

IMDC Colloquium Series, April 2 - June 25, 2021

**Socrates, Piaget and Kohlberg:  
They informed me about moral  
competence and its promotion**

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# Conventional Wisdom

- *One* morality. No differentiation between want and can.
- *Only one* test score of morality (Stage, P-Score, etc.).
- Morality is only a matter of *want*. “This person does evil because she or he *wants* to be evil.”
- Morality belongs to the “affective domain” of educational objectives. (Benjamin Bloom)
- *There are four components of morality*:
  - sensitivity, reasoning, motivation, and implementation (Rest).
- Morality is a *conscious* process, assessable through interviews or self-report questionnaires.

# My Three Moral Musketeers and Their Mottos: Aspects and Competence, Stupid!

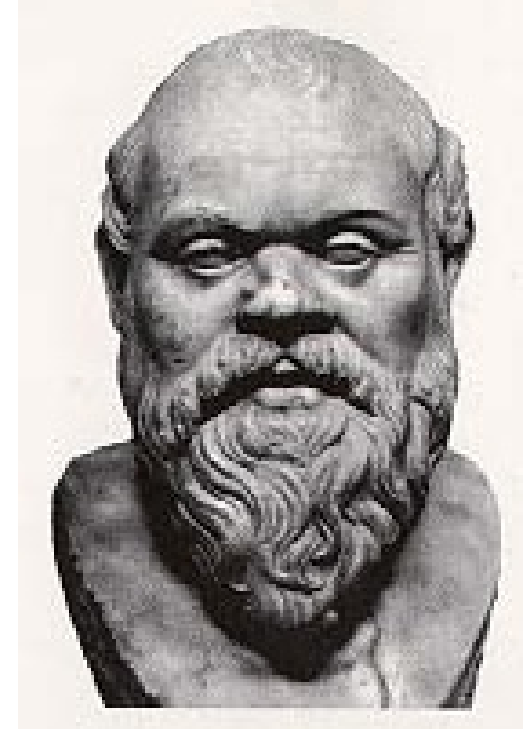
- Socrates:
  - ▶ Want and can
  
- Piaget:
  - ▶ Affect and cognition
  - ▶ Sentiment and judgment
  
- Kohlberg:
  - ▶ Content and structure
  - ▶ Orientation and moral judgment competence

# Socrates: Want and Can

SOCRATES: But if this be affirmed, then the desire of good is common to all, and one person is no better than another in that respect? ...

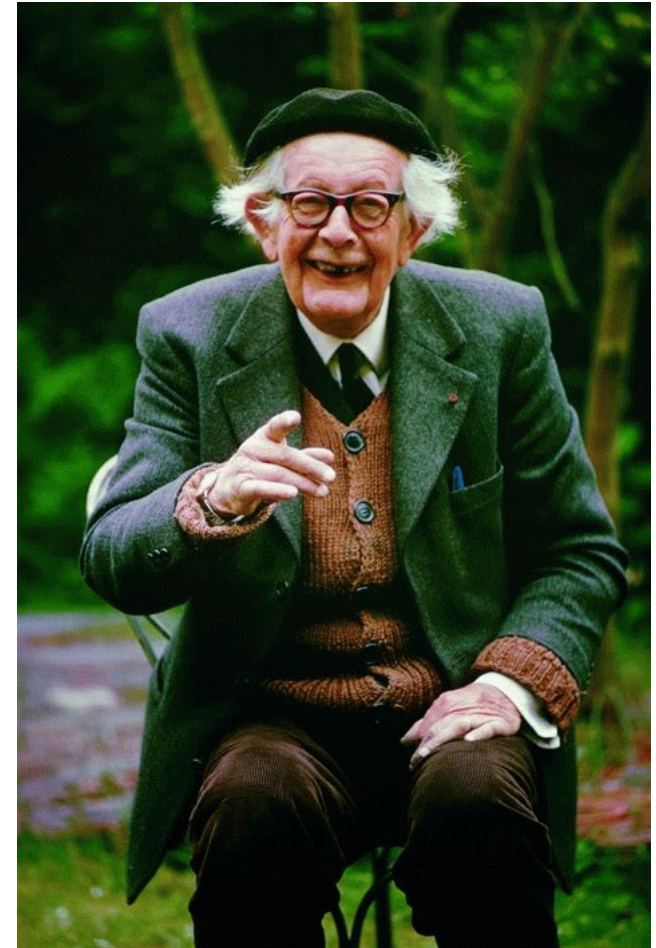
And if one person is not better than another in desiring good, she or he must be better in the power of attaining it?

