MORAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION: A CASE FOR INTEGRATION

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INTRODUCTION

   Moral and political education are often seen as one another's rivals.
Moral education calls to mind associations with moral "rearmament" and
"ethical revival" and is usually seen as the conservative version of
political education, in which the individual acquires insight into unequal
social relationships. I shall argue that since the appearance of Kohlberg's
theory on moral development and education (the theory of cognitive develop-
ment), this view of the relationship between moral and political education
has become out of date. The most important hypothesis of this contribution
is that whilst it is true that political education cannot be reduced to
moral education, the didactics of political education should contain the
necessary stimuli for pupils' moral development. This hypothesis will be
supported by describing the central elements of Kohlberg's theory and by
showing what relationships have been discovered between moral judgments
and political consciousness. Finally, an indication will be given of the
general pedagogical-didactic principles through which a social studies
course can be patterned on cognitive developmental theory. Supplementing
Langeveld (1975), who in the Netherlands introduced the discussion on the
utility of Kohlberg's ideas for political education, I wish to show that
influencing moral development should not only be seen as a form of indirect
political socialisation, but also as an integral part of planned political
education.

THE DANGER OF "MORALISING" SOCIAL STUDIES

   To start with, the question might be asked why no case is made here for
replacing social studies with moral education, which is happening in the
United States. In recent years, a considerable amount of curriculum material
has been developed that is used within the framework of so-called "social
studies" and which is aimed at stimulating moral development. This material
has been tested repeatedly for its effectiveness in connexion with promoting
moral development (cf. Lockwood, 1978) and therefore lacks only the label

"political education" to provide a new impulse to the out-of-date practice of social studies, designed for conveying information.

Before, however, deciding to transform existing forms and contents of political education on a large scale through this material, we would do well to dwell a moment upon the peculiar notion of politics upon which the specific American enthusiasm for transforming "social studies" into "moral education" is based. Political events such as Watergate and Billygate are continually ascribed to the "moral bankruptcy" the American people have fallen victim to. Not only politicians and political commentators but also social scientists interpret these events as moral dilemmas in which the actors are assumed to have made the wrong choice (cf. Lickona, 1979). This has resulted in a kind of "Sputnik" effect in the area of morality: just as mathematics and physics instruction was to play a key role in tapping and "refining" human potential to overcome the "cognitive gap" with the Soviet Union in the sixties, social studies must attempt to overcome the "moral gap" in the seventies and eighties. (From Sputnik to Watergate - Hintjes and Spiecker, 1979).

It is, however, questionable whether important political phenomena can so easily be reduced to solely individual moral causes. Looked at from a social point of view, the reduction of politics to morality has its dangerous sides, as Weber demonstrated at the beginning of this century. From a psychological point of view, such a reduction conflicts with available empirical material, as I shall further demonstrate.

My doubts as to the efficacy of substituting "social studies" with "moral education" in connexion with solving important current political problems do not, however, at all mean that I am not convinced of the usefulness of moral curricula for political education directed towards stimulating a critical political attitude. On the basis of available theoretical and empirical evidence it would seem unquestionably justified to posit the thesis that political education should, in part at least, be interpreted as moral education. But as I shall attempt to show in the ensuing paragraphs, the thesis that moral education could entirely replace political education (or vice versa, see Fellsches, 1977) is based upon an erroneous train of thought. But first I shall briefly review the foundation of all moral curricula, Kohlberg's theory of moral development, and show that this controversial theory cannot by any means be set aside as being unproven.

THE COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Moral prescripts are in particular applied when the necessity of a
practical moral choice presents itself, that is, a choice between two or
more alternatives of action within a conflict of interests. A well-known
example of such a conflict is the story of Heinz and his mortally sick
wife, who can only be cured by medicine available from a chemist at a
very high price. Heinz has not enough money and wonders whether he should/
may steal the medicine. With the aid of short sketches of such dilemmas,
Kohlberg investigated the moral development of children and youths. He
began this study in 1955 with approximately /0 children in Chicago between
the ages of 10 and 16. He followed this same group of children for more
than 20 years and periodically asked them their reactions to different
moral dilemmas. The responses were analysed in a complex fashion (Kohl-
berg et al., 1976). He investigated whether heteronomous moral thinking
developed into autonomous moral thinking. In the thirties, Piaget (1934)
had already stated that most children undergo development from heteronomy-
behaviour, determined by adults and external rules, to autonomy-behaviour
determined by consciously endorsed and internalised rules.

