

THE MALE GROUP EFFECT:
MEASURING MORAL JUDGMENT AND REASONING
AMONG TWO COHORTS OF FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE MEN

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Rebecca Byrd Terry, who for years now has believed in me, encouraged me, challenged me, and walked with me as I pursued the goal of completing this degree. You too sacrificed for this in so many ways. This is your accomplishment as well. Thank you for being on the journey with me, and I look forward to navigating the twists and turns together.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Historical Context of the Study

Most American four-year colleges and universities embrace an institutional mission that either implicitly or explicitly includes moral development as a desired student outcome (Kiss & Euben, 2010). This value is expressed in a variety of ways and is named—often in mission and vision statements—using language that refers to preparation for citizenship, character development, ethical leadership, service to the world, commitment to the common good, and other similar sentiments. Beyond inclusion in mission and vision statements, a renewed commitment to the cultivation of moral and ethical sensibilities in students can be seen in the recent establishment of over one hundred ethics centers and programs at colleges and universities around the country (Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, 2012).

In connection with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), researchers at the University of Michigan’s Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education surveyed more than 33,000 respondents (including students, faculty, and staff) at twenty-three colleges and universities about the role of college in promoting moral development among students. On the widely diverse campuses that contributed to the 2007 study, 93 percent of students and 97 percent of academic leaders, faculty, and student affairs professionals either “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed that fostering an environment that prepares students for living lives of moral and ethical responsibility is an *essential* task of higher education (Dey et al., ix).

The recent upsurge in concern for moral and ethical outcomes in college is actually something of a return to these commitments within the American academy. Colonial American educators drew on the work of Aristotle and the Greek tradition in the way that they connected liberal education with growth in moral and civic virtue (Nussbaum, 1998). Broadly speaking,

the early American college experience centered on training in moral values, vocational and professional preparation, and education in the liberal arts.

American higher education in the 19th century was characterized by a concern for character formation and citizenship, flavored by Christian-influenced conceptions of duty and virtuous living. In many ways, ethical and moral considerations functioned as a kind of maypole around which the curriculum in its entirety revolved (Sloan, 1980). In the latter half of the century, however, this began to shift somewhat as professors began to specialize in disciplines to which they were strongly devoted. A consequence of that devotion was a movement away from the holistic approach that had preceded it (Sullivan, 2001). The academy, during this time, focused its energy on technical know-how and scientific research, while the cultivation of moral wisdom began to take a back seat.

The 20th century saw the continuation of this drift toward specialization and fragmentation. Marginalization of ethical and moral development as a stated outcome within higher education continued as a result of complex cultural, intellectual, and institutional factors. Educational researcher Julie Reuben (1996) paints an historical picture of the factors that led to the contested nature of morality and ethics on campus. These factors included the elevation of freedom of inquiry and thought as a primary ideal within higher education; the scientific study of religion which essentially concluded that factual knowledge and religious “truth” were essentially separate and distinct; the ascendance of “value-free” inquiry in the social sciences; the decline of normative ethics that accompanied the rise of analytical philosophy; the enthusiasm for and ultimate eschewing of utopian visions for science; the rise of the research university with its specialized disciplines (and sub-disciplines) and professional norms centered on research; an emphasis on vocational, technical, and professional training within professional

schools; and an ever-widening division of labor between academic and student affairs that led faculty to largely limit their student interaction to the classroom, leaving much student development work to other professionals.

These trends within the academy emerged alongside cultural events that occasioned a public questioning—on both the left and the right—of the state of morality and ethics within our culture generally. A perceived decline in moral and ethical standards and commitment in personal, public, and professional life was fueled by

a wave of scandals stretching from Tuskegee and Watergate to the Lewinsky affair and Enron, as well as by broader social trends, from rising rates of crime, drug use, cheating, and divorce, to rampant materialism and civic apathy. Together, these clusters of events have fueled inquiry into public good and private virtues and the social and educational conditions that sustain them (Kiss & Euben, 2010, p. 8-9).

The political movements of the 1960's and 1970's—much of it played out on campuses—were driven by a sense of moral indignation at the duplicity and hypocrisy of democracy. Many demanded a reexamination of the relationship between ethics, politics, and power in light of the treatment of marginalized groups such as African Americans, women, and the poor, among others. A growing number of educators during this time argued that questions about right and wrong, justice and injustice, and virtue and vice were not tangential to the college experience, but were, rather, essential to it. This call hearkened a return to early attempts to integrate curricular and noncurricular experiences in such a way that “students graduated into the larger world both wiser and more sensitive to their moral and ethical responsibilities” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 345).

Despite the fact that the 20th century saw significant shifts in higher education related to disciplinary specialties, research-driven commitments, and the attendant fragmentation of knowledge, there remained a tradition of liberal education and its concern with developing the whole person. This tradition, as noted, reemerged with greater force in recent years such that it is now widely expected that the college experience should not simply contribute to cognitive and intellectual growth, but that student growth should also be expected in the interpersonal, social, and moral and ethical domains (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002; Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Colby et al, 2003; Evans et al, 2010; Ignelzi, 1990; Ikenberry, 1997; King, 1997; Mathiason, 1998). As a 1980 report put it, “A ‘higher education’ that does not foster, support, and implement an examination of the moral life will fail its own purposes, the needs of its students, and the welfare of society” (Callahan & Bok, 1980, p. 300).

By the time traditional-aged college students arrive on campus, much has happened to form their moral and ethical perspectives, values, interests, and attitudes toward civic life. Some have argued—contrary to research—that by the time students begin their college journey, most aspects of their moral and ethical lives are set (Colby et al, 2003). One thing, however, seems clear: traditional-aged college students (age 18-22) do in fact demonstrate gains in moral judgment and reasoning during the college years (King & Kitchener, 1994; King & Mayhew, 2002; Maeda et al, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Rest & Thoma, 1985). The question is no longer—as it once was—whether such growth occurs. Data in the affirmative is fairly clear and extensive on this point. Rather, the question for educators is, to what extent can certain aspects of the college experience be said to contribute to moral development, and, beyond this, what kinds of experiences, interventions, or programs within the college context appear to foster

or enhance moral growth beyond what one might expect developmentally from any 18-22 year old college student?

These broad questions about the moral development effects of college shape the contours of this study, and are directed herein toward the effects of a particular aspect of the college environment on the moral judgment development of a particular group of students. Specifically, this study examined the moral judgment development of two cohorts of men in the first semester of their first year of college. Both cohorts of men in the study—*Alpha Alpha* and *Beta Beta*—were in new member/pledge classes of local chapters of national fraternities. The researcher investigated whether the men of Alpha Alpha (the treatment group) had higher moral judgment growth rates than the men of Beta Beta (the control group) as a result of participating in Alpha Alpha's non-traditional, no-pledging, character-building approach to fraternity membership. While Beta Beta also had a programmatic intervention for “new brothers,” theirs was typical of traditional pledgship. Ultimately, this study was an inquiry into the efficacy of an intentional character-building intervention for first-year college men. The study offers insight for curricular and cocurricular educators into how men in their first year of college think about and process moral issues, and sheds light on what kinds of interventions are likely to stimulate growth in their moral judgment and reasoning capacities.

Focus of the Study and Research Questions

This study examined the moral judgment development of two groups of men in their first year of college. Both cohorts of men were comprised of 18 to 19 year-olds in their first-year of study at a mid-size, private, religiously-affiliated university in the Southwest. Each cohort—termed Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta—was the new member/pledge class of a local chapter of a national fraternity. The point of the study was to determine whether and to what degree men in

the first year of college demonstrate gains in moral judgment and reasoning as a result of participating in an intentional character development program. Data was gathered utilizing a moral judgment assessment instrument known as the Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT2).

The Alpha Alpha cohort moved through the new member education program of a local chapter of a national fraternity known for its non-traditional, no-pledging approach to fraternity life, and its thorough emphasis on the character development of its members via a program known (in this study) as the *Whole Man Initiative*. The Beta Beta cohort moved through the new member education program of a local chapter of a national fraternity but did so within one that subscribes to the traditional demands of fraternity pledgship and, while perhaps seeking to inculcate pro-social values, did not have a similarly intentional program of character development. The study, which utilized a pre-test/post-test, quasi-experimental approach, was conceived in such a way as to reveal whether the treatment group demonstrated growth over time in moral judgment and reasoning at a greater rate than the control group who did not participate in a similarly intentional intervention.

While a number of studies comparing the moral judgment scores (per the DIT) of college men and women have been conducted (Mayhew et al, 2012), very few have focused exclusively on the scores and growth rates of men as this study does. But this may be changing. Despite a clear history of privilege and success in higher education, troubling trends are emerging in regard to college men's recruitment, retention, and academic success (Kellom, 2004). Edwards and Jones (2009), citing emerging research, note that concerns regarding college men have extended into emotional, mental, and physical well-being, increased likelihood to commit and be victims of violence, and significantly higher rates of campus policy violations. The present study makes

a unique contribution to current understandings of the moral development of men by focusing on the efficacy of character-building interventions for men within the college experience.

In order to understand the moral judgment effects of participating in an intentional character-development program for men, this study investigated the following questions:

1. Do the men of Alpha Alpha have higher mean pre-test moral judgment scores compared to the pre-test moral judgment scores of the Beta Beta men?
2. Do the men of Alpha Alpha have higher mean post-test moral judgment scores compared to the post-test moral judgment scores of the Beta Beta men?
3. For both Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta, what were the rates of growth in moral judgment scores from the time of pre-test to the time of post-test? Do the men of Alpha Alpha have a higher rate of growth than that of Beta Beta after the intervention?
4. How do the scores of Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta (both pre- and post-test) compare to national normative scores for male college students in their first year?

Theoretical Foundations Informing the Study

Historically, philosophy has described moral judgment and reasoning as conscious, deliberate, and rationally effortful, with the individual thoughtfully weighing options in order to choose what is right. Many cognitive-developmentalists—Lawrence Kohlberg the foremost among them—adopted this assumption and studied moral judgment with a focus on testing conscious, thoughtful reasoning about moral dilemmas by asking participants to give a verbal rationale for their decisions (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Based on the early work of Jean Piaget, Kohlberg devised structured interviews using moral dilemmas to code and classify responses to challenging social/interpersonal situations. From interviews with male adolescents, Kohlberg became convinced of Piaget's theory

regarding the moral development of children (Evans, et al., 1998); namely, that children reasoned in phases that “broadly speaking, follow one another without, however, constituting definite stages” (Piaget, 1960, p. 195). Extending Piaget’s work with children into the adolescent years, Kohlberg posited that individuals advance through six stages of moral development as their capacity to reason becomes more sophisticated.

Kohlberg’s six-stage scheme was organized into three levels of development. The first level—*pre-conventional* reasoning—contained Stages 1 and 2, and centered on reasoning that focused on the self and the self’s needs with little reference to the needs of others or social rules and dynamics generally. The second, or *conventional*, level of moral reasoning describes an awareness of community norms and expectations on the part of the person. At this level, which comprises Stages 3 and 4, the individual has the capacity to understand oneself as part of a larger society and make moral and social judgments out of an appreciation of the situated nature of their lives. Stages 5 and 6 fall within the third level of thinking, *post-conventional* reasoning. In this portion of Kohlberg’s scheme, the individual develops a rather complex and sophisticated set of moral principles that transcend concerns related to personal interests and preferences (pre-conventional) and maintaining social norms and conformity (conventional). The post-conventional thinker is able to take a step back from his or her own interests and from contextual norms to consider more inclusive and just forms of cooperation (Narvaez, 2010).

Kohlberg advocated a stronger, more invariant version of the stage concept than did Piaget, arguing that development consists of moving up what amounts to a developmental staircase one step at a time (Rest, et al., 1999). He contended that individuals were “in” one stage or another at a moment in time, and that anyone studied would demonstrate (assuming growth) irreversible,

upward progression in the stage sequence toward greater sophistication of thought, with no skipping of steps or moving backwards.

Carol Gilligan (1982), a student of Kohlberg's, challenged Kohlberg's scheme based partly on the limited research sample (adolescent boys) from which he drew normative conclusions. She observed that women's decisions tended to focus on interpersonal relationships and an ethic of care in which abstract principles of justice are subordinated to the demands of relationships. Gilligan, and Noddings (2002) after her, thought Kohlberg's scheme was limited because it took macro-moral concerns to be the whole of the moral domain, leaving out the micro-moral considerations of daily relationships. Criticism of the Kohlberg scheme has also been directed toward the lack of a culturally relative perspective in his theory (Simpson, 1974).

James Rest, a student of Kohlberg's, rejected Kohlberg's "hard" stage concept in favor of a soft stage model that featured preferred thought schemas that people used to help them think. Abandoning the staircase model in favor of a more variant, content-driven one, Rest and colleagues devised the Defining Issues Test to measure the frequency with which individuals used three identified thought schemas—Personal Interest, Maintaining Norms, and Post-Conventional.

When moral judgment is measured via interviews—as Kohlberg attempted to do—and subjects are asked to coherently articulate the reasons for their moral choices (see Moral Judgment Interview, Colby et al., 1987), very few indicate having attained post-conventional levels (Snarey, 1985). The fact that so few persons could be classified as Stage 6 pointed, in the eyes of many, to the severe limitations of self-reported explanations of one's own cognitive processes (Uleman & Bargh, 1989). Persons trained in moral philosophy are among the few who consistently indicate post-conventional reasoning in measures requiring verbal fluency and the

articulation of concepts. Yet, when moral judgment and reasoning is assessed with tools designed to tap into tacit or implicit knowledge, many more respondents indicate a preference for the post-conventional level. Instruments such as the Defining Issues Test tap into *preference* and *recognition measures*, asking respondents to identify thought fragments consistent with the one(s) used to reach moral and ethical decisions, as opposed to having respondents verbally describe the cognitive processes used to reach their conclusions (Rest et al., 1999).

The image of moral agency assumed by Kohlberg and those influenced by him—one involving rational calculation that is conscious, deliberate, and cognitively effortful—is also at odds with empirical research revealing that much of human decision making (including moral judgments) is not conscious, deliberate, and reasoned, but rather is under non-conscious control and intuitive in nature. Many cognitive processes, including moral decision-making and judgment, occur automatically without awareness, that is, tacitly, implicitly and beyond (in many cases) the participant's ability to verbally articulate the rationale behind their choices. While the tacit dimension of thought and judgment does not invalidate the notion of reasoned deliberation, at the very least it contextualizes it within a broader understanding of cognition. For this reason, an integrative approach to the study of moral development is warranted and used in this study.

Intuitionist approaches to human functioning and cognition assume that judgment is essentially quick and effortless the vast majority of the time and that reasoned, deliberate cognitive effort is rare at best. In fact, intuitionists by and large assume that reasoning and deliberation are *post hoc* rationalizations of intuitive judgments (Klein, 2003). Previously, it was assumed that emotions, bodily processes, and other affective dimensions of existence were a source of distraction from reasoning, but now they are viewed as either primary or integral to

cognition and to social and moral judgment (Narvaez, 2010; Hogarth, 2001; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991).

According to Haidt and associates (2001; Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008; Haidt & Joseph, 2007; Haidt & Graham, 2007), moral judgments occur tacitly, rapidly, and without awareness of their source(s), conveying a sense of right and wrong without the assistance or intervention of reasoning. The intuitive decision or judgment may or may not be followed by reasoning. In those cases when reasoning does follow and is employed, its function is to “search for arguments that will support an already-made judgment” (Haidt, 2001, p. 818). The significant and compelling research showing that humans often operate using implicit cognitive processes cannot be true everywhere except in the moral domain (Narvaez, 2010), and, as such, demands thoughtful consideration regarding its implications for moral psychology and development.

This study takes an integrative theoretical approach to the study of moral development, one in which both the rational/deliberative *and* tacit/intuitive aspects of human thought and reasoning are accounted for and which, when taken together, comprise a more robust conception of moral judgment and reasoning. The DIT-2 is an instrument that is theoretically consistent with this approach to the extent that it tests for preference and recognition in moral judgment rather than relying on participants to verbally articulate a rationale for their evaluations and judgments.

Significance of the Study

AAC&U has, over the last ten-plus years, generated tools, research and numerous resources to inform campus practices and measure progress related to growth in the areas of personal and social responsibility or, in the parlance adopted in this study, *moral development*. A leading national association of more than 1,250 member institutions, AAC&U produced a

report in 2002 recommending that higher education engage more intentionally in developing “responsible” learners whose sense of social responsibility and ethical and moral judgment is marked by such qualities and dispositions as “intellectual honesty,” “responsibility for society’s moral health and for social justice,” and “discernment of consequences, including ethical consequences” of decisions and actions (2002, p. 24).

Recognizing this vision of higher education will require an understanding of the following factors: how moral judgment and reasoning among students might be characterized and assessed in a measurable or demonstrable way, the extent to which moral growth and development can be said to occur in higher education settings, and what kinds of experiences, interventions, or programs within higher education appear to foster or enhance moral growth beyond what one might expect developmentally from any 18-22 year old. While significant data exists on the influence of the college environment generally on the moral development of students (King & Mayhew, 2002), this study seeks to better understand the moral effects of *a particular aspect of the college environment on a particular demographic*; specifically, the moral effects of an intentional character development intervention on first-year college men versus those men who, while also having the same access to the college experience generally, do not participate in a similarly intentional character program.

Understanding how college students cognitively process information related to moral and ethical dilemmas assists in the creation of curricular and co-curricular learning contexts that better prepare students for their role as community members and citizens of the world. The results of this study have the potential to lead to greater understanding of and possible interventions regarding the moral development of college students generally, and men particularly. At a time of concern regarding the rates of matriculation and campus engagement

among men (Edwards & Jones, 2009), this study has the potential to reveal interesting insights into how men in their first year of college think about and process issues of moral significance, and the degree to which intentionally developmental interventions are likely to lead to moral growth and development. Answers to these questions could inform thinking about the nature of future developmental programming and interventions for men on college campuses.

Design of the Study and Overview of Methodology

To explore the research questions of this study, a quasi-experimental design was used. As noted, a pre- and post-test instrument was used to measure growth in moral judgment and reasoning over time among two groups of men in their first year of college. The moral development intervention common to both groups was the new member/pledge process of each group. The treatment group's intervention was ostensibly more intentional about character-building than that of the control group. The instrument used to measure moral judgment scores in the pre- and post-test was James Rest's *Defining Issues Test, 2* (DIT2). The two groups were not randomized, but rather were comprised of men who self-selected into each cohort.

The DIT-2 is a paper-and-pencil instrument for measuring moral judgment and reasoning development, and was created as a cognitive-developmental tool that quantitatively measures the thought schemas an individual uses to reason about and make judgments regarding moral dilemmas (Rest et al, 1999). Since its inception in 1974, the DIT (and later, DIT2) has been used in well over 500 studies (Thoma, 2002) in an attempt to understand the relative sophistication of moral thought schemas that people bring to the task of making moral and ethical judgments. Of the 500-plus studies reviewed, 172 were used explicitly to measure moral growth and development of college students (King & Mayhew, 2002).

A common measure of moral reasoning and judgment in moral development literature, the DIT-2 captures and measures changes in moral reasoning and judgment by using short dilemmas to stimulate moral thinking and reveal a participant's preference for one of three moral thought schemas as conceived by Rest based on Kohlberg's stages: *Personal Interest schema* (less sophisticated), *Maintaining Norms schema*, and *Post-Conventional schema* (most sophisticated). The schemas represent a more variant, flexible, and content-driven measure of moral judgment and reasoning than the "hard" stages within Kohlberg's model. Within the DIT-2, developmental gains in moral reasoning and judgment are indicated by increasingly greater preference for and use of more complex and sophisticated moral schemas when confronted by challenging moral and ethical situations (Thoma, 2006).

The DIT-2 presents five one-paragraph hypothetical moral dilemmas to participants, and asks participants what decision they would make in each case (*For*, *Against*, or *Can't Decide*). Each case is then followed by 12 issues (in the form of questions) that could be involved in reaching the decision they made about the dilemma. Participants are asked to rank each of the 12 issues—in terms of importance in their decision-making process—on a five-point Likert scale (from *Greatly Important* to *Not Important*).

Both groups of first-year men were given the DIT-2 early in the fall semester, specifically, within ten days of being invited to join their fraternity. The DIT-2 was given to both groups of men a second time at the beginning of their second semester so as to give the men in the study one entire semester at college and in their fraternities, and to minimize the distraction of trying to organize the second administration during finals at the end of their first semester. Pre- and post-test scores were measured regarding the sophistication of moral reasoning and judgment among both groups. As well, developmental gains were measured and

compared across and among both groups in moral reasoning and judgment over time. Moral judgment scores of both groups were compared to normative DIT scores for college students from around the country using data maintained by the University of Alabama.

Both groups of men, as first-semester college students, had a common experience of the college community and the common experience of choosing to join a cohort of other men. The exception is the nature of the approach to new membership (non-traditional, no-pledging versus traditional pledgship) and the level of emphasis placed on character development within each group. The researcher knew that a *selection effect* might be apparent in the pre-test moral judgment scores of men in the two cohorts based on the fact certain types of men might self-select into Alpha Alpha based on the reputation of its widely-known, character-building approach. For this reason, the focus of the study is on rates of growth over time, or, the *accentuation effect* of the intervention.

The DIT-2 was given to 67 men in the two groups. Forty men comprised the treatment group, and twenty-seven comprised the control group. Each group completed the DIT-2 on two occasions, once at the beginning of their new member/pledge period (pre-test) and again after completing their provisional period of membership and receiving official status as members of the group (post-test). After attrition and reliability checks following the post-test, 52 men provided usable data for the study. The intervention occurred between the two administrations of the DIT-2.

The research design notation is as follows:

M _t	O	X	O
M _c	O	X	O

“M_i” is the group of forty men who comprised the treatment group. “M_c” is the group of twenty-seven men who comprised the control group. “O” is the DIT-2 instrument which was used as the measurement instrument in the pre- and post-tests. “X” is the intervention of the new member/pledge experience.

Participants from both groups were recruited through the assistance of the fraternity advisor and president, both of whom understood and supported the purposes of the project and were willing to invite new members to participate. The DIT-2 took approximately 25-30 minutes to complete each time. At each administration, the general nature of the study was described and voluntary participants were solicited from the pledge/new member population. Four test sessions were held, two for the treatment group and two for the control group.

The dependent variable in the study was the N2 score—specifically, the mean pre-test N2 score, the mean post-test N2 score, and the measured change in mean N2 scores over time (from pre- to post-test). The N2 score is an index score that represents the degree to which items representing the Post-Conventional thought schema are preferred *plus* the degree to which items representing the Personal Interest schema received low preference ratings. The researcher hypothesized that in this study Alpha Alpha would not demonstrate a rate of moral judgment growth over time that is higher (in a statistically-significant way) than the growth exhibited by the control group, Beta Beta.

Definition of Terms

Within this study the terms *moral development*, *moral judgment*, *moral reasoning*, and *moral intuition* will be used. Definitions of these terms are therefore needed. Moral development broadly refers to the process of human growth and development that is concerned with constructing an identity relative to narratives of what is good or right in the domain of

human behavior or action, whether that behavior is carried out by an individual or group. Moral judgments refer to the evaluations of the actions, perspectives, or character of a person or persons that are made vis-à-vis a set of virtues held to be obligatory by a culture or sub-culture (Haidt, 2001). Moral judgment may at times refer not only to specific judgments themselves, but to the process by which moral judgments are reached.

Moral reasoning is a kind of cognition—evident most clearly in Kohlbergian notions of morality—that refers to the conscious, deliberate, effortful mental activity that consists of taking in information about persons or situations in order to reach a conclusion about what is right or wrong in a situation. Moral intuition is a kind of cognition that operates on a seemingly implicit perception of the issue, problem, or dilemma at hand. When moral intuition is at work, an evaluation or conclusion about the issue is reached—whether right or wrong—with little conscious awareness of the process used to reach it (Bruner, 1960). It is important to note that reasoning and intuition are two kinds of cognition.

Limitations of the Study

Many important issues related to moral development and moral judgment remain outside the confines of this study. This study is not intended to address issues related to moral behavior and what people actually do when confronted by complex situations. The DIT-2 yields insights into *moral attitudes and preferences*; it does not address or give insight into the well-documented gap between moral ideals and moral behavior. This study is limited to two cohorts of demographically similar men who attend a private, religiously-affiliated, medium-sized university in the southwest. As such, the results of this study will not produce findings that can be seen as normative regarding the moral judgment of college men generally or even men in their first year of college.

This study is also limited in its duration. It only measures growth over a relatively short period of time—one semester. Alpha Alpha's *Whole Man Initiative* (WMI) is a four-year developmental approach to character-building within a fraternity. This study, because of time limitations, does not measure its effectiveness over the duration of the program. Only the portion of WMI occurring during the new member period is measured. Nevertheless, this portion of the program represents a significant and vital aspect of a four-year process, and corresponds in duration to the pledge period for the men of Beta Beta.

Attrition is a potential limitation of this study. While all eligible men in each cohort participated in the pre-test, some of the men may choose to not participate in the post-test which could threaten internal validity. In addition, some institutional effects outside the new member/pledge education process could account for growth in moral judgment. While the groups are demographically similar in many ways and have equal access to opportunities for growth and challenge at the university generally, it is clear that not all students in the two cohorts have the same experiences. As such, whatever growth (or lack of growth) in moral judgment is demonstrated in either or both groups cannot be attributed solely to the intervention being investigated.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Piaget, Kohlberg, and Moral Development Research

Cognitive-developmental theories comprise most of the conceptual frameworks in the literature regarding the moral development of college students (Swaner, 2004). These frameworks generally focus on how thought and reasoning about moral and ethical issues develop in a person over time. For the past half-century the work of Lawrence Kohlberg—and those in conversation with him—has by far been the most influential approach to moral development in this framework (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 2000).

Kohlberg's theory of moral development was grounded in both psychology (from the work of Jean Piaget) and moral philosophy (from the work of John Rawls and Immanuel Kant). It was cognitive-developmental in nature because of its assumption that morality stems primarily from structures of moral reasoning and that these structures change in a stage-like manner over time, "building" on one another (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). The empirical connection between cognitive and moral development is a strong one (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), demonstrating the notion that a more advanced intellect is likely to exhibit more advanced moral reasoning.

Kohlberg's interest in morality stemmed from his work with the merchant Marines in World War II during which time he participated in efforts to assist Jewish refugees in moving from Eastern Europe to Palestine. His personal observations of the horrors of the War caused him to reflect deeply on issues of justice and morality. These experiences led him to begin considering the possibility of a rationally-grounded, universal morality that eschewed the relativism he believed opened the door to many of the world's great problems (King & Mayhew, 2004; Kohlberg, 1991).

