

HANDBOOK OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

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CHAPTER

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SOCIAL–COGNITIVE DOMAIN THEORY: CONSISTENCIES AND VARIATIONS IN CHILDREN'S MORAL AND SOCIAL JUDGMENTS

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The social world is complex. It is structured by many social expectations and rules, which are enforced in diverse social situations and in the context of different social relationships and societal arrangements. Through the process of development, children must acquire an understanding of these different social expectations and rules, including an awareness of the regularities that are specific to particular social contexts, as well as an understanding of which expectations and rules are more broadly applicable and obligatory across contexts. Moreover, although morality regulates social relationships, not all social rules are moral; some rules may be functional in regulating social interactions but lack the prescriptive and obligatory basis of moral rules. This chapter describes theory and research from the social–cognitive domain perspective on moral and social development (Helwig & Turiel, 2003; Nucci, 2001, 2002; Smetana, 1995b; Turiel, 1998, 2002, chap. 1 this volume) that describes how children come to understand, interpret, accept, and sometimes reject these diverse aspects of their social world.

Most psychological approaches to moral development view morality as multifaceted and as having affective, cognitive, and behavioral components, but theoretical perspectives have varied in the extent to which they have prioritized the different components. Like other structural–developmental theories of moral judgment development, researchers from the social–cognitive domain perspective (hereafter referred to as *domain theory*) propose that moral development is best understood through psychological analyses of moral judgments, but as discussed in this chapter, emotion and behavior have not been neglected. Emotion

is seen as inseparable from and providing one motivational or energetic force for judgments, and behavior is seen as following from individuals' interpretations of situations. Also consistent with other structural–developmental theories of moral judgment development, domain theory proposes that morality is constructed out of reciprocal individual–environment interactions (Turiel, 1983, 1998).

Domain theory differs from other structural developmental theories; however, in viewing morality as one of several strands of children's developing social knowledge. Thinking about the social world is seen as characterized by heterogeneity and the coexistence of different social orientations, motivations, and goals. Thus, concerns with justice, welfare, and rights—all moral issues—coexist with concerns with authority, tradition, and social norms (viewed as *social-conventional issues*) and concerns with privacy, bodily integrity and control, and a delimited set of choices and preferences (described as *personal issues*). Domain theory proposes that each of these constitutes an organized system, or domain, of social knowledge that arises from children's experiences of different types of regularities in the social environment (Turiel, 1983, 1998). This view differs from other structural–developmental stage models of moral judgment development, which have described the process of moral development as entailing the gradual differentiation of principles of justice or rights from nonmoral concerns with conventions, pragmatics, and prudence (Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1932/1965). Rather, these social knowledge domains are seen as differentiated in early experience and following different developmental trajectories. Thus, a full understanding and appreciation of the complexity and diversity of social life entails a consideration of moral knowledge as distinct from, and sometimes in coordination with (or subordinated to) other types of social knowledge.

Since the initial theoretical formulations (Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Turiel, 1979, 1983), domain theory has expanded in many different directions, far too many to summarize concisely in a single chapter. Fortunately, however, a number of excellent and comprehensive reviews have been published elsewhere (Helwig & Turiel, 2003; Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002; Nucci, 2001, 2002; Tisak, 1995; Turiel, 1983, 1998, 2002; see also Smetana, 1995b, 1997, 2002; Smetana & Turiel, 2003); many of these research directions are described in this handbook.

This chapter takes as its focus the basic proposition that children's moral and social knowledge is constructed out of reciprocal individual–environment interactions (Turiel, 1983, 1998) and considers how aspects of those interactions lead to consistencies and variations in moral and social judgments. The chapter begins with an overview of domain theory. Morality as a distinct developmental and conceptual domain is defined in distinction to other types of social knowledge, and methods for assessing children's moral and social knowledge are described. Then, evidence for the differentiation of moral, social, and nonsocial judgments in hypothetical and actual contexts and in straightforward and multifaceted situations is presented.

The next section focuses on how regularities in the environment, including characteristics and features of social interactions, lead to consistencies and variations in moral and social judgments. This is followed by a consideration of the influence of characteristics of individuals (such as gender, social class, and ethnicity) on moral and social judgments. Despite the criticism that structural–developmental theories of moral judgment development (particularly Kohlberg's theory) have neglected the influence of context (Shweder, 1982; Simpson, 1973), domain researchers have given a great deal of attention to contextual and particularly cultural variations in judgments. In the following sections, we return to a consideration of the environmental side of individual–environment interactions, but with a broader lens: we consider how different contexts, including social roles and social relationships, influence judgments. Broadening the lens still further, consistencies and

variations in judgments due to cultural influences are discussed. The chapter concludes with some future directions for research.

DEFINING THE MORAL DOMAIN

Morality as a Distinct Domain of Social Knowledge

Social–cognitive domain theory has drawn on philosophical definitions of morality (Dworkin, 1978; Gewirth, 1978; Rawls, 1971) and psychological research to define morality in terms of the obligatory and generalizable norms, based on concepts of welfare (harm), fairness, and rights, that regulate social relationships (Helwig & Turiel, 2003; Turiel, 1983, 1998). Moral transgressions are hypothesized to be wrong because they have intrinsic effects for others' rights and welfare. Therefore, moral concepts are hypothesized to be obligatory, universally applicable, impersonal, and normatively binding.

Children's prescriptive understanding of their social relationships differs from their descriptive understanding of social systems, social organization, and social conventions. Social conventions have been defined as contextually relative, shared uniformities and norms (like etiquette or manners) that coordinate individuals' interactions in social systems. Social conventions provide individuals with expectations regarding appropriate behavior in different social contexts and thus help to facilitate the smooth and efficient functioning of the social system. Thus, social-conventional concepts are hypothesized to be contextually relative, consensually agreed on, contingent on specific rules or authority commands, and alterable.

Moral and social conventions have been further differentiated from individuals' descriptive understanding of persons as psychological systems, including their understanding of and attributions for their own and others' behavior and their knowledge of self, personality, and identity. Psychological knowledge pertains to individuals' attempts to understand psychological causes and to infer meaning that is not given in social interactions. Although the psychological domain is a distinct conceptual and developmental system of social knowledge, it bears on the scope and nature of morality in that the notion of rights is grounded in notions of the self and personal agency (Dworkin, 1978; Gewirth, 1978; Nucci, 1996, 2001).

In turn, Nucci (1996, 2001) has proposed that individuals exercise personal agency when asserting control over personal issues. Personal issues include preferences and choices regarding issues such as control over one's body, privacy, and choice of friends or activities (Nucci, 1996, 2001; Nucci & Turiel, 2000). Because personal issues pertain only to the actor and the private aspects of one's life, they are considered to be outside the realm of conventional regulation and moral concern. Thus, asserting claims to an issue as personal is an important aspect of individuals' developing autonomy or distinctiveness from others (Nucci, 2001), and the right to make autonomous decisions forms the boundary between the self and the social world. Children and adolescents typically categorize personal issues as up to the individual (rather than as acts that are right or wrong), based on justifications that the action's consequences only affect the actor or that the acts are personal matters and should be the actor's own business (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Nucci, 1981; Nucci & Weber, 1995; Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

Criteria for Identifying Morality as a Domain of Social Knowledge

Much of the early research from the social–cognitive domain perspective focused on testing the proposition that children are able to distinguish morality from social convention. This

research examined whether children made consistent distinctions using theoretical criteria hypothesized to distinguish the domains. Accordingly, these studies examined children's judgments about hypothetical situations that are considered prototypical of the domains. Moral events, rules, or transgressions typically have been presented in story vignettes or pictures that depict straightforward events (in that the acts are not depicted as being in conflict with other types of goals, motivations, or events), and the moral stimuli usually are depicted as intentional and voluntary acts that have consequences for others' welfare or rights.

Domain distinctions have been examined using two types of assessments. First, children's criterion judgments have been assessed using the theoretical dimensions that are hypothesized to differentiate morality from other types of social knowledge. The criteria for morality include generalizability, obligation, inalterability, and independence from rules and authority sanctions, whereas the criteria for convention include contextual relativity, alterability, and contingency on rules and authority. *Generalizability* has been operationalized in terms of whether events or transgressions are judged to be wrong or permissible in different social contexts, such as at home, in another school, or in other countries. *Moral obligation* has been assessed by children's judgments as to whether individuals are obligated to perform requested actions or obey rules. *Judgments of rule and authority independence* have been operationalized in terms of children's evaluations of whether acts or transgressions would be wrong in the absence of rules or if the authority (teacher, parent, etc.) did not see or know about the rule violation.

In addition, studies also have included quantitative assessments of the seriousness and amount of punishment deserved for different transgressions and the importance of different types of rules. Although moral transgressions typically are treated as more serious and more punishable than conventional transgressions and moral rules are rated as more important than conventional rules, these quantitative dimensions are seen as correlated with, rather than as formal criteria for, distinguishing the domains (see Tisak & Turiel [1988] for an example of how seriousness can be disentangled from event domain).

Children's justifications for their judgments, or the types of reasons individuals provide to explain their evaluations of social actions, also have been used as criteria for domain distinctions. *Moral justifications* pertain to the intrinsic consequences of acts for others, including concerns with others' harm or welfare, fairness or rights, and obligations, whereas *social-conventional justifications* pertain to authority (including concerns with punishment, rules, or authority commands), social expectations and social regularities (e.g., social and cultural norms), and social organization or social order (e.g., the need to maintain social order, avoid disorder, or coordinate social interactions).