Kohlberg did, indeed, discover such a development; in addition, he was
able te sketch the general line of development in greater detail. His
development diagram contained the three well-known levels of moral reasoning,
each with two sub-levels:

1. pre-conventional level

    sub-level 1. "good" is whatever results in the smallest
    chance of punishment ("orientation to
    punishment")

    sub-level 2: "good is whatever satisfies one's own
    needs ("naive instrumental hedonism")

2. conventional level

    sub-level 3: "good" is whatever creates harmonious
    relations between people ("good boy,
    nice girl morality")

    sub-level 4: 'good" is whatever serves the existing
    order ("orientation to authority and
    conventions")

3. post-conventional level

    sub-level 5: "good" is preserving mutual rights and
    obligations fixed "contractually"
    ("utilitarian contract perspective")

    sub-level 6: "good" is acting according to potential
    universal values ("universalistic
    morality")

I describe the three levels as follows:

1. Pre-conventional level: at this level, the question as to what is right in a moral dilemma is usually answered by pointing to prevailing rules, seen as a sort of iron law of nature, and the consequences that breaking those rules will have. Intentions and motives are of no importance. If there is the risk of punishment without sufficient compensation, this consideration then determines the ultimate decision.

2. Conventional level: at this level, moral behaviour means following and maintaining rules and expectations of the group one belongs to. In a later stage, this group perspective is broadened to include a perspective on society as a whole. An active maintenance of the prevailing social order, with all its rules and expectations, is then the goal. At this second level, it is no longer the egotistical motive of avoiding punishment and other negative consequences for oneself that plays the most important role, but the very loyalty to one's own group and to society as a whole.

3. Post-conventional level: moral behaviour is acting according to general universal principles, values and norms. These principles are based upon a general obligation to the rights and well-being of one's fellow humans. A moral prescript should be universal, that is acceptable, in principle, to all those involved. The perspective is taken of a rational individual, abstracting from the level of the accidentally prevailing social system, and wondering which decision everyone could agree to if it were unclear what the position of each participant was.

A formal procedure is suggested here which can lead to universal principles and decisions. The affinity with Kant's categorical imperative is obvious. Kant, too, assumes that a correct decision can only be reached via a thought-experiment in which one asks oneself whether one's maxim can be raised to the level of a universal law (Kant, 1961).

THE STAGE THEORY

From the description of Kohlberg's theory above, one could conclude that he actually did little more than conduct semi-structured interviews with children of various ages and record their responses to dilemmas. These responses were then classified under certain categories, which were then labelled pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional morality.

Entirely within the tradition of the theory of cognitive development, Kohlberg attempted to show that the different types of moral thinking could not be placed in a random order. They are not equivalent levels of argumentation existing along side of one another. The core of Kohlberg's theory is the hypothesis that the three levels form a hierarchy of so-

called stages, passed through in a very specific order. Put simply: in terms of morality, level II is better than level I and. in turn, level III is better than level II.

For that very reason, Kohlberg's theory meets with resistance from both the left and the right. When studying this theory, "traditional" social scientists recall Weber's value-free postulate - scientific objectivity and ethical positions are irreconcilable. Scientific practice should require objective distance from every possible moral argument and none should be declared better or more optimal.

From the side of "progressive" social scientists, we might expect the standard reaction that as a stage theory, the theory raises the post-conventional structure of reasoning to the level of a universal norm. This is irreconcilable with the ethical relativism that is assumed to have become inevitable through the results of cross-cultural research. Indeed, if in one culture head-hunting and infanticide are considered virtues and in another are punished severely, how then is it possible to judge different value systems along culturally independent, universal lines? Is this not a case of cultural neo-colonialism in which the West's economic hegemony is translated into a superiority of western neo-Kantian ethics above all other (sub)cultural ethical systems? It is inevitable that every stage theory, whether in the cognitive, normative or social theoretical field, should elicit such criticism. And no wonder, when one considers the apparent pretention of attributing different values to the reasoning of peoples who in principle are both individually and (sub)culturally equal.