Kohlberg's research from the beginning was concerned with moral development. His 1958 doctoral dissertation was something of a revision of Jean Piaget's model of moral development published originally in 1932. Kohlberg was influenced by Piaget's approach to the study of cognitive processing, particularly the way Piaget contrasted more advanced thinking with less advanced thinking (Rest, et al., 1999). Higher levels of thinking were thought to use cognitive operations that lower levels of thought did not. Piaget depicted the developing thought capacities of children in terms of the acquisition of abstract, formal operations of thought.

Piaget and colleagues had a naturalistic approach to studying moral development. They investigated moral development by 1) observing children while they were playing games and 2) interviewing children using short scenarios that involve such issues as rule-following, responsibility, lying, and punishment (Krebs & Denton, 2005). From his research, Piaget concluded that younger and older children tend to display different moral orientations, with the former conceptualizing morality in terms of obedience to authority figures and the latter conceptualizing it in terms of social cooperation.

Piaget viewed the two moral orientations as phases of development that, "broadly speaking, follow one another without, however, constituting definite stages" (Piaget, 1965, p. 195). He believed that young children in the earlier phase viewed morality in terms of obedience as a result of their concrete thinking, egocentrism, and the fact that their worlds were dominated by seemingly omniscient adults. Older children, he believed, possessed a socially-informed moral orientation because they are cognitively able to understand concepts like reciprocity, are able to imagine the experience of others, and because their social worlds are driven by egalitarian relationships with peers (Carpendale, 2000; Youniss & Damon, 1992).

In his doctoral dissertation, Kohlberg took his methodological cue from early Piaget, devising structured interviews to code and classify responses to a set of moral dilemmas. Kohlberg read a set of nine dilemmas to a sample of 84 adolescent boys, asked them what the character(s) in the dilemma should do, and then probed with follow-up questions in an attempt to determine how they arrived at their decision. The crux of Kohlberg's project was not to map the boys' response to what the person in the scenario should do, but rather to explore the moral thought structures that gave rise to the judgments they made (Krebs & Denton, 2005). The set of dilemmas and follow-up questions that Kohlberg used in the interview process would become known as the Moral Judgment Interview (Kohlberg, 1981).

The most famous example of a dilemma drawn from Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview involves the actions of a man named Heinz whose wife desperately needs a special kind of cancer drug:

A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her life. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow money, but he could only get together about \$1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

Should Heinz have broken into the store to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

(Kohlberg, 1981, p. 12).

Using this and other moral dilemmas in his interviews with the young men, Kohlberg derived a model of moral development grounded in three primary assumptions. The first assumption was that the primary criterion of moral development was mature moral judgment and reasoning. For Kohlberg, when it came to moral development, cognition was primary (Gibbs, 1995). He put little stock in affective determinants of morality: “The construction of moral meaning...generates motivating feelings such as logical necessity or sentiments of justice—but such affect is secondary in the sense that it owes its motivational properties and indeed its existence to constructive processes” (Gibbs, p. 42).

Kohlberg’s second assumption was that people process the moral information that comes to them through the cognitive structures (“stages”) that define their current stage of development, assuming they are “consolidated” within a particular stage of thought. If they are in a stage of transition—that is, in process of moving from one stage of moral development to another—they will reason using structures from their current stage and the (next higher) stage toward which they are progressing. “Stage of moral reasoning is a filter through which...situational forces are perceived, interpreted, and acted upon,” (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 564). Kohlberg understood each stage as a new “logical justice structure” that is “progressively more comprehensive, differentiated, and equilibrated than the prior structure” (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 147).

Kohlberg’s third assumption was that people move through stages of moral development in an invariant, “stair-step” sequence. His version of the stage concept was stronger, “harder,” and more invariant than Piaget’s (Rest, et al., 1999; Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1984). He contended that individuals were “in” one stage or another at a moment in time, and that anyone studied would demonstrate (assuming growth) irreversible, upward progression in the stage

sequence toward greater sophistication of thought, with no skipping of steps or moving backwards. The stages, for Kohlberg, were sequentially fixed, with each successive stage incorporating all aspects of the previous stages (Evans et al, 2010).

Kohlberg believed that the new structures of moral reasoning and judgment that people acquire as they development and mature “transform and displace” the thought structures that characterize the prior stages of development (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987, p. 6). Kohlberg maintained that “higher,” more advanced stages of development exhibited superior perspective-taking abilities that increasingly took into account concerns beyond the self. Higher stages of thought, for Kohlberg, were characterized by more prescriptive, universal, and impartial moral decisions (Krebs & Denton, 2005).

Kohlberg’s Stage Sequence

What are Kohlberg’s stages of moral development? Kohlberg posited that individuals advance through six stages of moral development as their capacity to reason becomes more sophisticated. Kohlberg’s six-stage scheme was organized into three levels of development. The first level—pre-conventional reasoning—contained Stages 1 and 2, and centered on reasoning that focused on the self and the self’s needs with little reference to the needs of others or social rules and dynamics generally. The second, or *conventional*, level of moral reasoning describes an awareness of community norms and expectations on the part of the person. At this level, which comprises Stages 3 and 4, the individual has a “member-of-society” perspective and understands oneself in the context of a larger community. The person at this stage makes moral and social judgments out of an appreciation of the situated nature of their lives.

Stages 5 and 6 fall within the third level of thinking, *post-conventional* reasoning. At these stages, the individual reasons from a “prior-to-society” perspective. Here the individual

develops a rather complex and sophisticated set of moral principles that transcend concerns related to personal interests and preferences (pre-conventional) and maintaining social norms and conformity (conventional), separating themselves from the prescribed social rules and norms in favor of an internalized set of principles that promote human rights and values. The post-conventional thinker is able to take a step back from his or her own interests and from contextual norms to consider more inclusive and just forms of cooperation (Narvaez, 2010).

Kohlberg's six moral stages center on judgments of rightness and social obligation (Colby et al, 1987), and are defined in the following ways by Kohlberg and associates (Colby, Kohlberg, and Kauffman, 1987; Kohlberg, 1976; 1981).

Stage 1: Heteronomous Morality; or, The Stage of Punishment and Obedience—In this stage, right is understood as obedience to rules and authority and to refrain from doing harm to others or their property. Individuals in this stage are motivated by the avoidance of punishment. The most egocentric of the stages, individuals here do not particularly consider the interests of others; rather, all actions are seen in light of effects on the self.

Stage 2: Individualistic, Instrumental Morality—In this stage, right is understood as meeting one's own immediate interests and needs, and also allowing others to do the same. Rules function to protect the interest of individuals. Persons in this stage also understand that competing interests will occur, so right is defined by what is *fair* or what amounts to an equal exchange.

Stage 3: Interpersonal, Normative Morality; or, The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity—In this stage, right is understood as meeting the expectations of authorities and those to whom one is close. Persons in this stage are concerned about “being good,” which involves having good motives, showing compassion and empathy,

being loyal and dutiful, following social protocol, and ably carrying out acceptable social roles (son, father, daughter, friend, etc.). Shared feelings, expectations, and agreements take primacy over individual interests, and yet a generalized commitment to the social system does not yet exist.

Stage 4: Social System Morality—In this stage, right is understood as performing one's duty in society, upholding the social order, and maintaining the welfare of the society or group. Individuals in this stage view the social system as comprised of a set of rules and procedures that apply equally to all people. Obligations herein are to do one's part to perpetuate the social order. Individual relations are considered in terms of how they affect the system.

Stage 5: Rights and Social Contracts Morality—In this stage, right is understood as acting in such a way that fundamental human rights and values are promoted. Laws and social systems are evaluated based on the degree to which they uphold such fundamental values. People in this stage understand that many laws and rules are relative to one's group or culture. In most cases, such laws should be obeyed and upheld because one has made a social contract to make and abide by laws for the good of all and to protect their own rights and the rights of others. Laws and duties should be based on the rational calculation of overall utility; specifically, the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Stage 6: The Morality of Universal Ethical Principles—In the final moral stage, right is understood as acting out of a primary commitment to universal ethical principles. These principles are universal principles of justice: the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of all persons as individuals. Such principles are generalizable, normative, and apply in all situations. When one encounters a law or rule that violates these principles, one acts in accordance with the principle. The reason for acting in this way is that one has rationally

considered the principle of the greatest good, internalized that principle, and become committed to it.

Each of Kohlberg's stages fits into one of three levels of moral development that encapsulate the primary impetus for moral judgment and reasoning—preconventional (Stages 1 and 2), conventional (Stages 3 and 4), and postconventional (Stages 5 and 6). In general, the preconventional level is focused primarily on the self, the conventional level is focused primarily on the perceptions of others, and the postconventional level is focused primarily on the application of rationally-derived principles. The stages (and their corresponding levels) are outlined in Table 2.1 that follows (Kohlberg, 1981, Sullivan, 2011).

TABLE 2.1

Lawrence Kohlberg's Six Stages of Moral Development

Moral Level	Stage	Right action	Social Perspective
Preconventional: Focus on the Self	1	Obey rules and authority; don't harm; avoid punishment	Egocentric; action/inaction is purely self-referential
	2	Live and let live vis-à-vis personal interests; be fair	Conflicting interests resolved via instrumental exchange
Conventional: Focus on Others	3	"Be good;" meet expectations of others and authorities	Taking perspective of others; interpersonal harmony
	4	Do one's social duty; uphold/maintain social order	Individual relations seen in terms of place in the system
Postconventional: Focus on Universal Principles	5	Pursue greatest good for greatest number; uphold nonrelative obligations	Honor the social contract; certain values, rights stand prior to relative rules, norms
	6	Act from rationally-derived universal ethical principles, which stand outside culture	Social arrangements rooted in equality, liberty, and dignity; universally applied

Kohlberg's moral development theory emphasized rationalism, siding with moral philosophers who argued that deliberate reasoned reflection was the hallmark of mature moral decision-making. His theory was an attempt to use empirical data from psychology to demonstrate the validity of a certain approach to moral philosophy—one associated first with

Immanuel Kant and, in the second half of the twentieth century, John Rawls (Rest et al, 1999). The Kantian/Rawlsian view contains features of rationality, autonomy, and universality in a social contract wherein rationally-guided individuals choose to act toward one another out of respect for the dignity and autonomy of each individual. Rawls (1971), like Kant, held that the moral life of a society is governed by explicit appeal to and use of generalized principles derived from pure reason.

The influence of Rawls' moral philosophy on Kohlberg can particularly be seen at the higher stages of his theory of moral development. Kohlberg's Stage 6 centers on the reasoned, reflective use of universal moral principles such as "justice, of reciprocity and equality of human action, of universal respect for human rights and for human personality" (Blatt and Kohlberg, 1975, p. 130), and that such principles are applied logically and consistently when confronted with moral dilemmas. Judgments at this stage are based on generalizable principles that are, in the language of Kant, *categorically imperative*; that is, applicable at all times and in all places for all people. With a nod to Kant and Rawls, Kohlberg believe that a judgment was considered moral only if consciously, deliberately applied (Blasi, 2005; Kohlberg, Levine, & Hower, 1983; Lapsley & Hill, 2008).

Kohlberg's approach is philosophically consistent with Kant's idea that morality is a matter of autonomously expressing one's rationality in the face of challenging ethical or moral situations (Noddings & Slote, 2003). Kohlberg believed that the existence of Stages 5 and 6 demonstrated that ethical relativism (the cause of many of the world's horrors) could be defeated at the highest stages of development where the moral perspective commits a person to secure moral consensus around rationally-grounded, culturally-neutral, universal principles (Lapsley & Hill, 2008).

Like Rawls' moral philosophy, Kohlberg's theory of moral development was primarily a *macro-moral* theory of judgment and reasoning (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2005; Noddings & Slote, 2003; Rest et al, 1999; Rest et al, 2000). Macromorality focuses on the formal structures of society (laws, roles, institutions, generally accepted social practices, etc.) wherein people who live within a community or society seek to establish a system of cooperation. Such systems—if they are oriented toward justice—call for impartiality, generalizable norms, and a more-or-less “level playing field” among participants. Kohlberg's theory has much less to say about micro-moral issues; namely, those concerned with developing relationships with particular others, issues of care in intimate relationships, and being courteous, responsible, and empathic.

Criticisms of Kohlberg

While immensely influential in demonstrating that moral judgment and reasoning changes with age and life experience, Kohlberg's approach has been subject to waves of criticism through the years on several fronts. Many have criticized Kohlberg's stage theory for being too rational, objective, and cerebral. His theory—especially in its earliest conceptions—tends to reduce moral obligation to what a person with little moral character can accomplish, to the extent that it relies on choosing the correct universally applicable moral principle and applying it to a hypothetical situation (Narvaez, 2007). Moral judgment and reasoning is in fact only one component or aspect in moral development. Rest et al (1999) conceptualize the entire domain of moral psychology to include at least four major internal processes that lead to moral behavior and action: moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character. Moral judgment alone cannot account for the complex nature of morality. Kohlberg himself acknowledged, later in his career, that his original parameters and claims were an over-reach,

noting, more accurately, that his six-stage theory addressed “the rational reconstruction of...justice thinking” (Kohlberg, 1984, p. 217).

Kohlberg could find little evidence for the existence of Stage 6 even in his own research based on the Moral Judgment Inventory he developed, a fact that many critics have found severely damaging to his entire enterprise. Virtually every contributor in the volume, *Lawrence Kohlberg: Consensus and Controversy* (1986), found the near-absence of the highest stages in his research to be a serious flaw. One cross-cultural study found little evidence for Stage 5 scoring in Kohlbergian studies from around the world (Snarey, 1985).

Gibbs (2003), among others, notes that post-conventional processing was rarely found among adolescents and infrequently found even among adults during interviews regarding moral reasoning, raising questions about the usefulness and empirical accuracy of Kohlberg’s higher stages. Gibbs explains the lack of post-conventional reasoning in Kohlbergian studies by noting that whether a person is demonstrably able to reason in a post-conventional manner is influenced by the level of understanding one is seeking to measure. One could measure tacit knowledge, knowledge one is able to verbally describe (as in Kohlberg’s Moral Judgment Interview), or perhaps something in between.

When moral judgment is measured via interviews and subjects are asked to coherently articulate the reasons for their moral choices, very few indicate having attained post-conventional levels (Snarey, 1985). The fact that so few persons could be classified as Stage 6 pointed, in the eyes of many, to the severe limitations of self-reported explanations of one’s own cognitive processes (Uleman & Bargh, 1989). Persons trained in moral philosophy are among the few who consistently indicate post-conventional reasoning in measures requiring verbal fluency and the articulation of concepts.

Kohlberg's reliance on purely verbal methods for assessing moral judgment is another limitation of his project, according to critics. During the period he was developing his stage theory, Kohlberg favored assessing a person's stage of development by interviewing them using semi-structured interviews. This method asks subjects to explain their own thinking. "In the 1970's, Kohlberg argued that the verbal productions of subjects in interviews could be regarded as direct, straightforward indicators of cognitive process. Ask a person how his or her mind operates and the person can provide the experimenter with sufficient information to determine what program is operating in the subject's mind that produces the judgment" (Rest et al, 1999, p. 20).

Schweder et al (1987) described the limitation of Kohlberg's interview methodology succinctly: "[Kohlberg used] a verbal production task that places a high premium on the ability to generate arguments, verbally represent complex concepts, and talk like a moral philosopher...[But] people know more than they can tell. A distinction is needed between implicit, tacit, or intuitive knowledge of a concept and the ability to state explicitly the knowledge one has" (p. 16).

The Challenge of Cognitive Science: Affect, Intuition, and Moral Judgment

Schweder's insight prefigured the significant and compelling findings of cognitive science regarding the role of intuitive knowledge in everyday life. Kohlberg's principle of phenomenalism—the notion that moral behavior depends solely on the subjective perspective, conscious judgment, and explicit intention of the subject—came into question as new insights emerged regarding the "bottom-up" roots of human cognition. Previously, it was assumed that emotions, bodily processes, and other affective dimensions of existence were a source of distraction from reasoning, but have come to be viewed by many as either primary or integral to

cognition and to social and moral judgment (Narvaez, 2010; Hogarth, 2001; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991).

Damasio (1994), for instance, argued that rationality was grounded in “the action of biological drives, body states, and emotions...the neural edifice of reason” which is “shaped and modulated by body signals, even as it performs the most sublime distinctions and acts accordingly” (p. 200). Damasio’s argument about affective primacy was based in part on studies of people who had sustained damage to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex. While they retained a basic knowledge of moral and social rules, they had great difficulty into that knowledge into behavior. Experiments revealed that these patients lacked the affective responses that people normally feel when encountering, for instance, emotionally evocative slides. He surmised that brain areas involved in bodily reactions to real events are activated merely by imagining similar events. These activations provide us with flashes of positive and negative emotions, which tell us almost instantly, without much need for reflection, whether a certain course of action should or should not be pursued. If the prefrontal cortex is damaged, the patient is deprived of the flashes of affect and emotion that form the basis of most judgments and decisions, and open the door to rational, effortful deliberation about complex situations. Beginning early in one’s life, emotions “give birth” to the capacity to think, form ideas, and invent symbols. Greenspan and Shankar (2004) note that “sensory and subjective experiences...are the basis for creative and logical reflection,” (p. 2). With the development of symbolic thinking and rational deliberation, humans learn to transform (over time) basic emotions into increasingly complex emotional signaling, which paves the way for considered, informed ideas and behavior in the moral realm (Narvaez, 2008; 2010).

The decline in popularity of the kind of phenomenism we associate with Kohlberg can be attributed in part to the research of those like Damasio, but also to the evidence of those like Blasi (1980) and Thoma (1994) who demonstrated that there is a rather weak link between moral reasoning (knowing) and moral action (doing). Research on cognitive processing demonstrates the dominance of unconscious processing whereas conscious, deliberate processing becomes secondary (Bargh, 1997). Bargh and Ferguson (2000) noted that, “Higher mental processes that have traditionally served as quintessential examples of choice and free will—such as goal pursuit, judgment and interpersonal behavior—have been shown recently to occur in the absence of conscious choice or guidance” (p. 926). In short, the image of moral agency assumed by Kohlberg and those influenced by him—one involving rational calculation that is conscious, deliberate, and cognitively effortful—is at odds with empirical research that shows that much of human decision making (including moral judgments) is not conscious, deliberate, and reasoned, but rather is under non-conscious control (Reber, 1993).

The limitations of self-reported explanations of one’s own cognitive and moral judgments points to the recent work of a new Kohlberg critic, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt. While Haidt challenges the historic dominance of rationalist models of moral judgment, the focus of his criticism is a bit different. Haidt argues that the vast majority of our moral judgments are not the product of conscious, deliberate thought. Citing recent empirical studies, he argues that moral judgments are, for the most part, intuitive and automatic cognitive responses to challenges, elicited without awareness of underlying mental processes (Haidt, 2001). According to Haidt and associates (2001; Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008; Haidt & Joseph, 2007; Haidt & Graham, 2007), moral judgments occur tacitly, rapidly, and without awareness of their source(s), conveying a sense of right and wrong without the assistance or intervention of reasoning. The intuitive

decision or judgment may or may not be followed by reasoning (Klein, 2003). In those cases when reasoning does follow and is employed, its function is to “search for arguments that will support an already-made judgment,” (Haidt, 2001, p. 818). Haidt’s research echoes the moral philosophy of Scottish philosopher David Hume who, in stark contrast to Kant, argued that moral judgments are derived from sentiment and not from reason. Hume believed that we attained moral knowledge via an “immediate feeling and finer internal sense,” rather than from a “chain of argument and induction” (Hume, 1777/1960, p. 2).

Moral intuitionism—in contrast to Kohlberg’s moral phenomenalism—demonstrates the power of intuitions in shaping our moral judgments. Its embrace of intuitive-emotional systems to describe “moral encounters” provides a compelling corrective to overly rationalist approaches that rely on the use of abstract moral concepts to reason and make judgments.

As Hart (2005) noted, while the explicit, deliberative quality of moral judgment and reasoning still has a place, the findings regarding the intuitive dimension of cognition cannot be dismissed. Research indicating that humans often operate using implicit cognitive processes cannot be true everywhere except in the moral domain (Narvaez, 2010), and, as such, demands thoughtful consideration regarding its implications for moral psychology and development.

When moral judgment and reasoning is assessed with tools designed to tap into tacit or implicit knowledge, many more respondents indicate a preference for the post-conventional level. Instruments such as the Defining Issues Test tap into *recognition measures*, asking respondents to identify thought fragments consistent with the one(s) used to reach moral and ethical decisions, as opposed to having respondents verbally describe the cognitive processes used to reach their conclusions (Rest et al., 1999). Narvaez and Gleaton (2007) note that when it comes to moral judgment, understanding is first apparent when tacit measures are used to

discern the way forward, followed by measures of comprehension (e.g., paraphrasing and recall), and finally followed by “spontaneous production,” or the seamless connection between knowing and doing.

Gilligan’s Challenge and the Ethic of Care

Criticism of the Kohlberg scheme has also been directed toward the lack of a culturally relative perspective (Simpson, 1974). Elizabeth Simpson’s early critique of Kohlberg noted his uncritical use of western culture as a “morally superior” measuring stick for socio-moral values (Simpson, 1974, p. 91). Like Snarey (1985), Simpson cites cross-cultural studies where reasoning beyond that described in Kohlberg’s Stages 5 and 6 does not seem to exist. Other similar criticisms of Kohlberg point to the lack of an orientation toward an ethic of care in his theory (Gilligan, 1982; Murphy & Gilligan, 1979; Noddings, 2002). These criticisms stem, in large measure, from the limited research sample (adolescent boys) from which Kohlberg drew normative conclusions, and from the rationalist emphasis of his conclusions that in the minds of some over-emphasized the role that concerns about justice play in moral thought and behavior.

One of Kohlberg’s notable critics was Carol Gilligan, who studied with Kohlberg. Gilligan observed that women’s decisions tended to focus on interpersonal relationships and an ethic of care in which abstract principles of justice are subordinated to the demands of relationships. Gilligan proposed that individuals tend to speak about their moral reasoning and action in one of two “voices” (1982). She describes one voice—typically male—as emphasizing justice, autonomy, rights, and rules, and a second voice—typically female—as tending to value care and connection in their experiences of moral reasoning. In Kohlberg’s later writings, he acknowledged the limitations of the abstract principle of justice as the paramount feature of mature moral reasoning: “Our moral dilemmas and scoring system were limited in the sense that

they did not deal with dilemmas...of special relationship and obligations [such as]...special relationships to family, friends, and to groups of which the self is a member..." (1984, p. 228).

In a 1977 article, Gilligan suggested a developmental sequence wherein the individual's understanding of the relationship between the self and others develops in ever-more complex and embedded ways. She believed that the sequence better captured the moral experience of women and, when taken alongside Kohlberg's justice orientation, added more robust language and conceptions to our understanding of what belongs in the moral domain. Gilligan noted the advantage of placing care alongside justice as a moral orientation, remarking, "The dialogue between fairness and care not only provides a better understanding of relations between the sexes but also gives rise to a more comprehensive portrayal of adult work and family relationships" (1982, p. 174).

Gilligan's developmental sequence (1977) is comprised of three levels: Orientation to Individual Survival, Goodness as Self-Sacrifice, and The Morality of Nonviolence. With each level, the dualism of self and others disappears. Gilligan cites two transitions that occur in the three-part sequence. The first, From Selfishness to Responsibility, occurs during the conflict between self-care and care of others when moral issues become a question of connection versus independence. The second transition, From Goodness to Truth, centers on whether to subordinate the self's needs for another, and the capacity (with growth and over time) to meet both sets of needs and act morally in the process.

James Rest and Neo-Kohlbergian Theory

A number of researchers have sought to hold on to many of Kohlberg's core ideas while also extending, moderating, and modifying them on the basis of further research and warranted criticisms, many of which were discussed in the previous section. These researchers claim a

neo-Kohlbergian stance toward moral development. Perhaps foremost among the neo-Kohlbergians was James Rest. Rest produced the greatest expansion and modification of Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development. A student of Kohlberg's, Rest was the son of a politically progressive minister in the Deep South during the Civil Rights Movement. Rest watched his father struggle with cultural traditionalists committed to maintaining the social order and standing in opposition to what he viewed as the necessary demands of a just society (Thoma, 2002). After stints studying theology, philosophy, and psychology, Rest discovered Kohlberg's theory of moral development and finally found language that he felt adequately addressed the social tensions he witnessed in the communities of his formative years.

Rest eventually pursued a doctorate under the direction of Kohlberg but became concerned about the gap between theory and data in Kohlberg's scheme. While he remained committed to the cognitive-developmental approach, Rest sought a more reliable method for measuring empirical data related to theory. In time, he constructed an instrument that rated and ranked responses from Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview in a way that did not require verbal production from participants, and also provided a more efficient method (numbered indexes) of data collection (Thoma, 2002).

Constructed and refined over many years, Rest's instrument came to be known as the Defining Issues Test (DIT), and operates using a neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral judgment development. According to Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, and Bebeau (1999; 2000), neo-Kohlbergian theory of moral judgment development maintains the following basic premises of Kohlberg: (1) With Kohlberg, neo-Kohlbergians emphasize cognition as a starting point for research into moral judgment and reasoning. (2) Like Kohlberg, neo-Kohlbergians focus on the individual's attempt to make sense of basic epistemological categories such as "rights," "fairness," "justice," and

“reciprocity.” They are interested in the personal construction of these categories, but recognize that this process of construction occurs within the context of cultural ideologies and social experience. (3) As with Kohlberg, the neo-Kohlbergians portray change over time in terms of *development*, which is to say that not only can differences in moral judgments and dispositions be referenced, but one can also speak of “advances” occurring as one moves to a higher, more sophisticated level of moral judgment. Finally, (4) neo-Kohlbergians follow Kohlberg in assuming that cognitive-developmental growth in moral judgment and reasoning occurs along the lines of a growing awareness of how people interrelate through laws, rules, roles, institutions, and social customs and convention—through, in other words, a social system. These four affirmations of Kohlberg’s work comprise the Kohlbergian aspect of the neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral development.

