

The Effect of Residence in Therapeutic Homes and Reformatories on Youth and Young Adults

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This is a report on a research project in which a longitudinal study of 273 youths in 17 educational correctional institutions in two-language regions of Switzerland (French and German) was done to ascertain the effects of two types of correctional educational institutions. The project was conducted at the University of Zurich, under the direction of Prof. Dr. Heinrich Tuggener and was funded principally by the Swiss National Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Research.

Corrective educational measures for children, youths, and young adults are described in the Swiss Criminal Code (Articles 82-100). The objective of the provisions of the code is to indicate specific correctional educative measures, usually placement of one to three years, to be taken in place of other penalties. The placement is intended to provide special support for fostering personal development according to each person's abilities. This usually means integration into occupational life: completion of a formal apprenticeship, vocational training, or habituation to regular work. With adolescents, this ordinarily also means completion of mandated schooling and educational counselling.

The labels given to these institutions indicate the corrective or educational aims of the type of facility. In practice, however, there are significant differences among institutions of the same type, just as there are similarities among institutions of different types. In other words, the label given to the institution is not an indication of the actual, day-to-day practice within the institution.

The Effect of Educational Institutions

What is the real aim of educational efforts? We can distinguish between two basic concepts of educational influence on the moral behavior of youth. The first concept aims, through education, to bolster the ego strength of the individual and thus to contribute to her or his development of identity. Such an approach requires that the educational institution use strategies of

self-reflective problem solving and conflict resolution. The second concept is that the behavior of residents will be influenced by discipline and control. The aim is the internalization of societal norms by reinforcement of the individual's superego.

There is, however, a restriction on any method which seeks to strengthen ego; in the reformatory the young person is granted only limited autonomy. As long as therapeutic measures remain based upon the fantasy of feasibility and the claim that individual conflicts can be eliminated and that internalization of socially desirable rules and prohibitions can always be achieved to a significant degree, then they can be said to be pursuing a colonialization of the inner nature of persons that amounts, more or less clearly, to superego education. Education in reformatories, therefore, can contain only a mere approximation of ego-strengthening.

Superego education, or regimentation/discipline, attempts to achieve internalization of the institution's values, rules, and prohibitions through the application of external pressure. Reinke-Köberer's (1984) psychoanalytic model assumes that such internalization takes place without the ego mediating between drive demands represented by the id and the superego as representative of socially imparted rules and prohibitions. The external pressure imposed by the institution prevents the individual from reaching his own synthesis between his subjective wishes and the norms imposed on him. If these values do become internalized, they remain somewhat rigid. This means that, in terms of social behavior, the individual is dependent on society not altering these values through the course of social change, because he (due to a lack of inner flexibility) can only adapt to the new situations with difficulty. His individual frame of reference, which serves to direct his behavior, is not geared to active and flexible adaptation. In terms of individual psychology, superego education often results in individuals taking on the norms and values imposed on them without any real insight into the "why" of them. Behind the facade of apparent normality expressed in the affirmation of these learned values there often lies a great fear of change. The role of the ego in the context of such regimentation is to make bearable these rejected values and behaviors which are forced on the individual, by means of various defense mechanisms, such as repression, denial, reaction formation, identification with the aggressor, etc. Through the course of our research, young persons in locked units often reported great fear prior to discharge from the institution. The loss of the restricting environment which had regimented their lives over long periods (and three years is a long time in the life of an eighteen-year-old) makes them, after discharge from the institution, helpless in dealing with the demands of "normal" life.

Education which aims to strengthen the egos of residents tries to guide the individual, through interpersonal communication, to a synthesis of his or her own drives and societal demands. The form of daily experience in such institutions depends, to a considerable degree, on the two-way communication between staff and residents. Weekly meetings between

residents and staff and also institutionalized mechanisms of clarifying staff's relationships are indispensable for the maintenance of such a milieu. Ego education can also be seen as the educational institution's attempt to convey to the individual, from the outside, a flexible frame of reference for coping with one's own desires and the demands of society.