Over the last 30 years, numerous studies have examined whether children across a broad age range distinguish between moral and conventional acts in their judgments and justifications. The results of this research have been reviewed extensively elsewhere (see Killen, McGlothlin, & Lee-Kim, 2002; Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 1995b, 1997; Tisak, 1995; Turiel, 1998) and thus are not reviewed in detail here. But, as Killen, McGlothlin, and Lee-Kim (2002) have noted, the results of more than 100 studies provide strong support for the proposition that from early ages on, children distinguish morality and social convention using these theoretical criteria. Research (conducted in the United States and elsewhere) examining evaluations of prototypical hypothetical moral events have found that individuals from early childhood on evaluate straightforward moral transgressions as prescriptively and generalizably wrong, based on moral concerns with others' welfare or rights. Children generally are act oriented and focus on the consequences of acts for others when evaluating moral events, whereas they are rule oriented when evaluating social conventional events. Furthermore, children as young as 3 years of age make rudimentary distinctions between

moral and social events (Smetana, 1981a; Smetana & Braeges, 1990), and young children apply the distinction more for familiar than unfamiliar events (Davidson, Turiel, & Black, 1983). With increasing age, the distinction becomes applied more reliably and to a broader range of social events. Development proceeds from a reliance on specific personal experiences to the ability to apply the criteria to more abstract and unfamiliar social events.

Coordinations and Overlaps in Moral and Social Concepts

Not all events or situations can be cleanly separated into moral and conventional components (Smetana, 1983; Turiel, 1983; Turiel, Killen & Helwig, 1987). Many events or situations are multifaceted and entail overlapping concerns with morality, social conventions, prudence, pragmatics, or personal issues, sometimes in conflict with one another and sometimes in synchrony. These mixed domain (or multifaceted) events have been the focus of much recent research, as they are the source of much developmental and contextual variability and inconsistency in judgments. That is, the way individuals weigh and coordinate moral and nonmoral considerations in making judgments may vary across contexts, cultures, and development. Indeed, an adequate explanation of development must include analyses of how individuals coordinate moral and nonmoral issues in their thinking (Helwig & Turiel, 2003; Smetana & Turiel, 2003; Turiel, 1983, 1998).

In the research examining judgments about multifaceted situations, participants typically are asked to evaluate hypothetical situations where different types of concerns conflict. Some studies have examined children's judgments about different mixed domain situations (e.g., Killen, 1990; Smetana, Killen, & Turiel, 1991), or judgments about straightforward (single-domain) events have been compared to judgments about mixed-domain situations (e.g., Helwig, 1995; Turiel, Hildebrandt, & Wainryb, 1991). These types of comparisons demonstrate that although children may understand and apply moral concepts in straightforward situations, they sometimes subordinate morality to other concerns (e.g., law or social convention) when they are contextualized in more complex situations. These studies demonstrate clearly that children's reasoning in such complex situations does not reflect a general failure to distinguish morality from social convention (as global stage models of moral judgment development have assumed), but rather reflects the salience of different concerns in multifaceted situations. The findings from numerous studies reflect considerable variation both between and within individuals in how they coordinate morality with other social concepts. In some situations, children subordinate concepts in one domain to another domain, either because they explicitly consider but reject one type of concern as less salient or less valid, or because they do not recognize the competing concerns. In other situations, children may coordinate different social concepts, or they may view them as in conflict. Much research remains to be done to understand the nature of these coordinations at different ages and whether there are general developmental patterns in children's ability to coordinate different social concepts. In the following section, within-domain variations in children's moral judgments and judgments about moral versus different types of nonmoral acts are considered.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTS AS SOURCES OF CONSISTENCY AND VARIATIONS IN JUDGMENTS

Some of the studies examining children's judgments of prototypical moral and social-conventional events also have systematically varied the moral stimuli, yielding analyses of moral judgments regarding different types of moral issues. There has been substantially less attention to studying development within the moral domain, although the available

research does provide some evidence of developmental change in moral concepts with age. Other studies have compared moral or conventional events (or both) with nonsocial events, such as physical or logical regularities, or have examined judgments about hypothetical versus actual events. The findings from these studies are reviewed next.

Within-Domain Variations

Moral Judgments of Physical Harm, Psychological Harm, and Fairness. Most of the research examining distinctions in children's and adolescents' moral and conventional understanding has included different types of moral events, although the analyses have focused on comparing moral and conventional (or other nonmoral) judgments. Several studies have systematically examined children's judgments of different types of moral events, however, including those entailing fairness (e.g., not sharing or taking turns), psychological harm or distress (e.g., teasing, calling a child names, or being mean), and physical harm (e.g., hitting or kicking) along with their evaluation of social-conventional items (Smetana, Kelly, & Twentyman, 1984; Smetana, Schlagman, & Adams, 1993). Moral transgressions of all kinds are seen as more serious, more deserving of punishment, more independent of rules, and more generalizably wrong than social-conventional transgressions. But young children also view unfairness, psychological distress, and physical harm as increasingly serious transgressions (Smetana et al., 1984).

Furthermore, young children (primarily preschoolers) more consistently apply moral criteria to events entailing physical harm (hitting and hurting) than unfairness (such as not sharing a toy; Smetana, 1981a). The findings for young children's moral judgments of fairness regarding sharing are inconsistent, but differences among studies of preschoolers may be due to ambiguity in the depiction of sharing and resource distribution. The stimuli in these studies do not always clearly indicate whether the objects are personal possessions (where rights of ownership dictate that sharing may be more discretionary) or communal property, where rights of possession may dominate (e.g., Ross, Tesla, Kenyon, & Lollis, 1990). Furthermore, because mothers of toddlers have been found to be inconsistent in supporting rights of ownership versus rights of possession (Ross et al., 1990), children may have difficulty constructing an understanding of fairness in these situations.

More generally, however, studies with slightly older children confirm that children's understanding within the moral domain develops from a focus on concrete harm and others' welfare in early childhood to an understanding of fairness, defined in terms of equality and equal treatment between persons, in middle childhood (Damon, 1977; Davidson et al., 1983; Kahn, 1992; Nucci, 2001; Tisak & Turiel, 1988). During preadolescence, concerns with equality are transformed into a concern with equity, or an understanding that fair treatment entails a consideration of individual differences in needs and statuses (Damon, 1977; Nucci, 2001, 2002). Finally, during adolescence, concepts of fairness become more broadly comprehensive, universally applicable, and generalizable across situations as well as more able to take situational variations into account (Nucci, 2001, 2002).

Children have been found to apply concepts of welfare to situations entailing physical harm at earlier ages than to situations entailing psychological harm (Davidson et al., 1983; Smetana et al., 1993), most likely because situations involving physical harm are more immediate and concrete to young children than psychological harm. In situations entailing psychological harm, victims must first interpret the situation to experience the harmful consequences, whereas physical harm is more direct and does not require symbolic mediation (Helwig, Hildebrandt, & Turiel, 1995).

These studies provide some evidence that children's moral concepts as defined within domain theory change qualitatively with age, but the research evidence thus far has been based on relatively small and homogeneous samples studied in exclusively cross-sectional designs. Moreover, the studies have tended to focus on specific moral concepts (e.g., distributive justice or physical harm versus psychological harm). There is a need for longitudinal research that uses more heterogeneous samples and that more comprehensively examines qualitative changes in moral concepts as defined within domain theory.

Religious Versus Moral Rules. Distinctions between morality and social convention are not restricted to secular contexts but can be applied to religious rules as well. Nucci and Turiel (Nucci, 1985; Nucci & Turiel, 1993) examined conceptions of moral and religious rules in adolescents of different religious faiths (Catholic, Dutch Reform Calvinist, Amish-Mennonite, Orthodox Jewish, and Conservative Jewish). In addition to the usual domain assessments, the studies examined whether the permissibility of a given act is contingent on the presence or absence of a specific command from God and whether God's commands could make an act like stealing right that most children treat as morally wrong. As expected, regardless of religious affiliation, most adolescents treated moral issues (like stealing, hitting, and property damage) as wrong in the absence of a rule from God, whereas religious conventions, such as day of worship, expectations regarding appropriate dress (for Amish participants), and diet (for Jewish participants) were treated as acceptable. In addition, most children rejected the notion that God's commands could make a moral violation (such as stealing) morally right, and nearly all of the participants rejected the notion that God would make such a commandment. Thus, children of different religious faiths apply moral criteria to religious rules pertaining to fairness and rights and differentiate religious conventions from moral issues.

Judgments of Moral and Conventional Versus Other Social and Nonsocial Acts

Prudential and Personal Issues. Children's and adolescents' understanding of moral and conventional events has been compared to their understanding of *prudential issues*, which are nonsocial acts pertaining to safety, harm to the self, comfort, and health (Tisak, 1993; Tisak & Turiel, 1984). Children differentiate between situations involving (moral) harm to others (such as when a child pushes another child off a swing), and (prudential) harm to the self (such as when a child purposely jumps off a swing), even when violations are depicted as having similar consequences (e.g., a child getting hurt; Tisak, 1993). Furthermore, children judge moral transgressions to be more wrong than prudential transgressions, even when the consequences are depicted as more severe for the prudential than the moral rule violations or when the consequences of moral violations are depicted as minor (Tisak, 1993). Thus, children's judgments reflect a concern with the type of harm, rather than its severity.

As early as 3 years of age, children also distinguish moral and conventional issues from personal issues in both home and preschool contexts (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Nucci & Weber, 1995; Weber, 1999). Children typically categorize personal issues as up to the individual (rather than as acts that are right or wrong), based on justifications that the consequences only affect the actor or that the acts are personal matters and should be the actor's own business (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Nucci, 1981; Nucci & Weber, 1995).

