and let's assume that he would want to take out anything that had to do with development and civilization and teach only the religious view that the world was built in 6 days or something or 7 days. What do you think of that?

T That's bull.

F Do you think he has the right to do that?

T No...It's like this political correctness... You have to be careful what you say. The grade 3s have these image books that had really neat pictures in them and they banned them because they contained negative images of children.

M   It's like Dick and Jane, there was something about them that they didn't like, I don't know, it may have portrayed the girls in the feminine way or it wasn't real enough. But some books have portrayed the women as sort of in a stereotype position, like always in the home, cooking... And so in order to develop some sense of equality, you have to change the images and what is acceptable.

F   The whole thing is expanding. We have now gone from the swear words, Jesus Christ and God to Political correctness on a number of fronts when it comes to books.

M   Just trying to change attitudes is not bad, but in order to implement a change in society, you have to implement changes in a book and what kids are educated to see.

As mentioned by the father, the "issue" becomes defined and discussed in many different ways. The social interaction influences the son to examine the implications on democratic principles. Interestingly, the son makes a connection between restriction of speech and the issue of political correctness. The mother makes the connection between political correctness and stereotyping. As the discussion moves from an issue of swearing to stereotyping, the mother's judgment changes. She originally suggests that restricting what we read is a dangerous precedent and that adolescents should be raised with the ability to critically analyze what they read. However, when discussing feminist issues and gender stereotyping, she suggests that books are a powerful medium in which to implement change of societal norms by either reinforcing or changing stereotypes. This argument has subtle implications for the strong influence books do have on children, which are similar arguments presented by those advocating removal of books with swears. As one follows the arguments and the apparent contradiction,

individuals make judgments on simple issues within a specific context. However, as everyday sociomoral issues are complex and have many outreaching consequences, both parents and adolescents have a difficult time classifying a topic within a specific domain.

The influence of social negotiation can be seen by following two transcripts from the same family discussing two issues, namely education and legal curfews. Within the discussion over education, the 13-year old adolescent is influenced by his father's appeal to personal responsibility.

F   What's wrong with these kids?

T   They want to go back to school to get better marks.

F   Why do they have to go back to school?

T   Because they can't get a job.

F   Why do they have to go back in the first place?

T   Because of their parents.

M   No, because they didn't do it right the first time.

F   They messed around. Who's responsibility is it to see that you get decent marks?

T   The parents?

F   Is it?

T   The teachers?

F   What about you, the parents can encourage you, but you are the one who has to do the work.

However, in the following discussion over legal curfews, the adolescent takes a

personal stance, then tries to incorporate the argument made by his father by suggesting it is under his own control. However, both the mother and father explore parental obligations, but disagree on the role society should play.

Issue, legal curfews

T   I think [legal curfews] are ok, I wouldn't be out that late anyway.

M   I think it's a good idea because it may reduce crime.

T   It might but we don't know that for sure.

F   You are going to a dance next week and if you had to take the bus home

T   ...we might be out past 10

F   Then you'd be breaking the law. Who is suppose to be making the decisions when you ought to be out, the police or your parents?

T   the kids.

F   the kids?

T   no, the parents.

F   then, you think it is a good idea to make it illegal?

T   well, maybe not illegal.

F   You already have a curfew. Maybe it is silly for us to discuss this because we are willing to set curfews.

T   Not all teenagers break the law, though.

M   I think it comes back to the issue to parents should be responsible.

T   Well, if they are 16, 17, they are just like adults, do you need parents to tell them to come in?

F   We were married at age 17. Would you want it to be legal for us to be married, yet can't go out past midnight?

T   That would be dumb because you are practically grown.

F   If kids are breaking the law, they will just break the curfew, too. Some parents don't care.

M   That's true.

T   Well, then, if the kids broke the law and if there was a curfew and the police took them home, the parents wouldn't care.

M   I don't know. These are complex issues. Let's go on to another one.

Within this transcript, the father does not allow the issue to be discussed from a personal theme, as presented by his son. Rather, the father makes the topic meaningful to the family's everyday life. He pointed out the potential to restrict individual freedom by going out to evening functions. The adolescent then relied on judgments developed within the discussion over education and implied that kids should be competent and responsible enough to choose their own bedtime.

When challenged on his initial personal stance, the adolescent appealed to maturity and took a "public" stance with his own views. In other words, at some time during adolescence, there is a time when the child does not have to rely on parental authority and is able to go public and participate in society as a mature adult. What this also suggests is that the adolescent is willing to go public with his own views, and participate with other adults on an equal basis. Specifically, participating publicly suggests that the adolescent would feel comfortable that any decisions made would be morally acceptable to others in the community. However, the father did not grant him the status of an

individual moral agent within the context of curfews, suggesting that at his age (age 13), curfews should be under parental control.

Within this exchange, the mother can be observed working out the implications of this issue socially. While thinking in terms of reducing crime, her husband points out that they were married at age 17 and suggested that there was an inconsistency of being able to marry but not being able to stay out past midnight. Further, the son challenged his mother's initial argument by pointing out that nobody really knows if legal curfews reduce crime or not. The mother appears to react to the challenge, but is confused on what to do about this complex issue. She ended this discussion by stating that the issue is very complex and asked to go on to another issue.

Not only do judgments change within the 15 minute conversations, respondents also report that judgments change over time.

Issue, Media and Violence

T   I work with kids out in the field, and four kids from junior high walked
    across the field and pulled a knife on them... I think that it's how the
    parents have raised them and that they have been brought up with the
    totally wrong idea how to deal with things.

F   Where do you think the violence comes from?

T   I think a lot of it comes from TV, like ... it glorifies it most. They make it
    seem that people with the guns have so much power and people who are
    in gangs with low self-esteem need other people to back them up to make
    them feel more powerful.

M   You know, I thought you would say that this issue was unimportant
    because when we talked before about it, you sort of said "no, no, I don't
    think watching violent movies makes a difference" and you thought it was
    no big deal, but now I think you do think that, a little bit.

T   A little bit. I just don't know, I really never thought about it before, but I would say people know its not real, but I think that people on TV are heros and people want to be like that.