Rest attempted to contextualize and delimit moral judgment develop within a larger domain of thought related to moral functioning. He noted that moral judgment is *only one aspect* of moral thought and action (1983; 1986). In an attempt to more fully describe the landscape of moral functioning than Kohlberg did, Rest proposed what he called the Four Component Model (1986; Rest, Bebeau, & Volker, 1986). The model assumes that there are different facets to morality and that morality is a multiplicity of processes. It is not, for instance, solely a cognitive process. Rest synthesized a multiplicity of approaches, constructs, and phenomena that constituted the diverse research literature regarding morality. Rest’s model assumes that various (specifically, four) inner psychological processes together comprise what manifests as observable, demonstrable moral action in the world. Rest et al (1999) note the four processes as follows:

1. Moral *sensitivity* (interpreting the situation, role-taking how various actions would affect the parties concerned, imagining cause-effect chains of events, and being aware that there is a moral problem when it exists)
2. Moral *judgment* (judging which action would be most justifiable in a moral sense—purportedly DIT research has something to say about this component)
3. Moral *motivation* (the degree of commitment to taking the moral course of action, valuing moral values over other values, and taking personal responsibility for moral outcomes)
4. Moral *character* (persisting in a moral task, having courage, overcoming fatigue and temptations, and implementing routines and subroutines that serve a moral goal) (p. 101)

The second component, moral judgment, is the focus of this study and involves an individual making a moral judgment about a given dilemma, determining an appropriate course of action, and reflecting on the reasons behind that judgment (Rest et al, 1986). The Defining Issues Test, used as the measurement instrument in this study, was developed by Rest as an instrument by which the moral judgment construct is measured.

While Rest's neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral development retained some of the basic theoretical premises of Kohlberg, it also departed in at least three significant ways: 1) Developmental Schemas Rather than Stages, and 2) Tacit Knowledge (recognition) Rather than Explicit, Articulated Knowledge (production), and 3) Common Morality rather than Universal, Abstract Morality.

Developmental Schemas Rather than Stages

The neo-Kohlbergian framework describes moral development processes in terms of thought *schemas*, rather than Kohlberg's *stages*. Narvaez and Bock (2002) define moral schemas as mental models used for cognitive processing about moral dilemmas. The notion of schemas has been prominent in cognitive psychology research for many years. Piaget (1970) described schemas as cognitive structures that organize one's operational activities, and others describe them as sets of expectations, hypotheses and concepts that are formed over time as the individual notices similarities and patterns in the world, has recurrent experiences, and, on that basis, constructs a mental architecture through which they interpret experience and make judgments (Neisser, 1976; Rumelhart, 1980). Schemas operate constantly and are activated when a stimulus organizes or guides the application of prior knowledge to a new situation. As stimuli are sensed, they are filtered through the activated schema (Rock, 1997). One result of schemas is that they decrease the amount of processing that is needed to make sense of our environment (Mandler, 1984). In this sense, schema guidance is expectation-based processing of stimuli, which is only slowed by encounters with unusual stimuli for which there is inadequate mental architecture. Schemas are altered through assimilation of and accommodation to new experience wherein new information is integrated or relations between existing structures is altered (Derry, 1996).

Schemas likely operate in important ways during moral behavior, by inter-relating different stimuli, filling in missing information, guiding attention and directing problem-solving. Moral schemas can be described as general knowledge structures used in social cooperation. Moral schemas are built from experience in social interaction. They are constructed automatically from the brain noticing the elements in the socially relevant

environment that co-vary and the cause-consequence chains that obtain from particular actions (Narvaez & Bock, 2002).

In the neo-Kohlbergian framework, three schematic structures are suggested vis-à-vis moral judgment development. The *Personal Interest Schema* is derived from Kohlberg's Stages 2 and 3. Individuals using this schema, which is central in childhood, analyze what each stakeholder in a moral quandary has to personally gain or lose in the situation. Concern about how others might be affected or what is demanded in terms of social cooperation is not generally considered.

The *Maintaining Norms Schema* is developmentally more advanced toward a socio-centric perspective. "A person employing this schema takes on a society-wide view in considering how people should cooperate generally with those who are not friends, kin or well-known acquaintances. The individual also focuses on the need for laws and what duties s/he has toward other members of society" (Lies et al, p. 190). For the Maintaining Norms Schema, maintaining the established social order defines how one thinks about macro-moral issues, where "law" is connected to "order" in the moral domain.

The *Post-conventional Schema* operates on considerations of the meaning and essential elements of a fair and just society, which may or may not be at odds with the *status quo* (in the Maintaining Norms sense). Here, moral obligations are to be based on shared ideals that are reciprocal and open to scrutiny; that is, ideals must apply equally to all and be subject to tests of logical consistency, the shared experience of the community, and cohere with accepted social practice as it has evolved (Rest et al, 2000). In addition, post-conventional thought recognizes that while moral criteria (laws, rules, roles, codes, etc.) are primary, their claims are not absolute (as in the Maintaining Norms schema). Moral criteria are seen as conditional, contextually-

situated agreements that can be renegotiated when necessary. Whereas Kohlberg conceived of post-conventional thinking by reference to Kantian/Rawlsian deontological ethics, postconventionality in the neo-Kohlbergian framework is not defined in terms of any single (normative) moral philosophy or principle. “We do not propose a new normative philosophical theory by our highest levels of development (attempting to resolve philosophic disputes), and we are mindful of the unsettled state of moral philosophy at the present time. Our notion of schema is a broader, less partisan definition than Kohlberg’s—and one could also say it is more timid and less exact” (Rest et al, 1999, p. 40).

These three schemas can be viewed as mental models from which cognitive processing about moral dilemmas proceeds. According to the neo-Kohlbergian view, developmental assessment is not a matter of putting an individual into a particular stage, but rather is more about assessing the degree to which a person uses certain kinds of thinking in situations. In this way, development is more fluid than a person being in one stage and then “stepping up” into the next highest stage. Development, rather, is a matter of shifting distributions of schema use; or, using “lower” schemas with less frequency and “higher” stages with more frequency (Narvaez & Bock, 2002; Siegler, 1997).

Tacit Knowledge (recognition) Rather than Explicit, Articulated Knowledge (production)

As previously noted, Kohlberg used the interview as his form of data collection. Participants were presented with several moral dilemmas, asked to resolve the dilemmas, and then were asked to verbally describe (or “produce”) the reasoning behind the resolutions they chose. Critics, and Kohlberg himself, noted that few people short of those trained in moral philosophy were able to articulate evidence that they reasoned in a postconventional manner. By requiring verbal fluency about inner processes of moral judgment, Kohlberg in effect

constrained cognition by only crediting (in terms of how he coded responses) people for thoughts and behavior that they could explain to the satisfaction of a researcher. Neo-Kohlbergians believe this is the primary reason why there was so little evidence for Stages 5 and 6 in Kohlberg's data.

From the neo-Kohlbergian perspective, it is not valid to assume that reliable information about the inner processes of moral thought and behavior is only obtained by asking someone to explain their thinking. For this reason, recognition measures are preferable to production measures when it comes to measuring moral judgment and reasoning. Recognition tasks are methodologically "cleaner" and offer more control of the testing situation. The use of discrete items to which the participant responds clarifies the task for the participant and provides a unit of analysis for each item (Rest, Thoma, & Edwards, 1997).

Rest and colleagues (2000) point to the research of Nisbett and Wilson (1977), Uleman and Bargh (1989), and Gazziniga et al (1998) to make the case that mental operations are notoriously elusive to the self, and, as such, are not the most reliable means of cognitive assessment. Gazzaniga notes:

A vast amount of research in cognitive science clearly shows we are conscious only of the content of our mental life, not what generates the content. It is the products of mnemonic processing, of perceptual processing, of imaging, that we are aware of—not what produced the products. Sometimes people report on what they think were the processes, but they are reporting after the fact on what they thought they did to produce the content of their consciousness (1998, p. 532).

Common Morality Rather than Universal, Abstract Morality

Kohlberg was philosophically committed to the existence of a rationally-grounded, culturally-neutral, moral principle (or small set of principles) that could be applied by all people when confronted with moral dilemmas. The universal applicability of this principle, he believed, demonstrated that moral and ethical relativism could be defeated at the highest stages (5 and 6) of development. This Foundational Principle—in the form of the greatest good for the greatest number, or Kant’s Categorical Imperative, for instance—could be used as a key to deductively solving all moral problems. The notion of a foundational moral principle is a “top-down” approach to moral functioning, wherein an abstract moral principle(s) is applied to specific cases. In this view, the task of the moral educator is to understand the principle(s) and then enable and empower people to use the principle in their daily lives.

Rest and colleagues see this issue differently. They cite the moral and ethical theory of Toulmin (1981), Walzer (1983), and Beauchamp and Childress (1994) as a more accurate assessment of how morality actually emerges in human communities. In their view of “common morality,” notions of the right emerge from the specific experiences of the community dealing with specific challenging cases. Walzer (1983) traces the growth of common morality in different historical communities noting how those communities worked to provide services and meet needs for different groups in the community, conceptualized and developed different organizational apparatuses to deal with problems and disputes, and imagined and reimagined social practices based on evolving needs and circumstances.

The neo-Kohlbergian view is that morality emerges *inductively* as a community enterprise, relative to context, situation, and circumstance. In this view, moral knowledge and action is socially constructed; that is, it emerges from the “bottom up.” This is a significant

theoretical departure from Kohlberg. Rest and colleagues address this distinction in the following way:

Morality that is relative to group deliberation is not tantamount to the mindless moral relativism or moral skepticism that Kohlberg feared, nor does it pave the way to Nazi atrocities. Common morality might be different for different communities (and therefore relative), but the common morality is debated and scrutinized by members of the community and reflects an equilibrium between the ideals and the moral intuitions of the community (Rest et al, 2000).

Rest and colleagues do not define postconventional schema (Kohlberg's Stage 5 and 6) by reference to Kantian or Rawlsian moral philosophies, as Kohlberg tends to do. While the principles of Rawls would certainly qualify as an example of postconventional moral thought, they do not comprise the entire domain of postconventional thought. The neo-Kohlbergian use of schema rather than stage theory is itself an attempt to move away from Kohlberg's more prescriptive, normative, and "hard" approach to moral development. Rest sought to "open up" the postconventional schema to include any number of moral philosophies. The defining characteristic of the postconventional schema in the neo-Kohlbergian view is the broad understanding that rights and duties are based on sharable ideals for organizing cooperation in society, and are open to debate and tests of logical consistency, the experience of people in the community, and generally cohere with accepted social practice (Rest et al, 1999). Theoretically, one could arrive at this place of moral understanding via a virtue-based approach, through deontological ethics, religious ideals, feminist theory, or any number of frameworks. Each of these approaches emerged in particular contexts within history and found themselves holding common ideals and intuitions about the human community and social cooperation. They did not

deduce what is right from a pre-given, universal principle; rather, they worked themselves up toward a vision of right thought and action based on shared experience.

Moral Judgment Research on College Students

A significant amount of moral development research has focused on college students for at least three reasons. 1) “Emerging adulthood” (18-22 years of age) is a time of significant transitions, many of which have moral implications (Smith, 2011). This time is often accompanied by a willingness to examine the moral dimensions of their lives in preparation for new roles within society. 2) As noted earlier in this study, most American colleges and universities embrace a mission that includes fostering the moral development of students (such as ethical leadership, service to the world, global citizenship, etc.). In addition, almost all colleges encourage and/or require students to participate in community service and service-learning projects, which have a moral dimension (Colby et al, 2003). 3) Students who graduate from colleges go into workplaces, settings, and communities where they make difficult decisions that affect the lives of others in an increasingly interconnected world. As such, the impact and effectiveness of colleges and universities in fostering moral development and preparing students for social roles takes on an added dimension of importance.

Early research into moral judgment development within higher education sought to establish a relationship between the development of moral judgment and reasoning and participation in higher education. In other words, early research explored the question, “Is there a link between attending college and growth or development in moral judgment and reasoning?” The term *development*, here, is synonymous with movement toward a greater preference for post-conventional thinking. Many studies conducted in the 1980’s and 90’s with the DIT demonstrated that intentionally or unintentionally, moral development *is* a predictable outcome

of the college experience (Rest et al, 1974; Rest, 1979, 1986; Whiteley, 1982; Hood, 1984; Kitchener et al, 1984; King et al, 1984; Rest & Thoma, 1985; Shaver, 1985; Gfellner, 1986; Jeffrey, 1993; King & Kitchener, 1994; Quarry, 1997; Foster & LaForce, 1999; Cummings et al, 2001).

While moral judgment development may, from these scores, appear to simply be an issue of age and natural maturation, research has shown that formal education is the most consistent and powerful correlate of moral judgment development (Rest & Thoma, 1985; Rest et al, 1999). Rest and Thoma (1985) tracked the course of moral development in a group of participants for six years after graduating high school. Some attended college and others did not. For those attending college, DIT scores increased while scores for those who did not were stable. After regrouping participants into “low-education” (attended less than two years of college) and “high-education” (more than two years of college), results indicated that while both groups showed increases in postconventional (P) scores, the rate of growth was higher for those who attended college longer (Rest & Thoma, 1985).

A number of explanations have been offered as to why moral judgment development accelerates among college students. Maeda, Thoma, and Babeau (2009) suggest that institutional encouragement to explore and a generalized openness to change associated with the college years could account for development. This suggestion is supported by the research of Good and Cartwright (1998) who found that students from conservative, religiously-affiliated schools where exploration was discouraged or at least tempered, did not demonstrate freshman-to-senior gains in moral judgment development. Others have suggested that moral development accelerates among college students because of the influence of the curriculum—the formal classroom curriculum (where ethical/moral discussions might occur), the co-curricular offerings

within student affairs initiatives and programs, and the informal curriculum of the general social milieu (see Derryberry & Thoma, 2000). Still others have suggested that the acceleration of growth is due to general maturation and/or the fact that educational environments tend to select individuals who are interested in ideas or exploring values (Maeda, Thoma, and Babeau, 2009).

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), in an exhaustive review of moral development research in the 1990's, noted the following in considering the effect of college on moral development:

The weight of evidence indicated that the college experience itself has a unique positive influence on increases in principled moral reasoning. This influence appeared to be substantially greater in magnitude than that due merely to maturation and could not be attributed solely to initial differences in moral reasoning, intelligence, or social status between those who attend and those who do not attend college...the evidence suggesting a net positive influence of college on the development of principled moral reasoning is consistent with more broadly based findings on the effects of college on values. These findings, from an extensive series of national samples, suggested that college attendance is associated with a humanizing of values and attitudes concerning the rights and welfare of others (p. 347-348).

Given the strong evidence of a link between educational environments and moral growth, research has shifted in recent years to additional factors in the college environment—demographic characteristics of students, educational contexts, and curricular and co-curricular interventions, among others—in an attempt to better understand particular factors in the college experience that lead to growth. The two sections below explore some of this research, which is gathered under two headings: 1) Student Characteristics and Moral Judgment Development, and 2) Contexts, Interventions, and Experiences that Lead to Moral Judgment Development. The

present study examines variables from both sets of research insofar as it examines the effect of a particular collegiate intervention (a cohort-based fraternity experience) on a particular student demographic (men in their first year of college).

Student Characteristics and Moral Judgment Development

Significant data exists relative to gender and moral judgment development, as gender is a basic demographic category tracked by the Defining Issues Test. Rest et al., in their extensive discussion of post-conventional moral thinking (1999) point out that Gilligan's writings on moral development stimulated many studies on gender differences in moral development, and note that while the DIT was assumed to carry a Kohlbergian bias toward "justice" rather than "care," females regularly had slightly higher moral judgment scores than males on a supposedly justice-oriented instrument. This finding has served to call into question claims of gender bias in Kohlbergian approaches to moral development, insofar as it challenges the notion that justice concerns tend to be largely a male-oriented consideration (Brabeck, 1983, Walker, 2006).

In an early examination of gender differences in the DIT, Thoma (1986) examined 56 DIT studies including more than 6,000 participants and found that while scores of women were generally higher, they were only marginally so. Mayhew et al (2012) note that of the nearly fifty studies they examined investigating the relationship between gender and moral reasoning, the majority revealed that undergraduate women reported higher moral reasoning scores than undergraduate men. While most studies verify this finding, some have shown virtually no difference in moral judgment scores among college men and women (Bonawitz, 2002; Cohen, 1982; Cummings et al, 2001; Murk & Addleman, 1992; Thoma, 1994). Bebeau (2002) notes that gender differences regarding preference for postconventional thinking have been observed in

medicine, veterinary medicine, and law, and that the magnitude of gender difference is greater vis-à-vis professional school graduate students than among nonprofessional graduate students.

DIT research also exists using political and religious identification of students as variables. To the extent that post-conventional thinking is a measure of notions of social cooperation and justice, some DIT research has sought to identify the connection between self-described political orientation and moral judgment scores. In the demographic section of the DIT, participants are asked to rate themselves on a five-point Likert scale, somewhere between very liberal and very conservative. Research indicates that politically liberal orientations tend to exhibit higher post-conventional scores (Barnett, Evans, and Rest, 1995; Elmer, Palmer-Canton, and St. James, 1997; Fisher & Sweeney, 1998; Narvaez et al, 1999; Rest et al, 1999). Rest et al (1999) address the criticism of Emler and associates (1983) that the DIT is essentially a measure of political attitudes by arguing that political identity and moral judgment, while possibly related, are nevertheless independent constructs. Crowson, DeBacker, and Thoma (2007) view the relationship between political orientation and moral judgment as the result of different conceptualizations of social cooperation. See Rest et al (1999) for an extended discussion of the theoretical relationship between moral judgment and political orientation.

Research examining the relationship between religious orientation and moral judgment development indicates that students with theologically liberal religious orientations were more likely to use post-conventional moral reasoning than were students from more conservative religious backgrounds (Clouse, 1985; Foster & LaForce, 1999; Stepp, 2002). These studies utilized self-reported Likert scale indicators (conservative to liberal and stages in between) to assess religious orientation. This study included a five-point Likert scale to factor religious orientation, but did so differently: students were asked to indicate the relative importance of

religious faith in their daily life and decision-making (from Very Important to Unimportant).

King and Mayhew (2004) note that a number of studies have used other means for assessing the religious orientations of students—church attendance, religious training, religious and denominational affiliation, for instance—but little evidence suggests that any of these indices has a significant correlation with moral judgment scores.

College Contexts, Interventions, and Experiences that Lead to Moral Judgment

Development

As noted earlier in this study, moral and ethical development has been a central purpose of American higher education from its beginnings, and college mission statements in our time continue to reflect a commitment to developing the moral dimension of students' lives. Within such a commitment is the embedded assumption that colleges and universities are capable of addressing moral and ethical issues, and capable of providing opportunities and experiences that will assist students in developing their moral capacities. Institutional type is a fairly common research variable within higher education research generally (King and Mayhew, 2004). Several studies point to liberal arts colleges as having the institutional milieu most conducive to producing a large effect (that is, fostering growth) in moral judgment scores of students (Good and Cartwright, 1998; McNeel, 1994; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Shaver, 1985, 1987). McNeel's study (1994) utilized a diverse 12-institution set to analyze student gains in moral judgment and reasoning (as measured by DIT) over a first year-to-senior year period. The largest gains were among private, liberal arts colleges (several of whom were religiously-affiliated). Large, public universities registered more modest but still substantial student growth, while the smallest gains were made by students at Bible colleges. As to the possible reasons for the effect of liberal arts colleges on moral development, King and Mayhew note:

Obtained institutional differences may be the result of factors such as student self-selection (whether those who are more open to thinking about moral dilemmas are inclined to select a liberal arts college), access to opportunities for direct involvement, smaller classes with more discussion of societal issues or the role of values in students' lives, opportunities to practice reasoning about moral issues, or a liberal arts curriculum that stresses examining many issues from multiple perspectives (2004, p. 396).

The Defining Issues Test has been used in numerous studies to investigate the effects of educational experiences designed—at least in part—to foster student growth in moral judgment and reasoning. With few exceptions, a variety of courses and programmatic interventions were shown to produce at least modest gains in moral development—general education courses (Mustapha & Seybert, 1990), ethics courses and/or courses that contained a significant ethical decision-making component (Armstrong, 1993; Boss, 1994; Sullivan, 2011), social diversity courses intended to foster intercultural competence (Adams & Zhou-McGovern, 1994; Gurin et al, 2002; Katz, 2001), and community service/service learning programs (Boss, 1994; Gorman et al, 1994; Mayhew & King, 2008; Lies et al, 2012).

Mustapha and Seybert (1990) measured moral judgment development among students who participated in two different approaches to undergraduate general education, one of which featured an integrated, multidisciplinary six-course, six-semester sequence while the other approach provided liberal arts studies through separate departmental courses. Both groups had growth in scores, but the former approach, which featured dilemma discussion, Socratic inquiry, and active learning participation, produced remarkable results—students had a significant advantage in post-conventional thought preference over their peers in the traditional curriculum of about .50 standard deviation (Mustapha & Seybert, 1990). Sullivan (2011) found that first-

year undergraduate business students had a statistically significant growth in moral judgment from having participated in a business ethics course. Adams and Zhou-McGovern (1994) evaluated a course that focused on racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and disability oppression, and found that moral judgment scores increased significantly.

Courses with service-learning components have been shown to increase student moral judgment scores at a rate higher than for those courses where the content is the same with the exception of the service-learning component. Boss (1994) examined two sections of an ethics course, where one section contained service-learning. Even after controlling for class size and instructor, among other variables, students who participated in the service-learning section of the course still had significantly larger gains in post-conventional reasoning scores. Gorman et al conducted a similar study and found similar results (1994).

James Lies and colleagues (2012) examined the effects of an off-campus service-learning program on the moral judgment development of 76 students who participated in an eight-week summer service project. Guided reflection on the project continued into the following fall semester. A comparison group of 68 students did not participate in service-learning. The Defining Issues Test was administered as a pre/post test measurement to determine the efficacy of the summer service-learning intervention. Findings revealed no real difference in pre-test moral judgment scores, but the service-learning group had statistically significant higher moral judgment scores than the comparison group. Similar to a study by Mayhew and King (2008), Lies et al found no *selection effect*, wherein students with higher moral reasoning scores were more likely to opt in to a service-learning experience. They did, however, like Mayhew and King (2008), Boss (1994), and Gorman et al (1994), find an *accentuation effect*, with students improving their moral judgment post-test scores.

Male Judgment and Behavior in College

Surprisingly little research exists on the moral judgment of college men, as measured by the Defining Issues Test. As noted, the moral judgment scores of men and women have frequently been compared, but little exists that focuses exclusively on the moral judgment scores and growth rates of men. However, this may be changing thanks to an increasing focus on the issues and troubles of college men. Despite a clear history of privilege and success in higher education, troubling trends are emerging in regard to college men's recruitment, retention, and academic success (Kellom, 2004; Sax, 2008).

A review of the recent literature on college men reveals a sobering assessment of their judgment and behavior. Student development scholars and practitioners have identified numerous problematic trends in male behavior on college campus. More than 90% of all acts of violence, sexual assaults, and sexual harassment are committed by male students (Foubert, Newberry, & Tatum, 2007; Harris & Struve, 2009), and the vast majority of students who are cited for non-academic violations of campus judicial policies are males (Harper, Harris, & Mmeje, 2005). Edwards and Jones (2009) argue that many of these behaviors are the result of, or at least exacerbated by, the "performance of masculinity," wherein college men intentionally live into restrictive identities of stereotypical masculinity that including "...drinking to excess, doing drugs, having meaningless or competitive heterosexual sex with many women, not studying or pretending not to study or care about academics, and breaking the rules" (p. 216). In response, Davis and Laker (2004) call on student affairs professionals and educators generally to take more of an interest in the well-being and development of men, particularly when it comes to the types of interventions or social contexts that encourage pro-social values among the male student population.

The widening gender gap in college is also an area of focus for those doing research on the male experience in college (Harris, 2010; Sax, 2008). Sax, in a longitudinal quantitative study, noted that college men, when compared to college women, spent far more time watching television, playing video games, consuming alcohol, and partying. In a report sponsored by the American Council on Education, King (2006) noted that in the years 2003-2004 men comprised only 42 percent of the total undergraduate population in the United States. Beyond that number, the gap widens when these data are disaggregated by race/ethnicity. Among African-Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic students, the percentage of enrolled males ranges between 36-41 percent (KewalRamani et al, 2007).

Given these statistics and trends, the present study of college men takes on added importance. It seeks to understand what makes for effective interventions with men when it comes to growth in moral judgment and reasoning. Two cohorts of men are tracked for growth trends as a result of participating in a common rite of passage for many college men, the new member/pledgeship process of joining a fraternity. The question is whether the cohort who experiences the purportedly more intentional, character-building intervention demonstrates moral judgment growth at a greater rate than the other cohort of fraternity men.

Men, Fraternities, and Moral Judgment Development

Somewhat surprisingly, given their controversial presence on campuses, relatively few studies have been conducted on the effects of fraternity and sorority membership on moral judgment and reasoning. Martin et al (2011) used a longitudinal, national data set from 11 institutions to explore the ways in which fraternity and sorority members compare to their unaffiliated peers during the first year of college on 5 outcomes, one of which was moral

reasoning. DIT-2 scores were used to gather data. Results indicated that membership in a fraternity or sorority does not have a significant influence on students' growth.

Similarly, other studies have concluded that membership in Greek organizations does little, if anything, to enhance moral judgment and reasoning (Baier & Whipple, 1990; Cohen, 1982; Derryberry & Thoma, 2000; Kilgannon & Erwin, 1992; Marlowe & Auvenshine, 1982; Martin et al, 2011; Tripp, 1997). Using the DIT, Kilgannon and Erwin (1992) found that sorority women had lower post-conventional moral judgment scores than unaffiliated women after 2 years in the sorority; during the same period, they found that fraternity men scored slightly lower than their unaffiliated peers. *Vis-à-vis* men, Kilgannon and Erwin suggest that the membership effect of opting into a group of demographically similar peers may well, over time, have a restricting effect on beliefs and decision-making. The findings of Kilgannon and Erwin were extended by Pike (2006) who, in a study of college men, concluded that the lower moral judgment scores of fraternity men resulted in part from the value placed by members on conformity and dependability. This finding suggests that the emphasis on conformity slowed the movement of men from conventional to post-conventional thinking. McCreary (2012) produced similar findings in a study of hazing attitudes and moral judgment scores. He found that fraternity men scored lower in post-conventional thought than unaffiliated peers, and that there was a link between moral judgment and unwillingness to intervene in a fraternity hazing scenario.

