

# Can Probation Officers Identify Remorse Among Male Adolescent Offenders?

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Judgments about a youth's level of remorse are frequently used to make important decisions in the juvenile justice system that can have serious consequences to the person. Unfortunately, little is known about these ratings and what factors may influence them. In a sample of 325 1st-time youth offenders who were arrested for offenses of moderate severity, we tested whether probation officers' ratings of an adolescent's remorse soon after arrest were associated with the youth's self-report of showing a callous and unemotional interpersonal style, being arrested for a violent offense, and several demographic and background characteristics (e.g., age, race, socioeconomic status [SES], and intelligence). Our analyses indicated that both arrest for a violent offense and the adolescent's self-reported level of callous–unemotional (CU) traits were associated with probation officers' ratings of remorse. Further, youth age, SES, and intelligence neither were associated with these judgments nor moderated the association between CU traits and probation officers' ratings of remorse. However, youth race or ethnicity did moderate the association between CU traits and judgments of remorse, such that Latino youth who were high on CU traits showed a very low probability of being rated as remorseful.

## **Public Significance Statement**

Judgments of remorse can have important consequences for juveniles in the justice system. This study suggests that probation officers' ratings of youth remorse were not influenced by the adolescent's age or socioeconomic status but were influenced by the youth's self-reported level of callous–unemotional traits (e.g., lack of empathy) and whether he had been arrested for a violent offense. Further, the combination of reporting high levels of CU traits and being Latino led to a particularly low probability of being rated as remorseful.

*Keywords:* assessment, callous–unemotional traits, delinquency, adolescents

The level of remorse expressed by a defendant plays a critical role in the criminal justice system. In the adult system, offender remorse is often gauged by a judge (Rossmannith, 2015) or by a jury (Griffin & Patty, 2004; MacLin, Downs, MacLin, & Caspers, 2009) and can affect the severity of the sentence that the offender receives. Studies have indicated that remorse plays an important role in judgments of criminal defendants, such that individuals

perceived as more remorseful are viewed as less likely to recidivate (Proeve & Howells, 2006) and are generally more likely to receive more lenient punishments (Eisenberg, Garvey, & Wells, 1997; Proeve, Smith, & Mead Niblow, 1999). Indeed, judges tend to view remorse as a relevant and essential factor in sentencing decisions (Zhong et al., 2014), though this practice is not without critique (see Morse, 2014).

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Similarly, in the juvenile justice system, judges can use a youth's level of remorse to determine the severity of sentencing (Saper, 2014), including whether the person is retained in the juvenile system or transferred to the adult system (Slobogin, 1999). In some jurisdictions, a youth's level of remorse for actions committed is assessed earlier in his or her justice system experience. For example, in California, youths and their guardians are brought to the Department of Probation for an intake assessment interview with a probation officer (PO). From this interview, the PO makes a decision as to whether the case is handled informally at the level of probation or formally through the district attorney and court system. During this interview, POs assess the level of youths' remorse, a rating that can influence how severely they are processed (Bridges & Steen, 1998; Fine et al., 2016). Thus, an assessment of youths' level of remorse can have important consequences for how they are treated in the juvenile justice system.

There is some evidence to support the importance placed on this assessment. A youth's remorse following the commission of a crime has been linked to reduced recidivism (Hayes & Daly, 2003; Peterson & Robbins, 2008; small to medium effect sizes), increased amenability to treatment (Salekin, Rogers, & Ustad, 2001), and successful reparations between the victim(s) and the offender(s) in restorative justice settings (Choi, Green, & Gilbert, 2011; Hayes & Daly, 2003). For example, Peterson and Robbins (2008) found that, within a sample of over 100 adjudicated males, those with higher scores on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory–A's Adolescent Conduct Problems content scale were more likely to incur new legal charges within a year. This subscale includes items related to remorselessness, although remorse was not measured on its own. Similarly, Hayes and Daly (2003) found that coded observations of youth remorsefulness during restorative justice conferencing were associated with fewer official rearrests. However, little research has investigated what factors might influence the perceptions of a youth's level of remorse by persons in the justice system. This is especially important when considering those individuals assessing a youth's remorse early in the youth's contact with the system, because these individuals act as gatekeepers for the youth's future involvement in the justice system.