Then, according to your definition, virtue would appear to be the power of attaining good?



# Aspects, not Components

“Structure and functioning or intelligence and affectivity are indissociable in all behavior.”  
(Piaget 1981, p. 9)



# Aspects versus Components

- Aspects (properties, traits) of a ball
  - ▶ Shape
  - ▶ Color
  - ▶ Weight



- Components (elements, parts) of a ball
  - ▶ Rubber
  - ▶ Air
  - ▶ Color coating

- Aspects of behavior
  - ▶ Affective
  - ▶ Cognitive

- Components of behavior
  - ▶ Abiding law
  - ▶ Solving math problems
  - ▶ Doing sports

# Six Types of Moral Orientations

Pre-conventional Orientation	Type 1	Avoid (physical) damage and injury to oneself.
	Type 2	Acquire benefits and rewards.
Conventional Orientation	Type 3	Achieve recognition by other and avoid their disapproval.
	Type 4	Respect the laws and the order of society and contribute to its maintenance.
Principled Orientation	Type 5	Keep contracts.
	Type 6	Hold up universal principles of justice, reason and logic.

# Piaget: Cognitive Aspect of Moral Behavior

Piaget investigated “the moral judgment [...], not moral behavior or sentiment.”

(Piaget 1965, p. 7)

“moral behavior” = behavior that is labeled “moral” in regard to external criteria instead of the person’s internal moral sentiments

“sentiment” = moral orientation

“judgment” = moral competence



# Moral (Judgment) Competence

*Lawrence Kohlberg defines it*

*“as the capacity*

*to make decisions and judgments which are moral (i.e., based on internal principles) and*

*to act in accordance with such judgments.”*

(Kohlberg 1964, p. 425)