M   So you've changed a little bit. How have you changed on that, like something has changed. You didn't think that way before.

T   I don't know.

As suggested by Pekarsky (1983), the meaning of sociomoral issues is negotiated socially, and that Kohlberg did not address the idea of how issues became discussed in moral terms. Kohlberg assumed that individuals would recognized a moral when they were cognitively sophisticated enough to do so. Therefore, by providing respondents moral dilemmas, Kohlberg missed the important processes involved that lead up to the issues being viewed as a dilemmas between two competing moral claims. However, as suggested by Pekarsky, not all sociomoral issues are readily identified as moral dilemmas. Even if an issue becomes discussed in moral terms, individuals may renegotiate the moral meaning to a point where the issue has little or no moral implications. This can be observed in the following transcript:

Issue, Cigarettes

F   Cigarettes. Now that is one I couldn't get interested in at all.

T   No, me neither. The girls in the peer group wanted to talk about it, I didn't really say much in that particular one.

F   There is more smoking in Canada than in the U.K, I noticed.

T   Oh yea.

M   It is banned here in public places, and they have signs on the doors..

T   There is no smoking in English schools, there is a bit of drugs, but not much.

M   I feel it is actually going after the easy victim, which is the store owner, and really the emphasis is not upon the store owner at all.

F   But is it a police issue?

M   That's right, it's their lungs, isn't it, it's their pockets.

T   There shouldn't be a law against smoking at all.

F   I just can't get excited about the whole cigarette issue.

M   no.

T   no.

Although the mother initially implied that going after the store owners is potentially unfair, all respondents renegotiated the moral implications of this topic, suggesting that it is not important enough for social regulation.

In summary, these examples show how the identified themes are used as negotiation strategies during the initial conceptualization and modification of social understanding of everyday sociomoral issues. What is evident is that respondents find many issues associated with the topics, and that parents have few easy answers. Further, many of the topics were not defined in similar ways. For example, the Banning Books topic was discussed in terms of issues around freedom of choice, the implications of free speech in a democracy, protection of children, religious intolerance, the role of government and parents in screening materials, and the effectiveness of using books to change societal beliefs and attitudes. In other topics, the respondents initially conceptualized

the topic as having potential moral connotations, but quickly renegotiated the topic from potential moral implications to defining the topic to issues with little moral relevance.

It is easy to understand why individuals have problems categorizing complex social issues into discrete categories (e.g., Turiel, 1983) when the salient characteristics of the topics are not the same for everyone. As mentioned throughout the thesis, Turiel's information processing theory cannot readily account for changes of judgment. He suggests that social information is readily categorized within discrete boundaries that is readily identified by even young children. Further, Kohlberg's theory suggests a developmental endpoint in late adolescence, where moral maturity is marked by universal principled judgments based on justice. However, adults and teens in this thesis readily admit that these everyday, real life issues are complex and that meaning of these sociomoral issues changes across the lifespan. Judgments were formed and modified within a 15 minute conversation, while respondents report that judgments have changed over time.

The results can more readily be explained within a social constructionist view, which suggests that meaning of complex social issues is worked out socially with no developmental endpoint. In terms of socializing influences, respondents viewed family as a powerful influence on adolescent behaviour. Consistent with the literature (e.g., Montemayor, 1983), adolescents readily suggested that it is the parents' responsibility to provide their children with

morals and values that help guide them to make responsible choices throughout adolescence and into adulthood. Adolescents further suggested that they seek out friends with similar values as their family. Finally, a qualitative look at issues discussed by adolescents in both family and peer discussion groups suggested that both peers and parents influence how issues become defined and discussed.

Parent-Peer Group Comparisons

As mentioned above, a total of 10 adolescents participated in both parent and peer discussion groups. There were a total of 17 topics discussed within both peer and family groups. Interestingly, younger adolescents made conscious choices of what issues they were willing to go public with in terms of family discussions. For examples, many younger adolescents were reluctant to discuss topics around sexuality (e.g., condoms) with their parents.

Adolescent groups. The data showed that both parents and friends discussed the topics by exploring both the personal relevance to their own lives as well as discussed the issues in terms of the potential implications of the issues to society in general. However, peer groups preferred an experiential approach, which explained, in part, many of the uncodable transcripts. Many talked about each other's personal experiences that may or may not have been directly related to the topic chosen. For example, in many of the uncodable transcripts, friends asked each other questions about personal experimentation in drugs or sexuality rather than discussing the issue (e.g., placing condoms in

tuxedos or in schools, or sexual harassment).

Peer group, girls, age 15.

PT What about access to condoms?

P1 O.K. Go for it.

P2 Can I ask a personal question?

PT Sure

P2 Do you believe in premarital sex, are you, like, a virgin?

Cigarettes, girls, age 16

P2 I smoke occasionally

P1 Why?

P1 Just for the hell of it. It's not to be cool or anything. I tried smoking this year, nobody knew about it.

PT We were really hyper and jumped around all the time. We thought we needed one to relax.

P2 I smoke when I'm really depressed because it makes me feel better.

PT O.k., question. Has anyone ever tried drugs or will try drugs?

Sexual Harassment, girls age 16.

PT Has anyone ever tried to offer you a ride home?

P2 Yes, in grade 8, after one of the dances.

PT and you?

P1 Ya, and I took it.

PT Serious?

P2 You did? I have a major phobia, like if I'm walking down the sidewalk and a car slows down to turn the corner, I freak.

Girls, age 13

PT I hate the way boys are bigger, and they still are able to make you feel inferior. You know XXXX, he just pushes you around. He deliberately knocks me around and I always hit the wall. That's violent harassment.

P1 Sometimes I get so scared going into malls and stuff because I am afraid someone will kidnap me, or I get scared of being home alone.

PT ...at school, it's not just boys, its male teachers, too. Like, Mr. XXXX, when you go up to ask him a question, he looks straight down your shirt.

Education and jobs (boys, age 13)

PT It's hard because they won't hire you without experience, but you can't get experience without a job.

P1 Have you ever had a job?