One possible influence on perceptions of remorse includes the personality features of the juvenile. Indeed, there is substantial research to suggest that some adolescents who commit crimes are characterized by a callous and unemotional interpersonal style, defined by a lack of guilt and remorse, a lack of empathic concern toward others, a general poverty of emotions, and lack of concern over performance in important activities (Kimonis et al., 2015). Callous–unemotional (CU) traits are fundamental to most conceptualizations of “psychopathy” among both adults (Hare & Neumann, 2008) and adolescents (McCuish, Corrado, Hart, & DeLisi, 2015; Pechorro, Poiaras, Barroso, Nunes, & Jesus, 2015). That is, these traits form what has been termed the *affective* dimension of psychopathy, and this dimension has proven critical for differentiating psychopathy from more general patterns of antisocial behavior, again in both adults (Hare & Neumann, 2008) and youths (Frick & Ray, 2015). However, clinician ratings of these dimensions in general, and ratings of remorseless specifically, have proven to be unreliable in many field settings (Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 2013; Sturup et al., 2014). Yet, it is not clear whether this unreliability is related to the construct itself or to an inability to reliably rate these traits in others. In support of the latter possibil-

ity, CU traits are typically assessed through self-report in samples of children and adolescents, and such assessments show evidence for substantial reliability (Frick & Ray, 2015) and a moderate level of stability across time and situations (Frick, Ray, Thornton, & Kahn, 2014a). Further, self-reports of CU traits predict more severe and violent offending, as well as dampened emotional arousal to others' distress, as measured through performance on cognitive tasks and through biological markers of emotional responding (Frick, Ray, Thornton, & Kahn, 2014b). Given this evidence supporting the reliability and validity of self-reports of CU traits, it is important to determine how well they correspond with judgments of a youth's remorse by persons in the juvenile justice system.

In addition to CU traits, several other factors may influence the perceptions of a youth's level of remorse for criminal behavior committed. Youths who commit violent crimes may be perceived as being less remorseful for their actions (Crosby, Britner, Jodl, & Portwood, 1995). Also, research has suggested that mock jurors are more likely to judge guilt in adults (Devine & Caughlin, 2014; Mazzella & Feingold, 1994) and juveniles (Espinoza, Ek, & Espinoza, 2011) from a lower socioeconomic status (SES), although it is unclear whether these results are due to perceptions about the person's level of remorse. Another possibility is that a youth's age may play a role in whether the person is perceived as remorseful; younger youths may be perceived as showing more childlike innocence that may evoke protection rather than punishment (Hendrick, 2003). In contrast, ethnic minority youths may be mistaken for being older or more adultlike (Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Cullotta, & DiTomasso, 2014), more culpable for their crimes (Goff et al., 2014; Rattan, Levine, Dweck, & Eberhardt, 2012), and more dangerous (Todd, Thiem, & Neel, 2016). Again, it is not clear from this research whether the differential treatment of older offenders and youths of color in the juvenile justice system is related to judgments of their level of remorse, but this possibility warrants testing.

It is also possible that these factors interact with a youth's interpersonal style in predicting whether others will consider them to be remorseful. That is, it may be that a youth's callous disregard for others will lead the person to be judged as lacking remorse, irrespective of the type of offense, socioeconomic status, age, or ethnicity, whereas these factors may take on more importance when the youth's presentation is not indicative of some level of remorse. Another possibility is that some youths who show elevated levels of CU traits can learn to hide these traits from others. In other words, high CU trait youths may give the impression of being caring and concerned for others (Salekin, Neumann, Leistico, & Zalot, 2004), thus influencing how others evaluate their level of remorse. Such persons may have higher levels of intelligence that promote their ability to lie, con, and manipulate others (Gao, Raine, & Schug, 2011). Intelligence may therefore moderate the association between a person's self-reported CU traits and how others perceive the person's remorsefulness.