## Moral Competence:

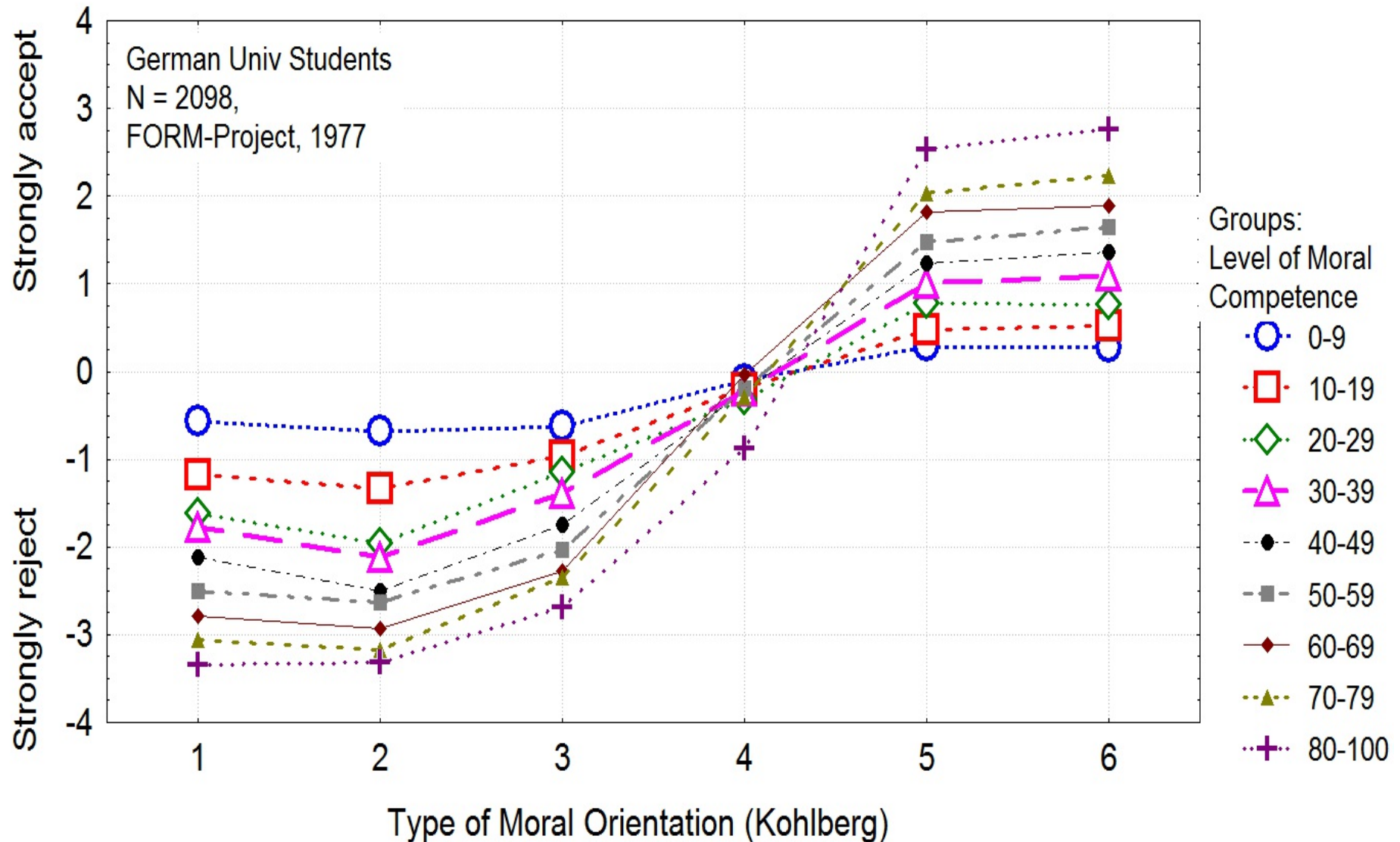
The ability to solve problems and conflicts through *thinking* (deliberation) and *discussion* with opponents, instead of through violence and deceit, or through submitting to an authority (Lind 2019).



# Putting the Theory in Order: The Dual-Layer, Dual-Aspect Model of Moral Behavior

	Affective Aspect	Cognitive Aspect
Ethical reflection (conscious layer)	Articulated ethical principles	Ethical judgment and reasoning
Overt moral behavior (unconscious layer)	Moral orientations, as they are manifested in behavior	Moral competence, as it is mani- fested in behavior

# Piaget's Hypothesis of Affective-Cognitive Parallelism is Testable and True!



# My Musketeers' Mistakes and Confirmed Assumptions

## ■ Socrates

- ▶ There are two moral aspects: Want and Can.
- ▶ Can (= virtue) is the more distinguishing aspect

## ■ Piaget

- ▶ The cognitive aspect is logical reasoning (component!)
- ▶ Affect and cognition are not components, but *distinguishable, though inseparable aspects*
- ▶ Both aspects are *parallel*

## ■ Kohlberg

- ▶ The two moral aspects can be combined into one Stage-score
- ▶ People's moral competence *cannot regress* (it can!)
- ▶ The six type of moral orientation show a universal preference order and they inter-correlated in a predictable order: simplex-structure
- ▶ Moral competence cannot be simulated upward, can be made visible, and is a very powerful factor of human behavior. Yeah!

Above all they taught me:  
without clear thinking no science is possible!