P2 I had a paper route for 3 years. It makes a lot of money and gave me a lot of experience, too, and that goes on my resume and this is good because I can work at McDonald's and then from there I can go to Co-op.

P1 I am going to get a good job, but I don't know what I'm going to do from there. Maybe take General Studies in University and then see.

Adolescents reported that they would not discuss such personal actions with

their parents for fear of retribution.

> I tried this roach thing and they smoked it and it didn't do anything to me, so I said why waste my time and money, this only makes me sick..... my mom doesn't know, she'd shoot me and send me away to a home or something.

> o.k. o.k. It's confidential

In many peer discussions, the target adolescent took an active role in focusing

the group on the topic and providing a more general view of the topic from

which to generate more discussion. However, the direction of the conversation

often drifted to a more experiential discussion.

P1 Remember our experience with condoms?... One time XXXX was trying to figure out how to put on a condoms... and it was a glow-in-the dark one...

PT Do you think that condoms should be accessible in high schools?

P2 Well, they shouldn't man, cuz you'll think that there is a condom there, therefore the teacher thinks it is o.k., therefore it is o.k. The reason I don't do it is because I think it is not o.k. and I don't plan on it until I'm married. But it's hard because you get caught up in the moment. You have to have a strong willpower.

PT Some people are going to do it anyway.

P2 I think they should be easily accessible, but not in schools.

P1 Would you be made, let's say you were out with XXXX, or somebody that you liked, and he pulled out a condom, would you think that he was using you the whole time or would you think that I'm glad that he's prepared. I'd think he was a jerk and that's all he came for. But if a guy carried it around for safety....

P2 My boyfriend, we were going out and I looked through his front pocket and there were condoms there.

P1 my friend went downtown, and I'm kind of mad at her.. she is drinking and on drugs and she's 13 and goes out every night to get laid. That's her goal...

The above transcript quickly lead to a discussion about personal

experimentation of drugs and sexuality.

Issue, Legal Ages

PT Shouldn't we look at this matter from both sides?

P2 Yes, we should.

P1 Why do they raise it? Because more people, like, got into crashes.

P2 They think that every teen is bad.

T   But the teen thing, the adults have more accidents.

P1   I know a lot of impatient adults.

PT   Will your parents let you drive?

P1   yea

PT   Will yours?

P2   Yea, I can drive a golf cart....

Issue, Media and Violence

P2   Some video games are violent. You win for killing somebody. That's not sending a good message.

P1   People in XXX are druggies. They broke into somebody's house once and they stayed there and partied...

PT   Some shows send out really bad messages to the kids and when they grow up, they aren't going to be...

P1   have you seen X-Files?

PT   There are UFOs and stuff like that....

Parental Approaches.   While many family discussions resorted to

discussing issues in an experiential way, it was often initiated by the parents as

a way of engaging the adolescent to take a more active role in the

conversation. Parents took a more instructive or educative approach.

Issue, Banning Books

M   Our agenda is more to allow people the freedom to live their own lives that don't damage other people's - degrade other people, but within those parameters have wide margins for different options that people don't want to do or hear. They want very narrow options, exactly what books they are going to read. If that one got banned, just think of what others in that category... I have heard that it is not an extreme book, and if that is not extreme, there are a lot more which are much more...if that is sort of the benchmark then it comes that more books fall into the banned category. The precedents are scary.

M Well, I guess they argue that in school, it shouldn't be like TV. In school, it should be a learning thing.

T We are all grown up enough that we realize that people did talk like that and we can accept that and look at the other aspects of the story.

M Can you understand the other point of view? See if you can get into it.

F Well, the other point of view is that they are trying to protect people...

T trying to protect people from the real world so that when they get out there they'll just get destroyed. Is that what they are trying to do?

F What do you think they are trying to do?

M I think that some people think it is teaching their kids that it is ok to say a swear word that puts down Jesus or whatever it is.

Issue, Education

F How much do I pay for him to go to school?

M I have no idea.

F Maybe $7000. So, who is going to pay that $7000 for these guys to go back to school?

One strategy parents used to encourage adolescent participation was to ask

about their personal experiences with the issue, and then link it to more general

social implications.

M and [the child] made a comment about level of education and social tolerance.

F How do you feel your education is? I guess it has to start within the school. How do you see your education, as narrow or broad? I mean, I have never been in your school.

T What?

F Do you have students who argue for book banning in your school? Or teachers?

T   They can't say nothing. The teachers. She said she can't force her views on us.

F   I have trouble with that, that is, the type of education that doesn't happen to share ideas and opinions.

M   I think that is really a folly to believe that you can be totally value free. I know kids are easily influenced but if you are teaching them to create ideas of their own, then I don't know whether it is harmful to share your ideas and be completely honest and say this is where I come from....

Issues, Condoms

M   I don't think that having access is encouraging them to have sex because if they are not ready for sex, then they are not ready for it.

T   Over 75% of my friends are sexually active now.

M   are you?

T   no.

M   ...There are lots of people out there who think you are too young in your life to make those kinds of decisions, but if that is the way you feel now, and you think you do not want children, well then yes, you take that precaution.

In summary, as suggested by Shotter (1983), parents have a broader, more historical and cultural context by which to discuss social issues. As expected, parents provided a wider perspective on the issue, and challenged the social implications of judgments. Both groups used the adolescent's personal experiences, but in different ways. The adolescents actively shared their personal thoughts and feelings about the subject, and about personal experimentation in sensitive areas where they might have felt more uncomfortable revealing such activities to their parents. This also may be a result of a lack of historical context from which to discuss the issue on an

ongoing basis. Specifically, they did not have much information from which to elaborate from their initial exchange of views and relied on personal experiences, or did not see the personal relevance of the issue to their own life. In contrast, parents attempted to draw the adolescent into the conversation by appealing to their personal experiences, such as their experiences of sexual harassment or violence in the school or their views on education. One goal of this thesis was to examine the influences of parents and peers on the target adolescent during on-going social negotiation. This influence has been highlighted throughout the above excerpts but will now be detailed below.