But what exactly is meant by stage-theory and what empirical and philosophical evidence is there for it? The stage-theory is based upon the following four assumptions:
1. The stages or levels are passed through in a fixed sequence;
2. the stages are structural wholes, that is internally consistent and not specific to particular situations;
3. the stages appear in a sequence that in principle is environmentally and culturally independent;
4. the stages can be placed not only psychologically but also ethically in an hierarchical sequence (Kohlberg, 1969).

There is considerable evidence available to support the first assumption. Cross-sectional and longitudinal research do, indeed, show that older children more frequently reason at the higher levels than do younger children. In the course of their development, most children slowly but surely appear to advance in the direction of a post-conventional morality. Regression in this course of development hardly ever occurs. What does

occur with very many children and youths is a kind of premature fixation
on a somewhat lower level of moral judgement than the post-conventional
level. In attempts at stimulating moral development through didactic means,
it also appeared that children progress step by step, never skipping more
than one sub-level at a time or regressing.

With respect to the second assumption - that stages form structural
wholes - the evidence is far less convincing. As I also ascertained in my
own study (Van IJzendoorn, 1980), there are often large individual
differences in moral level between the dilemmas. This may point to a
certain connexion between levels of reasoning and personal experiences
with specific situations. It is possible that a moral dilemma over a
mortally sick woman calls to mind less relevant personal experiences than
a moral dilemma over the obligation to keep a promise once made or over
the proverbial white lie. A greater involvement with the subject of a
dilemma may therefore lead to subtler, more deliberate reasoning at a
higher level.

The assumption that morality develops in a universally uniform fashion
has been tested through cross-cultural study in such places as Taiwan,
Mexico and Turkey. It appears, initially at least, that the same pattern
appears in different cultures, but that in non-western cultures, the level
that moral development actually attains is somewhat lower. In such cultures,
for example, there is hardly a trace of post-conventional morality. Such
results would support this assumption only to a very limited degree. Indeed,
it is impossible to prove that in those cultures, post-conventional morality
is ever achieved. This last stage would then not be universal [1].

This same problem occurs with the assumption that cognition develops
universally in the direction of formal-operational thinking, as Piaget
repeatedly purported. In this case as well, the available cross-cultural
evidence is inadequate. However, support for this assumption is sought in
particular in substantive analyses of the different cognitive structures,
which do, indeed, lead to better and better solutions to ever more
complicated problems in the interaction between man and nature. Looked
at from the point of view of logic, concrete operations simply do have
more limited applications than formal operations. At a concrete operational
level, problems in understanding certain natural phenomena, as for example
oscillation, are demonstrably insolvable, whilst through formal operations
the same problem resolves itself without difficulty. In other words, the
superiority of the highest cognitive stage can be more easily demonstrated
than that of the highest moral stage. And yet, Kohlberg also attempts to
provide substantive arguments for this presumed moral hierarchy and for the

superiority of post-conventional morality. The higher you go in the
hierarchy, the more stable the balance between the individual and his
or her social environment, resulting from the different level of moral
reasoning. The higher levels are capable of solving more moral problems
more completely than are the lower levels. Conventional moral thinking
reaches limits when individuals and groups can no longer identify them-
selves with prevailing laws. Within the level of conventional reasoning,
fundamental changes in law or in the prevailing values systems are hardly
feasible. There are no external criteria upon which proposals for change
can be tested. In that way, the post-conventional level inevitably attains
the highest position in the developmental logic of morality. In the case
of the well-known dilemma of Heinz and his mortally sick wife, it would
be morally and legally offensive to steal the medicine, based upon the
prevailing systems of values and laws. Only by going beyond the perspective
of the system in the direction of universal ethics can such a case provide
us with new perspectives. I doubt, though, whether this would eliminate
all moral problems and result in an idyllic harmony between the rational
individual and his social environment, as Kohlberg suggests. The moral
dilemma concerning Heinz and his wife contains relatively little information,
which does injustice to the complexity of a real moral dilemma. Wrongly, all
kinds of ramifications, for example those concerning larger social structures,
are left out of consideration.