Good science opened the door to a very  
effective method of moral-democratic education:  
The Konstanz Method of Dilemma-Discussion  
(KMDD)



Gymnasium an Wirteltor. Düren, 1986

# KMDD-session in 4th Grade Elementary School





# KMDD in the German Armed Forces



# KMDD in Prison

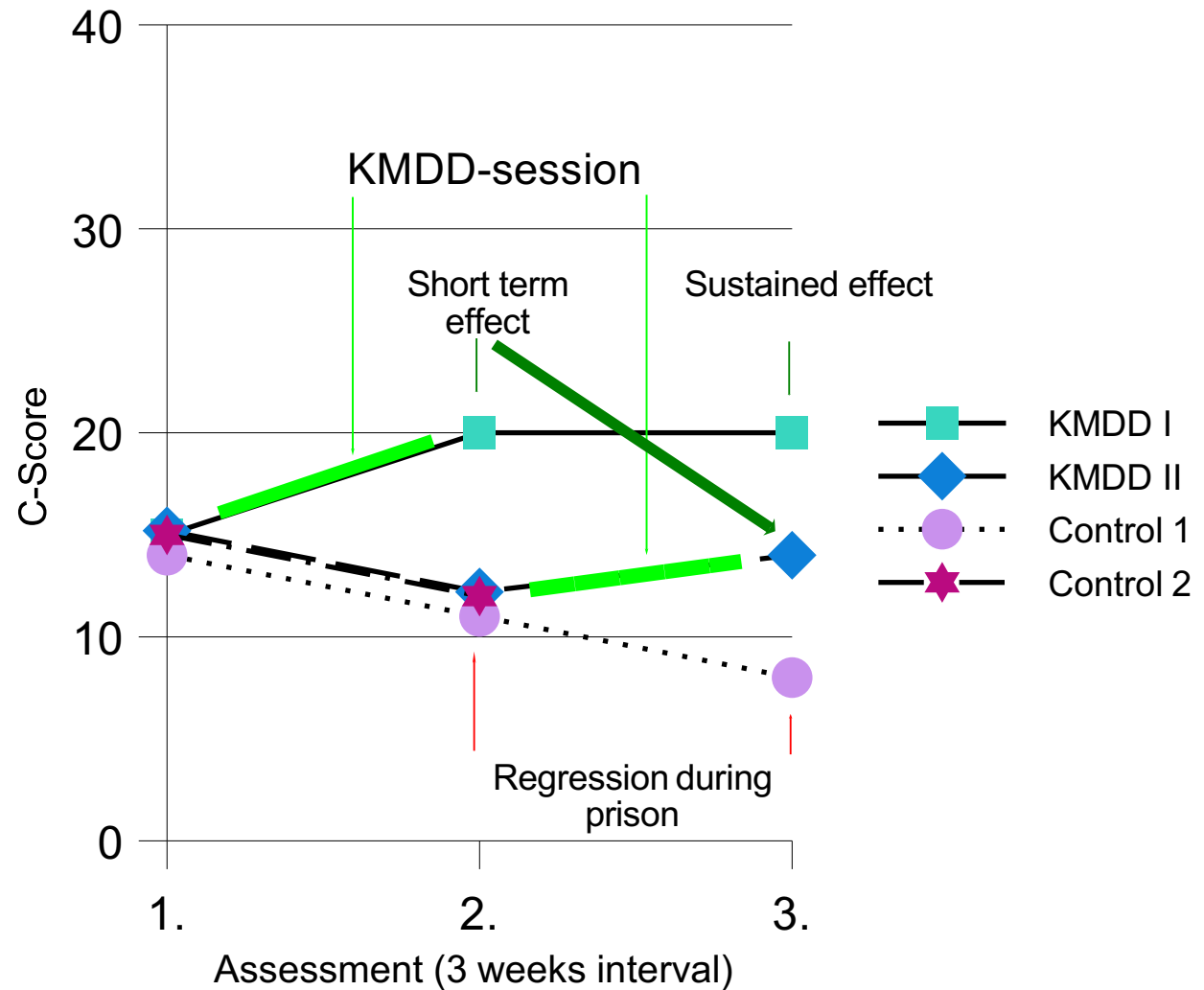


Hemmerling, K. (2014). *Morality behind bars*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