Parent-Peer Influences

As mentioned, a goal of this thesis was to examine the influence of social negotiation on adolescent judgments in both parent and peer groups. It was suggested that the influence of social negotiation from one discussion group would carry into the second discussion group. When adolescents participated in parent groups before peer groups, the arguments presented by the adolescent in the peer groups reflected the influence of the parental arguments.

Issue, Banning Books

T   If you find a word or a swear in a book, nobody can force you to read it. But the thing is, sometimes when people start reading a book, they ...read racist comments and then you have to worry about some people who don't know any better taking them for truths.

F   The thing is people start reading the book about something that says something bad about your religion or takes something you hold dear and you might not have known that when you started reading the book.

T   But you can put the book down.

M&F   You can put any book down.

M   The question comes down to, "who makes the decisions?"...I guess when it comes to the whole issue of banning, I think that it is right that it is more education that you want to do than start to ban and forbid people. As soon as you start to ban and forbid, then everyone tries to get these things, sales go up, and the same with pornography, and not to say that it is great, but it is better to educate people than put a ban on these things.

T   I know this is a complex issue because people want freedom of speech...All these guys that go to court, like the Holocaust deniers, those are their views and they shouldn't be allowed, especially when they are teaching this like that at school, they are pressing their views on innocent children or uneducated, ignorant people who might not know any better.

M   Is <u>Of Mice and Men awful</u>?

F   Not according to the criteria we have been discussing, in terms of violent acts against others.

M   Well, people wanted to ban Tom Sawyer because it was very derogatory towards blacks. The terms used refer to niggers, so should we ban that?

T   Those books show you how it was back then, that's how people talked.

M   As soon as you have a law, then you ban some books and not others, and who makes those decision, you know, about which books are banned, and which are not, and that is what is scary.

The adolescent used themes of welfare and individual rights, and then examined the issue in terms of the potential negative consequences of swearing on the reader. Her argument changed from that of protection of children or the uneducated to arguing that the language in the book reflected the cultural norms of that time. Interestingly, when discussing this same issue with her peers, the target adolescent initially emphasized freedom of speech and gives the initial impression that the family presented a united view. She slowly presented her initial argument made with the family (welfare) but did so

in an abstract way. When challenged to make a judgment, she fell back to her

original welfare claim, but in a more tentative way.

PT   Well, I don't believe in banning books. That's dumb. That's the one me
     and my parents talked about.

P1   What did your parents say?

PT   We think it is really stupid to ban books because I believe we have a
     choice. If you don't want to read a book, you don't have to. So, if
     something in the book offends you personally, don't read it.

P1   It also depends on your maturity. I don't think they would give that book to
     a five-year old.

PT   I guess you could think the other way, some people would think that books
     that, let say, are saying racist things... there is the liberty of expression but
     they are also spreading hatred.

P1   So, you want to ban those kids of books?

PT   There is enough hatred in the world. If it promotes a certain kid of racism...
     then I think that it should be banned. I don't know, I mean, it is a hard
     issue because it is kind of a personal matter of opinion, like if you are a
     Nazi, you are, of course, going to say no, it shouldn't be banned, and what
     about freedom of speech?

A family transcript, cited previously, shows the influence of social

negotiation on a young adolescent who had no preset views on the subject.

This adolescent moved from judging the issue from a personal theme to

evaluating the arguments made by his mother and father in terms of 1) fairness

of the law, 2) effectiveness of the law, and 3) role responsibility.

T   I think [legal curfews] are ok, I wouldn't be out that late anyway. (personal)

M   I think it's a good idea because it may reduce crime. (welfare of society)

T   It might but we don't know that for sure.

F   You are going to a dance next week and if you had to take the bus home

T   we might be out past 10

F   then you'd be breaking the law. Who is suppose to be making the decisions when you ought to be out, the police or your parents? (debate over role obligations)

T   the kids.

F   the kids?

T   no, the parents.

F   then, you think it is a good idea to make it illegal?

T   well, maybe not illegal.

F   you already have a curfew. Maybe it is silly for us to discuss this because we are willing to set curfews.

T   not all teenagers break the law, though. (justice)

M   I think it comes back to the issue to parents should be responsible.

T   Well, if they are 16, 17, they are just like adults, do you need parents to tell them to come in? (autonomy)

F   We were married at age 17. Would you want it to be legal for us to be married, yet can't go out past midnight?

T   That would be dumb because you are practically grown.

F   if kids are breaking the law, they will just break the curfew, too. Some parents don't care.

M   That's true.

T   Well, then, if the kids broke the law and if there was a curfew and the police took them home, the parents wouldn't care.

M   well, then the parents should... I don't know, it's a hard subject to talk about. Let's talk about something else.

When discussing legal curfews with his peers, this same adolescent took an

active lead in the discussion and presented the judgments made by his family, including his mother's view on adolescent violence and father's view of parental responsibility.

PT There is going to be no change if they do that because it doesn't really matter if you make it later... you can just go out and get drunk and go do all that earlier....So it's dumb.

P1 The police will be out.

PT You can have parent permission. It's the parents that should be able to judge their curfews.

P1 Some parents feel their kids are more responsible than others.

P2 And some parents don't even care about their kids.

P1 If the law decides it, how would they go by this, like would the older people, like say that I'm 12 and I'm in grade 7 and now most people who are 12 are in grade 6, now would I have to go in at the same time?

PT It's for everyone under 16.

P2 What's the point?

PT The point is to reduce violence.

P1 That point came from me.

PT I made the best point that they are just going to go out earlier.

As well, the affects of arguments made in peer discussion groups can be observed in parent groups.

Issue, Condoms in Tuxedos, Peer group

P1 I think there should be a right to access condoms.

PT yea, it is not going to affect the way you think about it. I am not going to see some condom box and say, hey, I'm going to have sex now, because there are condoms available.

P2   It makes it easier because you are embarrassed to go to the drug store.

PT   But if they aren't mature or responsible enough to go to the store and get it, then they shouldn't be having sex, like, they aren't ready.

P2   It's their own choice.

P1   I think it is better to have sex with protection.

PT   So do I, but to say that having condoms in there is going to influence whether or not they have sex, I think that is stupid. It's not.