Logical and Physical Issues. Although children of all ages treat moral laws as more unalterable than conventions, young children's ability to distinguish conventional and

physical regularities (such as gravity) increases with age in middle childhood (Komatsu & Galotti, 1986; Lockhart, Abrahams, & Osherson, 1977). Komatsu and Galotti (1986) also manipulated whether the events were depicted in this world versus a presumably dissimilar world ("E.T.'s world"); by third grade, most children understood that conventions are alterable in both worlds. In contrast, children viewed physical facts as unalterable in this world, but increasingly alterable in another world. Thus, children's understanding of different types of social and nonsocial regularities increases with age during middle childhood.

These distinctions have been expanded to include intellectual conventions (like how to draw certain letters) and personal intellectual matters (like preferences for particular books; Nicholls & Thorkildsen, 1988), as well as logical problems (Laupa, 2000). Children judge intellectual conventions to be more alterable than physical and logical laws, and they view children as having autonomy over personal issues, whereas teachers are seen as having the legitimate authority to set standards over other types of issues (logic and conventions).

Judgments Regarding Hypothetical Versus Actual Situations

The research discussed in the previous sections has focused primarily on children's judgments and justifications in hypothetical, prototypical situations. Studies using prototypical examples are designed to depict the features of moral actions in unambiguous and straightforward ways. In actual situations, transgressions also may be straightforward, but they may be more fleeting and more nuanced, and actors' intentions, the victim's role in instigating the events, and the extent of the negative consequences experienced by the victim all may be ambiguous or difficult to discern. In addition, actual situations may entail mixtures of different domains, for instance, when rules or authority pertain to unfair practices (Turiel, 2002). These factors all may lead to variations in judgments of actual situations.

Children's judgments of prototypical and hypothetical and actual, witnessed transgressions have been compared (Smetana et al., 1993; Smetana, Toth et al., 1999; Turiel, 2002). In one study (Smetana et al., 1993), preschool children made judgments about prototypical moral and conventional transgressions using standard assessment procedures. The novel aspect of this study was that preschool classrooms also were observed until a moral or conventional transgression occurred, and then bystanders, or witnesses to the transgressions, were interviewed about the events. Few differences in judgments about hypothetical and actual transgressions were observed, although children made clearer distinctions between moral and conventional events in their judgments of authority independence when judging hypothetical than actual transgressions.

A second study (Smetana, Toth et al., 1999) employed the same methods but interviewed actual victims and transgressors instead of bystanders. Again, children's judgments about prototypical moral transgressions were compared to judgments about straightforward moral transgressions. Children did not differ in their ratings of the severity of hypothetical and actual transgressions, but they viewed hypothetical transgressions as more deserving of punishment than actual transgressions. Children also focused more on the intrinsic features of acts when justifying hypothetical than actual transgressions, whereas they more often did not know why transgressions were wrong when justifying actual than hypothetical transgressions. Thus, children clearly judged the actual moral transgressions using moral criteria, but the hypothetical events appeared to elicit more clearcut moral evaluations.

Perhaps the most detailed description of judgments in hypothetical and actual situations comes from an observational study described by Turiel (2002). Observations of

moral, conventional, and mixed-domain events were conducted in several contexts in different schools. Children of varying ages were interviewed about the actual events shortly after they occurred; they were also administered standard interviews about hypothetical moral and conventional events about a month following the observations. As found in the previous studies, children of all ages distinguished actual moral from conventional events, but judgments about the hypothetical events were more clearcut and uniform than judgments about the actual events (Turiel, 2002). Thus, when children encounter straightforward moral transgressions in everyday life, the situations may be more ambiguous and the features of the events may not be as well specified and detailed as the situations that are presented in hypothetical interviews, leading to some variation in moral judgments.

Facts and Values: Informational Assumptions

A series of studies by Wainryb (1991, 2000; Wainryb & Ford, 1998) has illuminated the importance of distinguishing between children's factual beliefs and moral evaluations (for a discussion of this issue from an anthropological perspective, see Hatch [1983]; for a developmental discussion, see Turiel [2002] and Turiel et al. [1987]). Wainryb has proposed that apparent differences in moral evaluations may be due to differences in children's descriptive understanding of the nature of reality (which she refers to as *informational assumptions*), rather than in moral concepts or principles. Her research has demonstrated that children consistently take into account both moral and factual beliefs when making moral judgments.

In an initial study, Wainryb (1991) found that although adolescent and college-age students had similar moral beliefs about the wrongness of inflicting harm on others, they varied in their evaluations of particular situations (like whether it is permissible for a father to administer corporal punishment), because they disagreed about what they believed to be true (whether causing pain in the context of corporal punishment promotes learning or not). Differences in these factual beliefs informed their moral evaluations of the permissibility of corporal punishment. Attitudes about corporal punishment were more positive among those who believed that pain facilitates learning, whereas attitudes were more negative among those with more negative or uncertain beliefs about the value of pain in learning. Moreover, manipulating the informational assumptions led to changes in individuals' moral evaluations of the acts. Similar relationships between informational assumptions and moral evaluations have been found for other social practices as well (Turiel et al., 1991; Wainryb, 1991).

Factual or informational beliefs also have been found to inform real-life decisions about unwanted pregnancy through their influence in structuring judgments. Variations in adolescent and young adult women's beliefs about personhood (including when during a pregnancy a fetus becomes a person and the criteria for defining personhood) informed women's concepts of abortion as a moral or personal issue, which in turn, influenced their decisions whether or not to terminate an unwanted pregnancy (Smetana, 1981b, 1982). Indeed, domain orientation was a better predictor of pregnancy decisions than either religious background or developmental level of moral reasoning, as assessed using hypothetical Kohlbergian moral judgment dilemmas, although religious background influenced women's definitions of personhood. Thus, factual beliefs have a bearing on how individuals construe social practices and act on their beliefs. As these studies suggest, informational assumptions or factual beliefs come from a variety of sources, including science and religion, and may change (e.g., when scientific knowledge advances), or be

contested by different groups within a culture (e.g., different religious beliefs about when a fetus becomes a person).

In an interesting extension of these studies, Wainryb and her colleagues have examined judgments of tolerance, or how children's factual beliefs inform their evaluations of the legitimacy of beliefs different than their own. Shaw and Wainryb (1999) asked college students to evaluate social practices that were described as typically practiced by most members of another culture but that entailed harm (e.g., knocking out boys' front teeth with a rock as boys turned 14). Most study participants stated that individuals in this other culture must have factual beliefs that make these practices beneficial rather than harmful. Moreover, the researchers manipulated both the type of belief (moral versus factual) and whether or not there was societal consensus about the belief. They found that the practice was evaluated positively only when members of the society were said to hold the same factual beliefs (e.g., that the practice has beneficial consequences) and to have consensual agreement about the practice. When members of the society were described as disagreeing about the underlying facts or whether the behavior was immoral or agreeing that the practice was immoral, it was assessed negatively as having unfair or harmful consequences. Thus, individuals judge acts that they view as harmful or unfair to be acceptable if they appear to be based on divergent factual beliefs. Wainryb, Shaw, and Maianu (1998) concluded that an understanding that beliefs are matters of interpretation and that individuals may interpret the facts differently leads to tolerance of other people and their behavior. Individuals in such societies are viewed as misinformed but well intentioned.

Another set of studies has drawn on the extensive literature on theory of mind and children's understanding of false beliefs to examine when children begin to understand that individuals have moral and factual beliefs different than their own. An initial study (Flavell, Mumme, Green, & Flavell, 1992) reported that 3-year-olds' difficulty in a standard theory of mind false belief task (which focuses on factual beliefs) also extends to their inability to understand that others might have divergent moral beliefs. By 5 years of age, however, children in this study understood that others might have different factual and moral beliefs. However, as Wainryb and Ford (1998) noted, accurately attributing false moral beliefs alone does not predict how individuals judge the permissibility of others' social practices. Therefore, Wainryb and Ford (1998) extended this research to examine young children's evaluations of divergent social practices. Like Flavell and co-workers (1992), Wainryb and Ford (1998) found that 3-year-olds do not understand that other people have beliefs different than their own, and thus are intolerant. As with older children, however, Wainryb and Ford (1998) found that 5- and 7-year-olds more positively evaluated potentially immoral (e.g., harmful or unfair) practices when they disagreed with the informational beliefs than the moral beliefs. In other words, young children were more tolerant when they used informational beliefs different from their own to reconceptualize the meaning of the acts.

Summary. Substantial empirical evidence indicates that young children apply moral criteria to familiar moral issues and distinguish them from conventional, personal, and prudential issues in their judgments and justifications. In early childhood, moral criteria such as generalizability and rule independence are applied more consistently to moral issues pertaining to concrete harm and welfare than to fairness and psychological harm. During middle childhood, children also are increasingly able to apply moral criteria to unfamiliar moral events and to a broader range of moral concepts. Cross-sectional studies have yielded evidence that children's moral reasoning changes with age from early childhood

to adolescence, but longitudinal research examining normative changes in moral concepts as defined within domain theory is needed to provide evidence of qualitative changes in the moral domain. Longitudinal research also is needed to inform our understanding of age-related increases in children's application of the different criteria underlying their moral judgments.

During middle childhood, children's understanding of different types of regularities expands to include distinctions among moral concepts, intellectual and social-conventional uniformities, physical regularities, and logical rules. An understanding of distinctions between morality and social convention is not limited to secular contexts, but is applied to religious issues as well. Children's understanding of factual beliefs, which develops during early childhood, also influence moral evaluations and may be an important source of variation in children's moral judgments.

