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MEASURING MSW STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD
POVERTY AND THE POOR: A TOOL FOR EVALUATING
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION OUTCOMES

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MARGARET HELEN WHALEN

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MEASURING MSW STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD POVERTY AND THE
POOR: A TOOL FOR EVALUATING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION OUTCOMES

By

Margaret Helen Whalen

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ABSTRACT

MEASURING MSW STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD POVERTY AND THE
POOR: A TOOL FOR EVALUATING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION OUTCOMES

By

Margaret Helen Whalen

This study replicates, refines, and offers an enhanced tool for assessing social

work students' attitudes toward poverty and the poor. The research concerned ways

social work educators can assess the effectiveness of social work education with respect

to students' values, prior to or after, professional education.

Seventy, first year MSW students, enrolled in their first semester course on

organizational and community theories, agreed to participate during the twelfth week of a

fifteen week semester. Students voluntarily, and anonymously, completed a

questionnaire containing the original thirty-seven item Atherton, et al. (1993) Attitudes

Toward Poverty and the Poor scale (ATP). The questionnaire included seventeen

additional attitude items and twenty-one questions regarding respondents' demographic

characteristics, personal backgrounds and professional interests.

Factor analysis of the fifty-four item version of the ATP showed no clear factor

structure. Four, internally reliable conceptual subscales were crafted and analyzed with

respect to respondents' demographics, backgrounds and interests. No associations were

found between total scale score and subscales when correlated with demographic

characteristics or personal backgrounds. Relatively strong correlations were found

among attitude subscales and self-reported influence of liberal/conservative worldviews

and influence of religion on attitudes toward the poor and decisions to enter social work.

Respondents with more conservative worldview ratings reported stronger influence ratings for extent to which religion influenced their attitudes toward poverty and the poor. Respondents with more liberal worldview ratings reported stronger influence ratings for extent to which worldview influenced their decisions to become social workers.

The study demonstrated the viability of the modified version of the ATP scale, identified sound conceptual subscales, and suggested an evaluation logic model for using the measure for evaluation of professional education with respect to social work values and students' attitudes.

DEDICATION

To Bev,

for "only two more years"

that lasted for seven.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

You will hear people talk about education as a journey, but it's not a journey that just one person undertakes; the journey often starts with people who are not there at the end of the trip. My journey, started several generations ago, with an immigrant and an orphan, my grandmothers. A proud, 17-year-old, Irish Catholic girl, who left Northern Ireland to work in a Philadelphia garment factory. And a 10-year-old Italian girl, whose father and family couldn't care for her and her siblings. Over Tetley tea and orange marmalade on muffins my Irish grandmother taught me to hate oppression, to fight hard for justice, and to find wealth in small places. My Italian grandmother, and her siblings were raised in a Catholic orphanage in Philadelphia. From them I learned about making a family with those you meet along the way; that family is whomever you consider family; that simple generosity, kindness and responsibility is something you live everyday; and that you don't need to have a blood tie to someone to care about them or care for them.

My grandmothers shaped my values and gave me my parents who taught me about having roots and wings. From my father I learned my history, the importance of unions, that intelligence and education are two different things and come in many forms. My father taught me reverence for children, animals, and people who help the small and weak. My mother taught me the power of having a vision and using my voice. I grew up not only knowing "You CAN fight city Hall", but believing I had an obligation to do so. When I left to get educated I took with me these lessons and the values they had instilled.

I learned a great deal at the colleges and universities I attended. But I never forget where I really started my Social Work education, long ago, as a child. There are many people no longer with me at the end of this journey. My grandmothers and great aunts are gone, my mother, my brother Thomas, but I'm finishing the journey they

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Growing public demand for evidence-based practice has reached the academic

world of social work educators. Evidence-based pedagogy in professional education

requires evaluation of educational outcomes. Evaluating outcomes of professional social

work education is a task best met by using valid and reliable indicators of knowledge,

skills, and values. Examining changes in social work students' values is one important

aspect of professional education. Values are often reflected in our attitudes. Assessing

students' attitudes and attitude changes is important for evaluating social work education

outcomes.

Over the last three decades, social service agencies have been challenged to

demonstrate the effectiveness of programs they offer. Government officials,

communities, taxpayers, philanthropists and consumers increasingly require

organizational recipients of funding to evaluate the effects of their services they offer

(Barlow, Hayes, & Nelson, 1984; Peebles, 2000). In response there has been a steady

expansion of systematic accountability required of human service delivery systems,

agencies, and programs (Thyer, Isaac, & Larkin, 1997). Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey

(1999) explain,

> Evaluations are undertaken for a variety of reasons: to judge the worth of
> ongoing programs and to estimate the usefulness of attempts to improve
> them; to assess the utility of innovative programs and initiatives; to
> increase the effectiveness of program management and administration; and
> to satisfy the accountability requirements of program sponsors (p. 13).

Social service providers, evaluation researchers, public and private agencies for

health-oriented, educational, and public welfare programs have reacted to accountability

requirements by offering routine evaluations of both the process and outcome of

delivered services. The social work profession has responded to the growing mandatory accountability within social service systems by conducting program evaluations (Proctor, 1990; Rubin & Babbie, 2001; Zerhouni, 2003) and teaching social work students to identify, demonstrate, and provide evidence-based practices (Bloom & Fischer, 1982; Bloom, Fischer, & Orme, 2003; Gambrill, 1999; Gambrill, 2000; Glicken, 2005; Neuman & Krueger 2003).

In addition to these efforts to evaluate social work practice, social work education has an ongoing need for systematically evaluating itself with respect to the profession's mission and the goals of professional social work education. Self-awareness and practice accountability are skills regularly taught to social work students. Reflection, or self-study, is an initial step toward professional self-development. Self-study also can be a preliminary step for professional schools toward cultivating a collective professional-awareness within social work. The resulting collective-awareness potentially can go far in enhancing professional social work education. Over twenty five years ago, Pilsecker issued a call for the involvement of social work educators in such an undertaking. He suggested that educators are "obligated to make it possible for the process to begin" (1978, pg. 55). His call for educators to begin the process has been heeded through the self-study process and institutionalized through the CSWE accreditation process. However, the process remains unique to individual social work education programs. A collective awareness is yet to develop throughout social work education.

A more recent call for educators to pursue evidence-based practice has been made by Gambrill (1999). Social work educators indeed are in a unique position to initiate and facilitate a self-study process, not only for social work education, but also for the profession as a whole. To this end, social work educators need to frame professional

education in terms of evidence-based practice principles and craft an outcome evaluation for demonstrating the profession's achievement of its stated purpose and goals.

Recent changes by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) require social work education programs to demonstrate compliance with educational policies, adherence to education standards and achievement of educational objectives (CSWE, 2003). The educational policies and accreditation standards have resulted in routine process evaluation and education quality improvement since the early 1990's (CSWE, 1998). The 1994 evaluative standards, 1.4 and 1.5, required schools of social work to engage in systematic self-assessment (CSWE, 1998). Current CSWE educational policies and accreditation standards 8.0 and 8.1, enhance the earlier standards and call for demonstrable outcomes in accredited professional social work education programs (CSWE, 2003). This requirement has led to a flurry of activity in undergraduate and graduate schools of social work aimed at enumerating educational objectives, activities, and outcomes (Holden, Meenaghan, Anastas, & Metrey, 2002; Miah & Newcomb, 1995).

Demonstrating outcomes necessarily requires enumerating attainable, relevant goals, operationalizing objectives, and selecting valid outcome measures. The study described in this dissertation was designed to explore one potential outcome measure for evaluating social work education outcomes related to a core value of social work: the profession's commitment to promoting social justice and alleviating poverty. Work with disadvantaged populations is an ethical mandate for social work practitioners and a social justice curricular mandate for social work educators (NASW, 2000; CSWE, 1998). As such, social work educators must demonstrate that social work graduates also share the profession's commitment to social justice and have the knowledge, skills, and values to promote social justice and work to alleviate poverty.

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Social work students' attitudes about the poor and their beliefs about the causes of poverty should be of critical concern to educators. As noted above, attitudes that graduates bring to their work with clients affect individuals' experiences with social welfare. The relationship between attitudes and service delivery also affects public perceptions of the social work profession, as well as, perceptions of poverty as a social justice issue. Because of this complex of associations, social work educators must evaluate the nature and strength of professionals' knowledge, skills and values regarding the issues, individuals, and communities that are targets of social work interventions.

As indicated in the statement of its purposes, "social work education is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy" (CSWE, 2003, p. 6). When evaluating professional education, it is important that we base identified outcomes on the profession's history, its stated purposes, and the philosophy threaded throughout both history and purpose. Identifying social work's philosophy, with regard to social injustice and, in particular, poverty, is a difficult task. The difficulty, in part, arises from a the premise that the profession maintains a shared, unitary view of social injustices. A valid contention, that the profession, in fact, does not have a unitary philosophy, provides the first conceptual challenge to the argument advanced in this dissertation. Additional discussion of this study limitation is provided in the concluding chapter. However, the magnitude of the difficulty does not relieve evaluators of the task of conceptually defining and operationalizing outcomes that allow for comprehensive assessment of knowledge, values, and skills.

Professional Social Work Education

As specified by the CSWE (2003) the purpose of social work education is to prepare competent professionals that have the knowledge, skills, and values to provide

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effective social services in ways that reflect the purpose and philosophy of social work.

The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics states in its preamble:

> The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. ... Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. ... [Social workers] strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice" (1997, p. 1).

Relatedly, the Council on Social Work Education stated within the Educational Policy Statement for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) programs

> The purposes of social work education are to prepare competent and effective professionals to develop social work knowledge, and to provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems. Social work education is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy and is based on a body of knowledge, values, and skills. Social work education enables students to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession for competent practice (2003, p. 6).

These two passages provide a succinct picture of the goals and outcomes expected from social work education. The need for meeting these goals is reflected in the post-graduation market for trained social workers.

Every year, bachelor's and master's level social work graduates join the ranks of professional social workers that provide government supported or contracted services to disadvantaged families (NASW, 2005). One major employer of social workers is the nation's public welfare system, administered through the states. In addition to public welfare programs, protective services workers for children and adults, foster care and delinquency workers, preventive services workers and family preservationists provide services to many individuals and families struggling with poverty and its correlates.

Given the breadth of involvement that social workers have with individuals, families, communities, and other professions, it is crucial that we, as social work professionals, understand our own attitudes toward impoverished clients. Attitudes that graduates bring to their work with poor clients will affect the quality of their service delivery and their clients' experiences with the welfare system (Wyers, 1978; Piliavin, Masters & Corbett, 1979; Moffic, Brochstein, Blattstein & Adams, 1983; Reeser & Epstein, 1987; Kingfisher, 1996; Rehner, Ishee, Salloum & Velasques, 1997). Therefore, assessing social work students' attitudes about the poor and their beliefs about the causes of poverty and the nature of social justice must be of critical concern to educators.

Before we can evaluate student attitudes, however, we must begin with a review of the profession's history with respect to poverty and the poor. Social work educators must assess student values and attitudes within the context of the profession's history. This review is especially important given social work's ambivalence with regard to poverty and the poor (Walkowitz, 1999; Jansson, 2001; Margolin, 1997; Trattner, 1994). The following section presents a concise overview of our history with respect to poverty and the impoverished.

Social work history, poverty, and the poor

In the United States the social work profession historically has maintained a central position in societal care of the poor (Specht & Courtney, 1994; Jansson, 1988; Roff, Adams & Klemmack, 1984; Morris, 1977; Margolin, 1997). Late 1700's and early 1800's anti-pauperism movements, and the growth of community administered almshouses and poor farms, predated the Charitable Organization Societies (COS) and settlement house movement activities later in the century (Day, 1997; Leiby, 1978; Leiby, 1987; Trattner, 1984). The growth in "scientific charity" followed the established

traditions of private philanthropy and religious organizations as primary societal vehicles for addressing pauperism (Day, 1997; Trattner, 1984). The poor originally were recipients of social workers' help through the charitable organization societies of the 1800's. COS and settlement houses targeted the poor for services and intervention (Addams, 1961; Jansson, 1988; Watson, 1922; Stuart, 1990).

The founders of professional social work furthered the young profession's involvement with poverty as a social justice issue. Despite their broad range of activities and the variety of beliefs held by these early social workers, the overarching social condition and population to which they attended was poverty and the poor. Mary Richmond's publication in 1899, *Friendly visiting among the poor*, predated the social casework method she developed (Day, 1997; Leighninger, 1987). Richmond's conception of social casework grew from her own work with the poor and friendly visitors that worked with impoverished families through charity organization societies (Jansson, 1988; Longres, 1987).

Likewise, Lillian Wald's work at Henry House (Edwards, 1987) and Jane Addams' work at Hull House (Quam, 1987), and their efforts on behalf of the settlement house movement, were fueled by their individual commitments to changing social conditions for the impoverished and exploited in urban centers throughout the United States (Addams, 1961; Evans, 1997; Jansson, 1988; Stuart, 1990).

Edith Abbott's belief in the government's responsibility to address social problems, furnish humane public welfare systems, and consider the social ramifications of local and federal legislation further expanded the new profession's concern with poverty and the poor. The strenuous efforts of Bertha Capen Reynolds, on behalf of the working poor and other oppressed groups, and the Rank and File Movement, delimited

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more radical, grassroots, branches of the social work profession (Burghardt & Fabricant, 1987; Quam, 1987; Reynolds, 1963; Specht & Courtney, 1994).

The social work profession emerged during the 1800's out of private philanthropic work and religious efforts to alter the nature and extent of poverty (Trattner, 1984; Leiby, 1987; Lunbeck, 1994; Walkowitz, 1999). From its genesis, the profession identified the poor, worked with impoverished families and individuals, and crafted policies to address poverty. Over time the profession acquired an integral position in the creation and dispensing of private and public assistance (Walkowitz, 1999).