P1   I think they get a lot of that from tv. I think the majority of the influence comes from your friends.

P2   You see it on tv and say I want to do that now.

P1   We all watch tv and none of us are having sex, and all of us have the same friends.

PT   It's maturity.

Within the parent discussion, the target adolescent carried in her initial theme of

maturity and suggested that access does not increase behaviour. She also

incorporated some of the arguments made by her peers, including using

condoms for protection.

F   So, what do kids feel about condoms in school. Would you like to see condom machines in school?

T   I think it would be useful. We (the peer group) said that it doesn't change the amount of sex, but if people aren't mature enough to go out and get a condom from a store, then they aren't mature enough to have sex.

M   What about the issue of a time and place for everything. And is school a time and place for sex and a place for condoms?

T   You are away from your parents; it is a safe place to get them. I don't think it promotes it. I think people are still going to do it whether there are condoms or not.

F   ...To me, putting a condom machine in the schools is saying it's o.k. It gives false messages

M   ...that's what annoys me!

T   I don't think it encourages it. You aren't going to walk into the bathroom and see a condom machine and say I want to have sex. I think they need to hand out protection, it's not dealing with the problem that much but it is a solution to help prevent a lot of the bad outcomes.

In summary, the influence of on-going social interaction in shaping the conceptualization of important social issues can be seen for all respondents in both family and peer groups. The target adolescent appeared to incorporate ideas and judgments from one discussion group to the next. However, interpersonal style appears different within each group. Parents often moved the discussion into the direction of exploring the implications of the issue to society in general (e.g., implications on democratic principles, discussion on how society regulates behaviour). In contrast, peer groups often moved the conversations towards a more experiential level (e.g., psychological implications of the issue on self-esteem).

Chapter Summary

The goal of this chapter was to present an organized description of the massive amount of data accumulated in the form of discussion transcripts. The issues were defined and discussed in many different ways, and often the meaning was conceptualized and changed during social negotiation. Further, while many parents and older adolescents maintained their initial judgments within a narrow context (e.g., swearing is not an acceptable criterion for

banning books), they also admitted that the issues were complex when expanding the implications on a more general level (e.g., pornography, racism, stereotyping).

The content analysis of the 77 issues produced eight themes that respondents relied upon while debating the meaning of the current issues. Themes could be reliably identified within the transcripts. These included the following: 1) rights and freedoms, 2) autonomy or maturity, 3) justice, 4) welfare, 5) role obligations, 6) values and morals, 7) personal, and 8) social regulation. Similar information has been extrapolated from hypothetical moral dilemmas and from the parent-child conflict literature, suggesting that the present thesis identified relevant data within the transcripts. Further, these themes were identified in both peer and family discussion groups as respondents discussed the issues and considered the potential implications of the issues.

As suggested above, both groups appeared to discuss the issues in qualitatively different ways (e.g., peer groups emphasized personal experiences; parent groups emphasized potential social implications). However, social interaction with both groups influenced the target adolescent's conceptualization of the relevant issues associated with discussion topics. Finally, social interaction also had an impact on all members of both groups; adolescents as well as adults. This suggests that the process of acquiring social meaning is a life-long process that involves ongoing social negotiation as

individuals are confronted with different conversational partners and new information in their everyday life.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The goals of this study were twofold: 1) to begin initial exploration of the social negotiation process, employed by peer and family groups, as they enter into discussions of novel, real-life sociomoral issues, and 2) to explore qualitative differences between peer and parent groups as they discuss similar issues. Families and peer groups were given the choice of discussing two or three topics from a selection of 8 taken from local newspapers as stimuli for ongoing social debate. A total of 16 target adolescents participated in family discussion groups, and 10 of these adolescents discussed similar issues with friends in peer discussion groups. The 26 groups produced a total of 77 codable transcripts. The findings relevant to each of these questions will now be discussed.

Social Negotiation

The current study suggests that respondents in both peer and family groups ascribe different meanings to current issues, and that their different interpretations are articulated, elaborated, and modified in the course of their conversation. As suggested by Shotter (1993), individuals do not always express well-formed and orderly cognitions that have already been worked out internally. Rather, when encountering novel social situations, initial discussion may originate in a person's vague and unordered sense of the context they are in, and that understanding develops out of a set of "temporally conducted negotiations between themselves, their feelings, and those to whom they must

address themselves" (p. 108). Similar to the process by which an individual's internal thoughts are negotiated and organized in a back-and-forth conversational process, actual social interaction involves the expression of an individual's internal thoughts and a listener's attempts to understand. Further, each respondent challenges the other as to the "social appropriateness of their realizations and understandings, respectively" (p. 108). This view is at odds with the view expressed by Turiel and his colleagues, who suggest that social meaning is available in the social world to be apprehended. The data from this study is understood to challenge Turiel's approach.

In order to identify the process by which issues were shaped and modified throughout the discussion, a content analysis of the 77 issues was conducted. As a result, 8 themes were identified, including: 1) rights and freedoms, 2) autonomy, 3) equality and fairness, 4) welfare, 5) role obligations, 6) values and morals, 7) personal, and 8) social regulation. While similar concepts have been identified in the moral development literature, the methodological approach used in the current study suggests that these themes are found out socially and are not psychological. Respondents make references to more than one theme during the course of the conversation, suggesting that issues under discussion may be reconceptualized during the discussion and that as a consequence, meaning may change, or even emerge for the first time, as the discussion progresses.

In the cognitive moral developmental and information processing models,

the above-named themes have been conceptualized as moral rules (Darley & Shultz, 1990), domain criterion (Kahn, 1991; Smetana, 1991; Turiel, 1983), and justifications reflecting moral stage development (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). While similar to the current results, the thesis author argues that these themes are a product of the North American political and cultural contexts through which individuals come to discuss important sociomoral issues, and that the meaning of a given moral stance or theme is first formed and then reformed through ongoing social negotiations.