The Use of the Giessen Test in Measuring Change

The Giessen Test is an instrument which was originally designed to measure individual change occurring within the therapeutic process. The basic concept is based on psychoanalytic constructs (Beckmann & Richter, 1972; Beckmann, Brähler, & Richter, 1982; Baeriswyl & Tanner, 1985; Tanner, 1987b). The version of the test used in our project is comprised of five scales.

Scale 1: Social Resonance is a personal estimation of one's own effect on one's social environment, that is, popularity, attractiveness, assertiveness, etc. Scale 1, therefore, focuses upon the question of whether the subject feels competent in his social environment and whether social contacts have an affirming or negating effect.

Scale 2: Dominance measures aggressivity, impulsivity, obstinacy, claims to power versus aggression inhibition, patience, willingness to adapt, and submissive tendencies. Scale 2 deals with the question of whether inner conflicts tend to be taken out on dominating persons important to the subject, or if conflicts tend to be avoided through making oneself small, in a phobic manner, and forcing persons to exercise a controlling or helping function.

Scale 3: Control measures drive-determined character versus compulsive structure. In Scale 3, the relation between drive impulses of the id and control mechanisms of superego organization are examined; in other words, it seeks to measure various intensities of drive regulation, ranging from drive-impulsive character to compulsive structure.

Scale 4: Basic Mood measures hypomanic versus depressive mood. Scale 4 seeks to reveal the relation between mood and the principal direction of aggressive expression. If aggression tends to be directed toward external factors, there is a correlation with positive basic mood. On the other hand, aggression directed against the self is correlated with negative basic mood. Psychoanalytically, depression is seen as the expression of aggression directed inward. Coupled with depressive mood is a strong feeling of insecurity, which encourages a compensatory attitude of help-seeking dependency. To substitute for the lack of self-confidence, it is vital to have a relationship with a protective figure, which aids in avoiding depressive decompensation.

Scale 5: Openness measures trust, openness versus distrust, and reticence. Scale 5 relates to the theme of the dichotomy between basic trust and basic distrust. On the basis of basic trust, openness develops outwardly and inwardly. At the same time, positive object contacts stabilize an easygoing receptiveness to one's own feelings. On the other hand, fear of a hostile environment leads to the development of tight reserve; one is afraid of being exploited and abused when one is open. Therefore, one clings desperately to one's inner life. This does lead to isolation, but at least one escapes the danger of harmful attacks from the outside world (Tanner, 1987b).

The Conceptualization of Education in Reformatory Homes

When speaking of concepts in educational institutions, we can distinguish two types. One type refers to that which the facility wishes to do, a declaration of the institution's educational intentions. This type need not concern us further here. The other type is that which refers to what the institution does educationally, the actual educational activities. Education in a reformatory home or other corrective institution for youths and young adults is realized principally, in the author's opinion, in the daily life of the facility. Because the residential placement means that the resident spends his or her entire day in the facility, daily life in that facility becomes the resident's "real" reality. This fact is often overlooked by the institution or its staff, who believe that they are preparing the resident for life in the "outside world." Any preparation for life after the mandatory placement at the home can only take place within the context of the facility. For this reason, it is important to examine that context very closely.

The daily life at the home encompasses the totality of all learning opportunities which the home can provide for the young person. Embedded in this day-to-day living are all those educational objectives which the home may have for those young persons. Here, for example, are such important strategies as occupational advice or even the initiation and realization of an apprenticeship with a formal qualification at the end of the program. However, in reaching all of the formal goals which seem important to successful resocialization to the "outside world," the context in which these goals are reached seems particularly important. Each context, each social environment, also contains implicit goals. Depending on the design of the environment, both implicit and explicit goals can be consistent with or inconsistent with each other. Learning opportunities within a facility with a distinct criminal subculture and tyranny among the inmates will be very different from those offered by a therapeutic milieu based on a system of two-way communication. And yet, it could also be that two institutions seem only to show imperceptible differences in terms of their specific educational goals.