Social work's history with regard to poverty and the poor, as described above, is a patchwork of good intentions, misguided kindness, and "cruel compassion" (Margolin, 1997; Szasz, 1994). Margolin draws upon a 100-year period of social work literature to illustrate the semantic ways in which the profession has "blamed the poor for their own poverty" (p. 97). The literature he examines contains both 19th and 20th century treatises on the characteristics of the poor and justifications for intrusive forms of public assistance. Margolin (1997) cites a passage from 1964, in which Levine describes attributes of the poor:

> Conceptual or abstract thinking conveyed through words and phrases is beyond the capacities of this unsophisticated group, members of which are marginally educated, whose lives are a social and cultural wasteland, who act out anger and hostility, who have a low frustration tolerance and poor impulse control. Moreover, in the formative years of the parents and now their children, words were and are used to manipulate and confuse others. These people do not comprehend the true meaning of words, have little faith in them, and are unable to carry out concepts defined by words alone (p. 97)

Levine's work, entitled *Treatment in the home*, was published in the journal *Social Work*. Passages like the above are not anomalies in the professional literature, as Margolin

(1999) notes, but rather, reflect a widespread sentiment within the profession. The

sentiment has been, and can be still, traced throughout the profession's history (Gans,

1995; Lunbeck, 1994; Margolin, 1997; Specht and Courtney, 1994; Walkowitz, 1999).

Since the beginning, professional social workers have maintained a variety of

opinions or beliefs about poverty and the poor. Some have viewed poverty as a

consequence of capitalist industrialization and the exploitation of children and

immigrants. Others have considered poverty to be the result of rampant alcoholism and

the abandonment by husbands and fathers of their wives and children. Despite the

diversity of beliefs, within the COS there was broad-based agreement that the underlying

issue in poverty concerned morality and civility. Moral turpitude, laziness, spendthrift

habits and a poverty of culture were addressed with punitive language and moralistic

judgments (Jansson, 1988; Lunbeck, 1994; Margolin, 1997). The presumed dishonesty,

avarice, and ignorance of impoverished families and individuals was a driving force

behind the "scientific charity" of COS. The COS coordinated their records to ensure that

recipients of their philanthropy were not benefiting from duplicative charity (Jansson,

2001; Margolin, 1997).

The settlement houses throughout the United States held a divergent view of the

causes and issues of poverty. However, the sentiment and methods behind the settlement

houses included efforts to provide the urban poor with more than just basic needs.

Cultural enrichment and access to middle-class civility were integral parts of settlement

house activities. Although social workers' were concerned with improving conditions

and enhancing the lives of the poor, their underlying beliefs were based on attributions

about individual characteristics of the poor that sustained their poverty or individual

experiences that might ameliorate its effects (Jansson, 2001; Lunbeck, 1994; Walkowitz,

1999). Over time, the settlement house movement transformed into a professionalized, community-based arena for group work, referral, and recreation-oriented programming (Stuart, 1990).

The historic relevance of beliefs about poverty and attitudes toward the poor for the profession of social work cannot be overstated. The profession's history is peppered with good intentions closely followed by moralistic judgments and unsubstantiated attributions (Margolin, 1997; Piven & Cloward; 1993; Trattner, 1994; Walkowitz, 1999). Our history provides both a mandate and direction for contemporary social work education. Social work educators need to articulate the espoused values of the profession over time and systematically examine held values and attitudes of the new professionals we educate. The next section explores in more detail the means by which educators can evaluate the achievement of educational outcomes with respect to poverty and the poor.

Evaluating social work education outcomes

The means for self-study already are present in social work education. The accreditation standards and educational policies furnished by the CSWE (2003) require periodic review of social work education programs. This requirement has created a regular process in every accredited professional program whereby educators examine their curricula to demonstrate achievement of the standards and compliance with the stated policies. The accreditation process has evolved over time to its current state, one in which professional programs must demonstrate having attained their stated outcomes. Requiring empirical evaluation of education outcomes, in additional to demonstrating compliance with policies, presents new challenges to social work educators.

The requirement for outcome evaluation is equivalent to the challenges made to social work practitioners by scholars during the last twenty five years, namely, to engage

less in authority-based practice and more in evidence-based practice (Gambrill, 1999; Gambrill, 2001). Since the 1980's social work scholars have been calling for professional education and service delivery to embrace evidence-based practice (Fischer, 1983; Gambrill, 1999, 2001; Cournoyer, 2004).

Evidence-based Practice

By conceiving of social work educators as practitioners working in an academic setting, the strictures of evidence-based practice can be applied to the problem of evaluating professional education outcomes. Social work education can be viewed as another field of practice, similar in some respects to child welfare, gerontological social work, or mental health services. The value in redefining professional education as a field of practice comes from the application of principles of evidence-based practice. Cournoyer (2004) recently proposed a definition of evidence-based social work:

> Evidence-based social work is the mindful and systematic identification, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence of practice effectiveness as a primary part of an integrative and collaborative process concerning the selection and application of service to members of target client groups. The evidence-based decision-making process includes consideration of professional ethics and experience as well as the personal and cultural values and judgments of consumers. (p. 4)

This definition includes several ideas, which require elaboration with respect to social work education as an arena of social work practice, the concept of effectiveness, the nature of evidence, and the specification of the targeted client group.

Effective Social Work Education

Specifically, the effectiveness of professional education can be described as "the extent to which services yield their intended results" (Cournoyer, 2004, p. 4). This definition requires social work educators to operationalize the "intended results" of professional education. The question becomes, "What should we teach/know about

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poverty?" In order to understand the outcomes of social work education it is necessary to turn to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). In the 2003 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) the CSWE states:

> The purposes of social work education are to prepare competent and effective professionals to develop social work knowledge, and to provide leadership in the development of service delivery systems. Social work education is grounded in the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy and is based on a body of knowledge, values, and skills. Social work education enables students to integrate the knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession for competent practice (2003, p.6).

As enumerated in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the profession's purposes include two statements of particular relevance to this study: enhancing human well-being and alleviating poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice; pursuing policies, services, and resources through advocacy and social or political actions that promote social and economic justice. Fulfilling the profession's purposes, particularly with respect to poverty and economic justice, ultimately will reflect the effectiveness of social work education and professional practice.

The nature of evidence of educational effectiveness

As educators we are familiar with evaluating student acquisition of knowledge, typically achieved through testing or grading written assignments that apply newly acquired knowledge. Within social work, educators are familiar with teaching and assessing skill development among students undergoing field education. As a profession we are in relative agreement about the breadth of knowledge and level of skill a newly minted social worker should have. And, we have devised ways to evaluate both knowledge and skill throughout a student's education. We have had less success in routinely assessing values students hold when they enter professional education and as they graduate.

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Transformation or enhancement of student values, which results from social work education, largely has been left to faith. That change happens, and that the resulting values, beliefs, and attitudes are consonant with the profession's values, has been more assumption than verifiable fact. Assessing held values, and evaluating changes in values, is important because, as Piven and Cloward (1993) have noted, "professional beliefs serve the same economic and political functions as philanthropic beliefs in guarding the system against claimants for aid" (p. 175). The need for actively defining and operationalizing the profession's values to a degree that renders them measurable is profound and, as yet, unmet.

The profession already has delineated its values. The NASW *Code of Ethics* (2000) enumerates six core values:

- Service
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

The *Code of Ethics* states, "These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective (p. 1). The challenge becomes how to measure values. However, one additional aspect of evidence-based practice remains to be delineated.

The *Code of Ethics* provides not only an account of core social work values, it also furnishes broad ethical principles based on the values, and sets ethical standards for professional conduct and resolution of ethical dilemmas. The function of the code is to describe and support an overall pattern of professional behavior, both for individual

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social workers and for the profession as a whole. Among the stated purposes of the

NASW (2000) code the following are described:

- The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold
  the social work profession accountable;

- The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's
  mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards (p. 2).

These stated purposes add greater urgency for meeting the need for evaluation of

social work education. The purpose statements also reinforce the importance of

assessing values and value changes with respect to professional education.

Target population

Evidence-based practice necessarily entails identification of whose practice for

whose benefit. The consumers of the social work profession's services generally are

thought to be the individuals, families, organizations, and communities on whose behalf

professionals work to enhance well-being and alleviate social injustice. However,

applying an evidence-based practice model to social work education, reveals that social

work educators, and the educational process, are working to enhance the well-being of

the social work profession. Social work educators serve a population comprised of

existing and future professionals and organizations, professionals who, in turn, serve the

profession's customary client groups, individuals, families and communities.

Evidence-based Education

Despite NASW's broad enumeration of social work core values, as educators and

evaluators we are left the task of operationalizing those values and choosing or crafting

valid measures. Evaluation research has grown into a sophisticated methodology for

building the social service knowledge base (IASWR, 2001; Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey,

1999). Recent developments have yielded a useful evaluation tool, the Logic Model

(Mulroy and Lauber, 2004). Logic models conceptually facilitate organization of evaluations of health, education, and social welfare services (Kapp, 2004). Logic models offer a method for structuring an evaluation of social work education, in general, and of social work students' attitudes, in particular. The following section details the six components of a logic model structure proposed by Kapp (2004). The model is described with respect to graduate education in schools of social work.

Logic model for social work education

A logic model for an outcome evaluation of a program can be conceived as having six components. Figure 1 details the structure and content of a logic model for use in evaluating social work education. Logic modeling describes three aspects of any program, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The first three components of the proposed logic model constitute the inputs to social work education, (1) resources, (2) faculty activities, and (3) program processes. The next two model components constitute the outputs generated by social work education, (4) immediate outcomes and (5) intermediate outcomes. The final model component is (6) long-range outcomes.

Inputs

Resources. The first model component enumerates resources. Program resources in social work education are the concrete inputs, i.e., students, faculty, a school's physical environment or facilities, courses, textbooks and other scholarly works, non-classroom based events, and tuition.

Faculty activities. The second, major input involves faculty activities in support of the school's mission. Faculty activities in professional social work education include teaching, research, social work practice, committee work, school governance meetings, and community involvement. Teaching is a multifaceted technique for educating

professionals. Not only does teaching allow educators to introduce new knowledge to students, teaching also provides an opportunity for educators to model social work values and ethical principles. Students also learn through critical review of their thinking and writing elicited by course assignments. Challenges to expressions and interpretations inconsistent with social work values can be made during classroom contact or through feedback on assignments or group activities. Reinforcement of professional thought and behavior also is possible in classroom settings.

Program processes. The third input category, program processes, is comprised of the procedures by which social work schools operate and through which students are transformed into professional social workers. Teaching is a primary process in professional education. Educators work within a classroom setting where they teach to approved course objectives listed in course syllabi. The objectives reflect the educational policies and accreditation standards issued by the Council on Social Work Education. In addition to teaching, and student evaluation through grading, schools of social work structure their curricula in uniform ways. Every professional school includes a curriculum with demonstrable content on values and ethics, diversity, at-risk populations and social and economic justice, human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field education. Schools also offer advanced content with "greater depth, breadth, and specificity", with respect to fields of practice, than is covered in the foundation content (CSWE, 2003, p. 12).

These three inputs for social work education, resources, faculty activity, and program processes, typically are assessed through established plans and procedures for ongoing reviews within each social work program. Additionally, professional schools are

INPUTS			OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES
Resources	Faculty Activities	Program Processes	Immediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long Range Outcomes
Faculty	Teaching	Teaching	Student GPAs	Graduation	Attain goals
Students	Research	Grading	Field learning agreements	Acquire knowledge	Fulfill purpose
Facilities	Practice	Field Instruction	Field evaluations	Develop skills	Public opinion
Courses	Committees	Curriculum	Course evaluations	Adopt values	Social justice
Texts	Governance	Re-accreditation	Accreditation compliance	Program applications	
Field placements		Continuing education		Graduates' licensure	
School events					

Figure 1- Social work education logic model

evaluated on a periodic basis through the CSWE reaccreditations process. These inputs are intended to yield the outcomes detailed above in Figure 1.

Outputs

Immediate outcomes. Social work education outputs are two-fold, immediate and intermediate. Immediate outcomes are straightforward, customary indicators of educational attainment. Student grades on assignments and for completed courses are primary measures of educational effectiveness with respect to knowledge. In addition to grades, the content and achievement of field learning agreements or contracts furnish qualitative measures of student skills, knowledge application, and ethical behavior. Despite this breadth of coverage there is no systematic, direct measure, either qualitative or quantitative, of student values upon entering graduate social work programs or value changes throughout graduate education.

Intermediate outcomes. A variety of gross measures of educational policy compliance and achievement of accreditation standards comprise intermediate outcomes. Periodic reaccreditation is a program-based assessment of compliance and standards achievement. Graduation of MSW credentialed social workers that are able to pass licensure or certification requirements provides another intermediate measure of education success. Increased applications for study and growth in student enrollment also serve as measures of educational effectiveness.

Students' knowledge, skills, and values are other measures of intermediate outcomes. In some schools of social work, student course requirements include an integrative seminar at the end of graduate study. Such requirements allow schools to ascertain student achievement of educational objectives beyond assessments of course

objectives – typically measured by individual course grades and overall grade point averages.

Outcomes

 Long range outcomes. Long-range outcomes reflect the purpose of social work education and the mission of the social work profession. If social work education is effective, schools should be able to demonstrate they have created social workers that are prepared, competent professionals who develop social work knowledge, provide leadership in service development and delivery, and who integrate the knowledge, values and skills of the profession in their practice (CSWE, 2003). Within any given school of social work these professionals constitute the alumni.

 Meeting the mission of the social work profession also is a longer-term outcome. The mission includes enhanced social and economic justice, decreased social injustice, poverty, and oppression; increases in meeting the needs of individuals and groups; and advocacy and political actions to expand policies, services, and resources with respect to individual well being, poverty, and social justice (NASW, 2000). The profession's activities in pursuit of its mission also should be reflected in a more positive public opinion of social workers and the social work profession as a whole.

Overview of Logic Model for Evidence-Based Education

 The logic model presented above provides an overview of social work education inputs and outcomes. A detailed evaluation plan would be used to address sequentially each outcome, identify contributing activities, and suggest measures or indicators of inputs and outcomes. This task is beyond the scope of the study. However, one aspect of

the logic model can be developed as a circumscribed example, and an initial contribution, to the evaluation of social work education as an evidence-based practice.