This process is not a process of applying "moral rules" that are incorporated within us and applied to external situations as they arise. Such a cognitive moral developmental approach assumes that we already know how to be responsible and autonomous individual members of our society and are faced only with the goal of gaining information relevant to our goals. Further, this process is not an information processing system, which assumes that the elements of a knowledge domain, and the rules the reasoner develops for manipulating them, are inherent within the social environment (e.g., Turiel, 1983). Such a model "fails to characterize the way in which people's everyday actions are always 'situated' or 'placed' within a social and moral, as well as a historically developed, political order, actual or imagined' (Shotter, 1993, p. 163). That is, using the computer metaphor that underpins the information processing approach, computers lack any sense of being individually and personally 'placed' in relation to those around them, including parents and

friends, and ultimately to the members of the community to whom they are morally bound in one way or another. Therefore, the information processing model lack the practical moral knowledge required to act in a socially responsible manner.

Results also suggest that there are common threads that run throughout the identified themes. First, in contradiction to Kohlberg's theory, which identifies a developmental endpoint in late adolescence, the social negotiation and manufacture of moral positions and points of view is an on-going, developmental social process that does not reach an endpoint. Second, the application of the above themes in the relational context of the adolescent to family, peers, and to society clearly centres around the debate about the point at which young people may be granted maturity, personal responsibility, and moral autonomy.

The Development of Moral Meaning

The meaning of social issues is shaped in a moment-by-moment process of social negotiations between parents and child and friends. Respondents readily admit that social issues are complex, and that meaning changes both on an individual and on a societal level over time. As suggested by one father, societal attitudes change, referred to as:

> "...a paradigm shift, where because things have been that way forever and ever and ever, that is the only way you can see them. And sometimes, you have to take all the current thinking out and say 'what if we do things this way' and do things totally different?".

Both parents and older adolescents struggle with the complexity of real life

issues and suggest that there are often no "absolute" answers or solutions to these issues. This is an acknowledgement of the complexity of most important, real life, sociomoral issues. Perhaps this pragmatic moralism could be characterized as a more contextualized understanding of the issue.

The complexity is highlighted in the fact that the meaning of specific issues change both within the framework of a single discussion across groups, and over time. As Pekarsky (1983) hypothesized, issues, such as Legal Curfews and Banning Books, were discussed in many different ways, including freedom of choice (rights), protection of children (welfare), equality (justice), the role of government, parents, individuals (role obligations), the influence on morality (moral, cultural values), and maturity to make one's own decision (autonomy). As suggested by Pekarsky (1983) and by Shotter (1993), and clearly evident in the data gathered for this thesis, some respondents did not necessarily conceptualize the problem as a conflict between competing moral claims. However, if the issue was identified as a moral conflict, the meaning could change with on-going negotiation.

When discussing real-life, complex social issues, it appears necessary to move from an absolute need to know all the "correct" answers to the need for a more contextualized understanding. However, such results become problematic for cognitive developmental models. According to Kohlberg, late adolescence involves the negotiation of relativism, which reflects the kind of subjectivism and hedonism associated with stage 2. A mature morality is represented by

Postconventional justice reasoning, where relativism is overcome and a principled universalizable justice reasoning prevails. However, results from the current study are consistent with those reported by Tappan (1989), who examined excerpts from personal, real life accounts of adolescent moral dilemmas. He found that as adolescents matured, they reported that they found moral deliberation more complex and that the respondents were less able to make absolute judgments. He further compared the narrative structure of Kohlberg's cognitive developmental theory with that presented by Perry (1981). Perry suggests that during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, universal principles and standards are abandoned in favour of a more "contextually relativistic" view of real-life moral conflict and choice. As suggested by Gilligan (1981) "While, for Kohlberg, principled moral judgment solved the problem of moral relativism (during late adolescence), for Perry, relativism found the problem in principled moral judgment (p. 133). That is, Gilligan argued that for Kohlberg, moral relativism was solved by principled moral judgment, while Perry suggested that maturity brought you moral relativism and you spent your life dealing with everyday morality.

This thesis is not an objective test of Kohlberg's theory. That is, it is not designed to describe the development of "deep structures" of moral reasoning. However, as suggested by Tappan (1989), Kohlberg's theory may chart the development of deep structures of justice reasoning during childhood and early adolescence, but increased relativism that appears during late adolescence and

beyond may not be adequately represented by cognitive developmental theories. This may be the result of the de-emphasis of the social environment and the emphasis on the debate of hypothetical moral dilemmas. As well, "when an individual 'authors' a moral story in the context of a dialogic relationship with another, he or she claims authority and responsibility for his or her moral thoughts, feelings and actions (Tappan, 1991, p. 5). There was much reported upon in the results section that supports this argument, such as those captured in the form of parent and peer interactions for this project.

Moral Maturity

The current study centres on the common theme which asks, "when is an adolescent granted moral autonomy?". Within a North American political and cultural context, to become an autonomous moral agent suggests that an individual is competent enough to acknowledge one's own moral perspective and to honour (and expect that others will honour) what he or she thinks, feels and does, even in the face of disagreement. Further, it means to assume responsibility and accountability for one's moral actions and is tied in with one's moral identity.

A majority of the discussions that make up the data set for this thesis centre around this concept. Adults are expected to respect individual rights and freedoms, treat individuals fairly, protect the vulnerable of society, and actively respect the rules agreed upon by society. Young children are forgiven for transgressions as they are deemed incompetent and not totally responsible for

their behaviours. However, throughout adolescence, the relationship between children and the social environment gradually changes from that of needing protection and guidance to the a role of a competent adult who is able to rely on personal values and morals to make decisions deemed socially appropriate. However, this thesis suggests that it is not just a question of biological maturity, rather it is a social phenomenon.

The idea of moral autonomy is embedded within the philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin (1990), whose emphasis on social interaction suggests that the whole of human experience is represented and interpreted, whether it is a trip to the store or a moral crisis. Human narratives play a central role in the culture in which the individual lives and acts to mediate human action and shape and organize human experience. Bakhtin treats morality and values as being shaped in the activity of dialogue, and through which we develop accountability of and responsibility for our own actions. Unlike cognitive developmental psychology, Bakhtin does not suggest that an individual moral agent is free to autonomously or independently create a narrative that exists uniquely on its own. Rather the individual is embedded within a particular relational and sociocultural context from which discourse serves to shape and mediate psychological functioning and experience. Thus, the activity of becoming an autonomous, moral agent is placed within the context of personal relationships and in the context of ongoing dialogue between self and others.