# Diskussion Theater in Frauenkirche, Dresden, 7.3.18

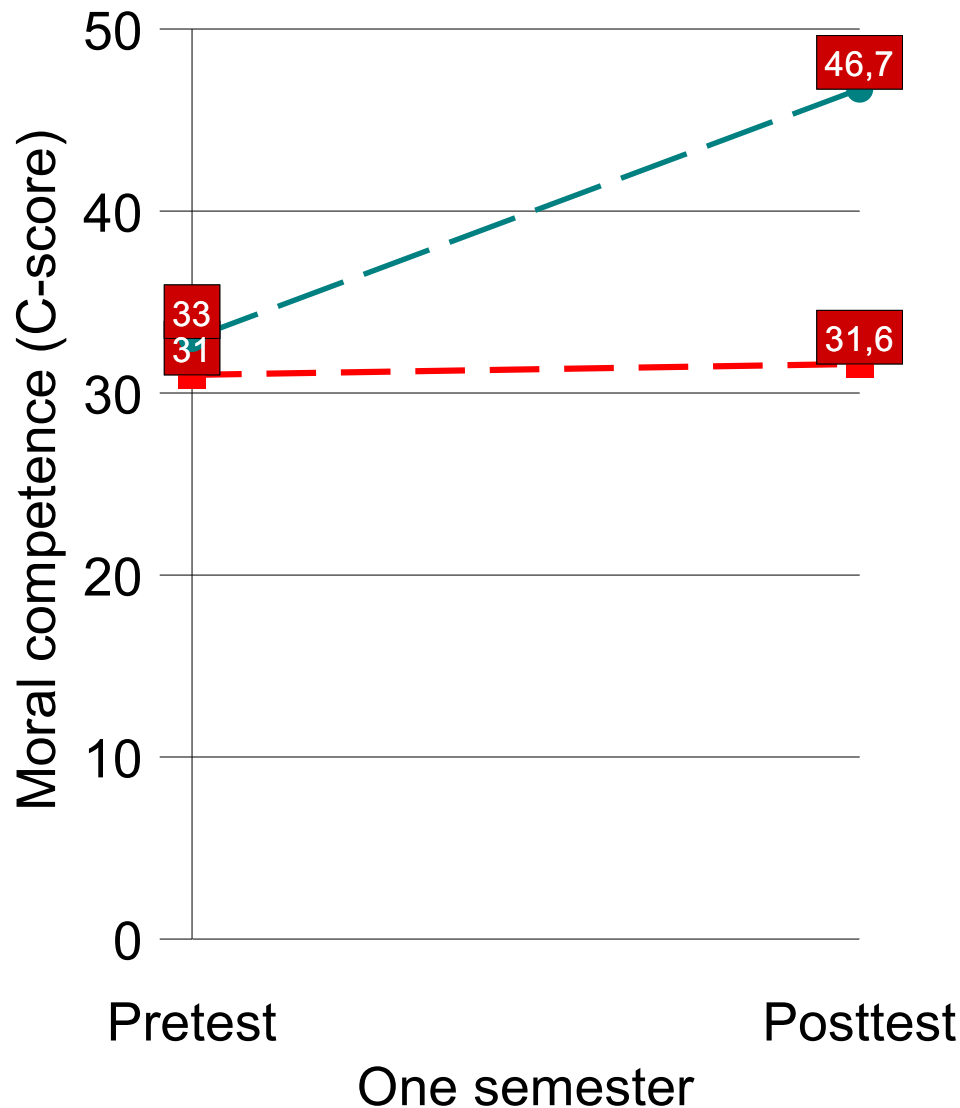


# Sustained Effect of the KMDD in Prison



Adapted from  
Hemmerling, K. (2014).  
*Morality behind bars*

# The *Konstanzer Methode der Dilemma-Diskussion* (KMDD) is Very Effective



—■— Traditional lecture  
—●— KMDD-Style Seminar

Data from 43 courses, with 3102 students (psychology and education).

Absolute effect size:

$$aES = (C_{k2} - C_{k1})_{kmdd} - (C_{t2} - C_{t1})_{trad} \\ = (46,7 - 33) - (31,6 - 31) = \mathbf{13,1}$$

Source: Lind (2015). Eight year study (2002 - 2009).

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