In summary, assessments of juvenile offenders' level of remorse for their criminal behavior can have important consequences for their treatment in the juvenile justice system. Unfortunately, little research has tested factors that may influence assessments of remorse. In the present study, we tested the association between male adolescent offenders' self-report of CU traits and ratings of their remorse by their probation officers shortly after the youths'

first arrest. Further, we tested whether the type of offense (i.e., violent or nonviolent), socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity, and intelligence also contributed to POs' ratings of remorse, both as main effects and as interactive effects with the adolescents' self-report of CU traits. The present study recruited only first-time offenders in order to eliminate the potential role of prior arrests in the probation officers' calculus of remorse. Also, only juveniles with charges of moderate level of severity (as defined by charges with relatively equivalent rates for being formally processed or diverted in previous years) were included to eliminate the potential role of crime severity in the calculus of remorse.

## Method

### Participants

The sample for the present analyses came from the Crossroads Study, a prospective study of first-time, male, juvenile offenders in three locales (Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Southern California) who had been arrested for charges of moderate severity. Data from only the Southern California site were used, because this was the only jurisdiction in which probation officers made ratings of the youths' level of remorse and included them in their official records. Of the youths from the Southern California site, 325 (61.1%) had PO ratings and were included in the current analyses. Youths from the Southern California site with PO ratings did not differ from those without ratings on any key variable, including CU traits,  $t(530) = -1.04, p = .297, d = -.09$ ; parental education,  $\chi^2(2, N = 532) = 4.79, p = .091, \phi = .09$ ; race,  $\chi^2(1, N = 532) = .84, p = .358, \phi = .04$ ; age,  $t(530) = -.09, p = .923, d = -.01$ ; or intelligence,  $t(530) = -.63, p = .530, d = -.06$ .

The mean age of the analytic sample was 15.49 years ( $SD = 1.22$ ). Consistent with demographic characteristics of youth involved in the juvenile justice system in Southern California, the ethnic makeup of the present analytic sample was 79.7% Latino, 16.6% White, 0.6% Black, and 3.1% other. As noted earlier, to be eligible for the Crossroads Study, youths had each been arrested for the first time and for an offense of low to moderate severity. Approximately 22.8% of the sample had been arrested for a violent offense (90.4% of whom were arrested for assault, battery, or assault and battery). Of the remaining sample (i.e., youths who were arrested for a nonviolent offense), the most frequent charges were vandalism (48%) and theft (33.2%).

### Procedure

The Institutional Review Board at all three institutions approved the study procedures. Parental informed consent and youth assent were obtained for all participants before interviews were conducted. Participants were informed of the nature of the study and were told that there was no penalty for not participating. Upon providing consent, youths completed intelligence testing and an interview a maximum of 6 weeks after the disposition for their first arrest. Face-to-face interviews with the youths ranged from 2 to 3 hr and were completed using a secure computer-administered program. All interview responses were protected by a Certificate of Confidentiality issued by the Department of Justice that protects participants' privacy by exempting their responses and identity from subpoenas, court orders, or other types of involuntary dis-

closures. Participants were given a detailed explanation of the Certificate of Confidentiality before beginning the interview and were reminded of this protection again before sensitive questions were asked.

Probation officers' ratings for the youths' level of remorse were obtained from the youths' official records at this Southern California probation department. Upon his arrest, each youth and his guardian met with a deputy PO. As part of the standard procedures, the PO interviewed the youth and his guardian, asking unscripted questions about the youth. On the basis of information gathered during the PO's interview, the PO completed an assessment report and decided how to process the youth.

### Measures: Dependent Variable

#### Deputy probation officer's perception of youth remorse.

During the processing decision interview, the deputy probation officer (PO) asked the youth questions about the crime, including his attitudes toward it and whether he felt remorseful. On the basis of his responses to the interview, the PO categorized the youth's attitude in one of four ways: remorseful (66.2%), indifferent (15.7%), minimizing (13.9%), or refusal to comment (4.3%). For the purposes of the present analyses, youths' attitude toward the crime was coded dichotomously as either remorseful (66.2%) or not (33.8%).

### Measures: Independent Variables

**Demographic information.** At the baseline interview, youths provided general demographic information, including age and race. Youths also reported on the highest level of education that their parent(s) had received, which was used as a proxy for socioeconomic status (Galobardes, Lynch, & Smith, 2007). Past research has supported the use of this method for assessing SES in adolescents (Lien, Friestad, & Klepp, 2001). Approximately 42% of the participants had at least one parent who had not graduated from high school, 23% had at least one parent who had graduated from high school but had not received tertiary education, and 36% had at least one parent who had more than a high school diploma. These three categories were used for analyses. The group of youths whose parents had not graduated from high school was used as the comparison group in all models.