In one study conducted more than twenty years ago, Sanders (1990) used the DIT with two groups of male students (fraternity men and independents) in their first semester of study. Independents scored higher than fraternity members on both the pre- and post-test, though she noted that the use of post-conventional thought was remarkably low for both groups. Sanders

suggests that fraternities may attract students with a preference for conventional thinking as opposed to more independent-minded unaffiliated students, noting that “a more compliant, socially oriented person may be more likely to go through the pledge period than would a very independent person” (p. 8). This is one reason the present study focuses on the *accentuation effect* of the pledge/new member process on moral judgment development. It is entirely possible that certain types of men self-select into certain types of organizations. This study, therefore, measures rates of growth over time between groups, taking into account possible selection effects in the two groups.

Cohen (1982) tested fraternity and sorority members in positions of leadership in order to determine whether serving in a leadership capacity in such an organization led to moral judgment growth at an increased rate over the average fraternity/sorority member. Cohen found no differences by membership category, noting that all had relatively low mean scores in the post-conventional schema (P score) as compared to national data sample of college students.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the literature and research relevant to the present study. The chapter began with an overview of the cognitive-developmental approach to moral development, featuring Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg’s developmental stage sequence was discussed, followed by a survey of the criticism of Kohlberg’s scheme. James Rest’s neo-Kohlbergian approach to moral development was presented as the theoretical foundation of the instrument used in this study to measure moral judgment and reasoning. An overview of moral judgment research on college students was provided, considering such factors as gender, educational contexts, and various college experiences. Moral judgment research involving

college men was explored, with specific attention given to the fraternity as an experience affecting the moral judgment and reasoning of men.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study increases understanding of what happens to the moral judgment and reasoning of men in their first year of college; specifically, the study examines the relative efficacy of two programmatic interventions for men—one more intentional and thorough than the other—by describing the effects that those interventions had over time on the moral judgment and reasoning capacities of the two groups of men who experienced them. The study offers insight for curricular and co-curricular educators into how men in their first year of college think about and process moral issues, and sheds light on what kinds of interventions are likely—or not likely—to stimulate growth or change in their moral judgment and reasoning capacities.

Research Questions

This study included the following research questions:

1. RQ1—Do the men of Alpha Alpha have higher mean pre-test moral judgment scores compared to the pre-test moral judgment scores of the Beta Beta men?
2. RQ2—Do the men of Alpha Alpha have higher mean post-test moral judgment scores compared to the post-test moral judgment scores of the Beta Beta men?
3. RQ3—For both Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta, what were the rates of growth in moral judgment scores from the time of pre-test to the time of post-test? Do the men of Alpha Alpha have a higher rate of growth than that of Beta Beta after the intervention?
4. RQ4—How do the scores of Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta (both pre- and post-test) compare to national normative scores for male college students?

Research Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental research design. Quasi-experimental designs differ from experimental, or randomized, experiments to the extent that in randomized experiments different treatment conditions are assigned to individuals (or groups, communities, classes, etc.) at random, whereas in quasi-experiments different treatment conditions are not assigned to units at random (Gribbons & Herman, 1997). The participant groups in this study—Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta—were not randomly assigned. Rather, participants self-selected into the treatment and control groups. The present study utilizes a specific kind of quasi-experimental design: the nonequivalent-group design. In this type of quasi-experiment, the different participating groups receive different treatments and the relative effectiveness of the treatment is assessed by comparing the performance of the participants across the different groups (Reichardt, 2009).

Because Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta were not assigned treatment conditions at random, it was possible that the groups differed even before the administration of the treatment. In other words, the presence of a selection effect, or selection bias, was possible and posed a threat to the validity of the design. This threat was present because the observed outcome difference between Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta—assuming one exists—could be due not only to the measured treatment but also to the effects of selection differences in the two populations of men. The researcher sought to minimize this threat by using a pre-test/post-test design to better account for the potentially biasing effects of selection differences. In this study, the pre-test and post-test measure (DIT2) are identical and the dependent variable is change or rate of growth in a particular index (N2 score) over time. Multiple analyses including means, standard deviation, t-tests, and ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) are used to measure growth while trying to take

selection effects into account. Further, the two nonequivalent groups in the study are quite similar in most respects with the exception of the different treatments. Additional information about the instrument and its validity, data collection and analysis, and limitations of the study will be discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The null hypotheses tested to answer the research questions are:

HO₁. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean pre-test moral development scores of the two groups.

HO₂. There is no statistically significant difference in the mean post-test moral development scores of the two groups.

HO₃. There is no statistically significant difference in rates of moral growth over time between the two groups.

HO₄. The pre- and post-test scores (mean N2) of the two groups are not different in a statistically significant way than normative national scores for male college students.

Context and Participants

This study was administered to male undergraduates in their first year of study at a mid-size, private, religiously-affiliated university in the southwestern United States. The university has 9,725 students of which 86.9% are undergraduates. Among undergraduates, 59% are female and 41% are male. The university has a Basic Carnegie Classification of *Doctoral/Research University*. 73.3% of students at the university are White/Caucasian, 9.9% are Hispanic/Latino, 5.2% are non-resident international students, 5.0% are African-American, and the remaining small percentage (6.6) of students are of Asian, multi-ethnic, unknown, Native American, or Pacific Islander descent. 47% of the undergraduate population is associated with a fraternity or sorority.

The study participants were all 18- or 19-year-old male students in their first year of college. The men were members of two fraternities, Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta. Each group of men comprised the new member/pledge class of Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta. 68 men participated in the study at some stage of the process, with 40 as members of Alpha Alpha and 28 as members of Beta Beta. Of these participants, a total of 52 provided usable data (n = 35 for AA, n = 17 for BB). All members of the new member/pledge class of each group volunteered to participate in the study.

Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta are both members of the local Interfraternity Council (IFC), the governing body of eleven fraternities on campus. While race is not a significant variable in this study, it is notable that both fraternities are more than 100 years old, and stand in a historic tradition of national social fraternities that are primarily, though not exclusively, white/Caucasian in their demographic makeup.

Participation in this study was voluntary and consisted of completing the Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT2) twice as a pre-and post-test measure. The researcher used the DIT2 to investigate whether the men of Alpha Alpha (the treatment group) had higher moral judgment growth rates than the men of Beta Beta (the control group) as a result of participating in Alpha Alpha's non-traditional, no-pledging, character-building approach to fraternal membership. While Beta Beta also had a programmatic intervention for new members, theirs was typical of traditional fraternity pledgship.

This study investigates whether a cohort of first-year college men who participate in a non-traditional, character-driven approach to fraternity membership demonstrate a greater rate of moral judgment growth (per Rest's *Defining Issues Test*) than a similar cohort of men who

participate in a traditional approach to fraternity membership. The distinct treatments or interventions measured in this study are described below.

The Pledging/New Member Intervention of Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta

In the late 1980's, in response growing concerns about substance abuse, poor retention of members, declining academic performance, and increasing issues with risk management and hazing, the national governing body of Alpha Alpha initiated a three-year process that would eventually produce the *Whole Man Initiative*, a holistic, developmental, four-year approach to fraternity membership. The elements of the Whole Man Initiative were drawn from best practices shared by the most successful Alpha Alpha chapters in colleges and universities across the country. "The membership experience at these chapters shared several commonalities: equal rights and responsibilities for all brothers, continuous development, accountability, deep appreciation for the Ritual, and consistent mentoring" (Balanced Man Program Guide, 2012, p. 3) Dartmouth College's chapter piloted the Initiative, and within one year saw improved recruitment, retention, and academic performance among its members. The chapter reported the virtual elimination of hazing incidents, and placed its emphasis on leadership and service-learning. The federal government's *Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education* granted national Alpha Alpha \$450,000 to implement the program nationally based on the success of the Dartmouth pilot program. By the end of 1999, over 150 chapters across the nation adopted the Whole Man Initiative as their approach to membership. A majority of Alpha Alpha chapters nation-wide have adopted the Whole Man Initiative, including the chapter participating in this study.

Alpha Alpha's *Whole Man Initiative* (WMI) rests on five philosophical tenets, outlined below. Aspects of implementation are also included with each tenet.

1. Equal Rights and Responsibilities: This tenet signifies that all Alpha Alpha members are brothers from the time they are issued an invitation to join the fraternity. In turn, all members are expected to contribute to the well-being of the group immediately. There are no membership tiers in Alpha Alpha. This philosophy is implemented through a no-pledging, immediate-membership policy.
2. Continuous Development: This tenet signifies a commitment to personal growth over a period of four years. In Alpha Alpha, development opportunities begin at the time of new membership and extend throughout the four year experience. Alpha Alpha believes a four year developmental commitment raises retention, distinguishes Alpha Alpha among other fraternities, and ensures graduates are better prepared for life post-college. Developmental opportunities occur throughout the four-year period via four self-paced “challenges,” each of which aims to fulfill a specific purpose with respect to a brother’s needs. *Challenge One* occurs during the period of this study and intends to educate new members about the chapter’s values and history, educate them in the Whole Man Initiative philosophy, and help them adjust and acclimate to campus and the community alongside a mentor. *Challenge One* consists of events, discussions, presentations, and activities that educate brothers about national and local chapter structure, Ritual and values, leadership development, relationships with brothers, time and stress management, campus resources, faculty relationships, study skills, physical and emotional well-being, and personal and professional development, among others.
3. Accountability: This tenet addresses Alpha Alpha’s commitment to help its members improve themselves, their chapter, their campus, and their community. Members are

- challenged to assume a “lifelong habit of responsibility,” and if it is determined that a member is not progressing through the development experience, then a standards board may reconsider his membership within the chapter. The chapter sets clear expectations for challenge timeframes and requirements, provides updates to members on their progress, and emphasizes challenge and support as members work toward completing their challenges.
4. Living the Ritual: Alpha Alpha’s Ritual is an event performed on certain occasions by member brothers, but is understood as most effective when it is lived, and when its core messages of *virtue*, *diligence*, and *brotherly love* are enacted in the lives of members. Two intended outcomes of this tenet are germane to the present study—1) members develop a moral compass for the rest of their lives, and 2) the chapter challenges negative stereotypes associated with fraternities by demonstrating values-based decision-making. The rites of passage contained within the Ritual are intended to help members reflect upon the meaning of the core values of Alpha Alpha and their experience within group.
 5. Mentoring: Alpha Alpha assumes that college men need support and guidance in order to maximize their personal growth. In their view, positive friendships and relationships with other men contribute to development. To this end, mentor relationships are established between all brothers from the time of acceptance into the fraternity. New members, the focus of this study, are assigned to a brother within a week of joining Alpha Alpha and remain in place throughout “Challenge One” in the new member period.

Beta Beta does not have a four-year, developmental approach to character development that is similar to Alpha Alpha's *Whole Man Initiative*, whether at the national or local level. Founded nearly 150 years ago, Beta Beta claims to be the most preferred fraternity in the world. At the heart of Beta Beta lies its Four Pillars—Fellowship, Leadership, Scholarship, and Service (“The Four Pillars,” 2012). The Pillars serve as the values of the fraternity, and the fraternity seeks to embed these values in their three primary programmatic initiatives: the Member Recruitment Initiative, the Pledge Education Initiative, and the Community Service Initiative. The primary concern of this study is the second initiative, Pledge Education. The Four Pillars serve to orient the pledge education period, which roughly corresponds to a brother's first semester in Beta Beta. Once a bid has been given and accepted to join Beta Beta, the man enters a period of pledgeship within a tiered-membership system. If the man completes the probationary period to the satisfaction of the members, he is granted full membership.

Beta Beta's pledge education approach draws on the Four Pillars noted above, and has four parts or “chapters,” according to a document provided by local Beta Beta's pledge education coordinator. The document is specific to the pledge education approach adopted by the local Beta Beta chapter. While national Beta Beta provides the structure of the Four Pillars as foundational values, each local chapter decides how best to communicate the meaning of those values.

Part 1—The Fellowship Chapter: The focus of this portion of pledge education is to communicate the privilege of being in Beta Beta, share the history of the fraternity, and create bonds among the new brothers.

Part 2—The Leadership Chapter: This portion of the pledge process emphasizes the importance of developing a strong work ethic, particularly when it comes to one's school work.

This chapter also provides examples of past Kappa Sigma members who exemplified honorable leadership and diligence.

Part 3—The Scholarship Chapter: This chapter of the pledge process teaches brothers about the importance of personal accountability and taking responsibility for one's education. Strategies for academic success are incorporated into this chapter.

Part 4—The Service Chapter: This chapter focuses on the importance of making a lifelong commitment to serving Beta Beta and the community. A desired outcome of this portion of the pledge education process is for brothers to "...develop morally and mentally from the beginning of the Pledge Education Program. They are expected to act like men and carry on the tradition of excellence within [Beta Beta]" (K. Lauck, personal communication, December 12, 2012).

During the pledge education period, the brothers meet weekly to discuss issues related to the four chapters above. Within each chapter, brothers are encouraged to set specific goals related to the Pillar, and to create an action plan for reaching that goal. During the semester this study was conducted, Beta Beta also incorporated an additional weekly meeting into its pledge education process wherein a facilitator from outside the fraternity talked to the brothers about "leadership development." The facilitator was from a religiously conservative Christian organization that specializes in leadership and spiritual growth of college men. The following characteristics were topics of conversation during these meetings: Vision, Character, Commitment, Time Stewardship, and Magnetism (Charisma).

Premise and Structure of the Research Instrument

This study utilizes the DIT2 as a measure of moral judgment and reasoning. James Rest designed the original version of the instrument in 1979 at the University of Minnesota. Heavily

influenced by Kohlberg's six-stage moral development scheme, Rest developed the original Defining Issues Test as a quantitative, paper-and-pencil assessment of how adolescents and adults come to understand and interpret moral issues. "Like Kohlberg, Rest viewed moral judgment as a social and cognitive construct that followed a developmental progression from a narrow self-focused interpretation of moral issues, through an understanding of the broader social world and associated group-based claims on moral decisions, to a reliance on postconventional moral principles (Thoma, 2006, p. 67)." Rest (1986) described the basis of Defining Issues Test in the following way:

The DIT is based on the premise that people at different points of development interpret moral dilemmas differently, define the critical issues of the dilemma differently, and have different intuitions about what is right and fair in a situation. Differences in the way that dilemmas are defined therefore are taken as indications of their underlying tendencies to organize social experience. These underlying structures of meaning are not necessarily apparent to a subject as articulate rule systems of verbalizable philosophies—rather, they may work "behind the scenes" and may seem to a subject as just commonsensical and intuitively obvious (p. 196).

Unlike Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Inventory which coded participants' open-ended verbal responses to hypothetical moral dilemmas, the Defining Issues Test invites participants to decide for or against a certain action based on a hypothetical moral dilemma and then to rate a series of 12 possible items (on a 5-point scale of importance) that might be considered when making up one's mind about the dilemma. After rating the 12 items, the participant is then asked to rank four of the items (Most Important, 2nd Most Important, 3rd Most Important, etc.) that best represent their understanding about what the protagonist in the dilemma should consider

in order to reach a decision. The items of the DIT are “fragments of lines of reasoning; the items are not complete orations arguing for one course of action or another. The items balance “bottom-up” processing (stating just enough of a line of argument for understanding) with “top-down” processing (stating not too much of a line of argument so that the participant has to “fill in” the meaning from schemas already in long-term memory)” (Rest et al, 2000, p. 389).

The Test contains five dilemmas, with the same rating and ranking process for each dilemma. The four ranked items deemed most important by the participant are used to determine which of three moral schemas the participant prefers to use when making judgments about moral dilemmas—the Personal Interest schema, the Maintaining Norms schema, or the Post-conventional schema. As the participant encounters an issue statement that makes sense and activates a preferred schema, the participant gives that item a high rating and will rank it as important in reaching a conclusion. Items that seem unconvincing or simplistic are given a low rating and ranking. The pattern of a participant’s ratings and rankings gives an estimate of the relative strength of the three schemas used by the participant. Responses are aggregated into index scores (in terms of a percentage) for each of the three schemas. The two most widely researched index scores are the P Score and the N2 Score (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003).

The DIT2 was developed in an attempt to update the hypothetical moral dilemmas and subsequent rating/ranking items used in the original Defining Issues Test. The original instrument had dilemmas that focused on issues that were no longer current by the late 1990’s, such as protesting the Vietnam War.

“Unlike the original DIT, which had its roots in the Kohlberg interview system, the DIT2 was written to mirror the basic features of the DIT shifting only the content of the stories and items. Thus, the stories all presented the same dilemma with a different context. For

example, in place of Heinz and the Drug, the equivalent DIT2 story asks whether a poor farmer should break into a rich store owner's food warehouse to feed his starving family" (Thoma, 2006, p. 77).

The DIT is the most widely used quantitative instrument within research on moral judgment. Since its inception, the DIT has been utilized in well over 500 published studies in an attempt to measure and understand the development of moral judgment (King & Mayhew, 2002). Of the more than 500 studies performed, 172 of them focused explicitly on some aspect of the moral judgment development of college students.

Scoring the Instrument

Ratings and rankings of the 12 items noted above are used to derive a participant's score. Historically, the most widely researched score is the P Score, which reflects the relative importance that respondents give to items that reflect postconventional moral reasoning. The P Score is computed by adding a participant's postconventional responses, and then weighting these ranks in order to calculate a score (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003; Rest et al., 1997). As noted, each of the 5 dilemmas in the DIT2 has 12 items to rate and rank based on moral justifications the participant finds compelling when considering how to respond to the given dilemma. A copy of the DIT2 can be found in the Appendix.

The P score is an index that reflects how often a participant ranks postconventional items within their top 4. The P Score is determined in the following way: if a participant ranked a postconventional item as "most important," then the P Score would be increased by four points; if an item is ranked as "second most important" the P Score is increased by three points; ranking an item as "third most important" increases the P Score by two point; and ranking an item "fourth most important" increases the P Score by one point. Each of the five dilemmas carries a

maximum of ten possible points (4+3+2+1) toward the P Score, with a maximum base score of 50. This score is the “raw” P Score. The raw score is then converted to a percentage, with a base of 100. For example, a participant with a raw score of 25 would be converted to a P Score of 50 (representing 50%). The P Score is interpreted as the degree to which a participant identifies and ranks postconventional items as important.

While DIT researchers sought to find a more reliable measure for quantifying moral judgment, the P Score consistently offered more reliable trends than other measures, and was relatively easy to compute and interpret (Rest et al., 1997). The score has, however, been subject to criticism based on the fact that it is calculated using only the rankings of the 12 items and essentially discards or doesn't take into account how the participant rates each of the 12 items. In this way, the P Score only *infers* the use of lower stage-based items by the relative use of postconventional items. In other words, the measurement of the P Score does not directly incorporate other available items in the computation of the score (Thoma, 2006). This characteristic of the instrument's primary index of moral development was a concern for many insofar as it essentially threw away useful data. DIT researchers, in response to this criticism, devised many experimental indices but did not find that they provided superior trends when pitted against the traditional P Score. This changed, however, with the identification of the N2 Score.

In recent years the N2 Score has surpassed the P Score as the preferred measure of moral development (King & Mayhew, 2004). The N2 reflects the degree to which Postconventional items are preferred and Personal Interest items are rejected. The participant's P Score is used as the starting point and is then adjusted based on the participant's level of discrimination between postconventional and personal interest items. Higher discrimination between the two items

results in a positive adjustment to the P Score, while a lower level of discrimination results in a downward adjustment of the P Score (Thoma, 2006). The correlation between P and N2 scores is high, ranging from the mid 80s to low 90s (Rest et al, 1997). The N2 score is used as the dependent variable in this study.

Normative data from 2005-2009 for the Defining Issues Test is available from the Center for the Study of Ethical Development at the University of Alabama. Table 3.1 reveals the following normative N2 scores by level of education

TABLE 3.1

Normative DIT2 N2 Scores by Educational Level

Education Level	Mean N2	Std. Deviation	Number
Grade 10-12	31.64	14.33	2,285
Vocational/Tech	27.99	13.72	986
Undergraduate (Year 1)	33.42	15.25	10,319
Undergraduate (Year 4)	36.01	15.42	12,204
Graduate	41.06	15.22	15,496

Validity of the Instrument

In social science research, construct validity is concerned with whether the labels that are applied to the treatment and measurement are theoretically and accurately meaningful (Reichardt, 2009). In the case of the Defining Issues Test, the question of construct validity concerns whether the instrument is in fact a reliable measure of moral development. Using the following six criteria for validity, the DIT has been found to meet the standard of reliability:

1. The DIT is able to differentiate age and education groups by level of moral development. Theoretically, graduate students in political science and moral philosophy should score higher than an undergraduate student unfamiliar with political and ethical theory. Similarly, college students should score higher than high school students. Early DIT research put this theory to the test. “The use of naturally occurring groups became a particularly popular study especially in the early years of the DIT. Large composite samples show that 30% to 50% of the variance of DIT scores is attributable to level of education in samples ranging from those with a junior-high education to those with a PhD” (Thoma, 2006).
2. The DIT, as a developmental measure, shows that changes occur in an upward manner. A 10 year longitudinal study (Rest, 1986) revealed significant gains for men and women, college students and those not attending college, and persons from a diverse walks of life. McNeel (1994) reported changes in moral development from college students in their first year until the time they were seniors (n=755). Using the mean difference between the P scores for first year and senior students, divided by the standard deviation for first-year students, McNeel showed an average effect size of .80.
3. DIT scores are related to measures of moral comprehension and other cognitive measures. Findings indicate that DIT scores are significantly related to cognitive capacity measures of moral comprehension ($r = .60s$), to recall and reconstruction of postconventional moral argument, and to Kohlberg’s measure of moral judgment, among other cognitive-developmental measures (Rest, 1979; Rest et al., 1999).
4. DIT scores are affected by interventions that seek to stimulate moral development. Rest, Thoma, and Edwards (1997) examined four data sets of intervention studies with a

combined sample size of 516. Each data set showed a statistically significant upward effect in shifting the P Scores of participants. Matched *t*-tests on the individual studies ranged from 3.62 to 9.16, all significant at $p < .001$. Combined *t*-test samples (pre- to post-) was 11.2, with an effect size of .54.

5. DIT scores are linked to prosocial behaviors and to desired decision-making in professional settings. Thoma, Rest, and Barnett (1986) explored links between P Scores and various behavior measures, noting that 32 out of 47 analyses were statistically significant. Rest et al (1999) cite more than 60 published studies relating DIT scores to various measures of behavior and decision-making.
6. A link exists between DIT scores and social and political variables. As noted in Chapter 2, the DIT is a measure of macromorality and as such ought to relate to political attitudes and understanding. A close correlation ($r = .40$ to $.65$) between DIT scores and political attitudes were revealed in multiple studies (Thoma, 2006) and predict “up to two-thirds of the variance of controversial public policy issues,” (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003).

Variables

The dependent variable in this study is the measured change in N2 scores over time (pre-test to post-test). As noted above, the N2 Score is the preferred index measure of moral judgment and reasoning in the Defining Issues Test. In this study, two participating groups of men received different treatments (in the form of two distinct new member/pledgeship education and enculturation processes) and the relative effectiveness of each treatment was assessed by comparing the performance of the participants across the two groups. The independent variables for this study are the treatment (membership in AA or BB), political orientation, and religious motivation. *Political orientation* is a variable taken from demographic information provided by

participants at the end of the DIT2, where participants are asked to describe themselves on a five-point scale from Very Liberal to Very Conservative. *Religious motivation* is a variable added by the researcher to the demographic portion of the DIT2. The researcher asked participants to describe the importance of religious faith in daily life and decision-making, using a five-point scale from Very Important to Unimportant. The researcher was interested in the presence of significant correlations between Religion or Politics and N2 score. Treatment (TRT) as a variable represents group classification—AA or BB. Table 3.2 describes the list of variables in this study.

TABLE 3.2

List of variables by name, type, measurement, and scoring scale

Variable	Indep./Dep.	Level of Measurement	Scale
N2 Score Pre-	Dependent	Interval	Low = more personal interest than post conventional
N2 Score Post-	Dependent	Interval	Low = more personal interest than post conventional
N2 Post minus N2 Pre	Dependent	Interval	Zero = no difference between pre- and post- Negative = scores decreased from pre- to post Positive = scores increased from pre- to post-
Treatment (TRT)	Independent	Nominal	0 = Control Group 1 = Treatment Group
Political	Independent	Ordinal	1-5 low = liberal
Religious	Independent	Ordinal	1-5 low = not important

Data Collection Procedures

This study uses the Defining Issues Test, Version 2 as a pre-test and post-test measure of moral judgment development among two groups of men in their first year of college, both of whom experienced distinct treatments in the form of a new member/pledge experience in a social fraternity. The study uses the DIT2 to measure rates of moral judgment growth over time in an effort to determine the efficacy of the interventions experienced by the treatment group and control group.

Both groups of men were given the pre-test on September 9, 2012. This date was within one week of the men in each cohort being given an invitation to join the fraternity. It was important to administer the pre-test as early as possible, before the formal aspects of the intervention began. For each group, all men taking the instrument were in the room together. In both instances, the researcher arrived toward the end of a group meeting, was introduced by the fraternity president, and then described the study and gave instructions about completing the instrument. All men who took the instrument signed a consent form regarding their participation in the study. In addition, a copy of the Institutional Review Board approval form was made available for participants. Copies of these items are located in the Appendix.

Each participant was given a copy of the DIT2, a scoring sheet, and a pencil. In addition to the basic demographic information requested of each participant at the end of DIT2, the researcher added an additional question regarding the relative importance of religious faith in daily life and decision-making. The majority of men in both groups took 25-30 minutes to complete the DIT2. 5-digit identification numbers were assigned to each scoring sheet in order to track completed instruments and to differentiate scoring sheets for the two groups. Each participant was asked to write the last four digits of their college ID number on the scoring sheet.

The researcher made this request in order to match pre- and post-test scores for each participant, allowing the researcher to track growth rates for each participant over time.

After collection, the answer sheets were temporarily stored in a secure filing cabinet in the researcher's office and then mailed to the *Center for the Study of Ethical Development* (CSED) at the University of Alabama for scoring. The Center produces the DIT2, scores results from research using DIT2, and maintains normative data for DIT2 from across the country and world. Within approximately two weeks of mailing the scoring sheets, the researcher received "raw" data from the Center.

The procedure described above was repeated for the post-test administration of the instrument on January 21 (Beta Beta) and January 23 (Alpha Alpha). Both groups took the instrument while in a large room together in their chapter house on campus. Scoring sheets for both groups were sent to the CSED at the University of Alabama two days after the final tests were given.

Data Analysis

The CSED scored the forms and within approximately two weeks sent an electronic copy of the results to the researcher via email correspondence. A disk of results and the original scoring sheets were returned to the researcher under separate cover and arrived several days later. The data were imported into a SPSS file, merged with demographic data, and analyzed for results. Answer sheets from participants were subjected to reliability checks in order to identify and remove bogus data.