The Operationalization of Educational Concepts

When differentiating among educational concepts, we, therefore, used as a basis the manner in which the role of the resident is formed by the particular facility. We were interested in how the home designed the daily life of the residents. In concrete terms, we observed the rooms available for use by residents. We asked if residents used the same bathroom facilities that the staff used, if smoking was permitted or limited or restricted to certain areas, if residents wore institutional clothing or their own, if residents were free to change underwear as they wished or received only a limited amount of underwear per time period, if residents used their own money and how much, about which things had to be or could be paid for with personal money and which not, if they had to or were allowed to make purchases for the facility or not, if residents were required to earn their own keep or not (that is, how tasks within the facility were distributed), and so on. We were interested in small, inconspicuous aspects of the facilities we studied. Such aspects determine whether or not one has a feeling of well-being in a particular place, whether one feels proud or humiliated. We believe that all of these aspects are, in the end, more important in terms of the effect that the facility has on the residents than all of the clearly thought out training programs and psychological test batteries which attempt, for example, to reveal latent vocational aptitudes of the resident.

In order to make preliminary distinctions among the various concepts of the homes, we have made a radical dichotomization of our sample. We distinguish between homes which, according to our estimation of the design of the resident's role, as described above, strive principally to follow educational practices which aim to develop ego strength and ego identity in their residents and homes which strive principally to reinforce the superegos of their residents. One of the important distinguishing factors in determining the atmosphere of the home was the presence or absence of a locked unit and the use which the facility made of that locked unit.

Empirical Findings: The Point of Departure After the First Investigation

Tanner (1987b, pp. 57-58, translated by this author) reported that "...in sum, it was found that the clientele of homes of Type 93, with the exception of the therapeutic home 'Le Bosquet', did not show differences in personality characteristics upon admission to homes when compared with subjects in a control group, in spite of the fact that these young people were selected for the homes on the basis of the formal admission criteria for homes of Type 93 StGB." The guidelines for Type 93 admissions require age at admission between 14 and 18, prior residence in a home and/or the existence of a multidimensional professional case report, and severe personality disturbance or persistent abnormal behavior which makes systematic use of therapeutic or educational methods seem appropriate. Type 93 StGB and its guidelines, however, require that characteristic groups be distinguished in such a way as to permit a prescriptive match between the

resident's needs and the institution's program. According to our findings, no admission selection in terms of personality characteristics takes place in the therapeutic homes and reformatories, or differentiations are made in regard to characteristics not tapped by the Giessen Test.

Results of the Second Investigation

Tanner (1987b, pp. 57-58, translation by this author) has reported the following observations:

In the profiles of inmates in therapeutic homes, we observe consistently that there is a pattern of increasing positive resonance, an increase in personal control, and an increase in openness, thus a general psychosocial openness and stabilization. We repeatedly observed the pattern of increasing depression correlated with an increase in openness, mainly in the clientele of Foyer La Rambarde, the Centre Cantonal de Vennes, and, somewhat less pronounced, in MET Pramont. This combination of characteristics can be explained by the fact that the scale 'Openness,' in addition to measuring openness in contact with other persons, also mainly taps sensitivity to one's own emotions. An increase in openness means, in this sense, that there is also an increase in the perception of depressive moods.

It is striking that in institutions that tend to stress superego training in their educational and therapeutic concepts there is an increase, in some cases a very clear increase, in impulsivity and reticence in the clientele. This is so at Foyer Montetan, Fondation Sandoz, Jugendstätte Sonegg, Jugendheim Lorry, ANE Preles, and Arbeiterziehungsanstalt Uitikon. With all due caution in pronouncing judgment, this increase in impulsivity as an effect of the implementation of educational measures must be viewed with skepticism. The fact that an increase in impulsivity is found with particular frequency in closed institutions or institutions which employ superego education confirms our previous reservations about concepts based on superego education and gives cause for a critical attitude toward imprisoning youths for longer periods, as is planned in the preliminary draft for the revision of the juvenile criminal laws, that is, so long as educational and therapeutic concepts are not oriented toward a model of ego-strengthening. The therapeutic home Gorgier, for example, has such an orientation, in spite of the fact that it is a closed educational institution.