**Callous-unemotional traits.** Callous-unemotional (CU) traits were assessed using the Inventory of Callous-Unemotional Traits (ICU; Kimonis et al., 2008). The ICU is a 24-item self-report instrument (Cronbach's alpha = .780 in the present sample) that utilizes a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all true*) to 3 (*definitely true*) to indicate how accurately each statement describes the youth. Half of the items are worded to describe callous and unemotional characteristics (e.g., "I seem very cold and uncaring to others"), and half are worded in the opposite direction (e.g., "I am concerned about the feelings of others") and then reverse-coded such that higher scores would indicate more CU traits. Factor analyses of the ICU generally support the presence of an overarching dimension of CU traits, but they also indicate the presence of three subfactors related to callousness, uncaring attitudes toward others and performance, and a deficient display of affect (see Frick & Ray, 2015 for a review). However, as recommended by the authors of the scale (Kimonis et al., 2008),

only the total score was used for analyses, because the subfactors were not based on strong theoretical considerations, they have not shown consistent differences in their correlations with other constructs, and there has been evidence to suggest that they may be an artifact of differences in item difficulty (Ray, Frick, Thornton, Steinberg, & Cauffman, 2016). In support of this method for using the ICU, the total score has been associated with restricted emotional responses to others' distress on self-report (e.g., measures of affective empathy; Jones, Happe, Gilbert, Burnett, & Viding, 2010) and laboratory (e.g., reduced attentional orienting to pictures of others in distress; Kimonis, Frick, Fazekas, & Loney, 2006) and biological (e.g., less amygdala activation to fearful faces; Viding et al., 2012) measures. The total ICU score has also been consistently associated with antisocial behavior in adolescent samples (Essau, Sasagawa, & Frick, 2006; Fanti, Frick, & Georgiou, 2009; Roose, Bijttebier, Decoene, Claes, & Frick, 2010; Thornton et al., 2015).

**Intelligence.** The Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI; Wechsler, 1999) was administered to assess each participant's IQ. The WASI offers a measure of general intelligence that was normed across the life span (Ryan et al., 2003). A full-scale IQ estimate was created by combining scores from the verbal ability scale (Vocabulary) and the performance ability scale (Matrix Reasoning). Studies have supported the psychometric properties of the WASI in samples of adolescents (Canivez, Konold, Collins, & Wilson, 2009).

**Analytic Plan**

Due to the small number of youths who self-identified as a race other than White or Latino in this sample (less than 4%), race was dummy-coded as Latino versus non-Latino White. Results did not change when models were reanalyzed using non-Latino White versus youths of any other race or ethnicity. First, zero-order correlations were calculated to examine the associations among the key study variables. These were followed by logistic regression analyses to determine which independent variables contributed independently to the prediction of probation officers' ratings of remorse and to test potential interactions with CU traits. To enhance interpretations, we entered variables in stages in hierarchical logistic regression models. In the first model, only the demographic variables of age, race, parental education, and IQ were entered. CU traits were added to the second model, and a binary

Table 1  
Means and Standard Deviations or Base Rate for Key Variables

Variable	M (SD)	Range	Base rate (%)
Remorseful			66.15
Age	15.49 (1.22)	13–17	
Latino <sup>a</sup>			82.75
Parent education			
Had not completed high school			41.29
Completed high school			22.58
More than a high school diploma			36.13
IQ	90.27 (11.18)	60–128	
Callous-unemotional traits	26.90 (7.75)	2–49	
Violent index offense			22.77

<sup>a</sup> Coded 1 for youths who self-identified as Latino and 0 for those self-identified as non-Latino White.

Table 2  
Zero-Order Correlations Among Demographic and Main Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Remorseful <sup>a</sup>	—					
2. Age	-.01	—				
3. Latino <sup>b</sup>	-.09	-.03	—			
4. Parental education <sup>c</sup>	.09	.09	-.44**	—		
5. IQ	.12*	.03	-.27**	.24**	—	
6. CU traits	-.19**	-.02	.11	-.13*	-.19**	—
7. Violent index offense <sup>d</sup>	-.15**	.05	-.03	.13*	.06	-.09

Note. CU = callous-unemotional.