Student values as an outcome of effective educational practice

Adoption of social work values is among the most challenging educational outcomes to measure. Student knowledge acquisition and professionals' knowledge development over time can be assessed directly. Testing for licensure or certification, now used in 35 states, is a means for assessing professional knowledge (Bowden, 2005). Social worker skills are concrete manifestations of the knowledge and experiences of novice and master social workers. Novice social workers' skill levels are monitored through field instruction and close supervision by seasoned social workers and administrators. Master social workers typically practice in organizations with program and agency standards, routine supervising, and accountability procedures.

Unlike knowledge and skill, the acquisition, adoption, or refinement of values is far more difficult to operationalize and measure. Assessing the application of those values also poses a challenge because it requires specification of a target about which values are concerned or to which values are applied. This study focused on poverty and the poor as the referent for values because of the prominence of poverty, both historically and currently, as a concern for the social work profession. This dissertation study assists with the task of operationalizing social work values by refining a relevant measure.

The Attitudes Toward Poverty (ATP) scale, proposed by Atherton, Gemmel, Haagenstad, Holt, Jensen, O'Haran, and Rehner (1993), was developed to be a credible tool for measuring attitudes and deducing underlying values held by social work students and professionals. The next chapter presents a brief argument to validate the

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measurement of values using attitudes as values indicators. This rationale for the study is followed by a review of the empirical literature on social work student attitudes about poverty. Based on a review of empirical literature, possible correlates of social work student attitudes about poverty and the poor were identified. The resulting list of variables provided direction for selecting demographic and personal background questions to include in the survey. Deficiencies in existing research are enumerated. Research questions, following from variables identified as possible correlates, are enumerated.

Chapter 3 details the methodology and analysis approach used to examine the ATP and explore the research questions. In Chapter 4, the presentation of findings begins with the replication of the original ATP scale. Scale reliability analysis is followed by conceptual and empirical justifications for refinements to the scale. The enhanced ATP instrument is used to address the research questions posed at the end of the review of the literature. Chapter 5 discusses the findings with respect to the research questions. Although the study was not designed to test theory, theoretical frameworks are drawn upon to facilitate interpretation of findings. The dissertation concludes with discussion of the implications of the study for evidence-based education, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature related to the measurement of social work

student attitudes toward poverty and the poor. The chapter begins with a brief review of

the theoretical context of attitude measurement, attitude formation, and the connection

between values and attitudes. This contextual overview is followed by a review of

empirical literature on social work student attitudes toward poverty and the poor. This

examination of knowledge regarding student attitudes about poverty is followed by a

brief critique of the research. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the research

questions examined in the current study.

Knowledge, Values, Attitudes and Behavior

The study of attitudes in social psychology and sociology suggests a means for

creating meaningful evidence for evaluating social work education. Knowledge and

values are reflected in attitudes (Cournoyer, 1991; Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). And, in

turn, attitudes affect behavior (Carrillo, Holzhalb, & Thyer, 1993). Azjen and Fishbein

(1980) and Fishbein and Azjen (1975) provided comprehensive reviews of attitude

research. Social science research on attitudes has a long history, predating the formation

of the social work profession (Azjen & Fishbein, 1980). Contemporary developments in

social science knowledge about attitudes reflect "agreement among investigators that

attitudes toward any object are determined by beliefs about that object" (1980, p. 62).

Azjen and Fishbein maintain, "in order to understand why a person holds a certain

attitude toward an object it is necessary to assess his salient beliefs about that object"

(1980, p. 63). They also observed, "quite simply, an attitude is an index of the degree to

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which a person like or dislikes" the focus of the attitude. In the current study the attitudinal object was poverty and the poor.

Azjen and Fishbein (1977) noted in their review of research on attitudes and behavior that "attitudes toward an object can predict only the overall pattern of behavior" (p. 27). They cited research by Thurstone (1931), Doob (1947), and Campbell (1963), in support of their contention that specific behavior toward an object cannot be predicted by knowing only an individual's attitude toward that object. This observation suggests that in the current study we may not conclude that negative or positive attitudes toward poverty and the poor will result in particular treatment of impoverished individuals, families or communities. However, it lends credence to the use of attitude measurement as a means for tapping underlying beliefs and values that may influence an "overall pattern of behavior" in students and, eventually, credentialed professionals.

Rokeach (1968) defines attitude as, "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner" (p. 112). Attitudes differ from beliefs in that "beliefs relate less to one's disposition or learning than to one's assessment of an empirical situation" (Tropman, 1989, p. xiv). Beliefs relate more closely to knowledge, facts, and evidence. Attitudes, however, can be maintained in the absence of empirical support. If attitudes are thought of as proxy indicators of individuals' beliefs and values, then assessing student attitudes should provide an acceptable measure of educational effectiveness for increasing knowledge and influencing social work student values in the desired direction.

More recently poverty attitude research with social work students reviewed theories of attitude formation (Melnick, 2000). Definitions of attitudes, with importance

for the current study, are credited to three researchers, Rokeach, Sherrod, and Gray.

Rokeach, in 1968, articulated three assumptions about beliefs for any given individual:

- "Not all beliefs are equally important"
- "The more central a belief, the more it will resist change"
- "The more central the belief changed, the more widespread the repercussions in the rest of the belief system. (p. 3)" (as cited in Melnick, 2000, p. 15)

Melnick (2000) noted, "attitudes are important as they relate to a person's behavior. While attitudes themselves do not constitute behaviors, they are 'mental processes that related individuals to objects' (Gray, 1996, paragraph 4)" (Melnick, 2000, p. 19). Melnick also cites "'Sherrod (1982) [who] notes that it is easier to predict multiple behaviors from a general attitude than to predict a single behavior'" (2000, p. 19).

Research On Social Work Student Attitudes Toward Poverty And The Poor

A number of studies have been published since the early 1960's regarding student attitudes toward the poor or beliefs about the causes or nature of poverty. A 1974 study by Sharwell, reportedly used a sample of 20 students. During the course of their social work education, students experienced significant increases in their initially positive attitudes toward public dependency. Orten (1979) found an extensive literature on attitudes toward the poor. Of the studies he reviewed (Cryns, 1977; Grimm & Orten, 1973; Orten, 1976), social work students' demographic characteristics were differentially related to their generally positive attitudes toward poverty and the poor. Orten's review (1979) of studies by Varley (1963) and Hayes and Varley (1965) noted no changes in student attitudes during graduate social work training. However, the authors had indicated that students who entered graduate school with practice experience exhibited an

attitude shift by the end of their professional training such that they viewed the poor more negatively and attributed poverty to personal failing rather than social injustices.

Orten (1979, 1981) reported that social, economic and demographic characteristics did not account for actual attitude but were somewhat related to the intensity with which attitudes were held. Orten indicated that change in attitude, following students' participation in a poverty simulation, did not occur for Black students or for students from lower socioeconomic levels.

Several other studies (Hayes & Varley, 1965; Varley, 1963) were designed to assess changes in student attitudes toward the poor during social work training. In one study, Orten (1976) reported a subgroup of students - those with initially more negative attitudes - became more negative by the end of their social work education; for the group overall, attitudes became more positive.

Throughout the 1980's, another four studies on social work student attitudes toward poverty and the poor were published. Macarov (1981) reported on a multi-national study of social work students' attitudes about poverty definitions, causes, and remedies. BSW and MSW students in Australia, Israel and the United States are described as having "confused, conflicting and ambiguous" attitudes toward poverty and the poor. Australian students tended toward a "conceptual" definition and understanding of poverty and endorsed system changes to alleviate poverty. Israeli students tended to attribute poverty more to personal "deficiencies" and recommended education as a curative measure. United States students were more "practical" when defining and attributing causes to poverty; they offered employment as a solution. Macarov

recommends that students be given more facts about poverty and policies for alleviating it and be assisted in identifying and modifying their own attitudes.

Moffic, Brochstein, Blattstein, and Adams (1983) advanced the position that physical and mental health providers in the public sector need sensitivity to the needs of poor patients. To this end, the researchers crafted an "innovative inter-institutional, inter-agency, and interdisciplinary primary care /community mental health training and service program" (p. 19). The program included 18 first and second year graduate social work students and 24 psychiatric resident physicians. Both medical and social work students were assigned to one of five public mental health clinics that were neighborhood-based and provided mental health care to underprivileged patients. The study assessed trainees' attitudes toward "patients of lower social class" using Lerner's (1973) Democratic Values Scale (p. 19). The Democratic Values Scale (DVS) provided a measure of "the depth and genuineness of a therapist's commitment to democratic values" (p. 19), which assessed the willingness of a respondent to use coercion with clients and willingness to limit client autonomy. The authors note the construct validity of the DVS as reported by Lerner (1973). Findings indicated the training model was effective in positively increasing democratic values from pretest to posttest. Despite the low sample sizes, and relatively small numbers of minority trainees, race status and change from pre-test to post-test showed an interaction effect. Moffic, Brochstein, Blattstein, and Adams concluded "that social work trainees may develop attitudes particularly conducive to working therapeutically with poor patients" (p. 24). They recommend that future research assess demographic factors such as "ethnicity, sex, age, religious preference, marital status, and personality" (p. 27).

Roff, Adams and Klemmack (1984) reported their comparison of MSW students and students enrolled in Introduction to Sociology classes. They found support for the hypothesis that MSW students were more supportive of the idea of government helping the poor when a reason for their poverty was not considered. Their willingness to have government help the poor dropped significantly when students could attribute poverty to an internal or intentional reason on the part of the poor person. Finally, MSW students agreed more with statements about poverty being caused by economics and discrimination and less with the statements that the poor are not willing to work hard. There were no differences between social work and sociology students for the other poverty explanations advanced by the researchers - the poor turn down jobs, lack job skills, have health problems, are laid off, have outdated job skills. Roff, Adams and Klemmack concluded that MSW students hold beliefs about deserving and undeserving poor. They suggest that social work students should be explicitly taught about the many causes of poverty and about the social work value of "access to adequate resources ... regardless of the worker's personal feelings" (1984, p.19).

Related to research on student attitudes, a study by Reeser and Epstein (1987) examined changes in surveys of social work professionals' attitudes toward poverty and social action between 1968 and 1984. Reeser and Epstein posed the research questions, "Where is social work today in regard to the poor and social action?" and have social worker attitudes about the poor and social action changed since the 1960's. Their work filled a void in scientifically sound, empirical research regarding social worker attitude changes over two decades. The study compared survey data from a 1960's era study by Epstein (1968) with survey data from a replication of Epstein's study conducted by

Reeser (1984). Epstein's 1968 study included a probability sample of members of the New York City chapter of NASW; sampling yielded an approximate sample size of 670.

Reeser used probability-based sampling from the national NASW membership list. Reeser's approximate sample size was 760 respondents. Both the 1968 and 1984 samples were statistically representative of the larger sampling frame. Social work students were omitted from the 1984 study. The samples differed on a variety of social dimensions: agency position, field of service, agency auspice, race, and religion; there was no observed difference for gender. Attitudes toward poverty were measured by eliciting from respondents the "two most important reasons for the existence of poverty in the U.S." (p. 613). Answer choices were as follows:

- Individualistic – "Poor people are not adequately motivated to take advantage of existing opportunities"

- Social structural – "Powerful interests are fundamentally opposed to the solution of the problem of poverty" and "Those people who are better off will never give up anything unless forced"

- Technological – "We do not possess the necessary knowledge and techniques"

- Interest group – "People representing different interests do not often enough sit down together to work out the problem" and "Poor people have not been organized to demand better treatment by society".

Two additional items were rated for agreement:

- "The only way to do away with poverty is to make basic changes in our political and economic system".
- "The poor are in the best position to decide what services they need".

Significant differences between the two samples were found for all explanations of poverty and for both agreement items. The 1984 sample had more frequent identification of the social structural explanations. The 1968

sample more frequently identified the individualistic, technological, and interest group reasons as explanations for poverty. The 1984 sample had a significantly higher proportion of agreement for both rated items, such that the later sample had twenty percent more agreement (81%) than the earlier sample (61%) that basic changes were needed in political and economic systems, and the later sample had fifteen percent more agreement (51%) than the earlier sample (35%) with the belief that the poor know best what services they need. Respondents from 1968 preferred working predominantly with the poor more frequently than reported preferences of the 1984 sample (14%).

Reeser and Epstein concluded that, in the 1980's, social workers [did] not "regard the elimination of poverty as a priority of the profession. Instead, they view[ed] the role of social work as helping individuals of all social classes to adapt to the environment" (p. 621). They suggested that social workers in the 1980's "view[ed] social work as a 'consenting' profession supportive of the social class system" (p. 621).

The volume of research on social work student attitudes increased sharply in the 1990's. A combination of thesis and dissertation research, and peer reviewed studies were published, spurred by growing concerns that social work had abandoned it's mission (Specht and Courtney, 1994). A number of these more recent studies examined the effectiveness of various teaching methods, academic content, or learning activities on altering student attitudes and beliefs about poverty and the poor (Santangelo, 1992; Baggett, 1993; Beigi, 1998; Melnick, 2000). These studies are reviewed chronologically in the remainder of this section.

Schwartz and Robinson (1991) reported on their study of beginning, intermediate and advanced BSW students during the 1986-1987 academic year. Students were asked to complete a poverty explanation survey and the 1966 Rotter Locus of Control Scale. Students in all three levels of BSW education gave relative ratings to structural explanations, i.e. discrimination, restricted opportunity, were rated the highest, followed by fatalistic explanations, e.g. bad luck, and lastly, individualistic explanations, i.e. character flaws. Advanced students did not differ from either intermediate or beginning BSW students on personal locus of control. Beginning students had a more internal, personal locus of control than intermediate level students. The authors conclude that these BSW students held attitudes toward the causes of poverty that are "congruent with desired professional values" (1991, p. 294). They call for longitudinal study on the impact of students' attitudes on their professional activities. Continued research on the impact of social work education on values about poverty and the poor is recommended.

Guttman and Cohen (1992) describe their investigation of Israeli students' knowledge of, attitudes about causes of, experience with and willingness to work with poverty. Undergraduate social work students were compared to students in economics, sociology, political science and literature on the above variables. Undergraduate Israeli social work students did not differ from the other student groups on any of the poverty related variables. Guttman and Cohen conclude that in Israel, social work education has "failed to produce the distinctive set of attitudes and values with regard to the poor on which the profession has traditionally built its contribution to social progress" (p. 61).