Results of a Comparison of the Two Investigations

Findings to date suggest the appropriateness of examining the hypothesis as to whether the group of institutions which we assign to the category "superego education" indeed replicate the striking results found in individual institutions. We also wish to see how strong these effects are. First, we examined mean differences of the test results between admission and discharge testing, looking at level of significance. The next step was to

compare these differences. These two results allow us to ascertain, for both groups of institutions, "superego education" and "ego-strengthening homes," the direction of personality change in the residents and the degree of that change. At present, we have classified the concepts of the institutions according to only one gross indicator, the existence and use of a locked unit. It will be necessary for further and more differentiated analysis to use additional parameters in distinguishing between the concepts of superego education and concepts of ego-strengthening.

A Comparison of Admission and Discharge Testing

Here we find two statistically significant results. Table 1 shows that, in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, residents of homes categorized as having a concept of ego-strengthening reach a clearly higher mean in Scale 1 of the Giessen Test (social resonance) upon discharge from the institution. Young persons who had been placed in these homes clearly feel a stronger positive social resonance than youths who had been admitted to homes we categorized as "superego training." Table 2 shows, for French-speaking Switzerland, a significant result on Scale 3 of the Giessen Test (control) upon discharge. Youths from ego-strengthening homes in this part of Switzerland show, upon discharge, significantly less self-control than youth from superego training homes; this finding, however, may be explained by the extreme scores of individual clients of "ego strengthening" homes in the small sample.

Comparison of the Differences

Differences between test scores at admission and discharge show the degree of change in the dimensions tapped by the Giessen Test. First, we find changes in Scale 1 (social resonance), as shown in Table 3. We find that, at discharge, there is a statistically significant increase in social resonance of the youths, for both language groups and for both types of homes, with the exception of the subgroup "total superego homes" in German-speaking Switzerland. Interestingly, in French-speaking Switzerland, the test of differences between the two types of homes is also statistically significant. In this part of Switzerland, homes with superego education make a clearly greater contribution to change in social resonance, a change toward more positive social resonance, than homes working with a concept of ego-strengthening. These general findings may be explained by two hypotheses, which need to be confirmed on the basis of further tests.

Hypothesis 1: Removing the young person from the psychologically and socially damaging home environment, which is the object of the residential placement, leads to an increase in positive resonance, that is, to a feeling of being more positively reinforced in social contacts.

Hypothesis 2: Sentencing the young person to a home leads generally, at admission to the home, to an increase in negative social resonance. The young person initially feels himself negatively reinforced through social contacts. During the course of the placement at the home, however, the young person recovers from this, so that, at the final testing, a positive effect results.

Table 4 shows changes occurring between admission and discharge testing on Scale 2 of the Giessen Test. Here we find significant results only for German-speaking Switzerland. The stay at the home leads, in all subgroups of the sub-sample German-speaking Switzerland, to higher scores on dominance. To explain this finding, again two hypotheses will have to be examined.

Hypothesis 3: The increase in dominance in youths during the course of the stay in the home can be understood as increased aggressivity stemming from an oppositional attitude toward restrictions connected with the stay in the home.

Hypothesis 4: The increase in dominance in the young persons is a result of the therapeutic process, which leads the youths toward increasing self-regulation and personal responsibility.

Table 5 shows changes on Scale 3 of the Giessen Test (control). Here we find, in German-speaking Switzerland, that homes which work with concepts of ego-strengthening make a clearly greater contribution to self-control than homes which employ a superego educational concept. These superego educational concepts make no significant contribution to increasing self-control. In French-speaking areas, we find the opposite tendency; homes based on superego education make a significant contribution to self-control. We think that changes on Scale 3 of the Giessen Test are especially significant because here psychosocial traits are measured which are traditionally seen in connection with conditions of neglect. Lack of self-control is often the decisive criterion in the decision to admit a young person to a reformatory.

For further analysis of the findings it will be necessary to make a finer distinction between the educational concepts. Here we see the limitations of our initial, gross operationalization which categorizes the two types of homes only on the basis of the criterion of the existence and use of a locked unit within the institution. In our sample of German-speaking homes, there is no home for males corresponding in nature to the therapeutic home Sonnenblick for females. As to the French-speaking region, we note that the therapeutic home Gorgier shows a combination of both custodial and therapeutic aspects. It is thus possible that transitional forms between the two types of educational concepts are somewhat different in French-speaking and in German-speaking Switzerland.