<sup>a</sup> Coded 1 for remorseful and 0 for all other attitudes. <sup>b</sup> Coded 1 for youths who self-identified as Latino and 0 for those self-identified as non-Latino White. <sup>c</sup> Coded 0 for less than high school diploma, 1 for high school diploma, and 2 for more than high school diploma. <sup>d</sup> Coded 1 for violent offense and 0 for nonviolent offense.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

indicator of whether the index offense was violent was added to the third model. Finally, two-way interactions between CU traits and each predictor were examined sequentially.

**Results**

Descriptive statistics for key study variables are shown in Table 1. Zero-order correlations between all study variables are provided in Table 2. IQ, CU traits, and being arrested for a violent offense were all associated with probation officer ratings of remorse. That is, youths who were of higher intelligence were rated as remorseful, whereas youths who self-reported high levels of CU traits or who had committed a violent index offense were rated as less remorseful.

The results of the hierarchical logistical regression analyses are provided in Table 3. Results of the first model indicated that none of the control variables (e.g., age, race, SES, IQ) were associated with probation officers' perceptions of youth remorse. Thus, the significant zero-order association between IQ and youth remorse was no longer significant when controlling for other demographic variables. However, when CU traits were added to the model, they did account for significance variance in perceptions of youth remorse. In the final model, when the dichotomous indicator of whether the index offense was violent was added to the regression model, both CU traits ( $OR = .95, p = .002$ ) and committing a violent offense ( $OR = .37, p = .001$ ) were related to perceptions of youth remorse. Specifically, youths who were high in CU traits or who had committed a violent index offense were rated as less remorseful, even after accounting for age, race, SES, and IQ.

The final step of the logistic regression analyses examined whether CU traits interacted with age, SES, IQ, violent offense, and race to determine how POs perceive youth remorse. Results indicated that CU traits did not interact with age, model  $\chi^2(8, N = 298) = 25.95, p < .001$ ;  $CU \times Age b = -.01, p = .988$ ; SES, model  $\chi^2(8, N = 298) = 27.37, p = .001$ ;  $CU \times High School Diploma b = -.04, p = .409$ ; IQ, model  $\chi^2(8, N = 298) = 26.43, p < .001$ ;  $CU \times IQ b = 0.01, p = .489$ ; or violent offense, model  $\chi^2(8, N = 298) = 26.06, p = .001$ ;  $CU \times Violent Offense b = -.01, p = .748$ . It is important to note that the interaction

Table 3

## Binary Logistic Regression Analyses of Predicting Probation Officers' Perceptions of Youth Remorse

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	OR (SE)	95% CI	OR (SE)	95% CI	OR (SE)	95% CI	OR (SE)	95% CI
Age	.99 (.10)	[.82, 1.21]	.99 (.10)	[.82, 1.21]	1.01 (.10)	[.83, 1.23]	1.02 (.11)	[.84, 1.26]
Latino <sup>a</sup>	.69 (.26)	[.32, 1.46]	.68 (.27)	[.32, 1.48]	.72 (.29)	[.33, 1.58]	.63 (.26)	[.28, 1.44]
Parent education <sup>b</sup>								
High school diploma	1.04 (.33)	[.56, 1.95]	1.01 (.33)	[.54, 1.91]	1.10 (.37)	[.57, 2.11]	1.03 (.35)	[.53, 1.99]
More than high school	1.22 (.39)	[.66, 2.28]	1.15 (.37)	[.61, 2.16]	1.34 (.45)	[.70, 2.58]	1.30 (.44)	[.67, 2.51]
IQ	1.02 (.01)	[.99, 1.04]	1.01 (.01)	[.99, 1.04]	1.01 (.01)	[.99, 1.04]	1.01 (.01)	[.99, 1.04]
CU traits			.95** (.02)	[.92, .98]	.95** (.02)	[.92, .98]	1.03 (.04)	[.95, 1.11]
Violent index offense <sup>c</sup>					.37** (.11)	[.20, .67]	.39** (.12)	[.21, .71]
CU Traits × Latino <sup>a</sup>							.90* (.04)	[.83, .99]
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	.016		.039		.068		.082	

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; CU = callous-unemotional.