Rosenthal's (1993) research tested a growing belief within the profession that social workers and social work students have abandoned the disadvantaged in

professional activity and attitude. In addition, she tested the hypothesis that social work students have unrealistic beliefs about the actual financial condition of being poor. She developed three new measures which assess (1) respondent belief in individual causes versus restricted opportunity explanations of poverty, (2) self-reported dislike for and avoidance of the poor, and (3) estimates of yearly income for a variety of disadvantaged recipients of government support. All study participants were MSW students. The sample largely rejected individual causes of poverty and overwhelmingly reported a willingness to associate with the poor. Student estimates of income were consistently inaccurate and often much higher than aid recipients actually receive. None of the study variables were significantly related to background or demographic characteristics of study participants. Rosenthal interprets her findings as being inconsistent with the observation made by Specht and Courtney (1994) and others (e.g. Dean, 1977) that the social work profession is dishonoring its legacy and abandoning its mandate to serve the disadvantaged.

Atherton, Gemmel, Haagenstad, Holt, Jensen, O'Haran, and Rehner (1993) published a brief report on their development of a scale for measuring social work students' attitudes toward poverty and the poor. These investigators offered the scale as a "dependable" tool for social work researchers, educators, and public presenters to use "to identify pertinent issues" and address "value questions associated with poverty" (p. 28). The survey was tested and refined using a convenience sample of 99 undergraduate social work and sociology students and 113 undergraduate business students from three universities. The sociology and social work students had significantly more positive scale scores than did the business students. Internal reliability and face validity of the

scale was acceptable, with Cronbachs' alpha coefficient of .83 and a Guttman split-half coefficient of .87. The study did not examine demographic variables such as age, gender, education, income, ethnicity, religion, or political orientation. The authors called for other educators, researchers and practitioners to use the scale and share results.

Beigi (1998) reported on research comparing social work students to accounting students on attitudes and knowledge about public assistance and the poor. The sample included 70 students from a large public university in California. Non-probability, convenience sampling resulted in 37 social work student respondents and 31 accounting student respondents. The survey consisted of demographic questions about age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, annual household income, number of children, educational major and standing, personal receipt of public assistance, and employment status. The survey also contained 54 statements to which respondents indicated their agreement using a four-point Likert type scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey contained two categories of statements. The first category concerned knowledge about three aspects of public assistance, policies, environmental factors affecting public assistance, and general knowledge about public assistance. The second category included items that assessed attitudes related to stigma around public assistance and judgmental attitudes toward the recipients of public assistance. The scales were not internally reliable and items were analyzed individually. Overall social work students were less judgmental and disagreed more strongly (M=3.18) that people on welfare are lazy when compared to accounting students (M=2.80). And, social work students (M=2.89) disagreed significantly more than accounting students (M=2.21) that welfare should be given to all people. Beigi concluded that social work and accounting students were comparable in

their knowledge and attitudes. Social work students did not have substantially more knowledge or better attitudes. Beigi calls on social work educators for a curriculum to change attitudes among social work students, and others.

Melnick (2000) reports research on the impact of social work curriculum on student perceptions of the causes of poverty and the formation of attitudes about the poor. Melnick used a quasi-experimental design, with pre-test and post-test to determine whether graduate social work education affected graduate social work students' attitudes toward the poor. A sample of 52 respondents was composed of social work students drawn from three schools of social work and a comparison group of graduate students in arts, music, and education. The response rate for the mailed pre-test and post-test surveys was low (47%) but not uncommon for mailed questionnaires. Results confirmed the hypothesis that professional socialization influences positive attitude change over the course of graduate social work education. No changes in attitudes or beliefs about the causes of poverty were noted for the comparison group. Socio-demographic variables, related to the positive shift in attitudes in MSW students, included: pre-MSW social work experience, age, gender, sexual preference, number of children, residence characteristics, political party affiliation, and marital status. In addition, MSW students attributed the positive changes in their attitudes toward the poor to faculty, field education, and coursework. Other demographic variables were unrelated to attitude changes.

Overview and critique of the research on students' poverty attitudes

The reviewed studies provide a picture of social work students' and professionals' attitudes about various aspects of poverty as an issue of concern to the profession. Observations about the existing research, offered by Santangelo (1992) remain relevant

and descriptive of the research to date. "Data gathered over the past three decades on graduate social work students' attitudes, values, and career aspirations have been inconsistent, reflecting methodological variations and diverse areas of focus" (Santangelo, abstract). The effort to address social work student beliefs, knowledge, and practice interests has been ongoing since the 1960's. The lack of uniformity in attitude assessment tools, and the range in research methods, has led to a variety of gaps in our knowledge about social work student attitudes toward poverty and the poor. The social work profession has a distinct, unmet need for a poverty attitudes measurement tool (Orten 1979). Such an instrument would enhance knowledge building and could stimulate curricular innovations in graduate social work education.

Substantial gaps exist in the literature on student attitudes about the poor and the causes and nature of poverty. First, a number of the studies contrasted social work students with undergraduate and graduate students in other disciplines or professional schools. Social work students consistently emerged as having more positive, less pejorative attitudes and values with respect to poverty, the poor, and related policies and programs. However, social work student attitudes were not compared routinely with an attitudinal standard or position, or compared against social work faculty attitudes. Although social work students maintain better attitudes toward economic disadvantage and impoverished people than students from other fields of study, their attitudes may remain less positive than educators or poor clients are satisfied with when interacting with individual students.

Two additional gaps are evident; the second concerns an absence of studies that examine potential associations between social work student attitudes and client

experiences or outcomes. If attitudes are to be a relevant construct about which educators must be concerned about, then evidence should exist which demonstrates their importance for client outcomes and service quality. Third, several studies (Melnick, 2000; Guttman & Cohen, 1992) tested the effects of professional education, specific curricula, or other teaching innovations, with respect to knowledge or beliefs about poverty and the poor. However, there was no uniformity in the attitude measures used in the research.

In addition to highlighting the need for attitude assessment tools the reviewed empirical literature provides a glimpse of the individual characteristics of students that may influence the nature and strength of their attitudes toward the poor and their beliefs about poverty. The following section details the descriptive variables included in the personal characteristics and background portion of the survey used in the current study.

Socio-demographic correlates

The reviewed literature informed selection of relevant socio-demographic variables for inclusion in the current study. The findings described above also shaped a series of research questions to direct exploration of the data. No clear theories emerged from the review of the literature on social work student attitudes. Therefore, testing of theory-based hypotheses was not relevant to the current study. The socio-demographic variables were examined to determine the nature and extent of relationships between attitudes toward poverty and the poor and individual student characteristics. Potentially relevant constructs reflected the psycho-socio-cultural environment of individual respondents. The specific variables, which had been identified from the literature review, included age, ethnicity and race, gender, socio-economic status (Atherton, et al., 1993;

Cryns, 1977; Grimm & Orten, 1973; Orten 1979, 1981), personal receipt of public assistance, religion (Atherton, et al., 1993; Lowenberg, Dolgoff & Harrington, 2000; Tropman, 1995), political orientation (Sowell, 1987), experience with the poor through family or work (Beigi, 1998; Moffic, Brochstein, Blattstein, & Adams, 2000), social work experience (Hayes & Varley, 1965; Sharwell, 1974; Varley, 1963), intentions to work with the poor (Reeser, 1984) and influences on the decision to enter the social work profession.

Purpose of the Study

The current study was designed as a replication of the Attitudes Toward Poverty scale development research. The purpose of the study, described below, was two-fold:

(1) to replicate the Atherton, et al. scale development study using a sample of

MSW students and compare the replication sample data to the Atherton, et al.

sample.

(2) to expand on the Atherton, et al. research by examining the relationships of

attitude toward poverty and the poor with

a. traditional demographic characteristics (age, socioeconomic status and background, family history of poverty, political affiliation, religious heritage and affiliation),

b. various life experiences (personal receipt of government assistance, informal, personal contacts with, and formal exposure to, the poor) and,

c. specific professional interests, influences and motivations.

The scale replication and comparison also included item content enhancements.

Additional items were included in the survey to assess more refined dimensions of poverty attitudes. New items also included statements about federal and state assistance program policies that emerged after 1993.

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Descriptive exploration was organized around student attitudes with respect to student socio-demographic characteristics. Six conceptual variables provided structure for the analysis of individual survey questions. These six concept areas were enumerated as follows:

1. Dimensions of social inequality and oppression, (age, race, class, gender, individual and familial history of poverty, and familiarity and contact with poor people),

2. History of public assistance (personal use of governmental support),

3. Professional interests (plans to work with poverty or the poor within social work profession, intended curriculum specialization),

4. Political orientation (political party affiliation, voting pattern, liberal/conservative worldview, and influence of worldview on attitudes toward poverty and on decision to become a social worker),

5. Religion and spirituality (spiritual/religious heritage, current religious affiliation, influence of religion on attitudes toward poverty and on decision to become a social worker),

6. Geographic effects (campus of study – main campus / distance education site).

Specific research questions were operationalized versions of these six conceptual variables.

Research Questions

A number of questions about the relationship of attitude scores to demographic and other personal variables were tested. Six exploratory questions specify that some correlation or group differences will exist for specific variables but no statements are made regarding the nature of those correlations or differences. In this study the non-directional statements regarding attitude toward poverty and the poor were as follows:

Attitude scores may -

(1) be related to age.

(2) differ between students with and without race ("White") privilege.

(3) differ between male and female students.

(4) differ among members of specific religions or spiritual traditions.

(5) differ among social work study specializations.

(6) be related to degree of change in social class or economic status from family of origin to just prior to beginning MSW education.

Attitudes toward poverty (ATP) scale scores were such that higher scores indicated more positive attitudes toward poverty and the poor. A number of questions specified that some correlations or group differences may exist for particular variables and the questions indicate an anticipated nature - or direction - of the relationships or differences. Directional statements were generated for the following variables. More positive attitudes may be found for respondents:

(7) with lower socioeconomic class scores for pre-MSW status and family of origin

(8) who indicate they were now or had ever been poor or that their parents or grandparents had grownup poor or that they have known someone who was poor.

(9) with personal experience in receiving various types of government assistance and for those with more extensive involvement with government assistance.

(10) expressing greater interest and reporting giving more thought to working with the poor as professional social workers.

(11) who are affiliated with the Democratic party as opposed to Republican, or rated their political orientation as more Liberal than Conservative.

(12) for whom their religion or spiritual tradition had greater influence on their decision to become a social worker and on their attitudes about poverty and the poor.

(13) for whom their political orientation as a liberal or conservative had greater influence on their decision to become a social worker.

(14) taking classes in more rural, impoverished areas of the state.

In addition to statements about overall attitude scores, several others were proposed with regard to individual scale items.

> (15) Respondents who had been recipients of food stamps, unemployment compensation, or Aid to Families with Dependent Children and General Assistance, were expected to have more positive attitude ratings for specific scale items relating to the corresponding assistance program.

Atherton, et al. (1993) examined attitude differences by gender and racial or ethnic group. In the current study, the absolute number of students of color and male students was so low that these items, in combination with each other or with other demographic variables, could potentially identify students from these groups. In order to protect student identities, data on these characteristics were not analyzed if the combination led to a subgroup of the sample with less than five individuals.

Summary

This chapter offered a brief review of pertinent theoretical literature on values and attitude measurement, provided a chronological review of research on social work student attitudes about poverty and the poor, included a brief critique of gaps in the student attitudes research, and posed a number of research questions to be explored after the replication, or revision, of the ATP scale introduced by Atherton, et al. (1993). The next chapter details the methodology used to replicate and explore the ATP scale results. The research design, sampling procedure, sample characteristics, survey content, and data analysis strategy are described.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Sample selection and characteristics

Graduate social work students were recruited through the 2004 fall semester social work theory course on organization and community theories of human behavior in the social environment (HBSE). Four class sections were approached to participate in the survey of attitudes toward poverty and the poor. The course is required of all first-year Master's level students on the main campus of a Midwestern university, and, during the 2004-2005 academic school year, for distance education students in other regions of the state. This course provided access to nearly all newly enrolled MSW students and also allowed for access to the distance education students in an outlying region of the state. Outlying areas of the state are more rural and more economically depressed as compared to Central and Southeast areas of the state. This geographic/economic heterogeneity is valuable because it has the potential for resulting in greater sample variability.

Four class sections of the course were available for recruiting potential participants for the study. The survey was completed by 61 first year graduate students in three course sections meeting on the main campus of the university and by another nine (n=9) distance education students attending class in outlying areas of the state by means of interactive television. These four class sections yielded a total study sample with 70 respondents.

Procedures

Instructors for each of the four HBSE course sections were asked to support the study by sharing 30 minutes of class time for distribution of the survey and verbal

description of the project by the investigator. Students were given a study disclosure and informed consent form attached to a 5-page survey and received verbally administered instructions. The study disclosure and informed consent form included a summary of the study, the anticipated risks and potential benefits, and an estimate of the time needed to complete the survey. The disclosure and consent form also contained a declaration of confidentiality and a statement about the voluntary nature of participation. Participants received a duplicate copy of the informed consent forms with the names of contact people available to them for support subsequent to participation. A copy of this form is included in Appendix A.

Students were given 20 minutes to fill out the five-page questionnaire (see Appendix). The investigator distributed the survey and remained in the room to answer questions and discuss the project further. At the end of the 20-minute period, the surveys were collected. Surveys were collected without unique identifiers. Students were told that once they handed in a completed survey, there would be no way for them to withdraw from the research because their survey would not be identifiable (see Appendix).

Signed informed consent forms were separated from the surveys as they were collected. The informed consent forms were placed in an envelope, sealed and the envelope flap was signed as a means of creating a tamper-evident seal. This method of collecting and storing informed consent forms was used to instill confidence among students that anonymity of the completed surveys would be maintained. The method also met the university Institutional Review Board requirements for protecting human subjects of research.

The survey instruments used for this study included 54 items of an attitude scale and 22 additional questions regarding students' demographic characteristics and backgrounds. The corresponding variables are discussed in the following subsections. The questionnaire was five pages long, single-sided. The attitude scale items were presented on the first two pages followed by the twenty-one descriptive questions (see Appendix B).