In the case of Heinz's dilemma, it would seem obvious to also consider
the medical health system, which apparently allows private individuals
to make large profits on medicines. If a truly universal solution is to
be arrived at, such matters as licensing, scarcity of the raw materials
for the medicine, the health insurance system, etc., should play some role
in reaching a decision, especially at the highest moral level. Contrary to
what Kohlberg suggests, as one's perspective broadens as a result of
advancing moral development, moral problems become more complex instead
of more easily solvable. There is then no evidence at all of a more stable
balance characteristic of higher moral reasoning levels, at least not from
the point of view of the individual's functioning and experience. Whilst
cognitive development may bring increased ease in relating to one's
surroundings, with moral development the opposite may even be the case.
Taken to extremes, it is just possible that in a pre-conventional or
conventional society, individuals at post-conventional moral levels are
the very ones running the risk of having to pay for their moral decisions
with their lives. An example Kohlberg at times also refers to is that of
Martin Luther King.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE STAGE THEORY

However, with respect to the central thesis of the stage theory, many things remain unclear, in particular the hierarchy of the different levels of morality. If, indeed, the statement, "some people have been arrested in their development" is to have any meaning, this hierarchy must be presumed to exist. Only within the framework of this hierarchy is it meaningful to speak of interrupted development, otherwise we should be dealing with different but equivalent terminal points per individual. This also applies to the assumption in which is stated that the stage-theory applies independent of environment or culture. Only if the developmental logic mentioned earlier is accepted as a departure point is it possible to describe other cultures as restraining and blocking moral development in a certain area, indicating the absence of post-conventional morality.

An additional problem is the following: even if everyone in all cultures should attain the post-conventional level, it remains questionable to what extent conclusions can be drawn concerning the normative value of this level based on that fact alone. In that case, we should be guilty of what Hume referred to as "naturalistic fallacy" in its narrowest sense: deducing what should be from what is, that is, making the logically untenable jump from purely descriptive premises to prescriptive conclusions. One cannot conclude that a certain type of moral reasoning has an automatic ethical superiority solely on the basis of quantitative data, namely that most or even all adults employ it. It would then seem feasible that what we have called post-conventional morality may, for whatever reason, be the result of something we might have to characterise as collective moral regression. Simply because everyone smokes more and more does not mean that smoking more is necessarily better. In judging the "value" of smoking, an external factor - in this case a theory on the optimal functioning of a healthy organism - will be the most important criterion. The theory of moral development, too, cannot avoid the use of such external criteria. This theory, too, cannot base its central assumption on the hierarchy and universality of the stages on empirical data alone, but is dependent, as well, upon philosophical arguments. No theoretical structure - not even in the natural sciences - can be completely reduced to so-called "bare facts". In every paradigm or research programme, norms, values and metaphysical convictions play a central role, as we have learnt from recent developments in the philosophy of science (Kuhn, Lakatos). There are empirically grounded indications - but no water-tight evidence - that the stage-theory is correct. These indications can be supplemented with philosophical considerations and,

conversely, empirical data can provide support for these philosophical arguments The theory of justice of the neo-Kantian John Rawls (1971) in particular, provides an important philosophical confirmation of the superiority of post-conventional moral thinking. The most important procedural feature of post-conventional reasoning is the "ideal role-taking procedure", yielding correct moral decisions. This procedure consists of putting oneself in the place of every person involved in the moral problem and imagining the wishes each person might express with respect to solving that problem. In addition, one must imagine that one does not know to which party in the conflict one will belong and, from that position, decide which wishes one would choose to retain. The wishes remaining after this sifting process merit the designation "universal" and are therefore just.

Rawls employs a similar procedure in constructing his theory of justice. He makes clear that from the procedural principles of a post-conventional morality, a system of ethics can be constructed that, without doubt, can rival any other system. To my mind, his tightly constructed system has until now withstood the test of criticism splendidly (see, for a more extensive grouding of this thesis, Cohn, 1982). Of course, this also has consequences for Kohlberg's theory of moral development, and in particular for his claim that the hierarchical nature of his moral stages can be defended against any ethical relativism. Indeed, this claim gains in credibility if its core appears to be able to form the foundation of one of the most promising modern neo-Kantian systems of ethics. Conversely, it is no small support for an ethical system if, looked at ontogenetically, individuals can acquire insight into and a positive outlook on its procedural foundation and employ this foundation as the most important criterion in reaching moral decisions, after having passed through certain preliminary stages (see Kohlberg, 1973).