<sup>a</sup> Coded 1 for youths who self-identified as Latino and 0 for those self-identified as non-Latino White. <sup>b</sup> Reference group is "less than high school diploma." <sup>c</sup> Reference group is "index offense was nonviolent."

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

between CU traits and race was significant, model  $\chi^2(8, N = 298) = 31.33, p < .001$ ;  $CU \times Latino b = -.10, p = .025$ . As depicted in Figure 1, self-reported CU traits were associated with lower ratings of remorse in Latino youth ( $dy/dx = -.015, SE = .004, p < .001$ ), but CU traits were uncorrelated with ratings of remorse in non-Latino White youths ( $dy/dx = .005, SE = .007, p = .488$ ). As a result of these differential associations, the probability of being perceived as remorseful did not differ for Latino and non-Latino White youths at low levels of CU traits ( $\Delta b = .13, SE = .12, p = .257, 95\% \text{ confidence interval [CI: } -.10, .36]$ ) but did differ significantly at high levels of these traits ( $\Delta b = -.35, SE = .13, p = .006, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.60, -.10]$ ). As noted in Figure 1, Latino youths were less likely to be judged to be remorseful at high levels of CU traits.

## Discussion

Judgments of remorse can have important consequences for juveniles in the justice system. Our findings highlighted several

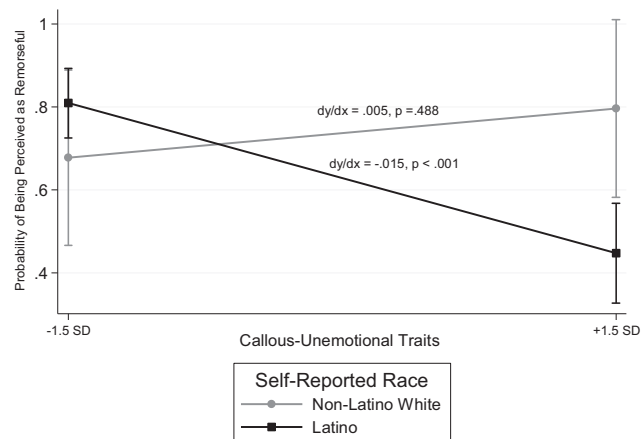


Figure 1. Effect of callous-unemotional traits on perceptions of youth remorse moderated by race. Error bars represent the 95% confidence interval.

factors that appear to influence probation officers' ratings of remorse for adolescent boys who were arrested for the first time for moderate-level offenses. Specifically, a youth's commitment of a violent offense and self-report of being callous and unemotional were both associated with being judged to be "unremorseful" by a probation officer soon after his arrest. The former finding is consistent with past research suggesting that violent offenders are often judged as being unremorseful for their criminal behavior (Crosby et al., 1995). Of importance, this association remained significant even controlling for the juvenile's self-reported CU traits. Thus, even after controlling for the adolescent's self-report of being callous and unemotional, probation officers seem to make attributions of remorse on the basis of whether the crime was violent.

The second factor that was associated with probation officers' ratings of remorse was CU traits, such that adolescents who self-reported being callous and unemotional were rated as less remorseful by their probation officers. Thus, there does appear to be some correspondence between how adolescents rate their typical interpersonal style related to guilt and remorse and how probation officers rate youth remorse for specific behaviors. It is interesting that the correlation between self-report and probation officers' ratings was  $r = -.19$ , where higher scores on the ICU were associated with fewer ratings of being remorseful. On the one hand, this suggests that, although statistically significant, less than 4% of the variance in one measure is explained by the other. However, this level of agreement is very similar to the level of interinformant agreement found in the rating of children's and adolescents' emotions, behaviors, and personality, which tends to be about .20 to .30 across types of informants, types of behavior being rated, and age of sample (Achenbach, McConaughy, & Howell, 1987; De Los Reyes & Kazdin, 2005). For example, in a high-risk sample of 394 seventh-grade boys, correlations between youth self-report and teacher report was  $r = .23$  for externalizing behaviors and  $r = .08$  for internalizing behaviors (Youngstrom, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2000).