Only those participants who completed the survey at both the pre-and post-test administrations and who met the reliability checks established by the DIT2 were included in the complete analysis of the study. The DIT2 contains reliability checks in order to flag and purge

the tests of participants who give indications that they are providing incomplete or unreliable data. The reliability checks were run on all completed pre-and post-test instruments, and include checks for 1) rate-and-rank consistency to insure subjects are not randomly responding to items, 2) selecting responses based on “high sounding,” but meaningless words rather than words that actually have meaning for a given scenario, 3) the problem of too many missing responses to items, and 4) the participant not differentiating between items or selecting the same answers for all or too many items on more than one scenario (Babeau & Thoma, 2003).

In order to compare AA and BB, independent t-tests were performed for the pre- and post-test N2 scores, as well as for the N2 score changes between the pre- and post-tests. Tests for normality of the N2 scores for both AA and BB were performed to assure that assumptions for the t-test were met. In order to compare the changes in N2 scores from pre- to post-test for AA and BB, while controlling for the selection effects, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was performed to see if there was any significant difference between AA and BB. Thus, the N2 score change (measured by N2 post-test score minus pre-test N2 score) was the dependent variable for the ANCOVA, with group identification/classification (AA or BB) as the independent variable and pre-test N2 score as the covariate. Assumptions for ANCOVA were checked to assure that the N2 score changes for both AA and BB were normally distributed, homogeneity of variance between AA and BB N2 score changes was present, and that there was no significant interaction effect between the independent variable (group classification: AA or BB) and the covariate (pre-test N2 score).

Limitations

This study is limited to two cohorts of demographically similar men who attend a private, religiously-affiliated, medium-sized university in the southwestern United States. As such, the

results of this study will not produce findings that can be seen as normative regarding the moral judgment of college men generally or men who attend private institutions similar to the one studied. Further, this study can only be said to produce findings regarding the development of *moral judgment and reasoning*. It does not address moral action and behavior or what the participants would actually do if faced with a certain moral dilemma.

The two participant samples in this study are almost exclusively white, upper-middle-class males. As noted in a previous section, Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta are members of the Interfraternity Council, which is comprised of fraternities that, while open to diversity, are populated by mostly white males. The demographic limitations of the two populations limit the ability to generalize the findings from Chapter 4 to populations that are more diverse ethnically/racially and socio-economically, such as fraternities associated with National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC).

This study is limited by its timeframe. It measures growth over a relatively short period of time—one semester. Alpha Alpha's *Whole Man Initiative* (WMI) is a four-year developmental approach to character-building within a fraternity. This study, because of time limitations, does not measure the program's effectiveness over the entirety of its duration. Only the portion of WMI occurring during the new member period is measured. Nevertheless, this portion of the program represents a significant and vital aspect of a four-year process, and corresponds in duration to the pledge period for the men of Beta Beta, the control group.

Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta were not randomly assigned treatment conditions. Therefore, selection effects could threaten internal validity of the study to the extent that differences in moral judgment scores between the groups could exist *prior to* the intervention. A pre-test/post-test design was utilized to account for the potentially biasing effects of selection differences.

The dependent variable is change or rate of growth in a particular index (N2 score) over time, and statistical analyses—particularly, ANCOVA—were used to reduce any potential selection effect bias. The two nonequivalent groups in the study are quite similar in most respects with the exception of the different treatments.

A significant limitation to this study is the sheer number of factors that could influence the moral judgment scores of an individual student or, in turn, a cohort of students. In addition, some institutional effects outside the new member/pledge education process could account for growth in moral judgment. While the groups are demographically similar in many ways and have equal access to opportunities for growth and challenge at the university generally, it is clear that not all students in the two cohorts have the same experiences. As such, whatever growth or change in moral judgment is demonstrated in either or both groups cannot be attributed solely to the intervention being investigated.

Summary of Methodology

Data was collected from two cohorts of fraternity men in their first year of college at a mid-size, private, religiously-affiliated university in the southwestern United States. Responses of men in the two cohorts to the Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (pre- and post-test) were used to compare the effect of two distinct interventions on the moral judgment and reasoning of men in the two groups. Results and rates of change/growth over time were examined and compared using means, standard deviation, t-tests, and ANCOVA.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This quasi-experimental study was conducted during the 2012-2013 academic year. It assessed changes in moral judgment and reasoning over time among two cohorts of men in their first year of college. A pre-test/post-test design was used to measure changes in growth rates over time. The two cohorts of men—Alpha Alpha (AA) and Beta Beta (BB)—were pledges/new members of two local chapters of national fraternities, each having experienced a treatment intervention in the form of a pledge/new member education period. The primary purpose of the study was to determine whether the non-traditional, character-based approach to fraternity membership of AA led to greater rates of moral judgment growth (as measured by the Defining Issues Test 2) than the traditional fraternity experience of BB that is characterized by pledgeship and a tiered-membership system.

Participation in the study was open to all members of the pledge/new member classes of the two fraternities. AA had 40 new members, and BB had 28. All new members from AA chose to participate in the pre-test (n=40), and all BB pledges with the exception of one participated in the pre-test (n=27). As noted, participation in the study was completely voluntary and consisted of each participant completing an instrument (the DIT2) at the time of their acceptance into the fraternity and then again several months later at the end of their pledge/new member period. Participation in the post-test was slightly lower than the pre-test participation, with 38 participants from AA completing the instrument and 26 participants from BB completing the instrument.

Nine participants (2 from AA and 7 from BB) were purged from the study for failure to meet reliability checks in either the pre- or post-test. The two purged pre-tests came from AA, and all 7 purged tests in the post-test administration came from BB. The researcher will address

the purged post-tests from BB later in the study. In a few cases, a participant took either the pre- or post-test, but not both. Consequently, when taking the factors of purged tests and attendance into account, 52 participants supplied usable data for the study (n=35 for AA, n= 17 for BB). As noted, the N2 score was used as the dependent variable in this study as a measure of moral judgment and reasoning.

As noted in Chapter 3, Two additional independent variables of interest in this study were religious motivation and political orientation, both measured on an ordinal scale. To determine whether these variables had any significant correlation with N2 score, a correlation matrix and scatterplot matrix were created. As indicated in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, neither religion nor politics were significantly related to N2 score, although they were significantly correlated with each other. Because they were not significantly correlated with N2 score, political orientation and religious motivation were excluded from the analysis of N2 scores.

Following Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 are four sections that correspond to the four research questions of this study. Each section contains descriptive and inferential statistics containing results for each research question. The results are used to validate or invalidate the hypothesis test for each question.

TABLE 4.1

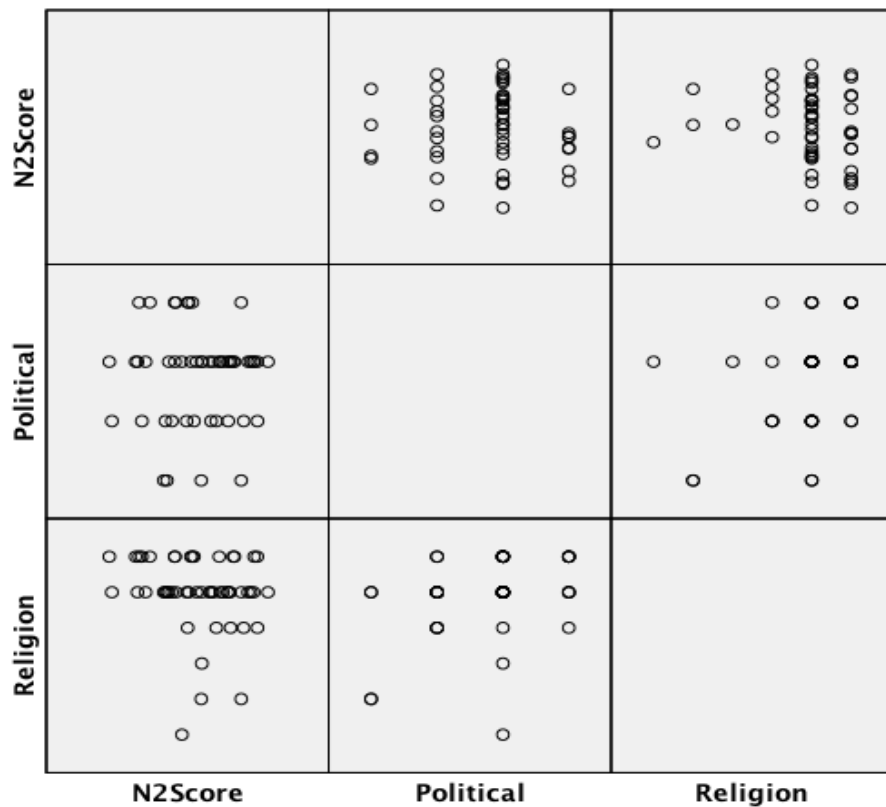
Correlation matrix for N2 score and independent variables Politics and Religion.

	N2 Score	Politics	Religion
N2 Score	--	-0.018 (p = 0.899)	-0.184 (p = 0.201)
Politics	-0.018 (p = 0.899)	--	0.358* (p = 0.011)
Religion	-0.184 (p = 0.201)	0.358* (p = 0.011)	--

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

FIGURE 4.1

Scatterplot matrix for N2 score and independent variables Politics and Religion.



Question 1—Mean Group Differences in Pre-Test Moral Judgment Scores

RQ1—Do the men of Alpha Alpha have higher mean pre-test moral judgment scores compared to the pre-test moral judgment scores of the Beta Beta men?

HO₁—No statistically significant difference in the mean pre-test moral judgment scores exists between the two groups.

The pre-test was administered to both groups of men on the same night at different locations, and was done so within one week of them receiving an invitation to join their respective fraternities. Scores for both groups were normally distributed as indicated by Q-Q plots and the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality (SW= 0.965, $p = .280$ for AA; SW=0.961, $p= .370$ for BB). Excluding two purged pre-tests, the AA sample contained 38 participants. The BB sample contained 28 participants, all of whom completed tests that passed reliability checks. The mean group N2 score for AA was 34.97, with a standard deviation of 10.36. The mean group N2 score for BB was 28.20, with a standard deviation of 13.60. See Table 4.2 below.

TABLE 4.2

Pre-Test Moral Judgment Scores (original data)

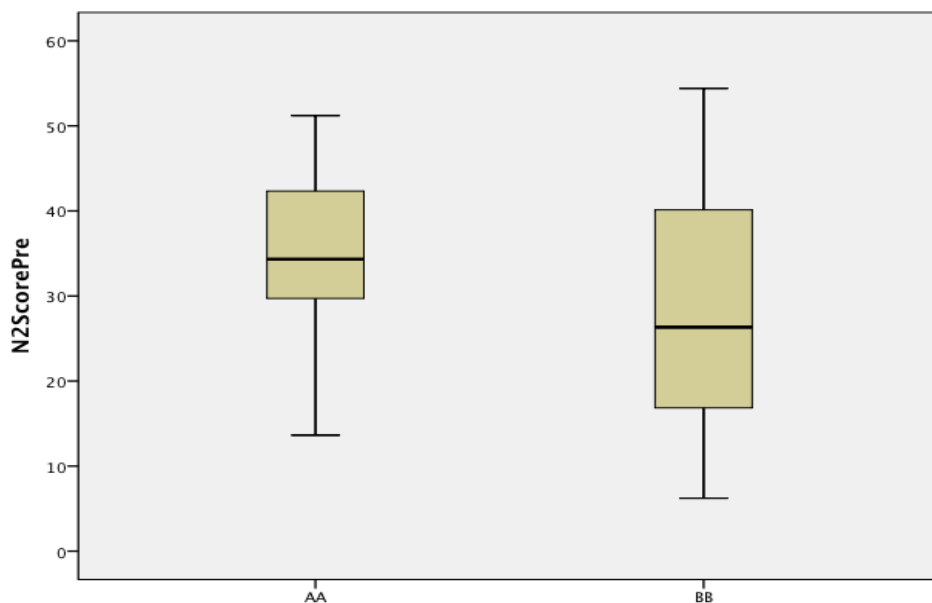
	AA	BB	Total
Mean	34.97	28.20	32.10
Std. Dev.	10.36	13.60	12.22
N	38	28	66

A Levene test for equality of variances demonstrated that the null hypothesis of equal variances could not be rejected, so variances were assumed equal ($F = 2.716$, $p = 0.104$). Thus, even though the two cohorts of men appear to vary differently, the difference in their variance is

not statistically significant. Figure 4.2 is a box plot demonstrating group variance. The dark line in the middle represents the median for each group. No outliers appear in either group.

FIGURE 4.2

Pre-Test N2 Score Variance for AA and BB (original data)



An independent samples t-test for equality of means demonstrated that the mean N2 scores for the treatment and control groups (AA and BB, respectively) were significantly different ($t = 2.299$, $p = 0.025$) on the pre-test. A 95% confidence interval estimate for the difference in N2 scores demonstrates that AA is at least 0.89 points and at most 12.67 points higher than BB, as shown in Table 4.3 below. This statistically significant difference in mean score demonstrated the likely presence of a selection effect, or selection bias, in the two populations, with the men of AA having statistically-significantly higher mean N2 score than the men of BB.

TABLE 4.3

Mean N2 Score Difference for AA and BB (original data)

T-test for Equality of Means						
t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
2.299	64	.025	6.7773308	2.9485502	.8869247	12.6677370

The number of participants who supplied usable data changed as a result of the post-test because 7 tests were purged from the BB group for failure to meet reliability checks. An additional nine participants (spread among the two groups) were removed from the study because they only took either the pre-test or the post-test, but not both. Consequently, when taking into account the factors of purged tests and attrition, 52 participants supplied usable data for the study (n = 35 for AA, n = 17 for BB). Usable participant data was particularly reduced in the BB sample, from 28 to 17. These changes impacted the original pre-test results, once participants were removed from the pre-test sample based on post-test absence and purged tests.

Table 4.4 details descriptive statistics regarding the pre-test usable data. Mean N2 scores for both groups increased slightly. The standard deviation for AA went down slightly to 10.11, while the standard deviation within BB rose to 14.71.

TABLE 4.4

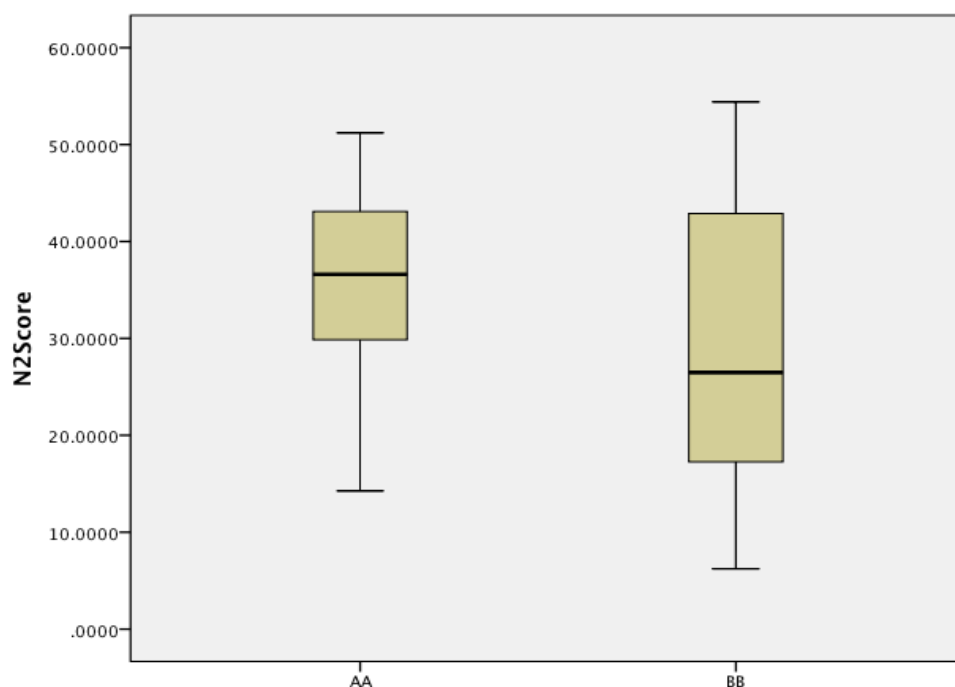
Pre-Test Moral Judgment Scores (Clean Data)

	AA	BB	Total
Mean	35.74	29.40	32.57
Std. Dev.	10.11	14.71	12.41
N	35	17	52

Levene's test for equality of variances on the usable pre-test data revealed that equal variances could be assumed at the .05 level, though just barely ($F = 3.926$, $p = .053$). While the variance between AA and BB does not quite rise to the level of significance, it approaches it, as indicated by Figure 4.3.

FIGURE 4.3

Pre-Test N2 Score Variance for AA and BB (clean data)



Assuming equal variance, an independent samples t-test for equality of means performed on the usable data reveals that the mean N2 scores for AA and BB did not reach significance at the .05 level after all. As indicated in Table 4.3 previously, the original pre-test data revealed a statistically significant difference in pre-test N2 score ($p = .025$). Usable data, however, revealed that the pre-test score differences approached significance ($.075$, $p < .05$), but did not quite reach it. The change in significance from original to usable data could be attributed to a significant reduction in the sample size of BB ($n = 28$ to $n = 17$). This 40% reduction in sample size in BB increased the standard error, therefore making it more difficult to find statistical

significance between the two groups. This reduction in confidence is indicated by the widening of the confidence interval for the mean differences in the usable data. The Confidence Interval as well as other t-test measures regarding means can be found in Table 4.5.

TABLE 4.5

Mean N2 Score Difference for AA and BB (usable data)

T-test for Equality of Means						
t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
1.82	50	.075	6.34	3.48	-.65	13.34

The null hypothesis (H_{01}) related to Research Question 1 was: *There is no statistically significant difference in the mean pre-test moral development scores of the two groups.* Based on analysis of usable data taken from the pre-test, H_{01} is *confirmed* insofar as the mean difference in N2 scores ($p = 0.075$, 2-tailed) does not rise to the level of significance at the .05 level.

Research Question 2—Mean Group Differences in Post-Test Moral Judgment Scores

RQ2—Do the men of Alpha Alpha have higher mean post-test moral judgment scores compared to the pre-test moral judgment scores of the Beta Beta men?

H₀₂—No statistically significant difference in the mean post-test moral judgment scores exists between the two groups.

The post-test was administered to AA and BB during the first week of classes in the spring semester, approximately five-and-a-half months after the administration of the pre-test and at the beginning of their second semester as fraternity men. The post-test was administered in the fraternity meeting room of both chapter houses. The same instructions and explanations

were given during the second administration as during the first administration. 38 men from AA were present for the post-test (same as pre-test), while 26 men from BB took the post-test (down two participants from pre-test). Scores for both groups were normally distributed as indicated by Q-Q plots and the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality (SW= 0.952, $p = .132$ for AA; SW=0.931, $p = .223$ for BB). As noted previously, 7 post-tests from BB were purged because they did not pass the reliability checks built into the DIT2 scoring system. All AA post-tests passed reliability checks, though some were removed because either their pre-tests were purged or they were not present for the post-test. Sample sizes for AA and BB were, respectively, 35 and 17. Table 4.6 contains descriptive statistics for the post-test N2 moral judgment scores.

TABLE 4.6

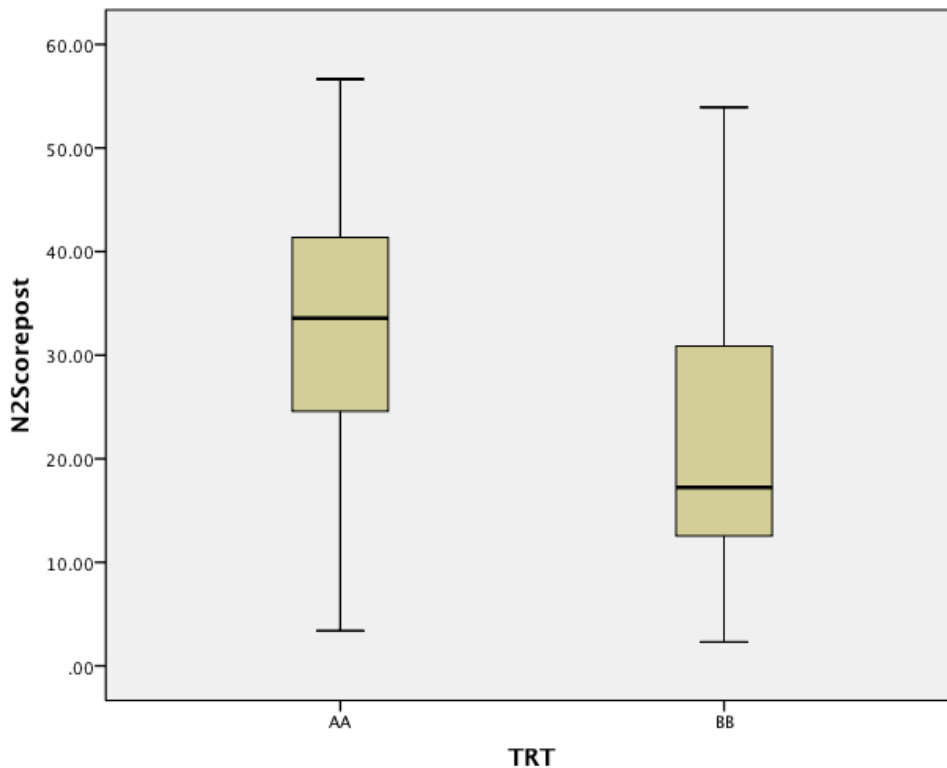
Post-Test Moral Judgment Scores

	AA	BB	Total
Mean	32.30	21.72	27.01
Std. Dev.	12.48	13.80	13.14
N	35	17	52

As Figure 4.3 demonstrates, post-test N2 scores for the two groups appeared to vary about the same, which is supported by a Levene test for equality of variance in scores ($p = 0.451$). This insignificant variance is due to the fact that the standard deviation for AA grew in the post-test, while variance of scores within BB remained roughly the same between the pre- and post-test. Thus, equal variances are assumed for the post-test.

FIGURE 4.4

Post-test N2 score variance for AA and BB



An independent samples t-test for equality of means was used to determine the significance of difference in mean N2 post-test scores for AA and BB. The mean difference between the two groups of 10.58 was statistically significant ($t = 2.77$, $p = .008$). A 95% confidence interval estimate for the difference in post-test N2 scores demonstrates that AA is at least 2.91 points and at most 18.24 points higher in N2 scores than BB, as shown in Table 4.7 below.

TABLE 4.7

Mean N2 Score Difference for AA and BB (post-test)

T-test for Equality of Means						
T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
2.77	50	.008	10.58	3.82	2.91	18.24

The null hypothesis (H_{O2}) tested to study Research Question 2 was: *No statistically significant difference in the mean post-test moral judgment scores exists between the two groups.* Based on analysis of data taken from the post-test, H_{O2} is *rejected* because the mean difference in N2 scores (.008, 2-tailed) is significant at the .05 level.

Research Question 3—Difference in Rates of Moral Judgment Growth Over Time

RQ3—For both Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta, what were the rates of growth in moral judgment scores from the time of pre-test to the time of post-test? Do the men of Alpha Alpha have a higher rate of growth than that of Beta Beta after the intervention?

H_{O3}—There is no statistically significant difference in rates of moral judgment growth between the two groups over time.

The primary purpose of this study was to compare the effects of two distinct interventions on the moral judgment and reasoning scores of two cohorts of men in their first year of college. A pre-test/post-test approach was utilized so as to reveal whether the treatment group (AA) demonstrated growth over time in moral judgment and reasoning at a greater rate than the control group (BB) who experienced a different, less intentional intervention than the one experienced by AA. RQ3 explores the question of N2 score difference over time for the two groups.

Descriptive statistics for RQ3 were determined by examining post-test N2 scores minus pre-test N2 scores for all participants in AA and BB who supplied clean, usable data. N2 Score differences from pre-test to post-test for both groups were normally distributed as indicated by Q-Q plots and the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality (SW= 0.952, $p = .132$ for AA; SW=0.931, $p = .223$ for BB). As indicated in the discussion of findings for RQ2, post-test N2 scores decreased from pre-test scores in both groups (see Table 4.8). The mean decrease for AA was -3.43, with a standard deviation of 9.26. The mean decrease for BB was -7.67, with a standard deviation of 15.52. Figure 4.5 graphically presents N2 score differences over time, from pre-test to post-test.

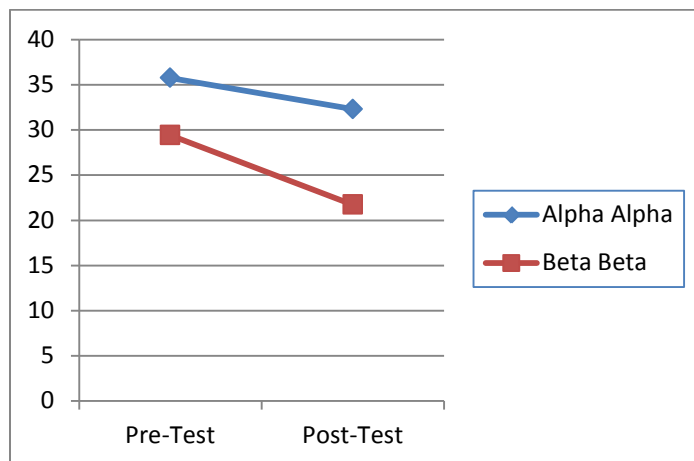
TABLE 4.8

Mean N2 Score Difference (post- minus pre-test) for AA and BB

	AA	BB	Total
Mean	- 3.43	- 7.67	-5.55
Std. Dev.	9.26	15.52	12.39
N	35	17	52

FIGURE 4.5

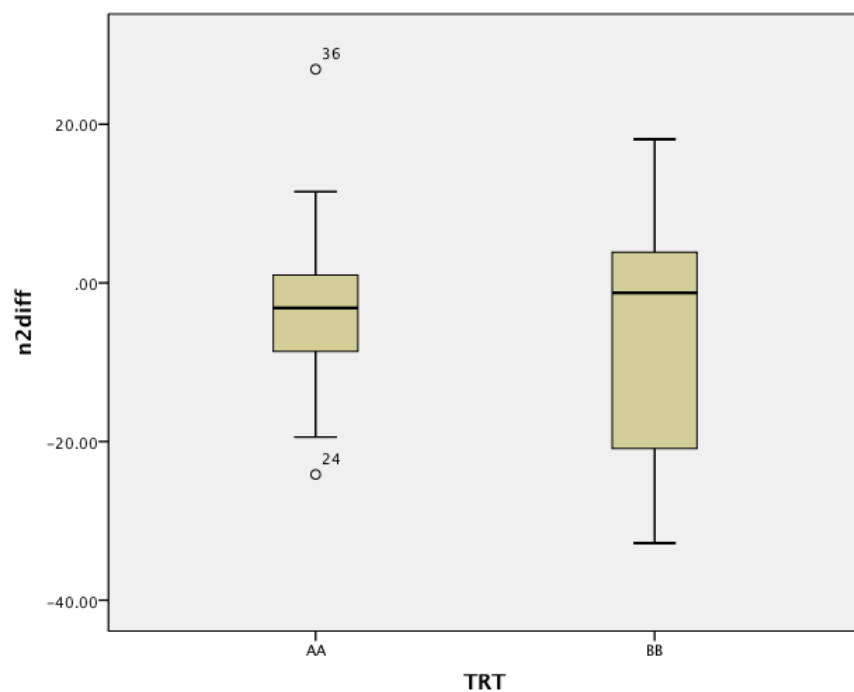
N2 Score Change from Pre- to Post-Test



A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances revealed that AA varied significantly less than BB, thus equal variances between AA and BB could not be assumed ($p = .001$). This is also clear from Figure 4.6, a boxplot for N2 score change from pre-to post-test, which shows how much more BB varies than AA.

