A Note of Caution about the "Moral Judgment Test in Physical Education" (MJT-PE)

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In their article on the "Moral Judgment Test in Physical Education" Mouratidou, Chatzopoulos and Karamavrou (2000) report about a validation study of the *Moral Judgment Test-PE* test which they have developed. In their survey they also included the *standard Moral Judgment Test* (MJT) which we have developed (Lind, 1978; in press). Because the naming of the MJT-PE is to highlight the common theoretical and methodological basis of both tests and because correlation with the MJT has also served as a validation criterion, the article by Mouratidou et al. (2008) triggers some critical questions in the reader: Do both tests measure the same construct, can their indexes be directly compared, and can one test substitute for the other?[1]

Let me clearly state that the findings by Mouratidou et al. (2008) fully support their claim that the "MJT-PE" fulfills the four criteria of a valid Moral Judgment Test set fourth by Lind (in press). Their evidence is convincing. However, the article may mislead the reader to belief that the MJT-PE can be directly compared to the findings of the MJT or can even replace the standard MJT. The authors should have noted that the MJT-PE will produce a different C-score because a) it contains only one dilemma (instead of two as the original MJT) amd b) it contains a dilemma taken from the immediate life world of the target population (physical educators). Unfortunately, the authors of the MJT-PE do not report the average C-scores of the MJT and the MJT-PE, nor do they discuss these differences.

These differences are important. Due to its design, in most cases the C-score goes up considerably when only one dilemma is used instead of two. The C-score indexes the proportion of variance of the participant's judgments that can be accounted for by the *moral quality* of the argument he or she judges in contrast to importance he or she gives to the arguments' agreement with his or her opinion on the particular issue or other aspects. When two dilemma are presented, the total variance of the participant's judgments is usually much larger because there are more aspects to which he or she can attend to. Hence, C-scores from one-dilemma tests like the MJT-PE cannot be compared to C-scores from two-dilemma tests like the MJT, and there is no formula which can make them comparable either.

A dilemma that deals with issues taken from the life-world of the target population of the test can also cause the C-score to behave differently than the C-score of the standard MJT. Whether this special C-score goes up or down can only be determined through empirical and cultural studies. If the dilemma touches upon a doctrine of the particular life-world, the C-score usually goes down, presumably because many people lower their judgment competence on issues which have been decided by some authority. This phenomenon, called *moral segmentation*, has been found in relation to military, religious, and professional life-worlds like medicine (Bataglia et al., 2003; Lind, in press). If, on the other hand, the dilemma is not seen as morally demanding, the C-score may be lowered. In the standard MJT the C-score for the workers dilemma is mostly lower by a small but noticeable margin than the C-score for the doctor dilemma (unless moral segmentation takes place, lowering the C-score for the doctor dilemma). Because of the unpredictability of this effect for newly developed tests, I recommend to use the much used standard MJT whenever the C-score is of importance.

In sum, the newly developed MJT-PE is highly valid, yet it measures something different from the standard MJT. Though the MJT-PE also measure the competence aspect of moral judgment behavior, its C-score is neither comparable to the C-score of the standard

MJT, nor can it be used in replacement of the latter. The best strategy it seems is to use both

tests in conjunction. Such a combination would be still shorter than any other test of moral

development. Used in combination with the standard MJT, the MJT-PE would add new,

important information to any study. Especially when used for evaluating educational

programs in the area of physical education such a research strategy would significantly

broaden the basis for conclusions on the efficiency of that program.

References

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Endnote

1. Note that the term "MCT" is copyrighted by Dr. Georg Lind, Unversity of Konstanz, and must *not* be used either alone or in conjunction of another term without the written consent by the author. New versions of the MCT must undergo a certification process as outlined on the author's web-site:http://democracy-education.net