THE THEORY OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Following this short sketch of the theory of cognitive development, this section deals with the question whether there is any reason to believe that there is a connexion between the level of moral judgement and political consciousness. If this connexion can be made plausible, it would seem obvious to structure political consciousness, in part using pedagogical-didactic principles as developed and evaluated for moral education.

In the United States in particular, several different research projects have examined the relation between such variables as cognition and morality on the one hand and political attitude and/or behaviour on the other.

I shall briefly discuss a number of them here to show that it is very much worthwhile to approach the problem of didactics for political education from a cognitive-development theoretical point of view. I shall also show that cognitive-development theoretical variables do not entirely coincide with variables of political consciousness. Haan et al., for example, investigated the level of moral judgment of participants in the American "Free Speech Movement". They discovered that the greater majority of politically active students made their judgments on the basis of post- or pre-conventional morality, whilst the moral conventionalists (sub-level 3 and 4) were clearly in the minority (Fishkin et al., 1973). Another study of Haan et al. (1968) showed that respondents with more radical political opinions made judgments on the basis of either post- or pre-conventional morality. Fontana and Noel (1973) noticed a positive relationship between moral level and political activism in their study among university staff members. This relationship was, however, not found among the student group. In this case, it appeared that a critical political attitude was not related to a morality based on principles. The more conservatively inclined students did, however, conduct their reasoning mostly at a conventional level and rarely at a pre-conventional level. Fishkin et al. (1973), too, found a highly positive correlation between political conservatism and conventional morality, and a negative correlation between the former and a morality based on principles. On the other hand, pre-conventional participants more often chose for violent radicalism. Sullivan and Quarter (1972) showed that, bearing in mind hybrid sub-categories more difficult to classify, morality has a positive linear relationship to the extent of progressiveness in political attitudes. Döbert and Nunner-Winkler (1975) showed that morality based on principles does, indeed, more frequently correlate with a critical attitude towards existing social relationships than does conventional morality. Kuhn et al. (1977) discovered that morality had a positive linear correlation to political attitude, the correlation between cognition and political attitude being greater than between morality and political attitude. Eisenberg-Berg (1979) found a positive correlation between the extent of progressiveness of political attitude and the level of moral reasoning among her female respondents. No such correlation was discovered with her male respondents. Tsujimoto (1979) found that conventionalists were more often inclined to personify social injustice than were pre- and post-conventionalists, that is, to blame individuals for political social problems. In all the above studies,

however, it may be remarked that, in particular, the variable "political attitude" was defined and/or operationalised in a dubious fashion. Fishkin et al., for instance, actually managed to operationalise political consciousness using a series of such popular slogans as "kill the pigs" and "make love not war". Kuhn et al. narrowed the notion of political attitude down to the attitude toward such forms of government as democracy, oligarchy etc., and asked just four short questions about it. In a study I did among pupils in Berlin employing a more legitimate operationalisation of the notion "political attitude", it appeared quite possible to demonstrate a positive linear relation between the level of moral reasoning and the progressiveness of political attitudes. Cognitive level, however, appeared to correlate significantly less strongly with this attitude (Van IJzendoorn, 1979). In brief, in view of the concurrence of the results of the research projects mentioned above, employing extremely divergent research designs, it may be concluded that the level of moral reasoning in particular is important to political consciousness. The higher the level of moral development, the more critical are the attitudes of adolescents towards social injustice. The results with respect to the correlation between cognitive level and political attitude are not uniform. Further research shall have to provide the answers in this area. However, theoretical developments show that in any case, the transition from concrete to formal operational reasoning is of crucial importance for a better developed political consciousness, which is capable of doing justice to the complexity of political and social problems (Adelson, 1975, Crain/Crain, 1974, Harten, 1977, Habermas, 1976, Merelman, 1976, Van IJzendoorn, 1978).