FEATURES OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AS SOURCES OF CONSISTENCY AND VARIATION IN JUDGMENTS

The hypothesis that moral and social knowledge is constructed from reciprocal individual-environment interactions has been examined in at least three types of studies. *Experimental studies* have varied features of acts associated with different types of transgressions to examine whether these features lead to differentiations in moral and social judgments. *Observational research* has examined children's and adults' responses to naturally occurring transgressions in different domains. Finally, research on *emotion attributions* has been examined in terms of its role in differentiating moral from nonmoral concepts. Evidence from these three lines of research is summarized in the following sections.

Features of Acts

Experimental designs have been used to explicitly test the proposition that children make moral judgments based on the features of social events. Smetana (1985) examined preschool children's judgments about familiar and unspecified moral and conventional events. The unspecified events were labeled by nonsense words, but they varied in the consistency of the prohibitions and the types of responses to the actions. Preschool children differentiated between familiar moral and conventional transgressions in the expected ways; they also differentiated the unspecified events on the basis of their features. Acts that were depicted as generalizably wrong and having consequences for others' welfare ("moral" acts) led to moral judgments, whereas acts that were depicted as contextually relative and prohibited by adults but that did not entail apparent harm or violations of rights ("conventional" acts) led to conventional judgments. Thus, children evaluated the features of interactions independent of children's knowledge of the content of specific events.

Using a different methodology, Zelazo, Helwig, and Lau (1996) assessed preschool children's judgments in different conditions that varied actors' intentions, as well as the relation between acts and their associated outcomes. For instance, children considered conditions under which hitting either caused harm (a normal or canonical causal relation) or pleasure (an unexpected or noncanonical causal relation) and where the actors either intended or did not intend to cause harm. Although young children had more difficulty with the unexpected than the normal causal relations, children's judgments of act acceptability were primarily based on the outcomes (whether or not someone got hurt), not on associations between the acts (such as hitting) and factors external to the acts,

such as adult punishment or sanctions. These findings have been replicated in 3-year-olds, demonstrating that they make similar judgments about psychological harm (Helwig, Zelazo, & Wilson, 2001). Thus, these studies provide convincing evidence that children use the specific features of moral actions, such as whether they cause harm to others, to construct generalizable moral judgments (as well as contextually relative conventional judgments).

Shaw and Wainryb (2003) took a somewhat different approach. They examined whether nonprototypical responses to transgressions (compliance or subversion rather than opposition in response to a hypothetical transgressor's demands) lead children to evaluate moral transgressions pertaining to unfairness as permissible or acceptable. Compliance and subversion can be seen as nonprototypical responses, because victims typically respond to unfairness with protest or resistance. Thus, compliant victims might be seen as willing participants. Contrary to expectations, 7- to 15-year-olds evaluated the transgressor's behavior to be morally wrong, regardless of the victim's responses. Children constructed an understanding of victimization and unfairness without explicit behavioral cues (like protests or cries from victims). The authors interpreted these findings as suggesting that the participants brought information and judgments from their own experience to bear on their evaluations of the events. Even when the hypothetical victims complied or subverted the transgressor's demands, most study participants evaluated victims as having negative emotional responses to their victimization. Thus, in addition to their moral evaluations of the transgressors, children displayed a sophisticated understanding that the victim's behavior may not accurately reflect their psychological states or internal feelings.

Characteristics of Social Interactions

Children ranging in age from infancy through middle school have been observed in different naturalistic contexts, including homes, day care centers and nursery schools, school classrooms, and playgrounds to examine characteristics of their moral, conventional, personal, and prudential interactions (see Smetana [1995b, 1997] and Turiel [1998] for reviews). The results of at least 10 observational studies (Blumenfeld, Pintrich, & Hamilton, 1987; Killen & Smetana, 1999; Much & Shweder, 1978; Nucci & Nucci, 1982a, 1982b; Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Nucci, Turiel, & Gawrych, 1983; Nucci & Weber, 1995; Smetana, 1984, 1989b; Tisak, Nucci, & Jankowski, 1996) using the same observational paradigm and highly similar coding systems (and at least 10 more studies that have modified the standard protocol to examine conflict resolution, discourse, and family, peer, and teacher-child interactions) have indicated that social interactions in the context of moral, conventional, and prudential transgressions differ, both in terms of who responds to transgressions, as well as in the type of response to misdeeds.

In these studies, observers first used behavioral definitions (e.g., object conflicts or aggression) to reliably identify and classify observed transgressions as moral or conventional (or in a few cases, prudential or personal). Then, observers coded who responded to the transgressions (e.g., the victim, other peers, or adults) and the type of response using a category system that included behavioral responses (such as physical retaliation), emotional reactions, ridicule, commands, and different types of statements (e.g., disorder versus rights statements).

These studies yielded highly consistent results. Both adults and children (primarily the victims) respond to moral transgressions in ways that provide feedback about the effects of acts for others' rights or welfare (e.g., requests by adults to take the victim's perspective, attempts by both children and adults to evaluate rights, victims' emotional reactions, or

claims of injury or loss). Both children and adults also responded to all violations with commands or sanctions, but most of the responses were consistent with the notion that children's moral understanding can be derived from the acts themselves rather than from the rules that regulate the acts. Furthermore, these studies suggested that although children's moral development may be of great concern to adults, many moral conflicts occur and are resolved in the absence of parents or other adults. Indeed, adult intervention in children's moral conflicts decreases from the early years to middle childhood (see Smetana, 1997). In contrast, adults primarily responded to children's conventional violations, especially until middle childhood, with information about what is acceptable in different contexts and what is not (e.g., statements about the disorder the acts caused, sanctions, rule statements, and commands). These findings provide behavioral evidence for how adults and children treat moral and social-conventional conflicts and transgressions. Moreover, the research provides support for the claim that social interactions form the experiential basis for the construction of social knowledge.

Affective Consequences of Transgressions

There has been increasing interest in the role of emotions in moral development (see Arsenio, Gold, & Adams, chap. 21, this volume; Arsenio & Lemerise, 2004; Arsenio & Lover, 1995; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). Theoretical approaches that give priority to emotions assert that the socialization of moral principles is accomplished through associations with (parents') negative emotions or that affective processes (such as empathy) drive changes in moral principles. In contrast, following Piaget (1967), domain theory researchers have viewed emotions as the energy that drives and organizes judgments; children's affective experiences are "grist for the social-cognitive mill" (Smetana, 1997, p. 122) in that they influence children's understanding, encoding, and memory of moral transgressions. Thus, in this view, moral knowledge, not emotional response, changes qualitatively with age (Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 1997; Turiel, 1998).

Arsenio's research program provides some support for this assertion (see Arsenio, Gold, & Adams, chap. 21, this volume). His research has shown that different emotions are associated with different types of transgressions. In middle childhood, moral events are evaluated as affectively negative, whereas conventional transgressions are viewed as affectively neutral, and these ratings are highly correlated with judgments of obligatoriness and alterability (Arsenio & Ford, 1985). Furthermore, children's expectancies of the emotional consequences of moral and social judgments are highly differentiated and increase in complexity with age; children use information about situational affective consequences (e.g., whether actors or victims are happy, sad, angry, fearful, or neutral) to infer whether initiating events are moral, conventional, or personal (Arsenio, 1988). These findings led Arsenio to propose that differences in the tendency of moral and conventional events to elicit emotional arousal may promote differential encoding of these events; highly arousing moral events may be considered "immoral" in part because they are more affectively salient than less arousing events. Thus, these studies suggest that affective reactions are a salient feature of children's experiences of transgressions that influence their ability to understand, differentiate, and remember moral and other types of social events.

Although children of all ages consistently attribute negative emotions to the victims of transgressions, most young children are "happy victimizers." That is, children attribute positive emotions (like happiness) to transgressors (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992). With advancing age (beginning at about 6 years), children also attribute conflicting emotions (happiness due to their gains as a result of the behavior as well as negative emotions due

to their understanding of their victim's plight) to victimizers. Arsenio and Lover (1995) proposed that with age, and as a consequence of positive peer relationships, normally developing children shift from viewing victimizers as feeling strictly happy to focusing on the negative consequences for the victim. This model helps to explain the apparent inconsistency between young children's relatively sophisticated moral evaluations (at least while focusing on victims) and the frequency of moral misbehaviors and transgressions in early childhood (because children also focus on the gains achieved through victimization). In Arsenio and Lover's (1995) conceptualization, stable individual differences in children's peer relationships combine with developmental changes to influence children's moral understanding.

Summary. The studies reviewed in this section bear on the claim that there are consistencies in children's moral judgments and that morality can be universalized. Using different methodologies, the studies provide evidence that children's moral and social judgments are inferred from features of the acts rather than from knowledge of the prohibitions regarding particular acts. Research on children's emotional expectancies and attributions for different types of transgressions suggests that the ability to coordinate the negative consequences of victimization with the potentially positive gains for perpetrators increases with age and that an attributional shift may account for discrepancies between children's moral evaluations and behavior.

Moreover, observational research indicates that adults and children use different conflict resolution strategies and have different responses to moral and social-conventional conflicts and transgressions. This research demonstrates that there are observable regularities in social interactions that map onto the distinctions that have been found in children's moral and social judgments. Research is needed to explicitly test these hypothesized connections between patterns of social interactions and the development of moral and social judgments.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL ROLES AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AS SOURCES OF CONSISTENCY AND VARIATION IN JUDGMENTS

The proposition that moral and social judgments are actively constructed from reciprocal social interactions implies that individuals are constantly interpreting situations and ascribing meaning to their interactions. This process of interpretation has been referred to as *social construal* (Saltzstein, 1994; Turiel et al., 1987, 1991) and has been the focus of much recent research. Although the steps involved in social construal have not been well specified in domain research (but see Arsenio & Lemerise [2004]), the steps in children's real-time social-cognitive processing of information and social cues during social situations have been examined from social information processing (SIP) models of social behavior. The initial steps are described as entailing coding and interpreting of social situations (Coie & Dodge, 1998). SIP models propose that because social situations typically are complex and too much information is available, individuals use heuristics (including biases and deficits) to encode the relevant portions of the interactions. Social construal, including evaluating the morally relevant aspects of situations, is part of this process and may be particularly important in evaluating mixed domain or multifaceted events (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2004). The research reviewed in the following sections indicates that elements of the situation, such as one's role in the interaction or the social relationships among the participants, may influence individuals' social construal of morally relevant situations.