Table 6 shows a result on the home Platanenhof. Here we observe a definite change in the basic mood of the inmates during the course of their stay, in the direction of increased depression.

Summary

1. A stay at a reformatory home results generally in an increase in social resonance. It is still unclear whether it is the removal from the milieu at the time of admission or the gradual change in self-concept resulting from the therapeutic process during the placement at the home which is primarily responsible for the change.
2. Dominance increases in both types of homes in German-speaking Switzerland. It is not yet known whether this effect is due to the greater aggressivity which develops within the context of opposition to increased restrictions connected with admission to the home or to an educational-therapeutic effect, a process of an increase in self control and personal responsibility.
3. The "ego-strengthening" homes in German-speaking Switzerland make a significantly greater contribution than "superego education" homes to the fostering of self-control in their residents, which cannot be said of the "superego education" homes.

Also, considering the rough distinction made between superego education and education through ego-strengthening, where only the existence and use of locked units was taken into consideration, and on the basis of an examination of the results by means of a change in the locus of control, a scale which measures the inner and external control of a person's behavior, we can state that the "ego-strengthening" homes in German-speaking Switzerland make a larger contribution to increasing self-control in their residents. This is a significant finding because lack of self-control is often an important factor in the decision to admit a young person to a reformatory. This finding thus deserves to be noted. Equally deserving of attention is the negative finding that residents of institutions with locked units show no significant changes in this central dimension. This may be related to the fact that locked units, first of all, signify a massive increase in an external control of residents who are deficient in self-control. Increased external control initially causes the young person to adapt to her or his role of resident and to a greater or lesser degree of adequate functioning within this role. The resident is, in this way, dispossessed of inner self-control, or self-control simply may not be developed within this social milieu.

These findings have been reached without regard to the educational concepts of single, individual institutions. A next step, which would involve taking the normative regulations of the individual home's concepts into account in a more differentiated fashion, would make a finer distinction possible in support of the hypotheses. Locked units and the highly regimented daily regimen within them tend to result in residents developing a conventional morality (Kohlberg, 1969; Döbert & Nunner-Winkler, 1983). Characteristically, conventional morality cannot adapt well to changed conditions. By contrast, educational institutions which attempt to put concepts of ego-strengthening into practice seem to have the effect of helping their residents to develop a post-conventional, flexible morality.

1. COMPARISON OF TEST SCORES UPON DISCHARGE FROM "EGO" AND "SUPER-EGO" INSTITUTIONS

TABLE 1: SCALE 1 OF THE GIESSEN TEST (RESONANCE)

GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 29.37) ¹⁾			Significance ²⁾
EGO(total (N=36)	vs. SUPER-EGO(total) (N=61)	Mean value "EGO": 30.3611 Mean value "S-E": 27.6066	0.041
EGO (male) (N=13)	vs. SUPER-EGO(male) (N=41)	Mean value "EGO": 31.9231 Mean value "S-E": 27.0000	0.004
EGO (total (mit Sonnegg) (N=46)	vs. SUPER-EGO(total) (N=51)	Mean value "EGO": 30.0217 Mean value "S-E": 27.3725	0.040

TABLE 2: SCALE 3 OF THE GIESSEN-TEST (CONTROL)

FRENCH-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 23.64)			Significance
EGO(total) (N=54)	vs. SUPER-EGO(total) (N=29)	Mean value "EGO": 22.5000 Mean value "S-E": 24.9655	0.054

¹⁾ Norm values taken from the test standardization; see Baeriswyl/Tanner (1985)

²⁾ To test hypotheses about differences between sample means statistical t-Test was used.