FIGURE 4.6

N2 Score Change from Pre- to Post-Test



An independent samples t-test revealed that the mean difference in rate of change/growth over time between AA and BB was not statistically significant ($p = .311$). While the moral judgment scores of both AA and BB decreased from pre-test to post-test, and while AA's scores did decrease at a lower rate, AA's rate of decrease was not significantly lower than the rate of decrease observed in BB. Table 4.9 details the independent samples t-test related to this analysis (equal variances not assumed).

TABLE 4.9

Independent Samples Test: N2 Score Difference Over Time (post- minus pre-test)

T-test for Equality of Means						
T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
1.04	21.71	.311	4.23	4.08	- 4.23	12.69

Original pre-test results in moral judgment scores revealed a statistically-significant difference in AA and BB ($p = .025$), indicating the likely presence of a selection effect, or selection bias, in the two groups. Usable pre-test data, based on test purges and attrition, revealed less significance of difference ($p = .075$) than the original scores, but still enough difference to suggest a possible selection bias in the two groups. In order to account for the possible presence of inherent differences between AA and BB and account for the possible selection bias in the groups (given that the groups were not randomly assigned), the researcher decided to use an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to assist with answering Research Question 3. The ANCOVA controls for the fact that one group can change more than another group because of inherent differences that have nothing to do with the results of the intervention/treatment being measured. Because earlier analysis showed that N2 scores are not significantly correlated with the other independent variables that measure political and religious preferences, an ANCOVA was chosen for analysis over Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA).

The change in N2 score over time (post- minus pre-test score) was the dependent variable for the ANCOVA, with cohort identification (either AA or BB) as the independent variable and pre-test N2 score as the covariate. Assumptions for ANCOVA were checked to

assure that the N2 score changes for both AA and BB were normally distributed (SW= 0.952, $p = .132$ for AA; SW=0.931, $p = .223$ for BB) and homogeneity of variance was verified through a Levene test ($F = 3.052$, $p = .087$). Additionally, there was no significant interaction effect found between the independent variable (group classification) and the covariate (pre-test N2 score), which is another assumption for ANCOVA ($F = 3.259$, $p = .077$). In Table 4.10 below, the independent variable TRT is a measure of whether group classification (AA or BB), and thus intervention technique, is a significant factor in N2 score differences from the pre-test to the post-test. Table 4.10 represents the results of the ANCOVA.

TABLE 4.10

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects to Determine Treatment (TRT) Significance

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1243.284 ^a	2	621.642	5.315	.008	.178
Intercept	283.945	1	283.945	2.428	.126	.047
N2Score	1038.406	1	1038.406	8.879	.004	.153
TRT	479.607	1	479.607	4.101	.048	.077
Error	5730.758	49	116.954			
Total	8183.669	52				
Corrected Total	6974.042	51				

R Squared = .178 (Adjusted R Squared = .145)

Using the difference in N2 mean scores over time as the dependent variable, the results of the ANCOVA demonstrate that the effect of AA's intentional intervention for men in their cohort *was significant* in producing a rate of change different than that of BB ($p = .048$), when controlling for selection differences. While it does not appear, based on the data in this study, that the intervention produced positive growth (per N2 scores), the data does indicate that the intentional intervention of AA did indeed produce an effect or change beyond that of BB.

The null hypothesis (H_{03}) tested to study Research Question 3 was: *There is no statistically-*

significant difference in rates of moral judgment growth over time between the two groups. While there is no statistically-significant difference in rates of moral growth over time between the groups in the independent t-tests, the ANCOVA showed that there are significant differences between AA and BB when the variation in pre-test is controlled for in the analysis. Therefore, based on ANCOVA analysis of data regarding N2 difference over time between the two groups, HO3 is *rejected* because the difference in growth/change rates ($p = .048$) is significant at the .05 level.

Research Question 4—AA and BB Compared to Normative National Data

RQ4—How do the scores of Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta (both pre- and post-test) compare to national normative scores for male college students in their first year?

HO4— The pre- and post-test scores (mean N2) of the two groups are not different in a statistically significant way than normative national scores for male college students.

The Center for the Study of Ethical Development at the University of Alabama collects and maintains normative data regarding moral judgment scores that is derived from research using the Defining Issues Test (Dong, n.d.). Table 4.11 presents N2 norms for men from the following four populations: grades 10-12, vocational/technical school, undergraduate, and graduate.

TABLE 4.11

Normative Data for N2 Scores of Male Students

Age Level	Mean N2 Score	Std. Deviation
Grade 10-12	29.59	14.61
Vocational/Technical School	27.67	14.49
Undergraduate (Year 1)	31.51	14.64
Graduate	39.79	14.43

The pre-test mean N2 score for AA was 35.74, more than one point higher than normative data

for first-year college students generally and more than 4 points higher than normative data for undergraduate college men in their first year. This score approaches the mean of undergraduate students (women and men) in their fourth year. A one-sample t-test for equality of means between AA and the normative data for first-year college men shows that there is a (positive) significant difference between the AA sample group and the normative male means ($t=2.474$, $p=.018$), as shown in Table 4.12. The pre-test mean N2 score for BB was 29.40, which is slightly less than the norm for the mean average of males in grades 10-12. A one-sample t-test for equality of means between BB and the male normative data shows that there is no significant difference between the BB sample group and the normative male means ($t= -0.593$, $p= 0.562$) for undergraduate men, as shown in Table 4.12.

TABLE 4.12

One-Sample T-test for Equality of Means: Pre-test results compared to Normative Data

T-test for Equality of Means							
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
AA	2.474	34	0.018	4.23	1.71	0.76	7.70
BB	-0.593	16	0.562	-2.11	3.57	-9.68	5.45

As noted, post-test scores for both AA and BB decreased. AA registered a mean post-test N2 score of 32.30, a 3.44 point drop. A score of 32.30 dropped AA nearly one point below the normative mean for first-year college students generally, but still above the mean normative score for undergraduate men in their first year. A one-sample t-test for equality of means for the post-test scores between the AA group and the male normative data shows that the difference between the AA sample group and the normative male means ($t= .374$, $p=.711$) was insignificant, as shown in Table 4.13. BB's mean N2 score dropped 7.68 points from pre- to post-test, placing their post-test scores well below that of male

vocational/technical school students. A one-sample t-test for equality of means for post-test scores between BB and the male normative data showed that a significant difference between BB and the normative male means ($t = -2.92$, $p = .010$) for first year undergraduate men, as shown in Table 4.13.

Figure 4.7 illustrates the pre- and post-test scores of AA and BB relative to normative N2 score data for four male demographic groups: grade 10-12, vocational/technical school, undergraduate, and graduate.

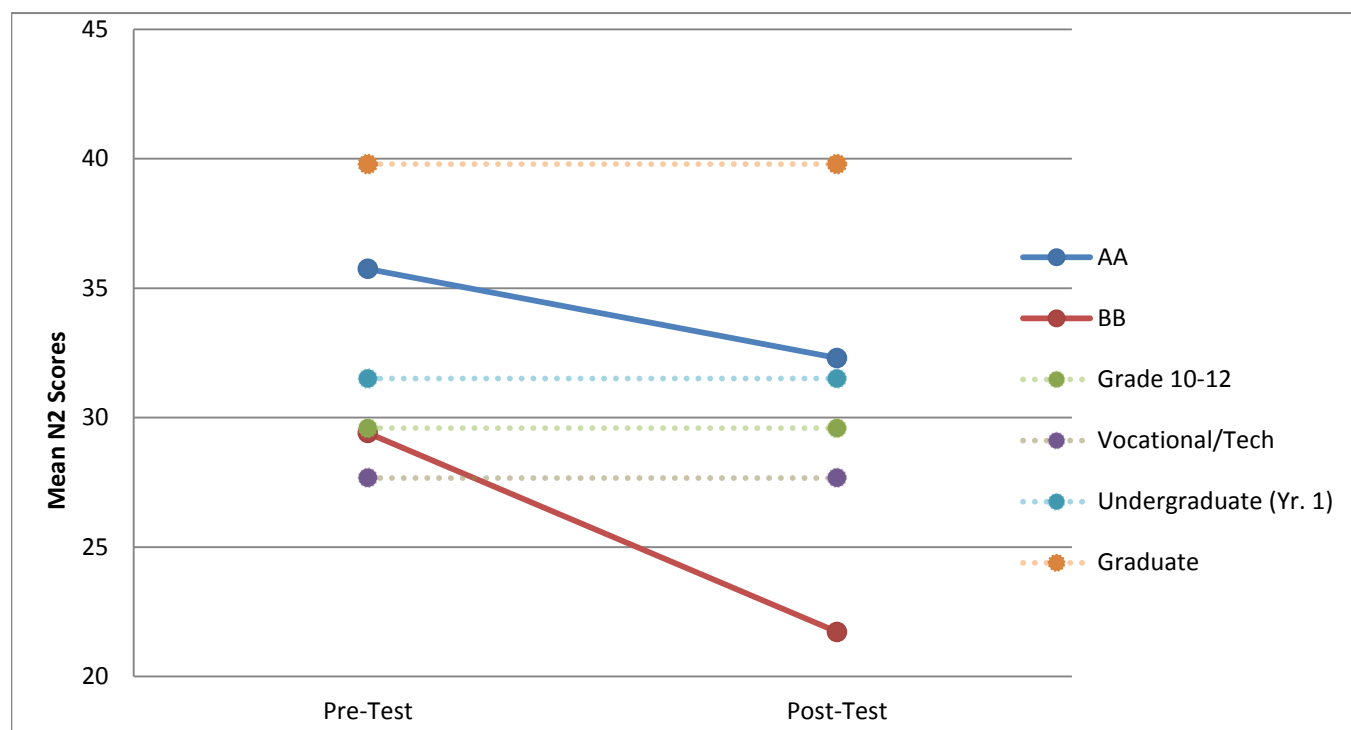
TABLE 4.13

One-Sample T-test for Equality of Means: Post-test results compared to Normative Data

T-test for Equality of Means							
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
AA	0.374	34	0.711	0.79	2.11	-3.50	5.07
BB	-2.92	16	0.010	-9.79	3.35	-16.88	2.69

FIGURE 4.7

AA and BB Pre- and Post-Test Scores, Compared to Normative N2 Score Data for Males



The hypothesis tested (HO₄) to study Research Question 4 was: *The pre- and post-test scores (mean N2) of the two groups are not different in a statistically significant way than normative national scores for male college students.* Based on analysis performed using one-sample t-tests, HO₄ is *rejected* due to the fact that there was a strongly negative significant difference between BB's post-test N2 scores and normative national scores for first-year undergraduate men. Additionally, a significant positive difference was found between AA's pre-test N2 scores and normative scores for first-year college men.

Additional Data from Other Moral Judgment Indices

In an attempt to better understand the decrease in N2 scores and paint a fuller picture of moral judgment changes in AA and BB, the researcher decided to explore additional data provided by other indexes and measures from the DIT2. Descriptive statistics were performed on data relative to the Personal Interest schema (PI), the Maintaining Norms schema (MN), and Type Indicator (Type). The Personal Interest schema is reflective of Kohlberg's stages 2 and 3, and indicates a participant's preference for items that appeal to one's own best interests, personal gain or loss resulting from a decision, and achieving or maintaining social approval. The Maintaining Norms schema (reflective of Kohlberg's Stage 4) focuses on maintaining the established norms of a community or social order in order to preserve the operative system. Type Indicator is an index that emerged from the research of Thoma and Rest (1999), who observed that some DIT respondents showed little evidence of discrimination among schema-typed items, whereas other respondents demonstrated clear preferences for items in certain schemas. In other words, some participants seemed to clearly reason and make judgments using a particular schema, while others seemed to go back-and-forth between different thought schemas. Thoma and Rest noted that a failure to discriminate between different schemas was a mark of developmental disequilibrium (or *transition*). On the other hand, a clear pattern of discrimination or preference for a particular schema was viewed as a sign of *consolidation*. Criteria were devised to classify profiles as either transitional or consolidated. Seven developmental types emerged from

research on the transition-consolidation variable. These types offer a more fine-grained analysis of a participant's moral development than any single score on an index summary (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003).

Type 1: predominant in Personal Interest and consolidated;

Type 2: predominant in Personal Interest, but transitional;

Type 3: predominant in Maintaining Norms, but transitional; Personal Interest secondary

Type 4: predominant in Maintaining Norms and consolidated;

Type 5: predominant in Maintaining Norms and transitional; Postconventional secondary

Type 6: predominant in Postconventional, but transitional;

Type 7: predominant in Postconventional and consolidated.

Types 1, 4, and 7 are consolidated profiles; types 2, 3, 5, and 6 indicate transitional profiles.

Theoretically, as development progresses across the lifespan, a person could be expected to move from consolidated profiles to transitional ones with shifts in schema preference occurring along the way as the person moves toward post-conventional thought. In this study, each participant's moral schema scores were used to create a developmental Type Indicator (1-7). For instance, a Type Indicator score of 4 would indicate a student who predominantly preferred the Maintaining Norms schema and was consolidated in his preference for that schema.

Table 4.13 details means, standard deviations, and pre-post differences for AA and BB vis-à-vis Personal Interest scores, Maintaining Norms scores, and Type Indicator scores. BB's remarkable decrease in N2 scores over time was accompanied by a remarkable increase in preference for Personal Interest items on the post-test. Table 4.15 notes this difference on the "Pair 2" line of the table. BB's Personal Interest scores went from 27.29 on the pre-test to 37.83 on the post-test, an increase of 10.54 points. This change was highly significant (.000, $p < .05$). Ideally, persons over time demonstrate growth with increases in preference for postconventional items (increased N2 scores) and decreases in preference for Personal Interest items. In this instance, BB demonstrated the opposite effect; as a group, their

preference for Personal Interest items significantly increased. This finding substantiates what the significant decreases in BB's N2 scores suggested; namely, that BB did in fact demonstrate a significant regression in moral judgment over time in this study. By way of comparison, AA's preference for personal interest items slightly increased at an insignificant level ($p = .37$), as seen in Table 4.14.

TABLE 4.14

Means, Standard Deviations, and Pre-Post Difference for Maintaining Norms, Personal Interest and Type Indicator for AA and BB in pre- and post-exams

Treatment Group	MN Pre	MN Post	MN Diff	PI Pre	PI Post	PI Diff	Type Pre	Type Post	
AA	Mean	34.15	35.09	.939	26.04	27.71	1.67	4.89	4.23
	Std. Dev.	12.12	15.21	19.03	9.54	10.39	10.93	1.80	1.93
BB	Mean	39.76	31.91	-7.86	27.29	37.83	10.54	4.65	3.41
	Std. Dev.	9.72	11.19	14.67	9.92	10.86	9.77	1.87	1.80

TABLE 4.15

Paired Samples Test: AA changes in Maintaining Norms, Personal Interest, and Type Indicator

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	MN Post – MN Pre	.94	19.03	3.22	-5.60	7.48	.292	34	.77
Pair 2	PI Post – PI Pre	1.67	10.93	1.85	-2.08	5.43	.906	34	.37
Pair 3	Type Post – Type Pre	-.66	1.99	.34	-1.34	.030	-1.95	34	.060

TABLE 4.16

Paired Samples Test: BB changes in Maintaining Norms, Personal Interest, and Type Indicator

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	MN Post – MN Pre	-7.86	14.67	3.56	-15.40	-.31	-2.21	16	*.042
Pair 2	PI Post – PI Pre	10.54	9.77	2.37	5.51	15.56	4.45	16	*.000
Pair 3	Type Post – Type Pre	-1.24	2.19	.53	-2.36	-.11	-2.32	16	*.034

*p < .05

While both groups decreased in type indicator score, only BB decreased at a significant level ($p < .05$). On both the pre- and post-test, AA remained consolidated within the Type 4 range indicating a consistent mean group preference for the Maintaining Norms schema. BB, however, experienced a significant developmental phase shift as a group, indicated by a shift (downward) from a mean consolidated score in the Maintaining Norms identity to a transitional identity in the direction of Personal Interest. Such a shift is not the desired effect of an intervention. While movement from a consolidated identity to a transitional identity may well be preferred in most instances and seen as evidence of cognitive and moral growth, here it reflects developmental regression to the extent that a less-sophisticated subdominant schema is increasingly preferred. Post-test data revealed that 94.1% of men in BB had a transitional profile, a 29.4% (negative) increase in transitional profiles from the pre-test administration. This increase in transitional profiles within BB was significant proportionally as compared to AA (.034, $p < .05$), as noted in Table 4.16. Whereas there was virtually no change in the percentage of men who became transitional as a result of the intervention in AA, the number of men in BB who became transitional in their identity after the intervention shifted profoundly. The significant

increase in transitional students reveals a dramatic movement within the group toward a more disequilibrated, or destabilized, status.

TABLE 4.17

Tests for differences in proportion of participants who were Transitional from pre- to post-test

Z-Test for Equality of Proportions						
	Z	Sig (2-tailed)	Proportion Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
AA	0.254	0.799	0.029	0.114	-0.191	0.249
BB	2.121	0.034	0.294	0.139	0.041	0.547

Summary of Results

This study found differences in the pre-test moral judgment scores of AA and BB. While the differences did not reach significance ($.075, p < .05$), the differences did suggest a possible selection effect or bias in the two self-selected groups. The possible selection bias was accounted for using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) when rates of change over time were examined. Statistically-significant differences in mean moral judgment scores were found in post-test scores for AA and BB ($p = .008$). While no statistically-significant difference in rates of moral growth over time between the groups was found in the independent t-tests, the ANCOVA showed that there were significant differences between the change/growth rates of AA and BB ($p = .048$) when the possible selection effect or bias in pre-test was controlled for in the analysis. An examination of the moral judgment and reasoning scores of AA and BB alongside normative national DIT 2 data for males concluded that the post-test scores of BB were significantly lower than that of the mean for first-year undergraduate men. The pre-test moral judgment scores for AA were significantly higher than the mean scores for first-year undergraduate men.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate rates of change or growth in moral judgment and reasoning among two cohorts of first-year college men. The study focused on whether a certain cohort of men (AA) who participated in a non-traditional, intentional, character-driven approach to fraternity membership demonstrated a rate of moral judgment growth that was greater than that of a similar cohort of men (BB) who participated in a traditional approach to fraternity membership. AA and BB were self-selected cohorts, not randomly assigned. As such, this study was quasi-experimental in nature.

The Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT2), a neo-Kohlbergian instrument used to measure moral judgment and reasoning, was used as the instrument to measure moral judgment. The DIT2 is a paper-and-pencil instrument that operates on the premise that people at different developmental points cognitively process moral dilemmas differently, define the issues embedded in those dilemmas differently, and, consequently, have differing intuitions about what is right, fair, or just in a situation. The test contains five moral dilemmas about which the participant is asked to make a judgment. The participant then rates and ranks twelve issue statements based on how important each statement is for reaching a conclusion about the dilemma. The ranked items are then used to determine which of three moral schemas a participant prefers to use when making moral judgments—Personal Interest schema, Maintaining Norms schema, or Post-conventional schema.

The dependent variable in the study was the N2 score—specifically, the pre-test N2 score, the post-test N2 score, and the measured change in N2 scores over time (from pre- to post-test). The N2 score is an index measure within the DIT2 that reflects the degree to which items

in the instrument that are reflective of post-conventional thinking are preferred and personal interest items are rejected. In post-conventional thought, moral obligations emerge from shared ideals that are reciprocal and open to scrutiny, while personal interest thinking is concerned with what the individual has to personally gain or lose in a situation. In this study, AA and BB received different treatments in the form of their respective new member/pledgeship education and enculturation processes. The relative effectiveness of each treatment was assessed by comparing the N2 score performance of the participants across the two groups over time

The researcher hypothesized that there would be no statistically-significant difference in N2 moral judgment scores between AA and BB for the pre-test, the post-test, or rates of change or growth over time from pre- to post-. The researcher also hypothesized that the moral judgment scores of AA and BB would not differ significantly from normative national DIT2 data concerning college men. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used to analyze the data.

Data analysis with usable data samples from AA and BB revealed that mean pre-test N2 scores for the two groups were not statistically different, though the scores were approaching statistical significance at the .05 level. Differences in mean N2 scores on the post-test were significantly different; notably, mean N2 scores for both AA and BB decreased from pre-test to post-test, with BB decreasing at a significantly greater rate than AA. Because the difference in pre-test mean scores approached significance (.075, $p < .05$), the researcher used ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) to account for the possibility that a selection bias in the groups, rather than the intervention, could account for any observable change or growth in N2 scores over time. While there was no statistically significant difference in rates of moral growth over time between the two groups in the independent t-test, the ANCOVA showed that there were significant

differences between AA and BB when the variation in pre-test was controlled for in the analysis. Therefore, based on ANCOVA analysis of data regarding N2 difference over time between the two groups, AA's intervention did prove to produce a significant effect on moral judgment scores beyond that of BB. The moral judgment scores of AA and BB were compared to normative DIT2 data for college men. One remarkable finding surfaced—the post-test scores of BB were significantly lower than the mean normative scores for college men.

Interpretation of Findings

N2 scores for AA and BB indicate that, on the whole, AA attracts and maintains men who reason and make moral judgments at a more sophisticated level than do the men of BB. However, the results of this study do not indicate that AA's programmatic intervention at the new member level leads to growth in moral judgment and reasoning. It is more accurate to say that the culture and new member intervention of AA is more effective than that of BB at stemming the tide of moral judgment regression in the first few months of the college fraternal experience. Put differently, when seen alongside BB, the effect of AA's new member intervention is a mitigating one; it appears to reduce what might otherwise be a significant reduction in moral judgment and reasoning capacities as a result of what seems to be a powerful group effect. The researcher describes that effect later in this chapter.

A closer examination of national normative N2 scores for undergraduate men from the Center for the Study of Ethical Development reveals a noteworthy pattern. As noted in Chapter 4, the pre-test scores (both original and usable) of AA were higher than the mean N2 scores of first-year undergraduate men and the pre-test scores (both original and usable) of BB were lower than the mean N2 scores of first-year undergraduate men. Normative data from the Center for the Study of Ethical Development reveals that men in their second year of college register *lower*

mean N2 scores than men in their first year of college. As noted in Table 4.11, the mean N2 score for a first-year college male is 31.51. The mean N2 score for a second-year college male drops to 30.96. This reveals that the decrease in moral judgment scores found in this study, while perhaps surprising on the surface, is nevertheless consistent with moral judgment scores for college men in the first two undergraduate years.

This finding regarding the first-to-second-year lag in moral judgment and reasoning is consistent with the research of Pascarella (2001), who noted—based on findings from the National Study of Student Learning—that Greek affiliation had negative cognitive effects for first-year college men on measures such as critical thinking, reading comprehension, and mathematics, as compared to unaffiliated students. Pascarella's research is noteworthy because, as noted in Chapter 3, growth in cognitive measures is highly correlated with growth in moral judgment scores on the DIT2. The negative cognitive effects of fraternity life appear to be largely relegated to the first year, as studies indicate that in subsequent years affiliated and unaffiliated men demonstrate growth in cognitive measures at essentially the same rates (Pascarella, 2001). The implication here is that while the cognitive growth of fraternity men in subsequent years of the college experience is quite typical, they do not (on average) fully recover from the initial lag experienced in their first year.

The most remarkable finding of this study is the decrease in N2 moral judgment scores over time for both groups. While AA's decrease was not significant, BB did have a significant decrease. In general, college men score lower than college women on the DIT2, and studies have demonstrated that membership in fraternities is linked with lower levels of moral judgment than non-fraternity men (Cohen, 1982; Sanders, 1990; Kilgannon & Erwin, 1992; Derryberry & Thoma, 2000; Carroll, 2009; Thoma, personal communication, 2013). The lower-than-average

moral judgment post-test scores of AA and BB are consistent with these and other similar findings wherein fraternity men perform below the level of their unaffiliated peers. It is, therefore, not surprising that the two fraternity interventions in this study did not produce significant moral judgment growth in the two cohorts of men over a relatively short period of time. What is surprising is that the effect was negative in both groups, and profoundly negative in one. What could account for this?

One possible reason for the decrease is that the men of AA and BB did not put forth the effort in the post-test. In a rather complex cognitive measure like the DIT2, it is not unusual for participants to experience a bit of fatigue, especially when taking the same measure a second time (Thoma, personal communication, 2013). The researcher tried to guard against this possibility by positively describing the instrument and the study, explaining why the exact same measure was being given to them again, and giving the same instructions as during the pre-test. As noted, the post-test differences were most pronounced in BB. Not only were BB's N2 scores remarkably low and negatively significant in pre- to post-test difference, but more than one-quarter of the post-tests taken by the men of BB were purged for not meeting reliability checks. It is notable that no post-tests were purged in the AA group. This indicates that post-test participant motivation in BB was a significant issue.