Attitudes Toward Poverty and the Poor

The original 37 items of the Attitudes Toward Poverty (ATP) Scale were used as written by the developers. (see Table 1). Atherton, et al. (1993) reported strong internal reliability for the scale (Cronbach's alpha = .93; Split-half reliability = .87) and review of the items suggested acceptable face and content validity. Items were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale of agreement anchored with "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree". The rating scale was presented to respondents as had been used by the scale developers. Atherton, et al. originally had offered respondents answer choices ordered as follows: Strongly agree; Agree; Neutral on the item; Disagree; Strongly Disagree. However, for the current study these choices were presented in a different order, that is: Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Equally Agree and Disagree; Agree; Strongly Agree. Scale anchor reordering of answer choices was used for ease of data coding and data entry. Before data analysis began eight items were recoded to reverse the score per the scoring instructions published by the developers, items #6, #11, #12, #22, #24, #25, #31, #36.

An additional 17 statements were included, immediately following the original 37 items. These items were created to capture more contemporary public welfare issues and

policies. The full text of all 54 attitudinal statements appears in Table 1 below and also can be found in the Appendix. Two of the new items required reverse scoring, item #40 and item #43.

Table 1

Attitudes Toward Poverty and the Poor - original and new scale items

	reverse

Original items

1. A person receiving welfare should not have a nicer car than I do.
2. Poor people will remain poor regardless of what's done for them.
3. Welfare makes people lazy.
4. Any person can get ahead in this country.
5. Poor people are satisfied receiving benefits.
6. Welfare recipients should be able to spend their money as they choose.   *
7. An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off the system.
8. Poor people are dishonest.
9. If poor people worked harder, they could escape poverty.
10. Most poor people are members of a minority group.
11. People are poor due to circumstances beyond their control.   *
12. Society has the responsibility to help poor people.   *
13. People on welfare should be made to work for their benefits.
14. Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder.
15. Poor people are different from the rest of society.
16. Being poor is a choice.
17. Most poor people are satisfied with their standard of living.
18. Poor people think they deserve to be supported.
19. Welfare mothers have babies to get more money.
20. Children raised on welfare will never amount to anything.
21. Poor people act differently.
22. Poor people are discriminated against.   *
23. Most poor people are dirty.
24. People who are poor should not be blamed for their misfortune.   *
25. If I were poor, I would accept welfare benefits.   *
26. Out-of-work people ought to have to take the first job that is offered.
27. The government spends too much money on poverty programs.
28. Some "poor" people live better than I do, considering all their benefits.
29. There is a lot of fraud among welfare recipients.

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30. Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget.

31. Poor people use food stamps wisely. *

32. Poor people generally have lower intelligence than nonpoor people.

33. Poor people should be more closely supervised.

34. I believe poor people have a different set of values than do other people.

35. I believe poor people create their own difficulties.

36. I believe I could trust a poor person in my employ. *

37. I would support a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor people.

New items added

38. Welfare discourages people from working.

39. Poor people give up looking for work too quickly.

40. Poor people are no different from me except in life circumstances. *

41. Poor people are more responsible for their condition than many people would like to admit.

42. It is unfair that welfare mothers get more money if they have a baby since working parents who have another child don't receive more money.

43. I believe people are poor because the U.S. economy excludes them. *

44. Poor people don't care about their neighborhoods.

45. Poor people don't keep up the properties they rent or own.

46. A person going on welfare should have to submit to urine or blood tests for drugs.

47. I would feel uncomfortable visiting the home of a poor person.

48. I would support an increase in the sales tax to support social programs for poor people.

49. I would support an increase in the state income tax to support social program for poor people.

50. I would support an increase in the federal income tax to support social program for poor people.

51. Many poor people do work but they get paid "under the table".

52. The government should be able to limit the ways welfare and food stamp recipients spend their benefits.

53. Society should expect poor people to work in order to receive benefits.

54. More and better substance abuse treatment would result in substantially less poverty.

* Indicates items that require reverse scoring

Note: Answer choices direct respondents as follows: "If you xxxxx, please circle XX" where xxxxx is,

Strongly Agree, Agree, are Neutral on the item, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and XX is SA A N D SD

Three of the new items were a refinement of an item from the original survey regarding a respondent's agreement with the statement "I would be willing to pay higher taxes to support programs for the poor." These three additional statements differentiated between federal income taxes, state income taxes, and sales tax.

Personal Characteristics and Background

Unlike the 1993 Atherton, et al. study, respondents were asked about their personal characteristics and background. The directions given were, "for each of the following questions, please choose the response that most closely describes you. If none of the answer choices listed are acceptable or accurate, feel free to write in your preferred response." Questions were related to the following variables:

- Age

- Gender

- Race and ethnic self-description as a measure of dichotomous race privilege

- Social class or economic status and social class history (*including class mobility, familial intergenerational experience of poverty, personal experience of poverty, personal familiarity with someone poor, and employment or educational experiences with poor people*).

- Political identification (*including political party affiliation, registration to vote, frequency of voting, and self-description along a continuum of liberal/conservative orientation*).

- Religious/spiritual heritage and current religious/spiritual affiliation

- Personal history of receiving financial or concrete assistance.

- Intended specialization within the social work curriculum, i.e. clinical or macro practice.

- Professional interests related to working with or for poverty and the poor.

- Extent of influence of religion and political orientation on decision to become a social worker and on attitudes toward poverty and the poor.

Five of the above variables were assessed using a modified magnitude estimation measurement technique. Magnitude estimation is a measurement approach for generating variables with an interval/ratio level of measurement (Lodge, 1981). Interval/ratio level variables can be analyzed with more powerful parametric statistics (Pearson r, Student's t, ANOVA, linear regression). The lines, which represent a conceptual continuum, were produced using an inkjet printer. The distance, in millimeters, between the left end of each line and the mark made by each respondent was measured using a plastic ruler purchased as an office supply store. The measurement became a respondent's score for each variable. Lines were 180 millimeters long – an arbitrary length that resulted from the margin settings on the survey pages.

Respondents were directed to mark a continuum, represented by a solid line, with an X at the place that best described each of the following personal characteristics:

- Respondent's most recent social class/economic status and family of origin;

- amount of thought given to working with or for the poor;

- political orientation, varying between Far Left, Liberal, Conservative, and Far Right; and

- amount of influence religion/spiritual tradition and political orientation had on their decisions to become social workers and on their attitudes toward the poor.

Data Analysis

This study was designed, in part, to be a replication of Atherton, et al. (1993), therefore, analysis initially followed that used by the scale developers. All analyses were made using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 11.5).

Four of the 70 respondents were missing two scale item answers. A conservative form of mean item substitution was used to replace the missing values. Sample means were calculated for each of the four affected items and then used to replace the respective missing answer. Atherton, et al. also had used mean substitution for a small number of surveys. However, they chose to substitute a less conservative estimate of the mean response to the individual respondent's non-missing answers from the other 36 items. The mean substitution method used for the current study was selected because it would not alter the sample mean for items with missing values but it would allow for including all participant surveys in all statistical analyses. The number of surveys with missing scale item answers was so small as to be negligible in either study. Given this, it is unlikely that either substitution method would affect scale metric properties and analyses.

Atherton, et al. had calculated discriminant power for each item as a secondary method of reducing their original item pool from 50 to 37 items. Replication of item reduction was not possible since the 13 items trimmed from the original scale were not reported. Item reduction was not the purpose of the current research, therefore discriminant power was not calculated.

Descriptive statistics were compiled by item, for the original scale, for a 54-item scale, and for several subscales. Internal scale reliability was examined using both Cronbach's alpha and a split-half reliability procedure. Reliability analysis consisted of computing item-to-total correlations.

A principle component factor analysis also was run using both orthogonal and oblique rotation. Atherton, et al. (1993) reported that no factor structure emerged. For the current study's sample, factors were not anticipated for either the original 37 items or a refined version based on 54 items, but factor analysis was conducted to confirm the lack of factors.

Descriptive statistics for demographic questions were calculated. Variables having an ordinal or interval level of measurement were correlated with the 37-item ATP scale score, the larger, refined scale, and each of the three conceptual subscales. Pearson r coefficients were computed to evaluate the statistical significance and strength of variable relationships of interest in the current study. Categorical questions, those having a nominal level of measurement, having enough variability to justify analysis of group differences were analyzed with respect to the five ATP Scale scores. Student's t-test for two independent samples and oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics for three or more categories were used to examine differences among demographic subgroups.

For all statistical tests a probability level of .05 was considered statistically significant. For non-directional research questions, two-tailed tests of significance were calculated. Research questions, that specified the nature of a variable's relationship to or differences on the ATP scale score, were evaluated with one-tailed significance tests.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to replicate the work of Atherton, et al.

(1993). The secondary intent of the research was to provide an exploratory,

descriptive analysis of poverty attitudes with regard to MSW student demographics and

personal background characteristics. Exploration of the poverty attitudes scale was

guided by the research questions posed at the end of Chapter 2 – Review of the

Literature. ATP scale analyses are presented in the first section, followed by

descriptive sections structured around the overarching concepts underlying the research

questions. Frequency analysis for variable distributions and appropriate descriptive

statistics are furnished to provide a sense of the homo/heterogeneity of the study sample

with respect to socio-demographic variables. Analyses of the poverty attitude scale by

socio-demographic and other individual characteristics follow each section of variable

descriptions.

Analysis of Attitudes Toward Poverty and the Poor Scale

Initially, analysis of the survey instrument mimicked the analytic procedures

reported by the original scale developers, Atherton et al. Additional analyses were

made to incorporate the 17 new statements added to the original 37 survey items. A

conceptual content analysis was used to create subscales, which were subsequently

refined using empirical reliability analysis to craft internally reliable scales. Scale

distributions and inter-scale correlations are presented.

Individual ATP Scale Item Analysis

Examination of the means and standard deviations for each of the 54 scale items

allows for determination of the magnitude of item variability within any given sample.

Inspection of item means and variability allowed for identification of survey questions that do not exhibit sensitivity to attitudinal differences among respondents. Table 2 contains a list of item means and standard deviations sorted from widest to more restricted variability. Restricted variability would indicate less sensitive items.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for individual ATP items sorted by descending variability.

Item Num	Item Content	Std Dev	Mean	Skew ness	Kur tosis	Mini mum	Maxi mum
46	A person going on welfare should have to submit to urine or blood tests for drugs.	1.3	3.5	-0.46	-0.98	1	5
6*	Welfare recipients should be able to spend their money as they choose.	1.1	2.8	0.32	-1.02	1	5
4	Any person can get ahead in this country.	1.1	3.6	-0.73	-0.26	1	5
10	Most poor people are members of a minority group.	1.1	3.4	-0.49	-0.86	1	5
26	Out-of-work people ought to have to take the first job that is offered.	1.1	3.7	-1.03	0.61	1	5
52	The government should be able to limit the ways welfare and food stamp recipients spend their benefits.	1.1	3.1	0.31	-1.01	1	5
1	A person receiving welfare should not have a nicer car than I do.	1.0	2.9	0.28	-0.40	1	5
13	People on welfare should be made to work for their benefits.	1.0	2.9	0.32	-0.55	1	5
21	Poor people act differently.	1.0	3.9	-0.65	-0.50	2	5
29	There is a lot of fraud among welfare recipients.	1.0	3.5	-0.34	-0.87	2	5
32	Poor people generally have lower intelligence than nonpoor people	1.0	4.0	-0.87	-0.28	2	5
47	I would feel uncomfortable visiting the home of a poor person.	1.0	4.0	-1.28	1.14	1	5
48	I would support an increase in the sales tax to support social programs for poor people.	1.0	2.1	0.95	0.40	1	5
51	Many poor people do work but they get paid "under the table".	1.0	3.2	0.05	-0.66	1	5
53	Society should expect poor people to work in order to receive benefits.	1.0	3.1	0.03	-0.66	1	5

54	More and better substance abuse treatment would result in substantially less poverty.	1.0	2.7	0.27	-0.55	1	5
22*	Poor people are discriminated against.	0.9	4.3	-1.84	3.72	1	5
24*	People who are poor should not be blamed for their misfortune.	0.9	3.7	-0.46	-0.41	2	5
5	Poor people are satisfied receiving benefits.	0.9	4.0	-0.92	0.97	1	5
15	Poor people are different from the rest of society.	0.9	4.0	-0.67	0.08	2	5
18	Poor people think they deserve to be supported.	0.9	3.5	-0.56	-0.14	1	5
28	Some "poor" people live better than I do, considering all their benefits.	0.9	3.9	-1.10	0.97	1	5
30	Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget.	0.9	4.1	-0.79	0.08	2	5
34	I believe poor people have a different set of values than do other people.	0.9	4.0	-0.68	-0.15	2	5
37	I would support a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor people.	0.9	2.0	0.79	0.24	1	4
40	Poor people are no different from me except in life circumstances.	0.9	4.0	-1.38	2.84	1	5
42	It is unfair that welfare mothers get more money if they have a baby since working parents who have another child don't receive more money.	0.9	3.6	-0.61	-0.23	2	5
45	Poor people don't keep up the properties they rent or own.	0.9	3.7	-0.52	-0.52	2	5
49	I would support an increase in the state income tax to support social program for poor people.	0.9	2.0	0.90	1.20	1	5
50	I would support an increase in the federal income tax to support social program for poor people.	0.9	2.0	0.98	1.22	1	5
25*	If I were poor, I would accept welfare benefits.	0.8	3.9	-0.62	0.43	2	5
11*	People are poor due to circumstances beyond their control.	0.8	3.6	-0.46	-0.24	2	5
3	Welfare makes people lazy.	0.8	4.1	-1.05	1.41	2	5
9	If poor people worked harder, they could escape poverty.	0.8	4.1	-0.75	0.43	2	5
19	Welfare mothers have babies to get more money.	0.8	4.1	-1.05	1.74	1	5
33	Poor people should be more closely supervised.	0.8	4.0	-0.86	1.06	2	5

#	Item						
35	I believe poor people create their own difficulties.	0.8	4.2	-0.69	0.36	2	5
38	Welfare discourages people from working.	0.8	3.8	-1.15	1.68	1	5
41	Poor people are more responsible for their condition than many people would like to admit.	0.8	3.8	-0.83	0.79	2	5
44	Poor people don't care about their neighborhoods.	0.8	4.1	-0.96	0.95	2	5
31*	Poor people use food stamps wisely.	0.7	3.3	-0.24	-0.49	2	5
2	Poor people will remain poor regardless of what's done for them.	0.7	4.4	-1.16	2.31	2	5
14	Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder.	0.7	4.0	-0.85	2.67	1	5
23	Most poor people are dirty.	0.7	4.2	-0.82	1.09	2	5
27	The government spends too much money on poverty programs.	0.7	4.4	-1.08	1.01	2	5
39	Poor people give up looking for work too quickly.	0.7	3.8	-0.57	0.50	2	5
43	I believe people are poor because the U.S. economy excludes them.	0.7	3.9	-0.43	0.57	2	5
12*	Society has the responsibility to help poor people.	0.6	4.5	-1.00	-0.02	3	5
36*	I believe I could trust a poor person in my employ.	0.6	4.2	-0.49	1.12	2	5
7	An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off the system.	0.6	4.2	-0.50	1.01	2	5
8	Poor people are dishonest.	0.6	4.6	-1.72	4.04	2	5
16	Being poor is a choice.	0.6	4.5	-1.19	2.07	2	5
17	Most poor people are satisfied with their standard of living.	0.6	4.4	-0.52	-0.62	3	5
20	Children raised on welfare will never amount to anything.	0.6	4.6	-1.64	2.90	2	5

Note Sample n=70
* Indicates items that were reverse coded before scale score creation
Values of skewness and kurtosis appearing in bold typeface indicate items that are normally distributed.