2. CHANGE IN GIESSEN TEST SCORES FROM ADMITTANCE TO DISCHARGE

TABLE 3: SCALE 1 OF THE GIESSEN-TEST: SOCIAL RESONANCE

GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 29.37)	Mean value	Difference	Significance
EGO(total) (N=36)	Admittance: 28.7500 Discharge : 30.3611	-1.6111	0.088
EGO(total) (N=46) (with Sonnegg)	Admittance: 28.0870 Discharge : 30.0217	-1.9348	0.024
EGO (N=33) (female) (with Sonnegg)	Admittance: 27.2424 Discharge : 29.2727	-2.0303	0.059
SUPER-EGO (N=20) (female) (with Sonnegg)	Admittance: 26.1000 Discharge : 28.5000	-2.7500	0.023
SUPER-EGO (N=10) (female) (without Sonnegg)	Admittance: 26.5000 Discharge : 28.9000	-2.4000	0.077
FRENCH-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 28.80)	Mean value	Difference	Significance
SUPER-EGO (N=29) (total)	Admittance: 26.2759 Discharge : 30.5517	-4.2759	0.001
SUPER-EGO (N=10) (male)	Admittance: 28.8000 Discharge : 32.7000	-3.9000	0.100
SUPER-EGO (N=19) (female)	Admittance: 24.9474 Discharge : 29.4211	-4.4737	0.008
EGO (N=41) (male)	Admittance: 26.8780 Discharge : 29.2927	-2.4146	0.055

TABLE 3: SCALE 1 OF THE GIESSEN-TEST: SOCIAL RESONANCE (CONTINUED)

TEST OF DIFFERENCES:			
FRENCH-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 28.80)		Mean value-difference	Significance
EGO (total) (N=54)	vs. SUPER-EGO (total) (N=29)	Difference "EGO": -1.444 Difference "S-E": -4.2759	0.089
EGO (female) (N=13)	vs. SUPER-EGO (female) (N=19)	Difference "EGO": 1.6154 Difference "S-E": -4.4737	0.051

TABLE 4: SCALE 2 OF THE GIESSEN - TEST: DOMINANCE

GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 22.94)		Mean value	Difference	Significance
EGO (total)	(N=36)	Admittance: 22.9722 Discharge : 21.1389	1.833	0.077
EGO (male)	(N=13)	Admittance: 23.0000 Discharge : 19.8462	3.1538	0.076
SUPER-EGO (total, with Sonnegg)	(N=61)	Admittance: 23.0000 Discharge : 21.7049	1.2951	0.077
SUPER-EGO (total, without Sonnegg)	(N=51)	Admittance: 22.6863 Discharge : 21.2745	1.4118	0.046
SUPER-EGO (male)	(N=41)	Admittance: 22.3659 Discharge : 20.8537	1.5122	0.051

TABLE 5: SCALE 3 OF THE GIESSEN - TEST: CONTROL

FRENCH-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 23.64)	Mean value	Difference	Significance
SUPER-EGO (N=29) (total)	Admittance: 23.1379 Discharge : 24.9655	-1.8276	0.081
GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 27.38)	Mean value	Difference	Significance
EGO (N=36) (total)	Admittance: 25.5000 Admittance: 27.3611	-1.8611	0.047
EGO (N=23) (female, without Sonnegg)	Admittance: 25.1304 Admittance: 27.6522	-2.5217	0.034

TEST OF DIFFERENCES:			Significance
EGO (total) (N= 36)	vs. SUPER-EGO (total, with Sonnegg) (N= 61)	Difference "EGO": -1.8611 Difference "S-E": 0.3115	0.062
EGO (total, without Platanen- hof and Sonnegg) (N= 23)	vs. SUPER-EGO (N=51)	Difference "EGO": -2.5217 Difference "S-E": 0.0784	0.065
EGO (female) (N=23)	vs. SUPER-EGO (female. with Sonnegg) (N=20)	Difference "EGO": -2.5217 Difference "S-E": 1.0500	0.022

TABLE 6: SCALE 4 OF THE GIESSEN - TEST: BASIC MOOD

GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND (Norm value: 23.36)	Mean value	Difference	Significance
EGO (male) (N=13)	Admittance: 21.3846 Discharge : 24.8462	-3.4615	0.025

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