The researcher noted a difference in the post-test attitude and disposition for both groups. The men in both groups were more attentive, focused, and formal in demeanor during the pre-test. They were "eager to please," especially since their new member/pledge experience had just begun and—at least in the case of AA—several fraternity leaders were in the room. The post-test experience was much more relaxed and permissive in both groups, though especially so in BB, as some men chatted with one another while taking the test and a light hum of banter filled

the room. In both the pre- and post-test administrations, the atmosphere with BB was more permissive and less focused than in AA, and, in addition, AA had a much larger presence of older members in the room with younger members. The older members functioned as models for the younger members, keeping them focused on the task at hand.

A second—and more interesting—possibility regarding the reason for moral judgment score decreases centers on what appears to be the negative or countereffects of the group. Thoma and colleagues (1993) note the connection between supportive friendship networks and moral development during college. They found that students who reported deriving significant social support from close college friends had higher moral judgment scores than those students who did not perceive their friends as particularly supportive. The connection between support and moral growth was particularly strong among those students who had friendship networks that Thoma and colleagues refer to as “low-density” networks, which they describe as a diverse network of multiple independent friendship groups. For example, a student with a low density network of friendships might have supportive relationships with others who don’t necessarily interact with one another—in their dorm, in two or three student organizations, in their major, in their fraternity or sorority, and at their work-study placement, for instance. In contrast, those with high-density social networks tend to have friendships with a relatively narrow spectrum of people—typically those who all know one another and tend to be quite homogenous in preferences and outlook. Thoma and colleagues found that high moral judgment scores were associated with low density networks and high levels of social support. Further, their research suggests that students with higher moral judgment scores view the diversity of college populations positively, are more open to forming a range of friendships, more likely to enter into

a range of activities on campus, and more likely to discuss a range of topics with peers than those with lower moral judgment scores.

Derryberry and Thoma (2000), in discussing friendship networks and fraternities, suggested that fraternity members tend to be more isolated than unaffiliated students, tend to surround themselves with those unlikely to challenge their views of the world, and tend to naturally develop an “us-versus-them” disposition toward those outside the group. Similarly, Carroll (2009) suggested that factors within the culture of fraternities cause members to be more morally disengaged than unaffiliated men. In a study of moral disengagement among fraternity men, McCreary (2012) also found indications of a culture that was more likely to condone, or at least be permissive toward, hazing and bullying, though the degree varies somewhat with context. These studies, along with the present study, suggest the presence of a powerful male group effect which tends toward insularity, conformity, and a lag in moral development.

AA, at least in terms of stated intention for the new member period, appears more global and less insular in its aim than BB. AA’s no-pledging, immediate-membership policy embeds an egalitarian ethos within the group from the time an invitation to join is extended, communicating a philosophy of equal rights and responsibilities within shared community. This value challenges what continues to be a status-quo commitment of fraternities generally—hierarchy and tiered-memberships. Further, AA’s education of new members extends well beyond chapter identity and history. The new member period consists of events, discussions, presentations, and activities that educate brothers about national and local chapter structure, the Ritual and values, leadership development, relationships with those within the chapter and outside the chapter (including faculty and staff), time and stress management, campus resources that promote

academic and personal growth, study skills, and strategies for physical and emotional well-being, among others.

AA's attempts to instantiate these values and desired outcomes within the new member period can be seen as an attempt to encourage connection to sources of meaning, identity, and support outside the immediate network of the group. Thus, while the men of AA may well develop a greater sense of affinity and loyalty to the group as a result of the new member intervention, they are nevertheless encouraged to connect with other sources of social support that lower the density of their friendships and expose them to the positive effects of a broader network of relationships. If indeed this is the case for AA, then the men of AA may well be better positioned for moral growth over time by virtue of the fact that the group is more outward-focused in its orientation.

Piaget (1985), among others, noted that achieving a healthy psychological resolution to the developmental challenges brought about by the experience of disequilibrium is a catalyst for cognitive and moral growth. Piaget's notion was that the equilibratory process was one in which the individual moved to higher levels of mental development by virtue of an ongoing process of differentiation and integration wherein the person changes and develops while seeking to maintain a stable identity. Within this process, challenging experiences or ideas, while destabilizing to one's current cognitive schemas, serve as the *occasion* for growth to the extent that one is able to assimilate the new experience or idea and then accommodate it into a more sophisticated and expansive scheme. But this is far from guaranteed.

From the significant decrease in the type indicator scores of BB, it can be inferred that the disequilibrium experienced by the men of BB—at least in the first few months of college—seems to move them in the direction of a lower or more immature schema of moral thinking.

The fraternal experience in this instance can be seen as an event with the potential (or perhaps, likelihood) to *perturb* one's view of self and world in such a way that a momentary regression occurs. The first-semester college fraternity man is presented, in the form of a distinctive group experience, with a destabilizing experience in the form of events, interactions, and circumstances (all of which come together to form a unique intervention). It is plausible that in response to this experience, regression occurs in the process of attempting to restabilize or reequilibrate oneself. The temptation in such times is to reattach to previously held notions of the world. However, when previous equilibria are simply reified in the face of new data, development does not occur. The apparent power of the male group effect in this study suggests that the initial effect of the fraternity intervention is a destabilizing one that leads to (at best) a period of arrested development, if not outright regression for the moment, until (statistically) the second year of college at which time the student is likely to reequilibrate at a higher and more developmentally appropriate level (Pascarella, 2001).

Implications and Suggestions

A number of implications emerge from the findings of this study for faculty, student affairs staff, university administrators, national fraternity headquarters staff, and local fraternity officers and advisors. Like several prior studies concerned in some way with the moral judgment and development of college men, the present study highlights the importance of devoting additional time, resources, and effort toward promoting the moral development of men. This need appears especially true among fraternity men, and particularly so during the early phases of their fraternity experience when, research indicates, they are most at risk of being negatively impacted in their thinking about moral issues. Those who work directly with these men should

take special care to engage and challenge their thinking about the interconnections of between self, others, and world.

Why challenge their thinking about these issues? As noted, what the researcher is calling the *male group effect* is a tendency within groups toward insularity, conformity of thought, and high relational network density. While these group characteristics are not inevitable, they are likely to develop in the absence of a profound effort to the contrary. These factors appear to contribute to a lag in moral development, at least in terms of how moral judgment and reasoning is measured by the Defining Issues Test. The present study indicates that even among fraternities like AA who adopt significant structural changes—such as ridding themselves of traditional pledgship in favor a no-tiered, “flat” membership structure—positive strides toward moral development are elusive at best. That said, groups like AA that have refashioned the fraternity experience in both structure and content appear much more likely to foster development in members than those still operating under traditional approaches to fraternity life. An implication of this study, therefore, is that fraternities should (re)consider their approach to membership and member education by 1.) modeling egalitarian values through a no-pledging membership system, and 2.) reshaping the content of their new member education program (as the first aspect of a four-year developmental model) to intentionally engage men repeatedly in deeply reflecting on the processes and skills of moral judgment and action.

While there is not room in this study for a full discussion of what such a program might look like, the researcher suggests that the *Integrative Ethical Education* model proposed by moral psychologist Darcia Narvaez (2005) could provide the foundation of an intentional approach to moral formation. Narvaez suggests that cultivating moral and ethical expertise must focus on both fine-tuning intuitive perceptions and building skills for right action. Drawing on

Rest's four-component model of the moral domain, Narvaez suggest specific skills to cultivate within the following four areas: ethical sensitivity ("reading" moral situations), ethical judgment (thoughtful reflection on duty, consequences, obligation, and responsibility), ethical focus (cultivating a moral conscience that includes respect, care, and empathy), and ethical action (resolving conflicts, taking initiative as a leader, asserting respectfully, advocating for others) (2005).

Another implication of this study is that in order to facilitate personal and moral development in first-year members, fraternities should do much more to encourage men to make meaningful connections to groups and networks beyond the fraternity. This suggestion cuts deeply against the grain of typical forms of new member education. Traditionally, fraternity men are immersed in the history, traditions, and culture of their chosen fraternity. This immersion experience is understood to "bond" them to the fraternity and one another. But if this bonding is partly what leads to insularity, the men would be better served (developmentally) for that immersion to at least be tempered by the inclusion of an outwardly-focused component. The researcher suggests an emphasis on service-learning. King and Mayhew (2004) cite a number of studies demonstrating the link between community service and increases in moral judgment scores. Notably, two studies found that the positive impact on moral judgment as a result of community service was significantly higher for men than for women.

Based on this and other studies, the researcher suggests that institutions, in conversation with fraternities, should consider the merits of delaying fraternity recruitment to the second semester after admission when discussing the role and benefits of fraternities and sororities on campus. Delayed recruitment could increase the possibility that those who would otherwise immediately reduce the size of their network upon matriculation would broaden the reach of their

relationships. There is certainly no guarantee that this would happen, and some would argue that the men would begin to naturally cluster anyway, but in the absence of a formal connection to a group, men would be free to explore the palette of social options before them. In the process, they would likely encounter more diversity than if their circles were almost immediately drawn tightly around a highly dense network. Deferred recruitment would also invite the men to wrestle with the natural disequilibrium that occurs for any student in the early days of matriculation rather than attaching to a group that is likely to ease their disorientation by reifying previously held values and, thus, tending to delay maturation.

Opportunities for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest interesting opportunities for further research. One suggested path for future research addresses a limitation in the present study; specifically, its relatively short duration. Future research could take a more longitudinal approach and follow cohorts of men over longer periods of time. The present study measured the development of the two cohorts of men during a time of great transition. A longer study could well reveal that in time, the men regain their moral footing and make strides toward overcoming the initial lag in development shown in this study. The researcher suggests following the men for a minimum of two academic years, with administrations of the DIT2 occurring twice yearly.

Another research project could involve a cohort of unaffiliated (non-Greek) men and/or groups of affiliated women. Examining rates of change or growth among a cohort of unaffiliated men could yield interesting insights into the question of whether there is something unique about the male group effect (as described in this study) in fraternities or whether such an effect is present among groups of men generally. The challenge in structuring such a study, from the researcher's experience, would be in identifying a cohort of unaffiliated men to study. Perhaps

men from an Honors College, or the band, or a service fraternity. Researchers should also consider conducting a similar study with Greek affiliated women in an attempt to discover whether cohorts of women are at all subject to a similar group effect. While it is likely that such a study would reveal that women outpace men on moral judgment scores (plenty of data exists to this effect), it would be interesting to note the relative effectiveness of sorority new member interventions as compared to that of men when it comes to fostering moral development.

Researchers should also consider whether men who pledge fraternities in their second semester fare better on moral judgment measures than men who pledge fraternities in their first semester. This research suggestion corresponds to a recommendation in the previous section for campus administrators to consider the merits of delayed recruitment in order to give men time to develop broader social networks and be exposed to a greater diversity of people and opportunities *before* immersing themselves in a high density network. Such a study could provide insight into the potential benefits of delayed recruitment vis-à-vis moral judgment.

Finally, researchers should consider conducting studies similar to this one at different kinds of institutions—for instance, a secular/state university and/or a religiously conservative one. Such a study would provide insight into whether a correlation exists between the moral judgment scores of Greek men and institutional culture. In other words, how are Greek men similar/dissimilar across institutional contexts when it comes to moral judgment? Do fraternity men at religiously conservative institutions, for instance, experience the same initial lag in moral development as the men in this study?

Limitations

This study is limited to two cohorts of demographically similar men who attend a private, religiously-affiliated, medium-sized university in the southwestern United States. As such, the

results of this study will not produce findings that can be seen as normative regarding the moral judgment of college men generally or men who attend private institutions similar to the one studied. Further, this study can only be said to produce findings regarding the development of *moral judgment and reasoning*. It does not address other components in the moral domain; for instance, moral action and behavior, or what the participants would actually do if faced with a certain moral dilemma.

This sample size used in this study was relatively small. It was confined to two groups of men totaling 52 participants. The two participant samples in this study are almost exclusively white, upper-middle-class males. The two groups in the study—Alpha Alpha and Beta Beta—are members of the Interfraternity Council, which is comprised of fraternities that, while open to diversity, are populated by mostly white males. The demographic limitations of the two populations limit the ability to generalize the findings from Chapter 4 to populations that are more diverse ethnically/ racially and socio-economically, such as fraternities associated with National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC).

This study is limited by its timeframe. It measures growth over a relatively short period of time—one semester. Therefore, one cannot draw conclusions about the entirety of the fraternity experience from this study. The most that can be claimed by the researcher is that the data within this study gives a snapshot of what happens to the participants during the pledging/new member period. Alpha Alpha's *Whole Man Initiative* (WMI)—the treatment group intervention—is a four-year developmental approach to character-building within a fraternity. This study, because of time limitations, does not measure the program's effectiveness over the entirety of its duration. Only the portion of WMI occurring during the new member period is measured. Nevertheless, this portion of the program represents a significant and vital

aspect of a four-year process, and corresponds in duration to the pledge period for the men of Beta Beta, the control group.

Another limitation to this study is the sheer number of factors that could influence the moral judgment scores of an individual student or, in turn, a cohort of students. In addition, some institutional effects outside the new member/pledge education process could account for growth in moral judgment. While the groups are demographically similar in many ways and have equal access to opportunities for growth and challenge at the university generally, not all students in the two cohorts have the same experiences or avail themselves of the same opportunities for growth and development. As such, whatever growth or change in moral judgment is demonstrated in either or both groups cannot be attributed solely to the intervention measured.

Finally, the researcher did not have full control over the testing environment. In both the pre- and post-test administrations, the researcher went to the chapter houses of AA and BB to administer the test. While the researcher was able to introduce the test and give instructions as he saw fit, the researcher was not able to control other environmental factors such as noise in the rest of the house, and other men entering the room and possibly distracting the participants during the test. AA voluntarily had more older members present to monitor the environment and make sure the first-year members were diligent and took the process seriously. BB had only one older man present, an officer in the fraternity. As such, the environment in which BB took the test was less controlled and more subject to distractions.

Conclusion

This study investigated rates of change or growth in moral judgment and reasoning among two cohorts of first-year college men (AA and BB). The study focused on

whether a certain cohort of men (AA) who participated in a non-traditional, intentional, character-driven approach to fraternity membership demonstrated a rate of moral judgment growth that was greater than that of a similar cohort of men (BB) who participated in a traditional approach to fraternity membership. The study utilized a pre-post, quasi-experimental approach to the investigation. The researcher hypothesized that there would be no statistically-significant difference between the two groups on the pre-test moral judgment scores, post-test moral judgment scores, or on the rates of change or growth among the two groups over time. Data analysis revealed that mean pre-test N2 scores for the two groups were not statistically different, though the scores were approaching statistical significance ($p < .05$). Differences in mean N2 scores on the post-test were remarkably different, with BB scoring significantly lower than AA on the moral judgment assessment. The analysis of covariance on the change difference over time revealed that AA's intervention did prove to produce a significant effect on moral judgment scores beyond that of BB, in spite of the fact that the scores of AA revealed a decrease in moral judgment.

The study revealed that the effect of AA's new member intervention was a mitigating one to the extent that it appeared to reduce what might otherwise be a significant reduction in moral judgment and reasoning capacities as a result of the powerful male group effect experienced by men who join a fraternity in their first semester of matriculation. The study contributed to literature about the moral development of college men; specifically, it contributed to literature that explores the effects of co-curricular interventions on the moral judgment and reasoning capacities of college men. The study suggests that more intentional efforts toward the moral development of college fraternity men are needed to offset a powerful male group effect which—left to its own devices—tends toward insularity, conformity of thought, and high density

relational networks. Changes in structure and content during the first semester of the fraternity experience are suggested.

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APPENDIX

DIT-2

Defining Issues Test

Version 3.0

University of Minnesota
Center for Research in Ethical Development

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Instructions

This questionnaire is concerned with how you define the issues in a social problem. Several stories about social problems will be described. After each story, there will be a list of questions. The questions that follow each story represent different issues that might be raised by the problem. In other words, the questions/issues raise different ways of judging what is important in making a decision about the social problem. You will be asked to rate and rank the questions in terms of how important each one seems to you.

This questionnaire is in two parts: one part contains the **INSTRUCTIONS** (this part) and the stories presenting the social problems; the other part contains the questions (issues) and the **ANSWER SHEET** on which to write your responses.

Here is an example of the task:

Presidential Election

Imagine that you are about to vote for a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. Imagine that before you vote, you are given several questions, and asked which issue is the most important to you in making up your mind about which candidate to vote for. In this example, 5 items are given. On a rating scale of 1 to 5 (1=Great, 2=Much, 3=Some, 4=Little, 5=No) please rate the importance of the item (issue) by filling in with a pencil one of the bubbles on the answer sheet by each item.

Assume that you thought that item #1 (below) was of great importance, item #2 had some importance, item #3 had no importance, item #4 had much importance, and item #5 had much importance. Then you would fill in the bubbles on the answer sheet as shown below.

1 2 3 4 5

G	M	S	L	N
r	u	o	i	o
e	c	m	t	
a	h	e	t	
t			l	
			e	

	Item #:					
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	0	0	1. Financially are you personally better off now than you were four years ago?
0	0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	2. Does one candidate have a superior personal moral character?
0	0	0	0	0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	3. Which candidate stands the tallest?
0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	0	4. Which candidate would make the best world leader?
0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	0	5. Which candidate has the best ideas for our country's internal problems, like crime and health care?

Further, the questionnaire will ask you to rank the questions in terms of importance. In the space below, the numbers at the top, 1 through 12, represent the item number. From top to bottom, you are asked to fill in the bubble that represents the item in first importance (of those given you to choose from), then second most important, third most important, and fourth most important. Please indicate your top four choices. You might fill out this part, as follows:

Item number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Most important item	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Second most important	0	0	0	0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Third most important	0	0	0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fourth most important	0	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note that some of the items may seem irrelevant to you (as in item #3) or not make sense to you--in that case, rate the item as "No" importance and do not rank the item. Note that in the stories that follow, there will be 12 items for each story, not five. Please make sure to consider all 12 items (questions) that are printed after each story.

In addition you will be asked to state your preference for what action to take in the story. After the story, you will be asked to indicate the action you favor on a seven-point scale (1=strongly favor some action, 7=strongly oppose that action).

In short, read the story from this booklet, then fill out your answers on the answer sheet. Please use a #2 pencil. If you change your mind about a response, erase the pencil mark cleanly and enter your new response.

[Notice the second part of this questionnaire, the Answer Sheet. The Identification Number at the top of the answer sheet may already be filled in when you receive your materials. If not, you will receive instructions about how to fill in the number. If you have questions about the procedure, please ask now.]

Please turn now to the Answer Sheet.]

Famine --(Story #1)

The small village in northern India has experienced shortages of food before, but this year's famine is worse than ever. Some families are even trying to feed themselves by making soup from tree bark. Mustaq Singh's family is near starvation. He has heard that a rich man in his village has supplies of food stored away and is hoarding food while its price goes higher so that he can sell the food later at a huge profit. Mustaq is desperate and thinks about stealing some food from the rich man's warehouse. The small amount of food that he needs for his family probably wouldn't even be missed.

[If at any time you would like to reread a story or the instructions, feel free to do so. Now turn to the Answer Sheet, go to the 12 issues and rate and rank them in terms of how important each issue seems to you.]

Reporter --(Story #2)

Molly Dayton has been a news reporter for the *Gazette* newspaper for over a decade. Almost by accident, she learned that one of the candidates for Lieutenant Governor for her state, Grover Thompson, had been arrested for shop-lifting 20 years earlier. Reporter Dayton found out that early in his life, Candidate Thompson had undergone a confused period and done things he later regretted, actions which would be very out-of-character now. His shop-lifting had been a minor offense and charges had been dropped by the department store. Thompson has not only straightened himself out since then, but built a distinguished record in helping many people and in leading constructive community projects. Now, Reporter Dayton regards Thompson as the best candidate in the field and likely to go on to important leadership positions in the state. Reporter Dayton wonders whether or not she should write the story about Thompson's earlier troubles because in the upcoming close and heated election, she fears that such a news story could wreck Thompson's chance to win.

[Now turn to the Answer Sheet, go to the 12 issues for this story, rate and rank them in terms of how important each issue seems to you.]

School Board --(Story #3)

Mr. Grant has been elected to the School Board District 190 and was chosen to be Chairman. The district is bitterly divided over the closing of one of the high schools. One of the high schools has to be closed for financial reasons, but there is no agreement over which school to close. During his election to the School Board, Mr. Grant had proposed a series of "Open Meetings" in which members of the community could voice their opinions. He hoped that dialogue would make the community realize the necessity of closing one high school. Also he hoped that through open discussion, the difficulty of the decision would be appreciated, and that the community would ultimately support the school board decision. The first Open Meeting was a disaster. Passionate speeches dominated the microphones and threatened violence. The meeting barely closed without fist-fights. Later in the week, school board members received threatening phone calls. Mr. Grant wonders if he ought to call off the next Open Meeting.

[Now turn to the Answer Sheet, go to the 12 issues for this story, rate and rank them in terms of how important each issue seems to you.]

Cancer --(Story #4)

Mrs. Bennett is 62 years old, and in the last phases of colon cancer. She is in terrible pain and asks the doctor to give her more pain-killer medicine. The doctor has given her the maximum safe dose already and is reluctant to increase the dosage because it would probably hasten her death. In a clear and rational mental state, Mrs. Bennett says that she realizes this; but she wants to end her suffering even if it means ending her life. Should the doctor give her an increased dosage?

[Now turn to the Answer Sheet, go to the 12 issues for this story, rate and rank them in terms of how important each issue seems to you.]

Demonstration --(Story #5)

Political and economic instability in a South American country prompted the President of the United States to send troops to "police" the area. Students at many campuses in the U.S.A. have protested that the United States is using its military might for economic advantage. There is widespread suspicion that big oil multinational companies are pressuring the President to safeguard a cheap oil supply even if it means loss of life. Students at one campus took to the streets in demonstrations, tying up traffic and stopping regular business in the town. The president of the university demanded that the students stop their illegal demonstrations. Students then took over the college's administration building, completely paralyzing the college. Are the students right to demonstrate in these ways?

[Now turn to the Answer Sheet, go to the 12 issues for this story, rate and rank them in terms of how important each issue seems to you.]

DIT-2 Answer Sheet

University of Minnesota
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IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

Please read story #1 in the INSTRUCTIONS booklet.

Famine -- (Story #1)

What should Mustaq Singh do? Do you favor the action of taking the food? (Mark one.)

- ① Should take the food ② Can't decide ③ Should not take the food

GREAT
MUCH
SOME
LITTLE
NO

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance (1-5)

- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1. Is Mustaq Singh courageous enough to risk getting caught for stealing?
2. Isn't it only natural for a loving father to care so much for his family that he would steal?
3. Shouldn't the community's laws be upheld?
4. Does Mustaq Singh know a good recipe for preparing soup from tree bark?
5. Does the rich man have any legal right to store food when other people are starving?
6. Is the motive of Mustaq Singh to steal for himself or to steal for his family?
7. What values are going to be the basis for social cooperation?
8. Is the epitome of eating reconcilable with the culpability of stealing?
9. Does the rich man deserve to be robbed for being so greedy?
10. Isn't private property an institution to enable the rich to exploit the poor?
11. Would stealing bring about more total good for everybody concerned or wouldn't it?
12. Are laws getting in the way of the most basic claim of any member of a society?

Rank which issue is the most important (item number).

Most important item ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Second most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Third most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Fourth most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Now please return to the Instructions booklet for the next story.

Reporter -- (Story #2)

Do you favor the action of reporting the story? (Mark one.)

- ① Should report the story ② Can't decide ③ Should not report the story

GREAT
MUCH
SOME
LITTLE
NO

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance (1-5)

- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

1. Doesn't the public have a right to know all the facts about all the candidates for office?
2. Would publishing the story help Reporter Dayton's reputation for investigative reporting?
3. If Dayton doesn't publish the story wouldn't another reporter get the story anyway and get the credit for investigative reporting?
4. Since voting is such a joke anyway, does it make any difference what reporter Dayton does?
5. Hasn't Thompson shown in the past 20 years that he is a better person than his earlier days as a shop-lifter?
6. What would best serve society?
7. If the story is true, how can it be wrong to report it?
8. How could reporter Dayton be so cruel and heartless as to report the damaging story about candidate Thompson?
9. Does the right of "habeas corpus" apply in this case?
10. Would the election process be more fair with or without reporting the story?
11. Should reporter Dayton treat all candidates for office in the same way by reporting everything she learns about them, good and bad?
12. Isn't it a reporter's duty to report all the news regardless of the circumstances?

Rank which issue is the most important (item number).

Most important item ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Second most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Third most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Fourth most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Now please return to the Instructions booklet for the next story.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



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School Board -- (Story #3)

Do you favor calling off the next Open Meeting?

- ① Should call off the next open meeting ② Can't decide ③ Should have the next open meeting

GREAT
MUCH
SOME
LITTLE
NO

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance (1-5)

- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 1. Is Mr. Grant required by law to have Open Meetings on major school board decisions?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 2. Would Mr. Grant be breaking his election campaign promises to the community by discontinuing the Open Meetings?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 3. Would the community be even angrier with Mr. Grant if he stopped the Open Meetings?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 4. Would the change in plans prevent scientific assessment?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 5. If the school board is threatened, does the chairman have the legal authority to protect the Board by making decisions in closed meetings?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 6. Would the community regard Mr. Grant as a coward if he stopped the open meetings?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 7. Does Mr. Grant have another procedure in mind for ensuring that divergent views are heard?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 8. Does Mr. Grant have the authority to expel troublemakers from the meetings or prevent them from making long speeches?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 9. Are some people deliberately undermining the school board process by playing some sort of power game?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 10. What effect would stopping the discussion have on the community's ability to handle controversial issues in the future?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 11. Is the trouble coming from only a few hotheads, and is the community in general really fair-minded and democratic?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 12. What is the likelihood that a good decision could be made without open discussion from the community?

Rank which issue is the most important (item number).

Most important item ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Third most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Second most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Fourth most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Now please return to the Instructions booklet for the next story.

Cancer -- (Story #4)

Do you favor the action of giving more medicine?

- ① Should give Mrs. Bennett an increased dosage to make her die ② Can't decide ③ Should not give her an increased dosage

GREAT
MUCH
SOME
LITTLE
NO

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance (1-5)

- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 1. Isn't the doctor obligated by the same laws as everybody else if giving an overdose would be the same as killing her?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 2. Wouldn't society be better off without so many laws about what doctors can and cannot do?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 3. If Mrs. Bennett dies, would the doctor be legally responsible for malpractice?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 4. Does the family of Mrs. Bennett agree that she should get more painkiller medicine?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 5. Is the painkiller medicine an active hallucinogenic drug?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 6. Does the state have the right to force continued existence on those who don't want to live?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 7. Is helping to end another's life ever a responsible act of cooperation?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 8. Would the doctor show more sympathy for Mrs. Bennett by giving the medicine or not?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 9. Wouldn't the doctor feel guilty from giving Mrs. Bennett so much drug that she died?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 10. Should only God decide when a person's life should end?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 11. Shouldn't society protect everyone against being killed?
- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 12. Where should society draw the line between protecting life and allowing someone to die if the person wants to?