Children's Roles in Situations

Not surprisingly, when preschool children are asked to evaluate hypothetical moral and conventional transgressions that are described as either committed by the self or by others, children view transgressions committed by the self as more permissible than those committed by others (Slomkowski & Killen, 1992; Smetana et al., 1984). Children's judgments also differ as a function of whether they are victims or perpetrators in a transgression. Dunn, Cutting, and Demetriou (2000) found that preschoolers gave more interpersonal justifications when the child-participant was described as the victim of a moral transgression than when the child was described as the violator. In real-life situations, preschool victims judge actual moral transgressions to be more serious and more deserving of punishment than did (actual) violators, whereas transgressors view their behavior to be more justified than do victims (Smetana, Toth et al., 1999). These perspective differences could be attributed to self-interest, but social psychological research on actor/observer differences has demonstrated that individuals have more information about the situational factors affecting their own than others' behavior and thus are more likely to consider mitigating and situational circumstances when making attributions about their own behavior.

This is consistent with the findings from Turiel's (2002) study of social judgments and social action. He also found role-related differences in evaluations, but importantly, victims and transgressors did not differ in their domain assessments of the same event as moral. Transgressors and victims had disagreements over who instigated a moral transgression or why a transgression occurred, but victims and transgressors almost always both viewed such events as moral (whereas for conventional transgressions, transgressors viewed the acts less negatively than did observers).

Recent research by Wainryb and Langley (2003) further illuminates these issues. These researchers examined 6-, 10-, and 15-year-old children's retrospective narrative descriptions of their intentions and reasons in situations of where children had been either a perpetrator or a victim of a moral transgression. When narrating experiences of victimization, children (and particularly younger children) were more likely to view the harm as intentional. Perpetrators typically described their behavior as a response to provocation, whereas victims typically described the perpetrator as wanting to harm or anger them, although with age, children more frequently referred to mitigating circumstances, misunderstandings, and negligence. Importantly, because most of these studies (Dunn et al., 2000; Smetana, Daddis et al., 1999; Wainryb & Langley, 2003) utilized within-subjects designs, differences between victims' and perpetrators' responses cannot be due to individual differences in children. Rather, there appear to be systematic differences in children's social construal depending on their role in the situation.

Social Relationships With Peers and Siblings

Piaget (1932) first proposed that the mutual nature of peer relationships allows for experiences of cooperation, conflict, and negotiation that may facilitate moral development. Others (Damon, 1977; Youniss, 1980) have likewise assumed that relationships with peers allow for reciprocity and mutual give-and-take, which may lead to the co-construction of knowledge. Consistent with this assertion, children have been found to have different social experiences with age mates and near age mates (e.g., siblings) than with parents. Based on a review of studies, Smetana (1997) concluded that moral conflicts, including disputes over possessions, rights, taking turns, hurting, aggression, psychological harm, and unkindness, occur primarily in interactions with peers and siblings rather than with

adults, whereas at least among young children, conflicts over social conventions occur primarily in interactions with adults (because adults have a stake in maintaining conventional regularities). By middle childhood, children also participate in conflicts over the conventions of a particular social context (and at younger ages when cultural conventions are involved).

Although moral conflicts have been found to be more frequent in peer than in parent-child interactions, little research from the social-cognitive domain perspective has examined whether the quality (or extent) of social experience with peers influences the developmental maturity of children's moral and social reasoning. An exception is a study by Sanderson and Siegal (1988). These researchers hypothesized that more socially skilled children would have more highly developed conceptions of social rules than their less socially skilled peers. They assessed judgments of moral and conventional transgressions in 4- and 5-year-olds, who were designated as controversial, popular, average, neglected, and rejected based on peer group nominations. Consistent with previous research, children distinguished the domains using a variety of criteria. Controversial children, however, rated moral transgressions as more deserving of punishment than did their popular peers. Because controversial children are more interpersonally skilled than other children, this finding was interpreted as demonstrating that more socially skilled children are more advanced in their moral maturity. Although these findings are suggestive, their hypotheses regarding popular children were not confirmed, nor were there consistent differences in other criterion judgments. Thus, further research is needed to replicate this finding.

Friendships. Several researchers have further proposed that early friendships may be particularly important in moral development (Arsenio & Lover, 1995; Dunn et al., 2000). Dunn and colleagues (2000) have asserted that interactions between friends provide an important context for a developing understanding of self and others through the opportunity for discourse about inner states and emotions, which may influence children's moral evaluations. Preschool children have been found to view moral transgressions as more permissible when they involve a friend than a nonfriend (Slomkowski & Killen, 1992). Moreover, children referred to interpersonal considerations more when justifying moral transgressions among friends, whereas they used moral justifications more to justify transgressions among nonfriends. Because the majority of children viewed hypothetical moral transgressions as wrong, the findings suggest that friendship influenced children's willingness to consider situational circumstances that mitigated the wrongness of the acts. Furthermore, research shows that young adolescents have different beliefs about appropriate resolution strategies in response to friends' versus acquaintances' moral transgressions (Tisak & Tisak, 1996).

Peer Groups. Horn, Killen, and Stangor (1999) have shown that stereotypes about adolescent social reference groups, or crowds (such as jocks or techies) influence adolescents' judgments about ambiguous situations in which blame for a moral transgression is unclear. Adolescents focused more on social-conventional concerns and less on moral concerns when moral transgressions were consistent rather than inconsistent with stereotypical expectations about different reference groups (Horn et al., 1999). In other words, social-conventional reasoning was activated more often when behavior was depicted as stereotype consistent, but judgments also varied according to the social reference group. Horn (2003) has further demonstrated that adolescents treat exclusion from social groups as multifaceted and having moral and conventional components. She found that adolescents who belonged to high status groups (cheerleaders, jocks, or preppies) judged exclusion

from peer groups as less wrong than did adolescents who either did not belong to a group or who belonged to low status groups (dirties, druggies, and gothics). Thus, moral concepts of fairness or equal treatment were influenced both by the moral parameters of the situation as well as adolescents' position in the social hierarchy (see Killen, Margie, and Sinno [chap. 6, this volume] for more elaboration on judgments regarding social exclusion).

Siblings. Siblings, like friends, provide a context for moral experience and interactions (Dunn & Munn, 1987). Children learn moral behavior (such as empathy), as well as immoral behavior, including experiences of hurting and upsetting others, from their siblings. During the second year of life, there is an increase in teasing, including an increased understanding of "how to provoke and annoy the sibling during confrontation" (Dunn, 1987, p. 94). Dunn (1987) found that 2-year-olds demonstrating greater sibling rivalry had a better moral understanding of how to hurt and upset others, whereas close and affectionate sibling relationships were associated concurrently with children's ability to cooperate, conciliate, and role play (Dunn, 1987) and longitudinally with a more mature moral orientation (Dunn, Brown, & McGuire, 1995).

Four-year-olds showed a greater understanding of others' mental states in naturally occurring conversations with siblings and friends than with mothers, and children who used more mental state terms engaged in more cooperative interactions (Brown, Donelan-McCall, & Dunn, 1996). Thus, social interactions between equals and near-equals provide contexts for gaining a psychological understanding of others, which may facilitate moral judgment development.

Relationships With Parents and Other Adults

Piaget (1932/1965) first called attention to the importance of power in social relationships. Whereas the mutual nature of peer relationships was seen as leading to cooperation and advances in moral judgment development, the imbalances in power that characterize parent-child (or more generally, adult-child) interactions were hypothesized to lead to relationships of constraint that impede moral development. This has led to a relative neglect of the influence of parents in facilitating moral judgments in early structural developmental research (but see Walker & Taylor [1991] for an exception). Domain theory researchers have examined several issues pertaining to the role of parents, including the types of family interactions and discipline methods that facilitate moral development and children's and adolescents' judgments of parental and teacher authority. Findings from this research are discussed briefly in the following sections.

Parental Discipline. Researchers from socialization perspectives have focused on the influence of parental discipline on moral development. A consistent finding is that induction, or parents' use of reasoning, explanations, and rationales, is associated with more mature morality, as assessed in a variety of ways (Hoffman, 1991; Thompson & Meyer, chap. 10, this volume). Traditional socialization theories have paid insufficient attention, however, to the content of those messages and the values to be internalized. Research reviewed extensively by Grusec and Goodnow (1994) has shown that the types of reasons parents use vary according to the nature of the misdeed. As noted, mothers tend to reason about others' needs and rights in response to acts entailing welfare and harm, and social order and rules in response to conventional transgressions. Furthermore, parental responses to moral (and conventional) transgressions are direct, explicit, and typically do not entail negotiation, whereas responses to personal issues entail more tacit forms

of communication, including greater negotiation and more opportunities for children to make choices (Nucci & Weber, 1995).