The level of agreement found in this study, albeit modest in its effect size, was remarkable because it not only involved different informants but also used somewhat different methods: Adolescent

self-reports utilized ratings on specific items, and the probation officers made global judgments on the basis of an unscripted interview. Also, the ratings of CU traits included a number of dimensions of a callous interpersonal style (e.g., lack of empathetic concern, unconcern about performance in important activities, shallow or deficient affect), in addition to the absence of guilt. Further, these ratings were based on the adolescents' perceptions of their "typical" attitudes and emotions and were not specific to their response to their criminal acts. Thus, the two ratings were measuring somewhat different constructs.<sup>1</sup>

Of importance, the probation officers' judgments were not associated with the age or socioeconomic status of the youths. Further, neither these demographic variables nor intelligence moderated the association between CU traits and ratings of remorse. Race or ethnicity, however, significantly moderated the effect of CU traits and ratings of youth remorse. Specifically, CU traits were related to perceptions of remorse for Latino youths, as predicted. However, CU traits were not related to perceptions of remorse in non-Latino White youths. This interaction indicates that the combination of high levels of CU traits and being Latino leads to a low probability of being rated as remorseful by probation officers (see Figure 1). Because the form of this interaction was not expected and because of the relatively low number of non-Latino White youths in the present sample, this finding needs to be interpreted cautiously until replicated. However, it suggests that probation officers' judgments of remorse may be more influenced by the youths' callous presentation when they are Latino. Whether this is reflective of an undue influence of the youths' interpersonal style needs to be tested in future studies.

All findings need to be interpreted in light of several other study limitations, in addition to the relatively low number of non-Latino youths. Although this reflects the racial composition of the juvenile justice population in Southern California, the generalizability to offenders that include other racial or ethnic minority groups needs to be tested. As noted earlier, the self-report ratings of typical prosocial attitudes and emotions (i.e., CU traits) and the probation officers' ratings of remorse assessed somewhat different constructs. Future research should disentangle the degree to which the different raters and the differences in the construct being measured influenced the correlations. Further, the PO rating procedures in this study were those employed in the jurisdiction. As such, they possess great external validity by capturing how judgments of remorse are actually made in juvenile justice settings. However, we were not able to measure how consistently the interviews were conducted to gather information for the ratings or the precise criteria on which probation officers based their remorse ratings during their unscripted interview with youths. Thus, we were unable to disentangle true remorselessness from adolescent insouciance about being arrested for low-level offenses. Another limitation is that our sample was limited to male youths who had committed an offense of moderate severity. Thus, the generalizability of the results to female youths and to more serious offenders needs to be tested. In particular, it is possible that when more serious violent offenses are included, the level of violence may override other predictors of remorse.

In summary, although judgments of remorse are frequently used to make decisions about juveniles in the justice system with serious consequences to the youths, little research has been conducted to test the factors that can influence these judgments. Our

findings indicate that, contrary to other decisions made in the justice system, the ratings of remorse were not influenced by age or socioeconomic status of the adolescents. Instead, the youths' self-reported level of CU traits and their arrest for a violent offense both were associated with the ratings of remorse. Further, the combination of being Latino and reporting high levels of CU traits led to a particularly low probability of being rated as remorseful. On the one hand, this could be interpreted as supporting the validity of the ratings of remorse in Latino youths, given the correlation between their self-report of CU traits and probation officers' ratings for these youths. However, it would be important to determine first why judgments of remorse are being made (e.g., to estimate risk for reoffense in order to determine the level of restrictedness in placement, to determine amenability to treatment). Second, it would be important to then test (a) how well these judgments predict these outcomes, (b) whether the predictive utility is consistent across race or ethnicity, and (c) whether other risk variables are better predictors of these outcomes than are these judgments.

<sup>1</sup> Items 5 ("I feel bad or guilty when I do something wrong") and 16 ("I apologize [say I am sorry] to persons I hurt") on the ICU are the items most directly related to lack of guilt and remorse. When these items (prior to reverse coding to form the CU composite) were summed, the correlation with probation officers' ratings of remorse was  $r = .11$  ( $p = .049$ ).

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