Rank which issue is the most important (item number).

Most important item ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Third most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Second most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Fourth most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Now please return to the Instructions booklet for the next story.

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Demonstration -- (Story #5)

Do you favor the action of demonstrating in this way?

- ① Should continue demonstrating in these ways ② Can't decide ③ Should not continue demonstrating in these ways

GREAT
MUCH
SOME
LITTLE
NO

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance (1-5)

- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
1. Do the students have any right to take over property that doesn't belong to them?
 2. Do the students realize that they might be arrested and fined, and even expelled from school?
 3. Are the students serious about their cause or are they doing it just for fun?
 4. If the university president is soft on students this time, will it lead to more disorder?
 5. Will the public blame all students for the actions of a few student demonstrators?
 6. Are the authorities to blame by giving in to the greed of the multinational oil companies?
 7. Why should a few people like Presidents and business leaders have more power than ordinary people?
 8. Does this student demonstration bring about more or less good in the long run to all people?
 9. Can the students justify their civil disobedience?
 10. Shouldn't the authorities be respected by students?
 11. Is taking over a building consistent with principles of justice?
 12. Isn't it everyone's duty to obey the law, whether one likes it or not?

Rank which issue is the most important (item number).

Most important item ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Second most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Third most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Fourth most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Please provide the following information about yourself:

1. Age in years:

0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9

2. Sex (mark one): Male Female

3. Level of Education (mark highest level of formal education attained, if you are currently working at that level [e.g., Freshman in college] or if you have completed that level [e.g., if you finished your Freshman year but have gone on no further].)

- Grade 1 to 6
- Grade 7, 8, 9
- Grade 10, 11, 12
- Vocational/technical school (without a bachelor's degree) (e.g., Auto mechanic, beauty school, real estate, secretary, 2-year nursing program).
- Junior college (e.g., 2-year college, community college, Associate Arts degree)
- Freshman in college in bachelor degree program.
- Sophomore in college in bachelor degree program.
- Junior in college in bachelor degree program.
- Senior in college in bachelor degree program.
- Professional degree (Practitioner degree beyond bachelor's degree) (e.g., M.D., M.B.A., Bachelor of Divinity, D.D.S. in Dentistry, J.D. in law, Masters of Arts in teaching, Masters of Education [in teaching], Doctor of Psychology, Nursing degree along with 4-year Bachelor's degree)
- Masters degree (in academic graduate school)
- Doctoral degree (in academic graduate school, e.g., Ph.D. or Ed.D.)
- Other Formal Education. (Please describe: _____)

4. In terms of your political views, how would you characterize yourself (mark one)?

- Very Liberal
- Somewhat Liberal
- Neither Liberal nor Conservative
- Somewhat Conservative
- Very Conservative

5. Are you a citizen of the U.S.A.?

- Yes No

6. Is English your primary language?

- Yes No

Thank You.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

Dilemma #6

Do you favor the action?

- ① Strongly Favor ② Favor ③ Slightly Favor ④ Neutral ⑤ Slightly Disfavor ⑥ Disfavor ⑦ Strongly Disfavor

GREAT
MUCH
SOME
LITTLE
NO

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance (1-5)

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 1.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 2.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 3.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 4.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 5.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 6.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 7.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 8.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 9.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 10.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 11.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 12.

Rank which issue is the most important (item number).

Most important item ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Second most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Third most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Fourth most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Dilemma #7

Do you favor the action?

- ① Strongly Favor ② Favor ③ Slightly Favor ④ Neutral ⑤ Slightly Disfavor ⑥ Disfavor ⑦ Strongly Disfavor

GREAT
MUCH
SOME
LITTLE
NO

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance (1-5)

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 1.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 2.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 3.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 4.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 5.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 6.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 7.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 8.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 9.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 10.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 11.
 ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ 12.

Rank which issue is the most important (item number).

Most important item ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Second most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Third most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Fourth most important ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD



PROTOCOL REVIEW REQUEST

The TCU Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for protecting the welfare and rights of the individuals who are participants of any research conducted by faculty, staff, or students at TCU. Approval by the IRB must be obtained prior to initiation of a project, whether conducted on-campus or off-campus. While student research is encouraged at both the undergraduate and graduate level, only TCU faculty or staff may serve as Principal Investigator and submit a protocol for review.

Please submit this protocol electronically to Dr. David Cross, TCU Institutional Review Board. Also submit a consent document, HIPAA form if applicable, Protecting Human Research Participants Training certificates, recruitment materials, and any questionnaires or other documents to be utilized in data collection. A template for the consent document and HIPAA form, instructions on how to complete the consent, and a web link for the Protecting Human Research Participants Training are available on the TCU IRB webpage at www.research.tcu.edu. Submission deadline for protocols is the 15th of the month prior to the IRB Committee meeting.

1. **Date:** August 20, 2012
2. **Study Title:** Measuring Moral Judgment Development Among Men in the First Year of College
3. **Principal Investigator (must be a TCU faculty or staff):** Don Mills
4. **Department:** Educational Leadership program, College of Education
5. **Other Investigators:** List all faculty, staff, and students conducting the study including those not affiliated with TCU.

Daniel Terry, Ed.D student

6. **Project Period:** August 31, 2012 – January 31, 2013
7. **Funding Agency:** none
8. **Amount Requested From Funding Agency:** none
9. **Due Date for Funding:** none

10. Purpose: Describe the objectives and hypotheses of the study and what you expect to learn or demonstrate:

The purpose of this research project is to examine the degree to which a cohort of first-year college men measurably demonstrate gains in moral judgment and reasoning from having participated in an intentional character development program as compared to a cohort of first-year men who do not participate in a similarly intentional character development program. The Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT-2), a paper-and-pencil instrument for measuring moral judgment development, will be used to generate data regarding developmental gains in both groups. In our study, the treatment group will be a cohort of first-year men who are together moving through the new member education program of a local chapter of a national fraternity known for its non-traditional approach to membership (men don't "pledge," they are welcomed as new members from the beginning) and for their explicit emphasis on character development. The control group will also be a cohort of first-year men moving through new member education in a local chapter of a national fraternity, but one that subscribes to the traditional demands of fraternity pledgship and does not have a similarly intentional program of character development.

Our question is whether the character intervention experienced by the treatment group affects the moral judgment and reasoning of participants in a way that is measurably different than for those first-semester college men (the control group) who do not participate in a similarly intentional character development program. Our hypothesis is that there will be no statistically significant difference in the effects of the character development program on the moral judgment and reasoning scores of men in the treatment group as compared to the scores of the control group.

We propose a pre-post quasi-experimental design utilizing the DIT-2 with the treatment group and the control group. Both groups of men, as first-semester college students, will have a common experience of the TCU community and the common experience of choosing to affiliate with a fraternity. The exceptional factor is the non-traditional approach to membership and the intentional focus on character development experienced by members of the treatment group. Both groups of first-year men will be given the DIT-2 early in the fall semester; specifically, within ten days of being invited to join each fraternity. The DIT-2 will be given to both groups of men a second time early in their second semester. We will measure and compare pre and post scores regarding the sophistication of moral reasoning and judgment among both groups, as well as measure and compare developmental gains in moral reasoning and judgment across and among both groups during the period of study.

11. Background: Describe the theory or data supporting the objectives of the study and include a bibliography of key references as applicable.

Most American four-year colleges and universities embrace an institutional mission that either implicitly or explicitly includes moral development as a desired student outcome.

This value is expressed in a variety of ways and is named using language that refers to preparation for citizenship, character development, ethical leadership, service to the world, and the like. The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has, over the last ten-plus years, generated tools, research and numerous resources to inform campus practices and measure progress related to issues of student personal and social responsibility or, in our language, moral development. AAC&U is a leading national association of more than 1,250 member institutions dedicated to improving the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. A 2002 AAC&U report recommended that higher education engage in developing “responsible” learners whose sense of social responsibility and ethical judgment is marked by such qualities and dispositions as “intellectual honesty,” “responsibility for society’s moral health and for social justice,” and “discernment of consequences, including ethical consequences” of decisions and actions (24). Recognizing this vision of higher education will require having a grasp of the moral dispositions of students as they enter college, whether and how those dispositions change in higher education settings, and what (if anything) we can determine about specific contexts or interventions within higher education that affect moral growth.

Cognitive-developmental theories comprise most of the conceptual frameworks in the literature regarding the moral development of college students. These frameworks generally operate on the assumption that moral development is primarily cognitive and centers in moral reasoning and judgment, and that moral development occurs progressively over a lifetime demonstrating increasing sophistication of thought. For the past half-century, the work of Lawrence Kohlberg—and those in conversation with him—has by far been the most influential approach to moral development in this framework (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Our proposal involves the use of a neo-Kohlbergian instrument (DIT-2) designed to elicit intuitive moral schemas utilized in moral reasoning and judgment, tapping into a level of tacit processing that is most closely tied to everyday moral thinking (Narvaez & Bock, 2002). Developed by James Rest, a student of Kohlberg’s, the Defining Issues Test was created as a cognitive-developmental tool that measures stage shifts in the upper half of Kohlberg’s moral development stage scheme (Rest, et al, 1999).

A common measure of moral reasoning and judgment in moral development literature, the DIT-2 captures and measures changes in moral judgment and reasoning by using short dilemmas to stimulate moral thinking and reveal a participant’s preference for one of three moral thought schemas: personal interest schema (less sophisticated), maintaining norms schema, and post-conventional schema (most sophisticated). The DIT-2 provides data regarding the schemas that participants bring to the task of moral discernment. Presumably, the schemas that emerge are those that structure and guide the participant’s thinking in decision-making beyond the instrument. The DIT-2 is a valid research instrument relative to seven criteria and cited in over 400 published articles (Thoma, 2006).

While significant data exists on the influence of the college environment generally on the moral development of students (King & Mayhew, 2002), we seek to better understand the moral effects of *a particular aspect of the college environment on a particular demographic*; specifically, the effects of an intentional character development intervention on the moral judgment of men in their first year of college.

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Association of American Colleges and Universities. 2002. *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

King, P.M & Mayhew, M.J. 2002. Moral Judgment Development in Higher Education: Insights from the Defining Issues Test. *Journal of Moral Education*, 31, no. 3, 247-270.

Narvaez, D. & Bock, T. 2002. Moral Schemas and Tacit Judgment, or How the Defining Issues Test is Supported by Cognitive Science. *Journal of Moral Education*, 31, no. 3, 298-314.

Rest, J., Narvaez, D., Bebeau, M.J., & Thoma, S.J. Postconventional Moral Thinking: A Neo-Kohlbergian Approach. Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum Associates.

Thoma, S.J. 2006. Research on the Defining Issues Test. In M. Killen & J.G. Smetana (Eds.). *Handbook of Moral Development*. (p. 67-91). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

12. Subject Population: Describe the characteristics of the participant population including the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the number of participants you plan to recruit:

Our plan is to draw our treatment and control groups from the new member class of two local chapters of national men's fraternities in the fall semester of 2012. The fraternities will likely accept a comparable number of new members/pledges, and will draw from the same pool of potential new members. The participants in both groups will be at least 18 years of age and in the first semester of their first year of college. The treatment group will be from a fraternity that offers men a nationally-recognized, cohort-based, non-traditional new member experience characterized by a "no-pledging, continuous development experience focused on scholarship, leadership, and life skills...that centers on personal growth and development." The control group will comprise men from a fraternity that offers a traditional cohort-based fraternity pledgship experience that, while perhaps seeking to inculcate positive social values, nevertheless does not claim a similarly intentional character development program. We expect the size of the new member/pledge class to be about 40 for both groups.

13. Recruitment Procedure: Describe your recruitment strategies including how the potential participants will be approached and precautions that will be taken to minimize the

possibility of undue influence or coercion. Include copies of the recruitment letters, leaflets, etc. in your submission.

Treatment and control group participants will be recruited through the assistance of the fraternity advisor and president, both of whom understand and support the purposes of our project and are willing to invite new members to participate. Both the advisor and president understand that student participation is completely voluntary and will communicate that with potential participants.

Within ten days of being invited to join the fraternity, the new members will be invited to take 30-40 minutes and complete the DIT-2 at the conclusion of one of their meetings. The general nature of the study will be described and voluntary participants will be solicited from the entire new member population of the two groups.

- 14. Consenting Procedure: Describe the consenting procedure, whether participation is completely voluntary, whether the participants can withdraw at any time without penalty, the procedures for withdrawing, and whether an incentive (describe it) will be offered for participation. If students are used as participants, indicate an alternative in lieu of participation if course credit is provided for participation. If a vulnerable population is recruited, describe the measures that will be taken to obtain surrogate consent (e.g., cognitively impaired participants) or assent from minors and permission from parents of minors.**

Participation in the study is completely voluntary for all participants, and all participants will be at least 18 years old. Participants may choose not to take the instrument or withdraw while taking the instrument, in which case their score sheet will be destroyed. Participants may withdraw from the study after taking the test by contacting the researcher by phone or email and requesting that their data not be included in the analysis. Participants may also choose to not participate in the "post" section of the study at the end of the semester. A copy of the consent form can be found in the Appendix.

No incentives will be offered for participation, beyond (possibly) providing a simple meal of pizza and soft drinks/water for the participants.

- 15. Study Procedures: Provide a chronological description of the procedures, tests, and interventions that will be implemented during the course of the study. Indicate the number of visits, length of each visit, and the time it would take to undergo the various tests, procedures, and interventions. If blood or tissue is to be collected, indicate exactly how much in simple terms. Flow diagrams may be used to clarify complex projects.**

Students in both the treatment and control group will be asked to complete the DIT-2 on two occasions, once during the first two weeks of the fall semester and once at the beginning of the second semester (exact dates have yet to be determined). Four sessions

will be scheduled, two for the treatment group and two for the control group. The DIT-2 takes approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. We chose to give our post-exam after students returned for their second semester so as to give the men in the study one entire semester at college and in their fraternities, and to minimize the distraction of trying to organize the second administration during finals at the end of their first semester. Each group will be given the same instrument in both the pre- and post-administrations.

The DIT-2 presents five one-paragraph hypothetical moral dilemmas to participants, and asks participants what decision they would make in each case (*for, against, or can't decide*). Each case is then followed by 12 issues (in the form of questions) that could be involved in reaching the decision they made about the dilemma. Participants are asked to rank each of the 12 issues—in terms of importance in their decision-making process—on a five-point Likert scale (from *Greatly Important* to *Not Important*). As the participant encounters an issue that resonates with their thinking and taps into their preferred moral thought schema, that item is rated and ranked as important or highly important. Conversely, when the participant encounters an item that either doesn't resonate or seems simplistic and unconvincing, that item is rated and ranked as unimportant or not important at all. After rating each of the 12 issues on their relative importance, participants are then asked to choose the first, second, third, and fourth most important issues for each of the five dilemmas relative to the decision they made.

The DIT-2 will be administered using a paper-and-pencil format. The investigator will provide copies of the instrument and pencils. After a brief introduction to the study by the fraternity advisor or president, the investigator will give instructions to the participants about taking the DIT-2 and answer any questions that might arise. **See Appendix for a copy of the DIT-2 that will be used for both the pre- and post-test administrations.**

16. Data Analyses: Describe how you will analyze your data to answer the study question.

DIT-2 instruments will be obtained from and scored by the Center for the Study of Ethical Development in the College of Education at the University of Alabama. The investigator will administer the DIT-2 and the completed forms will be sent back to the Center for scoring. The Center will send back a printed report and data on a CD to the researchers within three weeks of receipt of the instruments.

The data from the Center will calculate means and standard deviations for the sample as a whole. Four scores will be included by the Center for participant groups: three scores relative to the proportion of items selected that represent preferences for the three moral schemes listed in Section 11 above, and the "N2" score, a relatively new score that represents the degree to which Post-conventional items ("P" score) are prioritized *plus* the degree to which Personal Interest items receive lower ratings than Post-conventional items. Once all raw data is received (mid-February 2013), the researcher will examine change and variance over time, both within individual groups and between the two groups.

- 17. Potential Risks and Precautions to Reduce Risk: Indicate any physical, psychological, social, or privacy risk which the subject may incur. Risk(s) must be specified. Also describe what measures have been or will be taken to prevent and minimize each of the risks identified. If any deception is to be used, describe it in detail and the plans for debriefing.**

Participation in this study presents few to no risks for participants. Participants will be asked to supply only broad demographic information: sex, age, level of education, general description of political views (on a scale), U.S. citizenship or not, and whether English is their primary language. Questions related to demographic variables are contained in the copy of the DIT-2 included in the Appendix.

Participants may become bored or frustrated by the questions contained in the DIT-2. Participants will be informed of this risk and reminded that participation is completely voluntary.

- 18. Procedures to Maintain Confidentiality: Describe how the data will be collected, de-identified, stored, used, and disposed to protect confidentiality. If protected health information is to be re-identified at a later date, describe the procedure for doing so. All signed consents and hard data must be stored for a minimum of 3 years in a locked filing cabinet (and locked room) in the principal investigator's office, lab, or storage closet at TCU. Your professional society may recommend keeping the materials for a longer period of time.**

The results of the DIT-2 will be scored by associates at the Center for the Study of Ethical Development at the University of Alabama. A paper copy of the results and a CD containing data will be sent back to the investigators. Only the investigators listed on this IRB will have access to the results and data, which will be kept in a locked drawer. Results and data will not contain identifying personal information about participants, will remain confidential, and the data will be stored in the possession of investigators for seven years following the completion of the study. Data will not be traceable to specific participants.

The Center retains a copy of the results and data for the purpose of generating normative data regarding the DIT-2.

- 19. Potential Benefits: Describe the potential benefits of the research to the participants, to others with similar problems, and to society.**

There are no particular, direct benefits to the participants, other than the satisfaction of contributing to research that has the potential to lead to greater understanding and interventions regarding moral development of college students generally, and men particularly. At a time of great concern regarding the rates of matriculation and levels of campus engagement among men, our study has the potential to reveal interesting insights

into how the incoming class of men think about and process issues of moral significance, and whether intentionally developmental programs for men are more likely to lead to moral growth and development than simply experiencing the college environment generally. Answers to these questions could, we believe, inform thinking about the nature of future developmental programming and interventions for men on college campuses.

20. Training for Protecting Human Research Participants: Submit training certificates for all the study investigators. The training link is available on the TCU IRB webpage at www.research.tcu.edu.

21. Check List for the Items That Need to be Submitted: Please combine all the files into one pdf document before submitting the materials electronically to the IRB. To prevent any delay in the approval of your protocol, use the most recent template for the protocol, consent document, and HIPAA form by downloading them from www.research.tcu.edu each time you prepare your materials.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| a. Protocol | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Consent document | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c. HIPAA form if applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Protecting Human Research Participants Training certificate for each investigator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e. Recruitment fliers, letters, ads, etc. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f. Questionnaires or other documents utilized in screening and data collection | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |



Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research: Measuring Moral Judgment Development Among Men in the First Year of College

Funding Agency/Sponsor: n/a

Study Investigators: Daniel Terry d.terry@tcu.edu

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the study is to examine the degree to which two groups of college men measurably demonstrate gains in moral judgment from having participated in a program that seeks to positively impact their character. The new member/pledge classes of two fraternities will be used as the treatment group and control group in the study. One group has a non-traditional, “no pledging” approach, while the other group has a traditional pledgeship program. Our question is whether and to what degree differences in moral judgment scores and growth in moral judgment scores exist between the groups. A well-researched and valid measurement instrument known as the Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT-2) is being used to generate data.

How many people will participate in this study? Approximately 80

What is my involvement for participating in this study?

You are asked to take the instrument twice—once in late August/early September and a second time in mid-January at the beginning of the second semester. The instrument is given twice in order to measure growth and change over time. The test takes approximately 35 minutes to complete, and you will take the exact same instrument both times. You will be contacted at the beginning of the second semester regarding available times to take the assessment the second and final time.

How long am I expected to be in this study and how much of my time is required? see previous question

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will they be minimized? Participation in this study presents few to no risks for you. You will be asked to supply only the most basic personal information: sex, age, level of education, general description of political views (on a scale), whether you are a U.S. citizen, and whether English is your primary language. Your individual test responses will not be linked directly to you, but rather used to establish the moral judgment scores of your group. While your fraternity advisor and president are supportive of this study, your participation in it is completely voluntary.

What are the benefits for participating in this study? This study has the potential to reveal important insights into how first-year college men think about and process issues of moral significance, and whether

intentionally developmental programs for men are more likely to lead to moral growth and development than simply experiencing the college environment generally.

Will I be compensated for participating in this study? no

What is an alternate procedure(s) that I can choose instead of participating in this study? Taking the instrument as indicated above is the only way to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected? No identifying personal information will be collected from you in the course of your participation.

Is my participation voluntary? yes

Can I stop taking part in this research? Yes, you may stop participation at any point by informing the investigator that you wish to withdraw.

What are the procedures for withdrawal? You may withdraw by destroying your test instrument during or immediately after administration of the instrument. If you decide to withdraw at a later date, you may contact the researcher who will remove your results prior to scoring.

Will I be given a copy of the consent document to keep? Yes, copies will be supplied upon request.

Who should I contact if I have questions regarding the study?

If you have questions/concerns regarding the study or your participation in it, you may contact:
Dr. Don Mills
College of Education, TCU
Telephone: 817-257-6938
Email: d.mills@tcu.edu

Who should I contact if I have concerns regarding my rights as a study participant?

Dr. David Cross, TCU Institutional Review Board, Telephone 817-257-6416.
Dr. Tim Barth, TCU Institutional Review Board, Telephone 817-257-6427.

Your signature below indicates that you have read or been read the information provided above, you have received answers to all of your questions and have been told who to call if you have any more questions, you have freely decided to participate in this research, and you understand that you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Participant Name (please print): _____

Participant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Investigator Name (please print): _____ **Date:** _____

Investigator Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

TCU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Approval Form

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval refers to research involving human subjects whether on or off campus. **Significant changes in design, participants, or measures must be approved by the IRB. Multi-year projects must be submitted annually for approval. Any unexpected adverse effects on human subjects due to the procedure should be reported immediately.**

Date: 08/22/2012

Principal Investigator: Daniel Terry

Project Title: Measuring Moral Judgment Development Among Men in the First Year of College

Multi-Year Project: Yes No

Approval Number: DRB-F12-02

Proposed Participants:

- TCU students, faculty, or staff
 Non-TCU Participants
 Special populations (e.g. children) – specify _____

Comments:

Approval Period: 08/31/2012 - 01/31/2013

Committee Decisions:

- Approved, Minimal Risk
 Approved, Expedited
 Approved, Exempt Status
 Conditional Approval, with following stipulations:

 Not Approved, Comments:


Chair

8/22/12
Date

VITA

Personal Background	Daniel J. Terry Fort Worth, Texas
Education	Diploma, Kaufman (TX) High School, 1991 Bachelor of Arts in Religion, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 1995 Master of Divinity, Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 1998 Master of Arts, Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Counseling, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, 2000 Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 2013
Experience	Director, The Sophomore & Junior Year Experience, Texas Christian University, 2011-Present Assistant Director, TCU Leadership Center, Texas Christian University, 2008-2011 Minister of Spiritual Formation, University Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas, 2005-2007 Chaplain and Director of Religious Life, Mars Hill College Mars Hill, NC, 2003-2005 Chaplain, Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, Winston-Salem, NC, 1998-2002
Professional Memberships	ACPA—American College Personnel Association NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Association for Moral Education Association for the Contemplative Mind in Higher Education Courage & Renewal North Texas, facilitator

ABSTRACT

THE MALE GROUP EFFECT:
MEASURING MORAL JUDGMENT AND REASONING AMONG TWO COHORTS
OF FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE MEN

By Daniel J. Terry, Ed.D., 2013
College of Education
Texas Christian University

Dissertation Advisor: Donald B. Mills, Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership

What kinds of experiences, interventions, or programs within the college context appear to foster or enhance moral growth beyond what one would expect developmentally from any 18-22 year old student? This quasi-experimental study is directed toward the effects of a particular aspect of the college environment on the moral judgment development of a particular group of students; specifically, first-year college men. The study investigates whether a certain cohort of men, Alpha Alpha (AA), who participate in a non-traditional, intentional, character-driven approach to fraternity membership demonstrated a rate of growth in moral judgment and reasoning that was greater than that of a similar cohort of men, Beta Beta (BB), who participated in a traditional approach to fraternity membership. The Defining Issues Test, Version 2 (DIT2), a neo-Kohlbergian instrument used to measure moral judgment and reasoning, was used to assess change/growth in moral development over time.

Differences in the pre-test moral judgment scores of AA and BB were found, though the differences did not reach significance (.075, $p < .05$). Strong statistically-significant differences in mean moral judgment scores were found in post-test test scores for AA and BB (.008, $p < .05$), though both groups saw decreases in group moral judgment scores from pre- to post-test. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) revealed that there were significant differences in the change/growth rates of AA and BB (.048, $p < .05$). An examination of the moral judgment and

reasoning scores of AA and BB alongside normative national DIT2 data for males concluded that the post-test scores of BB were significantly lower than that of the mean for first-year undergraduate men. In discussing findings, the researcher notes the mitigating effect of AA's intervention; that is, rather than fostering growth in moral judgment and reasoning, it only appears to slow what might otherwise be a significant regression in moral judgment as a result of a powerful male group effect found in fraternities. The nature of this group effect is explored, and implications for practice and research are offered.

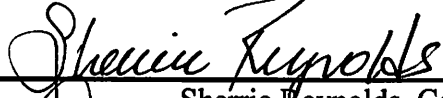
THE MALE GROUP EFFECT:
MEASURING MORAL JUDGMENT AND REASONING
AMONG TWO COHORTS OF FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE MEN

Daniel J. Terry

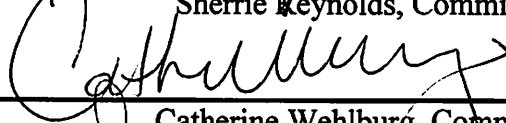
Dissertation Approved:



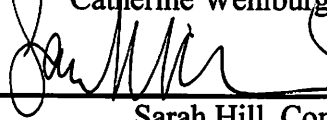
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Catherine Wehlburg, Committee Member



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