From the research material collected, the conclusion can also be drawn that the cognitive development theoretical variables - morality and cognition - can never explain more than a portion of the variance of the variable "political attitude". Correlations fluctuate between .20 and .50, with a few exceptions above or below. In other words, there were hardly any cases in which more than 25% of the total variance was explained by these variables. Political attitude can therefore not be explained by these factors alone, it would appear that emotional factors are also of importance, which can explain a considerable part of the perception of political "facts" and therefore contribute indirectly to the development of a political attitude. Sarat (1975), for example, found that the "fear level" (in part a determinant of the level of self-confidence) influenced the development of political reasoning. In my Berlin study, I discovered that the development of identity, in the

Eriksonian sense of the word, influenced the political attitude of the
group of adolescents I investigated (Van IJzendoorn, 1978). Merelman
(1976) assumed on theoretical grounds that such psycho-dynamic factors
as sex-role development, "impulse control" and the extent of emotional
detachment from the nuclear family (cf. Dobert and Winkler, 1975),
together with cognitive factors, lead to a more definitely shaped
political ideology. All of this points to the limitations of instruction
in political education based solely upon cognitive developmental theory.
In future, it should therefore be our aim to integrate this approach to
the didactics of political education with one more based upon group-
and psycho-dynamics.

THE NECESSITY OF INTEGRATING MORAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

    Even if it has been shown above that such variables as morality and
cognition explain a portion of the variance of political attitude, it
is still the question whether or not instruction in political education
should include them. Quite apart from the problem that research has yet
to demonstrate whether or not moral and cognitive development are really
"causal" factors or are to be regarded as epi-phenomena, or perhaps even
the result of a particular level of political consciousness, one can
without question be sceptical of the possibility of indirectly stimulating
the development of political attitudes, that is, by influencing the co-
variates. It is, indeed, possible that the development of political
consciousness has its own dynamics, which can only be stimulated by very
specific means. As yet, there is no empirical evidence available upon
wich we can base the conclusion that political consciousness develops
gradually through the disruption of temporary equilibria (Piaget 1976).
In other words, it is questionable whether political consciousness belongs
to the group of cognitive-development theoretical variables which we more
or less know to develop in a dialectical fashion (Van IJzendoorn, 1980).
For example, it is just possible that cognitive-development theoretical
variables correlate rather strongly with nail-biting or thumb-sucking.
This would not necessarily incline us to regard such a correlation as a
basis for a strategy aimed at influencing change in such behaviour

    At a theoretical level, however, there is support for the thesis that
cognitive-development theoretical variables are more important to political
consciousness than to nail-biting or thumb-sucking. Elsewhere, I have
argued at length that formal-operational reasoning is a necessary
prerequisite for a critical political attitude, in as much as essential
political myths (for example the myth of equal opportunity) endure

because many individuals are incapable of probabilistic reasoning. In the
same fashion it has been shown that a post-conventional morality is a
necessary condition for fundamental criticism of a system based on
principles relatively independent of any accidentally prevailing social
system Thus, such principles serve as a tertium comparationis, as a
relatively autonomous standard. Moral arguments at sub-levels 3 and 4
can only lead to inherent criticism of the system, any disfunctioning
of that system being traced back to individuals serving as interference
factors.

In short, it is possible, theoretically in any case, to make plausible
that, with respect to the development of political consciousness, morality
and cognition can provide a "ceiling effect." Because they restrict the
complexity and breadth of political criticism considerably, concrete-
operational and conventional reasoning can impede the development of a
critical political attitude In the absence of the prerequisites for
continued political development, it is better to concentrate on the
removal of impediments in that area before attempting to influence political
attitudes directly. This would argue for instruction in political education
that is initially aimed at stimulating moral and cognitive development. Such
stimulation could create the necessary conditions for the development of a
political consciousness that would otherwise quickly reach its limits.