Stereotypes underlie many of the survey items. For example, item #8 "Poor people are dishonest." Given prior research, which showed social work students have a more positive attitude toward disadvantaged people than other professionals and the public, the stereotypic nature of the items conceivably could polarize social work

respondent ratings or lead to restricted variability such that standard deviations and minimum and maximum ratings would be smaller than exists for non-stereotypic items. Review of items with the smallest variability supports this contention. Seven of the lowest 20% of items (the last 11 statements listed in Table 2) are more stereotypic in nature. Observed minimum and maximum ratings range between 2 and 5, and for one statement, between 3 and 5.

Scale score creation and descriptive statistics for the original ATP scale

Scale scores for 70 respondents were calculated by summing each individual's responses, on a 1 to 5 point scale of agreement, across the original 37 survey items. Potentially, scale scores can range from 37 to 185. Actual sample scores ranged from 110 to 174. The scale mean was 143.4 with a standard deviation of 13.2. The original scale was normally distributed with acceptable values for skewness (.042) and kurtosis (-.068). Just over two-thirds of students (68.3%) had scale scores between 130.2 and 156.6, the interval of values falling one standard deviation above and below the observed mean.

The scale developers reported scale scores ranging from 79 to 177 for a sample of 99 students attending social work and sociology courses at three different universities. They reported a scale mean of 119.65 and standard deviation of 21.97. Scale scores were described as having a slight positive skew but otherwise normal distribution. Exact values for skewness and kurtosis were not published. These distribution characteristics indicate that the sample for the current study was more homogeneous in their attitudes toward poverty and the poor than was noted in the study reported by Atherton, et al. (1993). The discrepancy may be related to two differences between the studies. First, the 1993 sample was drawn from both social work and

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sociology courses, and from more than one university. These sampling differences

would have allowed for a greater range in opinions, both by academic disciplines and

by geographic areas. Second, the samples were drawn twelve years apart, the first in

the early 1990's and the second at the end of 2004. These sampling timeframes differ

substantially in dominant social policy and political climates of the two decades, as

well as differing by age cohorts.

ATP scale reliability and validity.

As noted earlier in this paper, review of the items suggested acceptable face and content

validity. Reliability analysis of the scale items yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .87. This

coefficient is at an acceptable level of internal reliability. Cronbach's alpha for the

Atherton, et al. (1993) study was .93. The survey developers also calculated a

Guttman's split-half reliability coefficient of .87. The split-half coefficient for this

study sample also was .87.

Item-to-total scale correlations are displayed in Table 3 along with the item-total

correlations reported by Atherton, et al. (1993). These correlations help to determine

whether any given item contributes uniquely to the underlying concept being measured,

in this case attitudes toward poverty and the poor. Relatively weaker correlations can

be indicative of an item's contribution to the overall concept, providing it is not too

low. Very strong correlations should be interpreted to mean the item is not adding

much additional information to the underlying concept being assessed. Such items

presumably could be dropped from the scale without doing considerable damage to the

concept being validly measured. All items in the developers study exhibit acceptable

item-to-total correlations. Two items in the replication study, item 10 and item 15, had

low coefficient values (.002, .177, respectively). However, item reduction was not one

of the intended functions of the study. These items were retained for creation of an original scale score and used for remaining analyses.

Factor analysis.

Factor analysis is a statistical procedure used to detect an underlying factor structure or subscales. Using the same principal components (PC) approach to factor analysis employed by Atherton, et al., factor analysis was carried out. Initial PC analysis revealed 13 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. However, all but 4 items loaded on factor 1 with loadings of .30 or higher (the customary loading value in deciding item assignment to factors. This parallels the factor analysis reported by Atherton, et al. (1993). They also found 10 factors with eigenvalues above 1.0. In their study all 37 item loadings for factor 1 were .33 or greater. Visual inspection of the scree plot for the replication sample led to the same conclusion reached by Atherton and his colleagues. In both the original and current study factor eigenvalues declined from a factor 1 value of 11.40 (Atherton, et al.) and 8.66 (current study) to factor 2 eigenvalues of 2.80 and 2.71 respectively. From these patterns it is apparent that no empirical factor structure is inherent in the original poverty attitudes scale.

The factor analysis for the current study provided somewhat more detailed information regarding the factor analysis of the scale items. The value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO=.62) can be described as mediocre (Kaiser, 1974). This statistical description of the 1993 study sampling adequacy was not reported. In addition to the above characteristics noted in the factor analysis, the orthogonal rotation of the factor matrix failed to converge in 25 iterations. Factor rotation is used to reveal more simple structures across scale items. In this study rotation was not possible. This finding is further assurance that empirical factoring is

not supported by the sample data. Because rotation was not possible in a customary 25 iterations the extracted factor matrix could not be refined. The 37 items loadings on factors remained difficult to interpret because items had strong loadings on multiple factors.

Factor analysis was abandoned in favor of a conceptual approach to identifying subscales. A content analysis of all 54 items was completed. The results of the content analysis are described in the next section, along with additional analyses of internal reliability for conceptual subscales.

Content analysis of 54-item version of ATP scale for subscale creation

The 54 items that comprise the attitudes toward poverty and the poor scale in the current study were reviewed and coded thematically by the investigator alone. Investigator familiarity with literatures on attitudes research and public and professional beliefs about social welfare informed the identification of themes. No other raters were used to validate the thematic coding. This procedural omission is a study limitation and is discussed in the concluding chapter. Upon review, all 54 items were statements regarding poverty to which respondents potentially could agree or disagree. This review constituted confirmation of the face validity of the scale.

The items also could be sorted into several categories. Several scale items were related less to an individual's opinion and more to respondent knowledge of facts about poverty. For example, item 30 states that, "*Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget.*" If an individual is familiar with the Nation's budget their response would be based more on information than on personal opinion. In contrast, item 27 taps an individual's opinion about the expenditure of the nation's funds, "*The government spends too much money on poverty programs.*" This question can be

expected to yield an opinion-based response regardless of the respondent's knowledge about actual national budget figures. The ATP scale was content analyzed to separate items about an individual's own beliefs and feelings from statements that actually could be answered with fact-based information about poverty or the poor. Initially the categories were described as poverty beliefs, worldview, policy related, verifiable statements, and personal preferences. Each of these categories were refined using scale reliability analysis, a customary approach to scaled variable creation. The initial and final items for each of the item content categories or themes, are listed in tables following the narrative description of each category and relevant descriptive scale statistics.

Poverty Beliefs

The largest number of items concerned beliefs that individuals hold about the issue of poverty or about poor individuals, families, or communities. These items included statements such as, "Welfare makes people lazy" and "Being poor is a choice". This category was initially comprised of 34 statements. The next largest category contained items that were related to beliefs about the nature of the social world or human nature. These 15 items were described as worldviews and included such statements as, "Any person can get ahead in this country" and "Society has the responsibility to help poor people". The beliefs and worldview categories overlapped extensively, they had 11 statements in common. These two initial item content categories were ultimately blended, which resulted in a 38-item subscale. The 38 items were tested for internal reliability and systematically refined to create a single, 19-item subscale (see Table 3). This subscale exhibited acceptable internal reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha. The scale alpha coefficient was .83.

Table 3

Poverty beliefs subscale items and item-total correlations.

Item Num	Item Content *Cronbach's Alpha = .83*	Item-total correlations
3	Welfare makes people lazy.	.37
4	Any person can get ahead in this country.	.36
7	An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off the system.	.29
8	Poor people are dishonest.	.32
9	If poor people worked harder, they could escape poverty.	.52
11	People are poor due to circumstances beyond their control.	.45
12	Society has the responsibility to help poor people.	.59
16	Being poor is a choice.	.41
24	People who are poor should not be blamed for their misfortune.	.49
31	Poor people use food stamps wisely.	.36
34	I believe poor people have a different set of values than do other people.	.43
35	I believe poor people create their own difficulties.	.59
39	Poor people give up looking for work too quickly.	.62
40	Poor people are no different from me except in life circumstances.	.34
41	Poor people are more responsible for their condition than many people would like to admit.	.53
42	It is unfair that welfare mothers get more money if they have a baby since working parents who have another child don't receive more money.	.56
43	I believe people are poor because the U.S. economy excludes them.	.40
51	Many poor people do work but they get paid "under the table".	.18
54	More and better substance abuse treatment would result in substantially less poverty.	.21

Verifiable opinions

The next largest content area identified included 20 items that were statements that have been or could be verified. Agreement with these statements constitutes a personal opinion, but one which could be challenged or substantiated with factual information. For example, "Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget" and "Poor people don't care about their neighborhoods." Such statements can be confirmed or disconfirmed with scientifically collected information.

Determining the veracity of the 20 statements is beyond the scope of the current study, however the items shared a capacity for being tested through research. On this basis they were combined to form a conceptual subscale. The items were tested for internal reliability and combined to create a 20 item subscale (see Table 4). The subscale exhibited acceptable internal reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha. The scale alpha coefficient was .82.

Table 4

Verifiable opinions subscale items and item-total correlations.

Item Num	Item Content *Cronbach's Alpha = .82*	Item-total correlations
2	Poor people will remain poor regardless of what's done for them.	.35
5	Poor people are satisfied receiving benefits.	.54
10	Most poor people are members of a minority group.	.05
14	Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder.	.39
15	Poor people are different from the rest of society.	.23
17	Most poor people are satisfied with their standard of living.	.57
18	Poor people think they deserve to be supported.	.34
19	Welfare mothers have babies to get more money.	.37
20	Children raised on welfare will never amount to anything.	.46
21	Poor people act differently.	.46
22	Poor people are discriminated against.	.27
23	Most poor people are dirty.	.52
27	The government spends too much money on poverty programs.	.36
28	Some "poor" people live better than I do, considering all their benefits.	.39
29	There is a lot of fraud among welfare recipients.	.52
30	Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget.	.58
32	Poor people generally have lower intelligence than nonpoor people	.45
38	Welfare discourages people from working.	.31
44	Poor people don't care about their neighborhoods.	.55
45	Poor people don't keep up the properties they rent or own.	.30

Policy Attitudes

A third type of item content was identified. Thirteen items were initially selected as having policy related content. Respondents were asked their agreement with items regarding social policy toward recipients of public assistance. Such items included statements such as "Society should expect poor people to work" and "Poor people should be more closely supervised". These statements concern respondent opinions about policies around poverty and recipients of public support. The original 13 policy related items were tested for internal reliability and systematically refined to create one, 9-item subscale (see Table 5). This subscale exhibited an acceptable level of internal reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha. The scale alpha coefficient was .81.

Table 5

Policy attitudes subscale items and item-total correlations.

Item Num	Item Content *Cronbach's Alpha = .81*	Item-total correlations
1	A person receiving welfare should not have a nicer car than I do.	.37
6	Welfare recipients should be able to spend their money as they choose.	.45
13	People on welfare should be made to work for their benefits.	.69
26	Out-of-work people ought to have to take the first job that is offered.	.47
27	The government spends too much money on poverty programs.	.19
33	Poor people should be more closely supervised.	.42
46	A person going on welfare should have to submit to urine or blood tests for drugs.	.63
52	The government should be able to limit the ways welfare and food stamp recipients spend their benefits.	.64
53	Society should expect poor people to work in order to receive benefits.	.68

Personal Taxation Preferences

One additional distinction was noted through item content analysis. Seven items were identified as containing attributions about oneself, i.e., the items contained a

reference to "I believe..." or "If I were poor...". These "I" statements were combined

initially to create a seven item scale, which in turn was tested and refined to create a

much smaller, 4 item subscale. This subscale exhibited an acceptable level of internal

reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .88. All four items were questions

related to personal preferences around paying higher taxes, of various forms, in order to

support social programs for the poor.

Table 6

Personal taxation preferences subscale items and item-total correlations.

Item No.	Item Content *Cronbach's Alpha = .88*	Item-total correlations
"I would support ... "		
37	a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor people.	.65
48	an increase in the sales tax to support social programs for poor people.	.69
49	an increase in the state income tax to support social programs for poor people.	.84
50	an increase in the federal income tax to support social programs for poor people.	.82

Inter-scale correlations

Another method for assessing the usefulness of creating subscales is inspecting

the extent of association between pairs of subscale scores. Pearson correlations were

calculated to assess the nature and strength of relationships, if any, among the

subscales. Correlation coefficients are reported in Table 7. The correlation coefficients

indicate, as would be expected, that the subscales share variance. This observation

makes sense because the original selection of items by Atherton, et al., was made to

measure a singular phenomenon, namely, attitude toward poverty and the poor.

However, no one correlation exceeds .68, indicating that the majority of variability across the ATP items cannot be accounted for by just one of the subscales.

Table 7

Pearson correlation coefficients and significance levels for ATP subscales.