According to domain theory, interactions with parents (as well as peers) are important contexts for moral judgment development. Children's direct experiences (as victims and observers of transgressions) provide one source of knowledge about the intrinsic consequences of acts for others' welfare and rights, but parental statements, reactions, and responses to transgressions provide another source. Inductive discipline methods, including parents' domain-specific explanations and reasoning, facilitate children's moral and social development by providing information about the nature of transgressions and by stimulating children to think reflectively about their actions. As an illustration, sequential analyses of middle-class European American children's responses to transgressions demonstrated that young child victims reacted to moral transgressions with statements regarding the injury or loss they experienced or with emotional reactions; these were either followed sequentially by parental commands to stop the misbehavior or parental statements focusing on rights or requests to take the victims' perspectives (Smetana, 1989b). Thus, at least in the latter case, parents' reactions provided a complementary source of information about children's experiences that can be used to construct moral concepts. Parents' reasoning and explanations may help children to translate their immediate and potentially highly emotional reactions and responses into more generalizable, abstract principles regarding justice, fairness, and rights. Reasoning has been criticized as an overly broad and amorphous category (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994), but studies focusing specifically on parents' other-oriented reasoning have found that these explanations do facilitate moral development (Kuczynski, 1982; Zahn-Waxler & Chapman, 1982) and are associated with fewer moral transgressions (unpublished analyses reported in Smetana, 1997).

Conversely, power-assertive methods may be ineffective in facilitating moral maturity because they fail to provide information that can be used to construct generalizable moral concepts. Indeed, research has shown that power assertion is effective in inducing short-term compliance, but it does not facilitate moral development (Kuczynski, 1984). Parental responses that are extremely negative, angry, or coercive may be especially detrimental to the development of moral and social understanding because they are too negatively arousing, which may scare the child, threaten his or her sense of security, and lead to a focus on the child's rather than on others' feelings (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Zahn-Waxler & Chapman, 1982). Consistent with the claim that affect influences the salience and encoding of moral events (Arsenio & Lover, 1995); however, moderate anger and negative affect in conjunction with explanations that focus on others' welfare and rights, appear to increase the effectiveness of parental reasoning, perhaps because they help to focus the child on the harm or injustice caused (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Smetana, 1997; Zahn-Waxler & Chapman, 1982).

Furthermore, the process of discipline is interactive (Turiel, 1998), and thus, it is important to focus not just on the parental message, but how children interpret those messages. Children evaluate the appropriateness of adult responses to their actions and have clear preferences for domain-appropriate over domain-inappropriate responses (Killen, Breton, Ferguson, & Handler, 1994; Nucci, 1984). Although the observational research suggests that parents and other adults naturally coordinate their responses to transgressions with the nature of the act, children may be more responsive to parental directives when they are consistent with children's understanding of the actions.

Parental and Teacher Authority. Traditional approaches to moral internalization have focused on children's compliance as an indicator of successful socialization. More recently,

Grusec and Goodnow (1994) have recognized that, although compliance may be desirable in some circumstances, parents may have other goals for their children, including facilitating their child's autonomy or initiative. Thus, greater compliance or submissiveness to parental requests may not always indicate greater moral maturity or developmental competence, even when compliance is mutual or freely chosen (what Kochanska [1997] has referred to as committed compliance) rather than externally coerced (or situational compliance; Kochanska [1997]).

From the domain perspective, the proposition that discipline situations are interactive also implies that children or adolescents evaluate the legitimacy of adults' authority to make rules or request compliance. An extensive body of research (summarized in Laupa, Turiel, & Cowan [1995], Smetana [1995a, 1995b, 2002], Tisak [1995], and Turiel [1998]) has examined children and adolescents' conceptions of legitimate parental (and teacher) authority. Contrary to Piaget's (1932/1965) claims, even young children do not have unilateral respect for adult authority; they critically evaluate its legitimacy along several dimensions, including the domain and nature of the request, as well as the attributes of the authority source. From early childhood to late adolescence, children judge both moral and conventional issues as legitimately regulated by adults, as long as their authority is contextually appropriate (teachers are not seen as having legitimate authority to enforce conventions in the home and mothers have less authority to regulate conventions at school than at home; Laupa, 1991; Weber, 1999) and when they have the requisite knowledge (Laupa, 1991). Children reject adults' authority to make immoral requests, such as to steal or hurt others (Damon, 1977).

American children and adolescents also draw boundaries to legitimate parental and adult authority and consistently view personal issues as beyond the bounds of legitimate parental and teacher authority. Although parents and teachers also endorse the view that children and adolescents should have some personal jurisdiction over certain issues, such as choice of food, clothes, friendships, and activities (see Smetana [1995a, 2002] for a review) and among older adolescents, career decisions (Bregman & Killen, 1999), parents consistently view themselves as having more authority over personal issues than their children are willing to grant them. Parents (as well as teachers) and adolescents also consistently disagree over parents' legitimate authority to regulate issues that entail overlaps between the domains (e.g., events that include both conventional and personal components). Disagreements over where to draw the boundaries between parents' legitimate authority and adolescents' personal discretion has been found to lead to conflict in adolescent–parent relationships, and conflict, in turn, has been found to broaden the boundaries of adolescents' personal domains (Smetana, 1989a, 2002). Thus, disagreement and rejection of parents' control of personal issues are characteristic of children's social relations with parents throughout childhood and adolescence. Children and adolescents actively claim events as personal, resisting regulation and challenging adult authority. Although socialization research typically has treated children's resistance to adult authority as a characteristic of the child and as evidence of failure in socialization, these findings suggest that resistance may be systematically related to domains of social knowledge and beliefs about who should legitimately control and regulate different types of issues.

Finally, how adolescents and parents draw boundaries among the domains is related to children's psychological adjustment. Hasebe, Nucci, and Nucci (2004) have found that middle-class American and Japanese adolescents' evaluations of parental overcontrol of personal issues (but not conventional or prudential issues) is associated with self-reported symptoms of psychopathology (particularly internalizing symptoms like depression and anxiety) and that symptoms are more acute with age, as adolescents expand their claims to

a personal sphere. African-American adolescents' perceptions of greater parental control of decision making over personal and multifaceted issues was found to be associated with better adjustment (including better academic performance, more positive self-worth, and less deviance) in early adolescence, but increases in adolescent decision making over personal and multifaceted issues from middle to late adolescence were associated with better adjustment, including better self-worth and less depression (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Daddis, 2004). Adolescents also view overcontrol of the personal domain as psychologically intrusive (Smetana & Daddis, 2002). However, the findings also indicate that granting adolescents autonomy needs to be developmentally appropriate, because too-early or contextually inappropriate autonomy is associated with poorer psychosocial adjustment (Smetana et al., 2004).

Summary. Social construal entails interpretations of social interactions, including whether children view acts as being morally relevant (e.g., in the moral domain) or not. Perpetrators are more likely to view their behavior as a response to provocation, whereas victims are more likely to view harm as intentional. Because most of the research has used within-subjects designs, there is compelling evidence that these differences are due to children's roles in the situation rather than individual differences in children (and the likelihood that they will be victims versus transgressors in social situations). With age, child victims are more likely to consider mitigating circumstances, but more research is needed on normative shifts in children's understanding of these mitigating circumstances and on coordinations between knowledge obtained in victim versus violator roles.

Moral conflicts and transgressions occur more frequently in interactions with peers and siblings than with adults. Dunn's (1987) research has shown that interactions with siblings provide children with opportunities to learn both moral and immoral behavior. Developmentally appropriate parental reasoning and explanations help children to construct moral understandings of right and wrong, but discipline is interactive, and children also interpret the messages they receive. Thus, children are more responsive to parental (and more broadly, adult) directives that are domain-appropriate and consistent with their understanding of the events and when the adult authority is contextually appropriate and knowledgeable.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS AS SOURCES OF VARIATION IN CHILDREN'S JUDGMENTS

Because structural–developmental theories of moral judgment development focus on normative development, there has been relatively little attention to individual differences in moral judgment development. Although domain theory also assumes that there are qualitative changes with age in moral reasoning, the focus on how moral understanding is coordinated with other types of social knowledge leaves room for examining individual differences in judgments. In the following section, differences in moral and social judgments according to gender, social class, and race/ethnicity are discussed, followed by a review of research on atypical children's development.

Individual Differences

Gender. The issue of sex differences in moral development has been a longstanding source of controversy, from early moral theorists (like Freud) who claimed that girls have a weaker moral sense, to Gilligan (1982), who has claimed that boys and girls develop

different moral orientations. Gilligan also asserts that boys' morality is oriented toward rules, rights, and the self as an autonomous agent, whereas girls' morality is structured by care, responsibility, and the need to avoid harm. These claims have been extensively debated (see Walker, chap. 4, this volume).

In light of these controversies, it is notable that few sex differences have emerged in research from the domain approach. Boys and girls do not appear to differ systematically in their ability to apply moral criteria to situations or to use moral reasoning. One study, specifically designed to examine the balance between justice and welfare (care) in children and adolescents' moral reasoning (Smetana et al., 1991) indicated that whether boys and girls give greater priority to maintaining interpersonal obligations or justice depends on the features of the situations. Children and adolescents favored maintaining interpersonal obligations in situations depicting close interpersonal relationships (a friend rather than acquaintance) or when unfairness was minimized. However, when fairness was made more salient, adolescents gave less priority to maintaining interpersonal relationships. There were considerable inconsistencies both within and across individuals in their reasoning that were not simply due to gender. Rather, much as Walker (1991, chap. 4, this volume) has concluded, the situational features of the dilemmas accounted for the variations.

Gender has been considered in more complex ways in recent research. Okin (1989) and Turiel (1998) have called attention to the way that gender inequalities in the distribution of power and resources in the family may influence children's moral understanding as well as social roles and relationships. This has led to an emerging body of research (discussed in following sections) on how gender inequalities inform children's moral and social evaluations.

