

# Part I

## Legal Socialization Theory

In the first section, we introduce the research questions being addressed in the book. We present the major theoretical approaches to studying legal socialization: cognitive development theory (Levine & Tapp, 1977; Tapp & Kohlberg, 1977) and social learning theory (Akers, 1985; Akers, Krohn, Lonza-Kaduce, & Radosevitch, 1979; Bandura, 1969b, 1977). Finally we describe in detail the research design, including the setting, the population, the variables, hypotheses, and experimental manipulations.

In Chapter 1, we present the major issues involved in understanding legal socialization and the specific questions that will be answered in the current study. Specifically we focus on the cognitive developmental (Levine & Tapp, 1977; Tapp & Kohlberg, 1977) versus the social learning (Akers, 1985; Akers et al., 1979; Bandura, 1969b, 1977) explanation of legal socialization. Related to these two theoretical explanations is a consideration of the relative influence of internal and external factors. We also examine whether the relationship between reasoning and behavior is direct or mediated by situational attitudes, i.e., the enforcement status of the rule and the normative status of the behavior. At the end of the chapter, we briefly present the operationalization of the theories, setting, population, variables, and experimental manipulation.

Chapter 2 compares the two major legal socialization theories: legal developmental theory (Levine & Tapp, 1977; Tapp & Kohlberg, 1977) and social learning theory (Akers, 1985; Akers, et al., 1979; Bandura, 1969b, 1977). The two theories vary in their view of the nature and function of cognitive structures, the role of norms of behavior and other situational factors, and the effects of the rule-enforcing environment. Both theories emphasize the importance of cognitive structures, but neither explains how these structures and norms of behavior are related to each other and the behaviors.

Finally in Chapter 3, we explain the research design in detail. We describe the two populations studied, a random sample of entering freshmen students and a representative sample of freshmen and upperclass students living in the four residential halls under study. The three primary variables

being studied are legal reasoning, attitudes toward rules (enforcement status) and rule-violating behaviors (normative status), and the frequency of engaging in rule-violating behaviors. Finally the experimental manipulation consisted of two control residence halls and two experimental halls, Peer Authority and External Authority residence halls. In the Peer Authority residence hall, students have a student run internal Judicial Board. In the External Authority residence hall, all rule violations are strictly enforced by the hall staff with no involvement on the part of hall residents.