Parent-Peer Negotiations

The second goal of this study was to examine the relational influences of parents and friends on target adolescents participating in both discussion groups. Consistent with the literature, parents continue to be influencing factors in adolescent moral development (Walton, 1985). However, both parents and peers are important in defining sociomoral issues. Target adolescents were observed working out the defining characteristics and the potential implications of these issues on themselves and their social environment. By following discussions on identical issues across groups, it was shown that adolescents incorporated arguments made by respondent during the first discussion (whether it was family or peer group), and presented them for debate to the second group.

Results suggest that parents and friends have unique, yet overlapping roles in helping shape meaning of sociomoral issues. Parents and adolescents suggest that it is the parents' responsibility to raise autonomous, moral adults. These morals help the adolescent make the "right" interpretations when reading books or see violent imagery on television, resist temptation when seeing condoms in tuxedos and condom machines in schools, respect other people's rights, and treat people justly and fairly independent of adult guidance. Parent-child discussions about sociomoral issues resembled a question-answer conversation, where parents urge the child to enter into the discussion by asking for personal experiences with the issue (e.g., sexual harassment). The

parents instruct adolescents in the use of various thematic approaches which are culturally invented. It is argued that the 8 thematic approaches in identifying "the problem" in the issues presented are socially constructed from the North American sociocultural history (Shotter, 1993). These are deemed appropriate to life in a democratic society that values both individualism and accountability to others within the social system.

When discussing sociomoral issues with friends, adolescents appear to discuss the issues on an experiential level. It was noted that many of the peer discussions were not codable as adolescents strayed from the topic and used their discussion time to gossip about friends, to self-disclose about personal experimentation, and to compare their own behaviour with those who they perceived as acting in an "immoral" way. That is, they discuss how the issue relates to their everyday situation and the impact on their self-esteem. This is consistent with the work done by Parker & Gottman (1989), who explored the social and emotional development of adolescence within relational context. They suggest that social interaction during adolescence is characterized as honest, intimate self-disclosure, "notably humour, gossip, problem-solving, social-comparison, and mindreading" (p. 120). Gossip involves discovering the norms of same-sex peers as well as an attempt to come to a comfortable understanding of their own position on these important issues.

Clearly, a large part of what adolescents views to be important is being recognized as being mature and responsible, being spoken about as such, and

being permitted to participate and speak publicly as an equal. In other words, as sociomoral issues are worked out socially, it is important for adolescents to feel that they can participate in that process. What the adolescents were struggling with, both in discussions with their parents and with their peers, was the social interactive or discursive burden of going public with their views. This means holding up their part of a moral conversation and showing that they are a moral actor. In other words standing for the right sorts of things and stating the right points of views.

Limits of Current Research

Like all research, this exploratory study has limitations.

1) The families in the current study over-represent a highly educated, psychologically-minded group from Christian backgrounds. However, the theoretical approach taken in this thesis suggests that sociomoral meaning is worked on socially.

2) The study under-represents adolescent boys, particularly in peer discussion groups (n=2). However, as discussed above, the particular difficulty in recruiting adolescent males was an interesting piece of data in itself. Boys report that they do not discuss sociomoral issues with their male counterparts. As it is argued that important issues are worked out socially, it may be that girlfriends and families have special importance in the development of moral meaning for older adolescent boys.

3) In the current study, a content analysis was an appropriate approach given

that it was important to explore the category boundaries that Turiel and others had reported in their research. Future research could entail discourse analysis, in that this approach would better capture the discursive processes involved (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) and a more detailed look at conversational patterns.

<u>Suggestions for Future Research</u>

Although more research is needed, the current study suggests that ongoing social interaction is an important factor in moral development. Current programs of moral interventions, both within schools and within clinical populations, are influenced by Kohlberg's stage theory and the use of his hypothetical moral dilemmas. However, it is suggested that a greater understanding about the processes involved in defining moral issues would be beneficial in developing interventions. In terms of peer interactions, Parker and Gottman suggest that "observational studies of self-disclosure in adolescent friendship are exceedingly rare, leaving much to be learned about how self-disclosure is initiated and responded to in adolescent friendship" (p. 120). There is much to be explored within peer groups, specifically around male adolescents. Preliminary observations suggests that the two male peer groups were less experiential, more solution focused (e.g., tried to figure out alternative ways to deal with the problem) and appeared more competitive in their discussion (e.g., "I said that first"; "I had the best idea") than did female peer groups. It would also be interesting to examine the peer groups consisting of

friendship groups, general peer groups, as well as groups of mixed gender.

To conclude, the data suggests that a social constructionist approach appears

more promising than an approach that relies on Kohlberg's developmental

approach.

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APPENDIX A

Adolescent Rating Sheet

1. Banning Books

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM?   YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

2. Legal Curfews for Teenagers

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM?   YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

3. Video and Music influence on Teenage Violence

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM?   YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

4. Education and Jobs for Teenagers

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM?   YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

5. Legal age of selling and smoking cigarettes

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM?   YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

6. access to condoms

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM? YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

7. Drinking and driving

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM? YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

8. Sexual Harassment

Have you talked about this issue with your MOM? YES NO   DAD? YES NO

Please rate from 1 to 5 how important this issue is to you.

1	2	3	4	5
very important	somewhat important	important	somewhat unimportant	very unimportant

APPENDIX B

Topics

1. BANNING BOOKS

Victor Doerksen, a member of the Alberta Conservative government, is trying to have books that use swear words, or use God or Jesus Christ in a negative way, removed from schools. Others think that it is wrong to let people screen what we read based on their beliefs.

2. LEGAL CURFEWS FOR TEENAGERS

People are concerned about teenagers who are breaking the law, such as stealing or breaking into homes. Recently, the police and the City Council talked about this issue and decided that if parents were unwilling to set curfews for their children, then the law should be changed. For example, in Phoenix, Arizona, kids under 15 can't be out on the street past 10 at night, and kids 16 and 17 must be in by midnight.

3. INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION AND MUSIC ON TEENAGE VIOLENCE

People are concerned about violence in the schools. Last year, a 13-year old boy was stabbed in the school yard. Students say that there are kids coming to school with weapons and starting fights and bullying other kids. People have been looking at the effects of violence on television, movies, video games, as well as music, on teenager's behaviour.

4. EDUCATION AND JOBS FOR TEENAGERS

There has been much talk about the "lost generation" in the newspaper. When teenagers graduate from grade 12, they have a hard time finding work or getting into university. Some want to go back to high school and try to get better marks. However, the government won't pay for it. Both the Catholic and Public schools now say they won't allow the kids who graduate to come back to high school. Some kids may have to go to pay to go to special schools to upgrade.

5. CIGARETTES

The legal age of selling cigarettes to teenagers has gone up to age 18. Stores can be fined up to $10,000 if caught selling to kids underage. However, it is not against the law for children to smoke, and if the police see teenagers smoking under age, they can't do anything about it. Clearly, there is some disagreement about who is responsible for young people's smoking behaviour

6. ACCESS TO CONDOMS

Last year, people promoting "safe sex" tried to put two condoms in tuxedos rented by boys for their grade 12 graduation. There is also talk about putting condom machines in schools. Some people think that making condoms available to teenagers gives a message that having sex is o.k. Other people believe that teenagers who want to have sex will have sex anyway, and that having a condom will help keep them safe from pregnancy and diseases, including aids.

7. LEGAL Driving AGE AND LEGAL DRINKING AGE

When getting insurance to drive a car, it is very expensive for boys between the ages of 16 and 20. The insurance companies say that boys take more risks than either girls their own age or than adults, including drinking alcohol and driving. There are some people who argue that the legal driving age should be age 18. Other people also argue that the legal age of drinking should be raised to age 21.

8. SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN SCHOOLS

Many girls complain that boys make comments about their looks or their bodies at school. Some say that they are actually grabbed or followed around. People argue that this is just normal behaviour for boys. However, others think that it promotes negative attitudes towards girls and does not encourage boys to control their behaviour.

APPENDIX C

CODING MANUAL

INSTRUCTIONS

<u>Directions to coders:</u> Below are a list of general categories often used when making judgments about social issues. For each respondent, identify the position taken on a specific issue.

Examples:

I think that we should not allow legal gambling in the city <u>because it can lead to gambling addictions</u>. (justification)

Legal gambling is a great idea. It is a <u>great way to raise money for charities and community groups</u>.

I think we should be able to say what we want. It's a free country.

For each category, examples are provided that describe the comments that characterize the category under consideration.

CATEGORIES

I.   INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

This category refers to individual rights and freedoms. It may be referred to as a constitutional right to free speech, freedom of choice, and/or right to personal privacy.

It's our God given right to read what we want.
It should be the kid's choice.
It's like we have to be so politically correct that we have to watch what we say.
It's an invasion of our privacy. People should be allowed to do what they want in their own home.

II. AUTONOMY

This category includes arguments for independence. References include maturity to know right from wrong and independence of thought and action, including decisions to act independently of authority.

If you learn your morals at home, then you will be able to make responsible choices
We are old enough to make our own decision.
Teens will smoke anyway, they'll just get someone else to buy them.
I will do it anyway, just to tic them off.
Teens will have sex no matter what. Even if you put a condom in a tuxedo, they will used their own judgment to what is right for them.

III. JUSTICE

This category refers to judgments relating to fairness, equality, and justice.

It's discrimination, you can't punish all kids for the actions of a few.
Not all kids break the law.
It's hypocritical to say to punish someone for voicing his opinion.
I hate the power they have over us, it is so unfair.

IV. WELFARE

This category refers to the rights of individuals or society to live in safety. It includes references to how the issue may be harmful to self, others and society or, the need to protect the vulnerable in society (e.g., children, elderly, minorities). This category also includes psychological harm.

Society has to protect those who are uneducated or young.
This is harmful to society. It promotes negative values.
I hate it when they say things about me. It makes me feel embarrassed and sometimes scared.
I think that adolescents should have access to birth control so they won't get AIDS.

V. ROLE OBLIGATIONS

This category refers to attributions of specific role responsibilities/obligations for particular people/groups. There may be references to what they "should/should not" do or "ought to/ought not" to do or what they are responsible for. They may include references to personal, parental, family, and/or societal obligations.

Kids shouldn't be allowed back into grade 12 free. They should do it right the first time.

People ought to be responsible for their own behaviour.

Parents have an obligation to teach their kids right from wrong.

If parent's are not responsible, then society has the obligation to protect people from crime.

This isn't the government's business, it should be up to parents.

The government should screen hate literature.

VI.   VALUES AND MORALS

This issue is directly identified as based on morality. I may identify the issue as part of cultural values/beliefs. This category also includes reference to influencing factors on moral development.

In our culture, premarital sex is wrong.

In our religion, premarital sex is wrong.

Society pushes university, it really undervalues trades.

Society tells us that money is the measure of success.

I don't like the morality that is portrayed on sit coms.

VII. PERSONAL

This category refers to references of an issue being of little consequence to the speaker without elaboration. Respondents often suggest that they do not care about the issue as it does not affect them personally.

I haven't read this book so I don't care.

I don't stay up that late so I don't really care, it doesn't affect me.

I guess this issue doesn't really matter to our family. None of us smoke, and I guess that its their lungs, so who cares?

VIII. SOCIAL REGULATION

This category refers to references of effectiveness of rules and regulations, including formal legal sanctions. Respondents often refer to alternative solutions or flaws in the system. References to do with ineffectiveness due to the notion of rebellions or moves for independence should be categories in "autonomy". References to negative consequences to individuals or society should be categories under "welfare".

I don't think that this would work. It would be impossible for police to enforce such a law.

It would never become illegal. The government would not want to make cigarettes illegal as it makes them too much money.

I think that such a law would not benefit the current generation, but attitudes would change so that societal norms would gradually change. We see that already with drinking and driving.