Ethnicity and Social Class

Socioeconomic Status. Although much research on children's moral and social judgments has focused on middle-class children, an increasing number of studies have examined the judgments of children living in poverty. Jagers, Bingham, and Hans (1996) examined moral and social judgments as well as relationships between judgments and socialization experiences in African-American preschoolers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In contrast to the vast majority of studies, Jagers and associates (1996) found mixed support for children's ability to make domain distinctions. Children generalized the wrongness of moral (but not conventional) transgressions from school to home and judged moral transgressions to be more independent of rules than conventional transgressions, but they did not differentiate between moral and conventional transgressions in their ratings of seriousness and deserved punishment or in judgments of generalizability across school contexts. The authors speculated that in an environment where violence is endemic, children may view moral transgressions such as hitting as relatively innocuous offenses and therefore may not differentiate morality from social convention for what may be perceived as relatively minor violations. Children who distinguished the domains, however, had mothers who reasoned more with their children and denied privileges and ignored transgressions less. Thus, children's failure to apply moral criteria to moral events and differentiate morality from social convention can be attributed at least partly to differences in parents' child-rearing practices. Lower socioeconomic status has been associated with the greater use of harsh, power-assertive, and more parent-centered methods of discipline (Hoff, Laursen, & Tardif, 2002), which may stem from different cultural or social class-based (informational) assumptions about the efficacy of those practices. It should be noted, however, that other research including children living in poverty (e.g., Astor,

1994; Smetana, Toth et al., 1999) did not find similar deficits in children's moral and social understanding.

Nucci, Camino, and Sapiro (1996) explicitly examined the influence of socioeconomic status on Brazilian children's moral, conventional, prudential, and personal justifications and judgments across a range of criteria. Comparing lower versus middle-class northeastern Brazilian children, these researchers found no effects for socioeconomic status, except that lower class children were more likely to generalize the effects of conventions across contexts and to justify conventions by appealing to rules. Claims to a personal domain also were more frequent in middle-class than in lower class children, but these social class effects disappeared by middle adolescence. Thus, the emergence of claims to a personal sphere was attributed to developmental factors. Nucci and his colleagues proposed that social class effects, particularly in judgments of personal issues, are linked to opportunities to express personal freedoms, which may be more limited for children living in poverty.

Smetana and Gaines (1999) compared reasoning at the other end of the income distribution—among middle-class versus upper class African American families—and found few differences in reasoning according to income (but a number of differences in how parent–adolescent conflict was experienced and resolved). There were some subtle differences in the types of conventional justifications used; upper class parents appealed more to traditions and cultural norms and to responsibility than did middle-income parents. However, the two groups did not differ in their overall use of conventional justifications.

Race and Ethnicity. Although many of the studies cited in previous sections have included ethnic minority children, only a few studies have explicitly examined the influence of race or ethnicity on children's judgments. Few race or ethnic differences have been found. Killen and associates (2002) found that African-American, Asian-American, European-American, and Latin-American adolescents did not differ in their evaluations of straightforward moral transgressions; ethnic differences were found only for elaborations of the wrongfulness of exclusion, a multifaceted issue. Fuligni (1998) also found few differences among American adolescents from European, Chinese, Filipino, and Mexican backgrounds in their conceptions of parents' legitimate authority to make rules about conventional and personal issues (moral issues were not studied).

Likewise, Smetana (2000) found much the same pattern in African-American adolescents' and parents' judgments of legitimate parental authority regarding moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and overlapping issues as has been observed in European-American families. Comparing across studies, Smetana (2002) concluded that African-American parents appear to be somewhat more restrictive of adolescents' freedom to make choices over personal and multifaceted events than are European-American parents, although African-American children, like their European-American counterparts, assert their personal jurisdiction in opposition to parents' claims. Like Nucci and co-workers (1996), Smetana linked African-American parents' greater restrictiveness to their concerns for their children's well-being in an environment where racism and prejudice remain pervasive and where too-early autonomy may carry substantial risks for their children's safety.

Atypical Populations

Moral and social-conventional reasoning and judgments have been examined extensively in atypically developing children. These studies provide useful insights into the role of

social experience in development. In some of these studies, the hypothesis has been that children's moral and social understanding would follow the same progression or process but at a different rate, due to the nature of their disability. For instance, Schmidt, Nucci, and Kahn (1991) hypothesized that retarded adolescents' judgments would be more consistent with their mental age than with their chronological age. The results confirmed this expectation in that, as assessed through interviews, the mildly mentally retarded adolescents' developmental levels of conventional reasoning were consistent with their mental age rather than their chronological age. Retarded adolescents distinguished moral and social rules on a number of criteria, but they also judged a higher proportion of conventional items as wrong in the absence of rules and gave justifications that were more dependent on appeals to authority or the absence of rules than has been found in research with same-age normally developing children.

Blair (1996) hypothesized that autistic children's ability to make moral evaluations would be associated with their understanding of theory of mind. Therefore, he examined a sample of autistic children who were divided between those who had passed or failed a standard theory of mind false belief task, as compared to normally developing children and children with moderate learning difficulties. Contrary to the hypotheses, all children distinguished between moral and conventional issues in their judgments; level of ability on the false belief tasks was not associated with children's ability to make moral and conventional judgments.

Smetana and her colleagues have hypothesized that the aberrant social experiences associated with maltreatment might lead to different moral evaluations (Smetana et al., 1984; Smetana, Toth et al., 1999). In two separate studies, abused and neglected preschoolers (who were compared to nonmaltreated children matched in age, gender, socioeconomic status, and race) were found to differentiate moral and conventional transgressions in their judgments of hypothetical transgressions and evaluate moral events according to the hypothesized moral criteria. One study (Smetana et al., 1984) suggested that compared to nonmaltreated children, abused and neglected children were more sensitive to the intrinsic wrongness of moral events most closely connected to their experiences of maltreatment than were nonmaltreated children, but these findings were not replicated in later research (Smetana, Toth et al., 1999). In general, moral judgments did not differ as a function of maltreatment status (Smetana, Daddis et al., 1999; Smetana, Toth et al., 1999), although maltreated and nonmaltreated children differed in their emotional attributions for transgressions.

Research with children and adolescents (as well as adults, e.g., Blair [1995]) with conduct problems has examined whether children and adolescents who are identified as acting out or behaving aggressively have deficits in their moral reasoning (an assumption that also has received extensive empirical examination in research employing Kohlbergian stages of moral judgment development). In these studies, conduct problems have been assessed in a variety of ways, including high scores on measures of psychopathy (Blair, 1995, 1997; Blair, Monson, & Frederickson, 2001), children identified as disruptive and hard to manage (Hughes & Dunn, 2000), diagnoses of behavioral or conduct disorder (Arsenio & Fleiss, 1996; Nucci & Herman, 1982), and adjudication as a juvenile felon and misdemeanant (Tisak & Jankowski, 1996). The findings demonstrate that conduct disordered or adjudicated children and adolescents evaluate moral transgressions using moral criteria and successfully distinguish morality from social convention in their judgments and justifications (Blair, 1997; Blair et al., 2001; Nucci & Herman, 1982; Tisak & Jankowski, 1996); they also distinguish morality and social conventions from personal issues (Nucci & Herman, 1982; Tisak & Jankowski, 1996).

Nevertheless, some consistent differences in conduct-disordered and typically developing children's judgments have been observed. Behaviorally disturbed or adjudicated adolescents are more likely to judge moral transgressions to be permissible (or less wrong) in the absence of rules (Blair, 1997; Blair et al., 2001; Nucci & Herman, 1982) and also are more likely than typically developing children to focus on conventional aspects of moral transgressions, reasoning that moral transgressions are wrong because the acts could lead to punishment. Conduct-disordered children also are less likely than normally developing children to treat personal issues as within their personal discretion (Nucci & Herman, 1982). Similarly, felons rated rules regarding personal issues to be more important than did misdemeanants (Tisak & Jankowski, 1996). This suggests that behaviorally disordered children have some difficulty in understanding the intrinsic basis of moral transgressions. They also lack clarity about the boundaries between societal regulation and personal autonomy, and have difficulty in identifying areas of personal responsibility. The research to date has not examined the developmental factors that lead to these differences in judgments, however. Intriguingly, one study found that greater behavioral disturbance was associated with greater deficits in making moral/conventional distinctions (Blair et al., 2001), but whether these differences in judgments are causes or consequences of children's behavioral problems has not been examined.

More recent research has focused on another potential source of variability in moral judgments. Astor (1994) examined differences between aggressive and nonaggressive children in their judgments of provocation. He found that although both violent and nonviolent children both used moral reasoning in hypothetical situations that were depicted as provoked, aggressive children focused more on the immorality of provocation and viewed hitting back as morally justified, whereas nonviolent children used moral reasoning to condemn retaliation. These findings are consistent with Nucci and Herman's (1982) observation that behaviorally disordered children understood that moral transgressions like hitting caused harm but often referred to mitigating circumstances (e.g., that "she wasn't really hurt" or "she deserved it") to excuse the moral transgressions. They also elaborate on earlier findings (Slaby & Guerra, 1988) that compared to aggressive or nonaggressive high school students, violent juveniles who were incarcerated for violent crimes (like rape, robbery, and murder) were more likely to believe in the legitimacy of aggression and to ignore the sufferings of their victims.