Subscales	Poverty Belief	Policy Attitude	Verifiable Opinions	Tax Preferences
Poverty Belief	1	> .001	> .001	> .001
Policy Attitude	.64	1	> .001	> .001
Verifiable Opinions	.68	.50	1	> .001
Tax Preferences	-.56	-.44	-.51	1

The basic descriptive statistics for each of the five scale scores, the original ATP scale and the four subscales, are uninterpretable in relation to each other. This difficulty is the result of scales containing a varying number of items. To address this challenge, the scale scores were recomputed for purposes of comparison. Individual scale scores were divided by the number of items that comprised each scale. For example, for the original ATP scale, respondent scores were divided by 37 – the number of items in the scale. This technique was used to recompute scores for each scale, which subsequently can be understood with respect to the one to five point Likert-type scale of agreement respondents used to rate each statement.

Descriptive statistics for each scale are presented in Table 8. All five scales are normally distributed, based on Skewness and kurtosis values falling between –1.00 and + 1.00. As indicated, score distributions can be interpreted relative to the 1 to 5 point rating scale of agreement. Higher values, those closer to 5, reflect more positive attitudes poverty and the poor with respect to the scale content. The most positive attitude subscale is for verifiable statements about poverty or the poor, with a mean of

4.01 and a minimum observed rating of 3.1. As described in the methodology, ratings

of 3 corresponded with an answer anchor of "Neutral on the item". The next highest

scale mean is found with the original ATP scale, comprised of the 37 original Atherton,

et al. items (M=3.88). The variability for the original scale (SD=.36) is comparatively

more restricted than the variability noted for the verifiable statements scale (SD=.41).

Minimum observed rating for this scale is 3.0.

Table 8

Descriptive statistics for the original ATP scale and four new subscales.

Scale variables	Mean	Std Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Original 37 item ATP scale	3.88	.36	.04	- .07	3.0	4.7
Poverty Belief	3.86	.40	-.21	.34	2.8	4.8
Policy Attitude	3.38	.65	.16	-.47	2.0	5.0
Verifiable Opinion	4.01	.41	.08	-.26	3.1	5.0
Taxation preference	2.03	.79	.40	-.26	1.0	4.0

Note. Skewness & kurtosis values between – 1.0 and + 1.0 indicate a normal distribution

The poverty beliefs scale has a somewhat lower mean rating of 3.38, with a

standard deviation of 4.0, similar to that observed for the verifiable statements scale

(SD=.41). Minimum average score for the poverty beliefs scale (Min=2.8) is lower still

than the previous two scales. The policy attitudes scale has a scale mean of 3.38, a

value closer to the midpoint value of the response scale, i.e. 3, used for individual item

ratings. The standard deviation for the policy scale (SD=.65) is half again as large as

the variability seen on the poverty beliefs scale (SD=.40). The policy scale also has a

lower minimum observed score of 2.0. Finally, the lowest scale mean occurs for the

willingness to be taxed to support programs for the poor. This scale also has the

broadest variability with a standard deviation of .79 and a minimum observed scale score of 1.0 (strongly agree) and a maximum of 4.0 (disagree). The taxation preference scale was not recoded. Lower values indicate greater agreement with the four items stated, "I would support an increase in ...".

Content analysis of the 54 items in the attitudes toward poverty and the poor scale resulted in one overall scale and four subscales for use in analysis of demographic and background questions. The measures of internal reliability for the five scales described above provided statistical reassurance that the thematic content identified actually showed evidence of inter-item cohesion. The correlations among the subscales indicate that the scales are related but are not so highly correlated as to be measuring the same underlying variable. These qualities are desirable metric properties in the conceptually created scales. The remainder of this chapter reports findings from the analysis of respondent characteristics. Survey questions are grouped by the classes of variables identified earlier in the dissertation.

Analysis of socio-demographics, background, and characteristics

Classes of variables provide the structure of the following sections. As noted in Chapter 2, a series of research questions were posed. Questions were related to six conceptual variable categories. The following table describes the six conceptual variables explored in the remainder of this section. The table details the research questions related to each conceptual category.

In the sections following Table 9, inferential tests of group differences and relationships between groups are described in a narrative passage, followed by tables summarizing the results of each statistical test.

Table 9

Research questions related to each of six major conceptual variables.

Dimensions of social inequality

 (1) be related to age.

 (2) differ between students with and without race ("White") privilege.

 (3) differ between male and female students.

 (6) be related to degree of change in social class or economic status from family of origin to just prior to beginning MSW education.

 (7) With lower socioeconomic class scores for pre-MSW status and family of origin

 (8) who indicate they were now or had ever been poor or that their parents or grandparents had grownup poor or that they have known someone who was poor.

History of public assistance

 (9) with personal experience in receiving various types of government assistance and for those with more extensive involvement with government assistance.

Professional interests

 (10) differ among social work study specializations.

 (11) expressing greater interest and reporting giving more thought to working with the poor as professional social workers.

Political orientation

 (11) who are affiliated with the Democratic party as opposed to Republican,

 (11) rated their political orientation as more Liberal than Conservative.

 (13) for whom their political orientation as a liberal or conservative had greater influence on their decision to become a social worker.

 (13) for whom their political orientation as a liberal or conservative had greater influence on their poverty attitudes

Religion and spirituality

 (4) differ among members of specific religions or spiritual traditions.

 (12) for whom religion or spiritual tradition had greater influence on their decisions to become social workers.

 (12) for whom their religion or spiritual tradition had greater influence on their poverty attitudes.

Geographic effects

 (14) taking classes in more rural, impoverished areas of the state.

Dimensions of social inequality

The absolute number of students of color and male students was very low. Because these items, in combination with each other or with other demographic variables, could potentially identify students from these groups, analysis was restricted to just single dimensions. This limitation prevented conceptually more sound comparisons that could have examined the intersecting effects of age, race, class, and gender. However, for the sake of protecting confidentiality, data on these characteristics were not analyzed. The combination of demographic characteristics did result in subgroups of students that would be identifiable as respondents.

Age

Respondent ages were not normally distributed (skewness and kurtosis values between $\pm$ 1.0 are considered normal.). The distribution of ages had a slight positive skew (skewness=1.5) and was somewhat more peaked than a normal distribution (kurtosis= 1.2). Ages ranged from 22 to 56. The mean age was 29.2 years with a standard deviation was 9.1 years. Over half of the respondents (57.1%) were 25 years old or less. Because no directional question had been made with regard to the relationship between age and student attitudes, a 2-tailed pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. There were no significant relationships between respondent age and any of the poverty attitude scales scores.

Social advantage/disadvantage

The analysis of racial and ethnic categories is a troubling enterprise. Race is a social construct, lacking a biological reality (Fields, 1987). However, race has been used over time as a socially constructed dimension upon which social and economic privileges are distributed throughout the United States. To the varying extents that

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whiteness conveys race social advantages and non-white racial and ethnic groups are disadvantaged, analysis of race/ethnicity information can be conceptualized as a dichotomy of advantage and disadvantage. In this study, 75.7% of respondents (n=53) self-described as White. The remaining 17 respondents constituted slightly less than one-quarter (24.3%) of the sample. Because varying degrees of privilege are conveyed on the basis of skin color, respondents that self-reported a race/ethnicity category of White, were analyzed as a group, in contrast to the group of respondents self-reporting any non-White race/ethnicity. Any given individual's experience of disadvantage and privilege varies by unique life circumstances. However, non-White groups typically are denied social or economic advantages on the basis of race or ethnicity. Two students, counted among the disadvantaged subgroup, were international students who, had they been born in the United States, would have been classified as disadvantaged.

Analysis of the social disadvantage variable was made using t-tests for independent samples and a one-tailed test of mean group differences. Comparisons of poverty scales revealed significant differences between the groups on two of the four subscales. There were no significant differences between groups on attitudes toward poverty policies or on preferences expressed regarding taxes. Significant group differences were noted on beliefs about poverty and verifiable statements or facts regarding poverty. The mean poverty belief score for those with race privilege (White respondents) was 74.3, and for those disadvantaged because of race/ethnicity the mean was 70.5 (t=1.84, p < .05 one-tailed). The mean verifiable scale score for those with race privilege was 81.3, versus a mean of 77.3 for those without such privilege (t=1.76, p < .05, one-tailed). For both of the scales the White respondents appear to hold more positive attitudes with respect to beliefs and potentially factual statements about

poverty and the poor. There is no observed difference in preferences for policies or taxation related to poverty. These findings indicate that dichotomous race/ethnicity based-groups do not differ in opinions about poverty solutions, but the groups do differ in regard to beliefs about the causes and nature of poverty and with respect to knowledge about verifiable poverty facts.

Gender

Similar to comparisons of race or ethnicity, gender presents a challenge to interpretation of group comparisons. This challenge is particularly vexing when comparisons involve social work students. The social work profession is disproportionately inclusive of women (NASW, 2003). This discrepancy is quite large with estimates typically around 80% female and 20% male. This difference in gender proportions is present to an even greater extent in this study sample. Of the 70 respondents, 62 are female (88.6%) and 8 are male (11.4%). Such large discrepancies in sample size between groups render detecting significant mean differences extremely unlikely. However, t-tests were run for each of the four scales. As expected group differences were not statistically significant for any of the poverty subscales.

Social class, class history & class mobility

The final dimension of social inequality examined in the study involved variables related to socio-economic status. Several measures of current socioeconomic class and class history of each respondent's family of origin were collected. Respondents marked an anchored continuum to indicate their economic status or social class just prior to starting the MSW program (Current) and also for their family of origin (FOO). Continuum scores potentially could range from 0 (Poor/Lower Class) to 180 (Wealthy/Upper Class). Self-reported current socioeconomic class estimates

ranged from 18 to 167 with a mean of 80.4 and standard deviation of 30.2. Self-reported family of origin socioeconomic class estimates ranged from 1 to 180 with a mean of 79.2 and standard deviation of 39.6. The research question posed was about whether students with lower SE class estimates would have more positive attitudes toward poverty and the poor than those with higher social class estimates. Pearson correlations between social class estimates and the poverty attitude score indicated there was no significant relationship between the four attitude scores and family of origin-based social class estimates. For estimates of current social class a significant relationship was found for poverty beliefs, verifiable statements, and taxation preferences. The correlation described weak negative relationships such that higher social class estimates were related to less positive poverty belief scores (r = -.27), less positive verifiable statement ratings (r = -.21), and less positive taxation preferences (r = -.20). Each of the reported correlations was significant at the .05 level (one-tailed). There was no relationship between policy scale scores and current social class estimates.

Class mobility was measured by calculating two change scores using self-reported estimates of Current socioeconomic class and family of origin (FOO) social class. The first change score was a simple difference between the Current social class estimate and the FOO estimate where FOO was subtracted from Current so that downward mobility would appear numerically as a negative value. This measure of change was directional; it allowed for testing the possibility that movement up the economic mobility continuum would be related to less positive attitudes toward the poor and likewise, movement down the continuum would be related to more personal

experiences with declining socio-economic status and more positive attitudes toward the poor.

The second measure of social class change was the absolute value of the first change score. This non-directional difference score provided a measure of change that disregarded the direction of change, either upward or downward, and indicated only that a change had occurred. The reasoning behind this second measure of class mobility was that substantial change from the social class or socio-economic status of one's family of origin, in either direction, may have a similar impact on attitude. That is to say, ANY change may be more powerful in accounting for attitude than change in one direction or another. This measure allows for the possibility that members of a similar economic class level can hold negative attitudes about the poor. Also, the second change score potentially corrects for some non-linear relationships. If the scatter of attitude scores across the class change scores was non-linear and U shaped the first change score could appear to be uncorrelated with the attitude scale.

Directional change scores ranged from -89 to 145. Close inspection of the score distribution revealed that one respondent was over three standard deviations (SD=45.02) above the mean score of -1.17. This respondent's score was considered an outlier and was dropped from the test of relationship strength between the class mobility measure and attitude scores. Pearson r coefficients calculated for the class mobility measure paired with the poverty attitude scales indicated only one significant correlation between poverty beliefs scale and class mobility. The association between the two was such that greater upward mobility was related to less positive attitude on beliefs about poverty and the poor ($r = -.24, p < .05$, one-tailed). Relatedly, absolute values for the change scores ranged from 0 to 145. After dropping the outlier value of

145, Pearson correlations between absolute change in social class and poverty attitude scales were computed. No significant correlations were found between attitude scores and the simple, non-directional measure of change in social class/economic status.

Additional questions about respondents' experiences with poverty and being poor were asked. Respondents indicated whether they were now or had ever been poor, whether they knew if their parents or grandparents had grownup poor and whether they had ever personally known someone who was poor. Respondents chose among responses of Yes, No or Don't Know. Research questions posited that respondents responding Yes to any of these questions would have more positive attitude scores. Sixty-five students (n=65) indicated they knew or had known someone who was poor. Three students had not personally known anyone poor, and two students indicated they did not know whether they have known someone poor. Due to the lack of variability, no tests were run on this variable.

For the remaining questions, about respondents' own histories of being poor and about poverty experienced by parents or grandparents, one-tailed Student's t-tests for independent samples were run to test for mean differences in attitude scores. Twenty nine students (42.7%) indicated that they either currently were poor or had been poor in the past. The survey questions did not specify a definition of "poor" or "poverty" against which students could compare their own histories. Therefore, student responses reflect entirely subjective, personalized definitions of what being "poor" meant to them. Half the respondents (n=35) indicated they had not been poor (51.5%). Two respondents left the question blank and four reported that they did not know whether they had ever been poor. No significant differences were revealed for any of the four poverty scales. With respect to cross-generational poverty experiences, a large majority

of respondents (79.7%) described either or both their parents and grandparents as having been poor (n=55). Another 15.9% indicated that neither parents nor grandparents had been poor (n=11). Three respondents indicated they did not know and one left the question blank. Comparison of the "yes" and "no" groups revealed no significant differences on any of the four poverty attitude scale variables.

Experience with poor people also can be garnered from employment, internships, and volunteer work. When considering all three sources of contact with the poor, 65 students (92.9%) described experience with the poor, and five (7.1%) had not encountered the poor in any of the three forums. Here, again, the lack of variability prevented comparisons on the basis of this variable. However, comparisons were possible between having versus not having experience with the poor through employment (44 vs. 21), through internships (43 vs. 22), and volunteer work (37 vs. 28). Despite more equivalent sample sizes, no significant differences were found for any of the three experience variables on any of the four poverty attitude scales.