Research of Faust and Arbuthnot (1978) and Walker and Richards (1979)
show that such a "ceiling effect" is not at all unrealistic. These
researchers established that moral education loses its effectiveness as
soon as the cognitive requirements for higher moral development are no
longer met. Faust and Arbuthnot discovered that participants reasoning
at sub-level 3 were unable to get as much out of a moral curriculum. Those
using concrete-operational reasoning hardly profited from this additional
programme. On the other hand, those reasoning at a formal-operational level
got a great deal out of the moral curriculum This group can therefore be
referred to as the "moral underachievers," inasmuch as their moral develop-
ment did not reach the "cognitive ceiling." That same "ceiling effect"
was detected by Walker and Richards, who endeavoured to stimulate the
moral development of a number of participants through educational programmes.
They concluded: "Exposure to high levels of moral reasoning will not produce
transitions unless the cognitive prerequisites have been attained." (p 102).
It is clear that if morality and cognition bear the same relationship to
political consciousness as cognition to morality (and "role-taking" to
cognition), a similar "ceiling effect" may be expected for political
education. It is in part due to this "ceiling effect" that instruction

in political education shall have to incorporate the stimulation of
cognitive and moral development.

CONCLUSION

Within the framework of the theory of cognitive development, much
research has been done into didactic methods of promoting cognitive
and moral development (for example Wassermann, 1978, Langer, 1979,
Hersh et al., 1979). Elsewhere I have summarised a general design for
stimulating cognitive and moral development as follows:
- maximalisation of the opportunities for co-operation, in particular
  among children of the same age;
- stimulation of the opportunities for constructive activities of a
  non-verbal or verbal nature, depending upon the age of the target group;
- expansion of the number of cognitive and moral conflict experiences in
  an anxiety-reducing group atmosphere;
- optimalisation of the democratic structure of the school, so that the
  'hidden curriculum' allows experiences with higher rather than lower
  moral structures (Van IJzendoorn, 1980).
In view of the case presented above, these principles should in some way
be incorporated into the curriculum of political education. The conclusion
is that political education shall have to devote attention to the cognitive
and moral prerequisites of a critical political attitude.

It will be clear to anyone with first-hand, day to day teaching experience
that, in putting this theory into the practice of political education, a
good many problems may arise. I should like to mention two here. The first
concerns the way education will meet the requirement that pupils should
gain practical experience in solving real-life moral and, in particular,
political problems, without going beyond the competence of the school or
the teacher. In a parliamentary democracy, there are markedly fewer
opportunities for intensive, active participation in political events,
for young people in particular, than there are for active experimentation
with the world of physical objects ("cognitive activities") or for
practical experience with individual conflicts (moral activities). This
is very likely one of the reasons for the existing "political décalage"
(Padioleau, 1976), that is, the gap between the political consciousness
our society demands and the one that is actually developed. The second
problem concerns the demands that are made upon the teacher. Rightly,
Holtmann (1982) has pointed out that teachers are in danger of getting
the worst end of the bargain with theories making too great a demand,
for example, upon their skill in assessing their pupils' level of moral

judgment within a short period of time. More consequential still is the
related problem of the teacher's being asked to expose the "immorality"
of a school system, i e. its hidden curriculum, of which he or she is a
representative and within which he or she must continue to work Looked
at from the pupil's point of view, the teacher must then perform the
frustrating role of both exponent and critic of the school's, and
society's "double morality".

These two problems in integrating moral and political education
force us to put the pretentions of a cognitive-development theoretical
view of political education into perspective. Immediately usable
instructional methods are not available and can only be developed
through laborious and time-consuming educational research as conducted
by Kohlberg among teachers and pupils (Kohlberg et al., 1978) Due to
the "ceiling effect" through which pupils' cognitive and moral
development sets limits upon the effectiveness of political education,
such didactic experiments are, despite all the problems, of utmost
importance to the theory and practice of political education

NOTES

1 We must hesitate to draw the conclusion that the moral development
  in non-western cultures attains a lower level. It is possible that
  the instruments for measuring moral development are not as 'culture-
  free' as they would have to be for implementation of cross-cultural
  research.

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ABSTRACT

In this article it is shown that pupil's moral and cognitive development may constitute a "ceiling effect" in political education. Conventional morality and concrete-operational reasoning seem to hinder the development of critical political consciousness. Political education should contain the necessary stimulants for pupils' moral and cognitive development. Kohlberg's empirically and philosophically well-grounded theory provides some relevant didactic principles.