These studies suggest that there is a social-cognitive bias in conduct-disordered and adjudicated children's and adolescents' construal of situations. This claim is not novel; Dodge and his colleagues have provided extensive evidence of information processing deficits in aggressive children's evaluations of ambiguous situations (see Coie & Dodge [1998] for a review). But social domain research adds the insight that although aggressive and conduct-disordered children are capable of making moral evaluations, they focus on the perspective of the perpetrator and view provocation as a moral justification for their behavior, rather than focusing on the effects of the act on the victim. In addition, much as has been found with maltreated children (Smetana, Toth et al., 1999), behaviorally disordered children made different attributions (for both victims and perpetrators) about the emotional consequences of transgressions than normally developing children. These findings need to be considered along with studies reviewed earlier that indicate that typically developing children also show biases in their judgments according to their role in the situation and that perpetrators are more likely to attribute provocation to their actions than are victims (Smetana, Toth et al., 1999; Wainryb & Langley, 2003). Further research should examine developmental differences between typically developing and aggressive or conduct-disordered children in their ability to focus on victims' versus perpetrators' perspectives.

Summary. Few systematic gender differences in judgments about prototypical moral and social events have been observed. Contrary to Gilligan's (1982) claims, judgments about multifaceted situations that entail conflicts between interpersonal needs and justice reveal variations according to situations rather than gender. Socioeconomic status and racial and ethnic differences are more evident in how children and adolescents construct the boundaries between legitimate personal control and conventional and moral regulation; variations in these evaluations appear to be related to differences in social experiences (such as childrearing practices), informational assumptions, and opportunities, although more research explicitly examining these issues is needed.

Compared to typically developing children, research on atypical samples, including autistic children and maltreated children, have found relatively few differences in moral evaluations and in their ability to differentiate the domains, although maltreated and non-maltreated children appear to differ in their understanding and attributions of emotions. As hypothesized, developmental delays consistent with their developmental rather than chronological age have been found in retarded adolescents' developmental levels of conventional understanding.

Numerous studies of conduct-disordered and aggressive youth indicate that they apply moral concepts to moral violations and distinguish them from conventional regularities on some dimensions, although there is some evidence that they conventionalize moral transgressions and focus more on the immorality of provocation than on the consequences of transgressions for victims. As research suggests that there are developmental changes in typically developing children's understanding of provocation, longitudinal research should determine whether developmental delays in understanding provocation or differences in social construal of situations contribute to the development of conduct problems.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURES AS SOCIAL CONTEXTS

The cross-cultural application of theories of moral reasoning development has generated a great deal of interest and controversy and has been an ongoing concern to researchers from the domain perspective. The following section briefly considers culture as a source of both consistency and variation in moral and social judgments from a domain perspective (for more extensive treatment, see chapters by Wainryb, chap. 8, and Turiel, chap. 1, this volume).

One currently popular approach to understanding culture has been to describe cultures as varying on global dimensions, like individualism and collectivism (Shweder et al., 1998). According to this view, individualistic cultures stress self-sufficiency, the attainment of personal goals, autonomy, detachment from others, and, in the moral realm, a concern with individual rights. In contrast, collectivist cultures are said to stress interdependence, harmony, and connectedness in interpersonal relationships, a focus on statuses, roles, relationships, and, in the moral realm, concerns with authority, tradition, and duty.

In contrast, domain theory researchers have adopted a more differentiated view that takes into consideration the diversity of orientations within cultures. Individuals across cultures develop heterogeneous orientations that entail the coexistence of different kinds of concerns (Killen & Wainryb, 2000; Nucci & Turiel, 2000; Smetana, 2002; Turiel, 1998, 2002; Wainryb, 1997), including the importance of maintaining traditions and group goals (social conventions), concerns for others' rights and welfare (morality), and concerns with personal choice, personal entitlements, and autonomy (personal issues). Thus, like other structural developmental theories (e.g., Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; Kohlberg, 1984), the domain theory claim is that moral concepts are universally applicable, but so are

concepts of social convention and personal jurisdiction. Social conventions serve the same function of structuring and facilitating social interactions in all cultures, although their form is expected to be cross-culturally variable. Furthermore, because notions of the personal domain are grounded in underlying psychological realities that are cross-culturally applicable (Killen & Wainryb, 2000; Nucci, 1996; Nucci & Turiel, 2000; Turiel & Wainryb, 2000; Wainryb, 1997), all cultures are hypothesized to treat some issues as fundamentally within the boundaries of the self and personal agency, although cultural variations are expected in both the scope and content of the personal domain (Nucci 1996; Smetana, 2002).

These assertions have been examined in numerous studies. Children in a wide range of cultures in North and South America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Australia have been found to differentiate moral from social-conventional issues on a variety of criteria, although some differences in justifications have been observed. Although there have been fewer studies, research has shown that appeals to personal choice are not restricted to children in individualistic cultures, but are found in children's judgments in diverse cultures in Europe, Asia, South America, and the Middle East (see Killen, McGlothlin et al. [2002], Nucci [2001], and Smetana [2002] for reviews).

There has been a growing interest (discussed extensively in Turiel [2002]) in examining moral and social judgments as a function of individuals' position in the social hierarchy. Individuals construct notions of the fairness of different social and societal arrangements. Thus, individuals in more subordinate roles (e.g., women, children, individuals living in poverty) may experience greater restrictions in their choices and freedoms as a function of their social position, as well as inequalities in the distribution of power, the way resources are allocated, and their available opportunities. All of these may be potent sources of variation in moral and social judgments (Turiel, 1998, 2002).

This has led to research examining children's, adolescents', and adults' judgments about the rights, entitlements, and choices accorded to men and women in traditional societies. For instance, an extensive series of studies by Wainryb and Turiel (1994; Turiel & Wainryb, 1998, 2000) have examined the social judgments of the Druze, a small, hierarchically organized, highly inbred Arab community in Israel, where women occupy subordinate roles and also experience greater restrictions in their choices and freedoms as a function of their social position. Druze-Arab women desire more control over personal issues, but they view decisions not to oppose the existing conventional order and to express their desires for more personal jurisdiction as more appropriate or more pragmatically wise. Nevertheless, in such situations, women tend to evaluate social practices as more unfair than do those in more dominant positions, who are accorded more entitlements and choices. Thus, gender differences were linked to individuals' position in the social hierarchy. Therefore, even in collectivistic cultures, where individuals are said to value interdependence rather than independence and where social relationships are more hierarchically organized, different social concepts, including justice, interpersonal obligations, conventions, personal choice, and personal entitlements, coexist. At the same time, cultural orientations do affect social judgments. Furthermore, drawing on ethnographic research in cultural anthropology as well as psychological studies, researchers have shown that individuals in subordinate positions contest, resist, and attempt to transform social practices.

It should be clear that this perspective also informs the research on gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status differences in moral and social evaluations described in the previous section (see Nucci and colleagues' [1996] discussion of social class differences in personal choices in Brazil as an example), as social inequalities and restrictions in choices and freedoms may be a powerful sources of variation in moral, social, and personal judgments.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The domain model has expanded and revitalized the study of moral judgment development. It has provided a complex way of conceptualizing the different concerns of individuals within cultures, including concerns with justice, welfare, rights, social conventions, traditions, authority, personal choice, and personal entitlements. These different concerns coexist in individuals' reasoning because they are all aspects of social life within cultures, yet they may be coordinated in different ways depending on individual development, social contexts, and particular cultural arrangements.

Although early social domain research focused on validating the claim that children of different ages distinguish between moral and social-conventional concepts, more recent research has examined children's, adolescents', and adults' reasoning in multifaceted situations that entail overlapping or conflicting concerns. This approach has generated much research on a variety of topics, including children's rights, aggression, concepts of tolerance, peer exclusion, stereotyping, and adolescent–parent relationships. The domain approach provides a powerful way of understanding reasoning in such contextualized situations that does not reduce all thinking to global stages of moral judgment development, but rather considers how individuals evaluate the salience of different moral, conventional, and personal concerns. Moreover, this approach has shown that considering individuals' (domain-related) interpretations of situations leads to associations between domain orientations and social behavior.

Despite the progress that has been made in understanding morality as one strand of children's social reasoning, there still are many gaps in our knowledge. The qualitative, normative developmental shifts in children's moral reasoning that have emerged from cross-sectional studies, as well as the apparent sequencing with age in children's understanding of different moral concepts, need further specification using longitudinal research. We also need to understand how these developmental changes intersect with children's ability to coordinate morality with other social concepts, and more generally, how children's ability to coordinate moral and nonmoral concepts changes with age and may be moderated by features of the social context.

The research thus far has provided some important insights into how interactions with siblings, friends, peers, parents, and other adults facilitate moral reasoning development, but more research using heterogeneous samples is needed to fully understand the processes that influence children's construction of moral concepts in different social contexts and the causal links (which have been inferred but not directly tested) between social interactions and the development of moral and social judgments. Furthermore, not much is known about how children's developing ability to distinguish morality from other social concepts is related to other moral or psychological characteristics, including psychological adjustment. The studies of atypically developing children suggest that difficulties in understanding the intrinsic basis of morality are related to conduct problems, but more research on the processes leading to difficulties in development and variations in normally developing children is needed.

The research on children's moral and social reasoning in actual situations and the different perspectives of victims versus transgressors in the context of different social relationships (such as friendship or peer relationships) has begun to inform our understanding of within-individual variations in moral reasoning. Future research should examine how children at different ages evaluate provocation and coordinate the perspectives of victims and transgressors in their moral and social judgments in hypothetical and actual situations and in their understanding of and attributions for emotions. This research is

likely to inform our understanding of problematic development, such as in the case of aggressive or conduct-disordered children, as well as normative development in different contexts.

Finally, the recent focus on hierarchical structures and societal arrangements in different cultures opens many new avenues of investigation, not just for cross-cultural research, but for developmental research as well. The notion that hierarchical structures can lead to dominance, subversion, and resistance in social life can be fruitfully applied to studying morality in other cultures, as well as variations in moral development in American culture. The social-cognitive domain approach provides a rich theoretical framework for further research on developmental variations and consistencies in moral and social judgments both within and across cultures.

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