Personal History Of Receiving Government Assistance

Respondents were asked to check mark from which of the listed government run or subsidized programs they currently or had ever received assistance. Table 10 lists the number and percentage of students indicating they participated each of fifteen public assistance programs.

As expected, a substantial majority (75.7%) of respondents indicated they had received financial aid (n=53). Of the 15 programs listed, only five were endorsed by enough respondents to justify further analysis; food stamps, unemployment compensation, Medicaid, scholarships/fellowships, and federal financial aid.

Table 10

Respondent history of participation in various social welfare programs

Forms of social welfare assistance	Frequencies		Significant differences between recipients and non-recipients			
Programs	n	percent	Subscales			
			Beliefs	Policies	Verifiable	Tax Prefs
AFDC	6	8.6%				
General Assistance	5	7.1%				
Food Stamps	12	17.1%	*	ns	*	ns
SSI	3	4.3%				
SSDI	2	2.9%				
WIC	7	10.0%				
Food Bank	4	5.7%				
Scholarship or Fellowship	31	44.3%	ns	ns	ns	ns
Homeless shelter	0	0.0%				
Unemployment Compensation	12	17.1%	ns	*	ns	ns
Worker's compensation	3	4.3%				
Medicaid	14	20.0%	ns	ns	ns	ns
Housing Assistance /Subsidy	2	2.9%				
Veteran's Benefits	2	2.9%				
Federal Student Financial Aid	53	75.7%	ns	ns	ns	ns

Created assistance categories

Any government assistance (excluding financial aid & veteran's benefits)	29	41.4%	ns	ns	ns	ns
Received "welfare" (ADC, GA, SSDI)	10	14.3%	*	ns	ns	ns
Entitlements (workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, SSI, & veteran's benefits)	18	25.7%	ns	ns	ns	ns

Two additional categories, having a large enough n for analysis, were created by

combining recipients of ADC, General Assistance, and SSDI (n=10) into a Welfare

variable, and by combining program participants receiving Veterans' Benefits, SSI,

workers' compensation, and unemployment compensation (n=18) into an Entitlement variable. Finally, a category for students who reported having received any form of assistance (other than financial aid or veterans' benefits) was created. This category contained 29 recipients of any of the various forms of government assistance.

Respondents with personal histories of receiving government assistance were examined to address the research questions regarding experience with receiving public assistance. The research question was regarding whether recipients of social welfare programs would have more positive attitude scores. One-tailed t-tests for independent samples were run to test for mean differences in attitude scores for the above categories of assistance. A small number of significant differences were found.

Food stamps

Twelve respondents (17.1%), who had received food stamps, had significantly less favorable beliefs (M=68.0) about poverty and the poor than the average beliefs (M=74.5) reported by the remaining non-recipients (t=2.83, p < .05, two-tailed). Likewise, the food stamp recipients (M=81.6) had significantly lower subscale scores about verifiable opinions than the average score (M=74.5) for the remaining non-recipients (t=2.83, p < .05, two-tailed). No significant differences were found between food stamp recipients and non-recipients on agreement with policy related items or willingness to pay more taxes.

Unemployment compensation

Twelve respondents (17.1%), who had drawn unemployment compensation at some time, had significantly greater agreement (M=32.9) for the policy subscale than the average agreement (M=29.8) of non-recipients of unemployment benefits (t=1.71, p

< .05, one-tailed). Unemployment recipients did not differ from non-recipients for any of the three remaining subscales.

Welfare recipients

Ten respondents (14.3%), who had received either Aid to Dependent Children, General Assistance, or Social Security Disability Insurance, had significantly lower agreement (M=68.7) on the poverty beliefs subscale than the average agreement of non-recipients (M=74.2) on the poverty beliefs subscale (t=2.16, p < .05, two-tailed). No other differences were found between welfare recipients and non-recipients on the other poverty attitude subscales.

Other recipient categories

Several other recipient groups had high enough group sizes to allow comparison with the corresponding non-recipient group. Comparisons on the four attitude subscales were made between recipients and non-recipients of scholarships or fellowships, Medicaid, federal student financial aid, and entitlement programs (specifically, veterans' benefits, Social Security, workers' compensation, and unemployment compensation). As indicated in Table 10 above, none of the comparisons of groups' differences were statistically significant.

Receiving multiple forms of government assistance

An additional variable was created by making a simple count of the total number of government programs from which a respondent reported having received assistance, not including financial aid. Education related aid was excluded from the count because so many of the respondents (81.4%, n=57) reported having received federal financial aid, scholarships, or fellowships. The count variable provided a rough measure of the extent of experience respondents had with government assistance. The

count ranged from 0 (n=40) to 7 (n=1), with a mean of 1.01 and a standard deviation of 1.60.

The relationship of exten t of government assistance with attitude subscales was assessed using Pearson's correlation. There were no significant correlations between the subscale variables and receipt of government assistance. A total of 29 respondents indicated they participated in anywhere from 1 to 7 of the government assistance programs listed, not including financial aid. Thirteen of these 29 had only received assistance through one program. A dichotomous variable was created to compare the forty individuals who had never received government assistance (58.6%) with the twenty-nine respondents who had received assistance from one or more government programs (41.4%). Perhaps an experiential or attitudinal difference exists for people once they become a "recipient". The mean attitude score for this group of 29 was compared with the remaining respondents using a t-test for independent samples. No significant differences between the two groups was found for any of the attitude subscales.

In addition to the above comparisons, several other questions related to individual scale items, were examined. Respondents, who had been recipients of food stamps, unemployment compensation, or Aid to Dependent Children or general assistance, were examined to reveal whether they had higher agreement ratings for the specific scale items related to the corresponding assistance program. Table 11 lists the specific items analyzed for recipient/non-recipient rating differences. The agreement rating scale has an ordinal level of measurement; therefore, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U statistic for independent samples was used.

Table 11

Program recipient differences for scale items related to specific programs

Recipients of	ATP item number examined	sig
Food Stamps	7. An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off system.	ns
	31. Poor people use food stamps wisely.	ns
Unemployment Compensation	14. Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder	ns
	26. Out of work people ought to take the first job that is offered	$< .05$*
Welfare (ADC, GA, SSDI)	25. If I were poor I would accept welfare benefits	ns

* Indicates greater disagreement by recipient group

Only one significant difference was revealed. Individuals who had received

unemployment compensation disagreed (M rank = 45.1) significantly more than non-

recipients (M rank = 32.9) with the policy related statement, "Out of work people ought

to have to take the first job that is offered" (U = 220.5, p < .05).

Interests within professional social work

Respondents were asked three questions to determine their interests within the

profession. Professional interest in working with or for the poor was assessed with a 5

choice question. The numbers and percentages of students choosing each response

choice are displayed in Table 12. Mean differences in attitude subscale scores were

examined for respondents with no specific interest in working with/for the poor (n=17),

those who would not mind and those specifically seeking an MSW in order to work

with/for the poor. A oneway ANOVA was run. Significant differences between

interest groups were found only for attitudes toward the verifiable, knowledge-based

items subscale. Differences among the three interest groups were such that the 17

students who had not given any thought to working with the poor, or had specific interest in other working with other populations had significantly lower (M=75.2) verifiable subscale scores (F = 4.68, df (2,66), p < .05) than both the 35 students who would not mind working with or for the poor (M=81.9) and the 17 students who specifically sought an MSW in order to work with the poor (M=81.2). Tukey b, post hoc analysis confirmed specific mean differences between the groups.

Table 12

Type and extent of student interest in working with or for the poor

What professional interest do you have in working with poor people and/or with policies or programs for poor people?	n	percent
Had not given it any thought	4	5.8%
No interest, I have a specific interest in other populations	13	18.8%
No interest, I would not / could not work with/for the poor	0	0.0%
Some interest, I would not mind working with/for the poor	35	50.7%
High interest, I specifically sought an MSW in order to work with/for the poor	17	24.6%
Sample n=70, one respondent did not answer	69	100%

Respondents also indicated on an anchored continuum the amount of thought they had given to working with poor people or policies and programs for the poor. Continuum ratings could vary between 0 (None) and 180 (A great deal). Actual responses ranged from 0 to 172 with a mean of 99.23 and standard deviation of 47.4. Ratings had a nearly normal distribution with only slight negative kurtosis (-1.3); the distribution was a bit flatter than a typical bell-shaped distribution. One research question posited that those respondents giving more thought to working with the poor would have more positive attitude subscale scores. One-tailed Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess these relationships.

Three significant (p < .05) positive associations were revealed between amount of thought given to working with/for the poor and the policy subscale (r = .29), verifiable items subscale (r = .28), and taxation attitudes subscale scores (r = - .28). No correlation existed between amount of thought given to working with the poor and the general beliefs subscale. The more thought given to working with or for the poor, the more positive the attitude scores for the policy subscale and for the verifiable subscale, and the less positive the score on taxation subscale.

Respondents also were asked to identify which programmatic area of study they were pursuing within the MSW curriculum. MSW students choose either a clinical specialization or a macro practice specialization in Organizations, Communities, and Policy (OCP). Two thirds of the respondents (n=46) identified the clinical specialization. Twenty-one percent (n=15) identified OCP and thirteen percent (n=9) were undecided. The research question posed with regard to differences for these specializations was addressed using two-tailed t-tests for independent samples. The tests revealed significant group differences (t = 2.03, p < .05, two-tailed) only for attitude scores on the policy subscale, such that, OCP (macro practice) students had more positive policy subscale scores (M = 33.3) than reported by Clinical (micro practice) students (M=29.73). No significant differences were found for the beliefs, verifiable, or taxation willingness subscales.

Political orientation or worldview

Several questions were used to identify respondent political orientations or view of the social world, namely affiliations with various political parties, voting registration status, voting frequency, and orientation to the social world along a continuum of Liberal / Conservative. Continuum scores could range from 0 (Far Left) to 180 (Far

Right). Liberal and conservative rating anchors were spaced evenly along the continuum leaving a middle segment of the rating line open for respondents to indicate a middle of the road position.

A wide spectrum of party affiliations was endorsed by respondents. The two largest groups were None (n=11, 15.7%) and Democrat (n=44; 62.9%). Smaller numbers of students reported affiliations with other parties, specifically six respondents were Independents (8.6%), five were Republicans (7.1%), and four indicated other political parties (5.7%). A comparison of Democrats and Republicans had been planned but was not done because too few students identified as Republican (n=5).

All but 4 students were registered to vote (n=66, 96.4%). However, there was a broad range in the frequency with which they voted. One student indicated they never voted (1.5%), 27 students vote only in the November presidential elections every four years (41.5%), 16 only vote in local elections (24.6%), 5 students vote in yearly primaries (7.7%), and 16 students indicated they vote regularly throughout each year (24.6%). Correlations between voting frequency and attitudes subscales were calculated using Spearman's rho. No correlations were statistically significant and all coefficients were very low.

The continuum scores for liberal / conservative worldview or political orientation ranged from 0 to 145 (of a possible upper value of 180) with a mean of 72.5 and standard deviation of 31.2. The distribution was normally distributed. One research question posited that respondents with a more Liberal orientation would have more positive attitude scores. One-tailed Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess relationships between worldview and the attitude subscales. Significant negative correlations ($p < .05$) were revealed between worldview and the

beliefs subscale (r = -.26), the policy subscale (r = -.27), the verifiable subscale (r = -.33) and the taxation willingness subscale (r = .39) toward poverty and the poor such that a more liberal orientation (lower score) was related to more positive attitudes (higher subscale scores)

Respondents also indicated the extents to which their liberal or conservative views influenced their decisions to become social workers and their attitudes toward poverty and the poor. Influence of worldview on attitudes were estimated along a continuum of influence ranging from 0, "no influence at all on my attitudes about poverty and the poor", to 180, "the greatest influence of all on my attitudes about poverty and the poor". Influence estimates along the continuum ranged from 0 to 175 with a mean of 107.5 and standard deviation of 37.4. The estimates were normally distributed. One-tailed Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess relationships between worldview influences on the attitude subscales. Significant positive correlations (p < .05) were revealed between influence of worldview on poverty attitudes and the beliefs subscale (r = .39), the policy subscale (r = .40), the verifiable subscale (r = .34) and the taxation willingness subscale (r = -.47) toward poverty and the poor, such that the greater the influence of worldview on attitudes about poverty (greater influence) the more positive the attitudes (higher subscale scores).

It is interesting to note that the relationship between worldview and self-reported influence of worldview on attitude is statistically significant and relatively pronounced (r = -.37, p < .05); the more liberal a respondent's rating the greater the reported influence of worldview on poverty attitudes. Likewise the relationship between worldview and self-reported influence of worldview on decision to become a

social worker was statistically significant and quite strong (r = -.51, p < .05). More liberal ratings were associated with ratings for greater influence of worldview on decision to become a social worker.

Relatedly, the relationship between worldview and self reported influences of religion on attitudes toward the poor was statistically significant (p < .05). Respondents with more conservative ratings on worldview reported religion having a greater influence on their attitudes about poverty and the poor (r = .36). More conservative ratings on worldview also were associated with increased influence of religion on decision to become a social worker (r = .28). These findings raise an additional question about worldview. Do different types of current religious affiliations and different religious heritages from family of origin differ in respondent worldview? This question was addressed by comparing the three categories of religions (None, Catholic, Protestant/Christian) on average worldview estimates. None of the comparisons, for either current religion or family religion during childhood, were statistically significant.

Religious/Spiritual Affiliation

Respondents were asked to specify with which of six religious/spiritual traditions they were currently affiliated and indicate with which religious heritage they had grown up. The sample currently was disproportionately Christian (n=51) – including Catholic, Protestant, or Other Christian - (72.9%;). A small number (n=11) indicated they had no religious affiliation currently (15.7%). The remaining eight students described various other religious affiliations (11.4%).

With respect to religious affiliation of family of origin, the sample largely was Christian (n=57) with 81.4% indicating they had grown up Catholic, Protestant, or

Other Christian. Only 9 students indicated they had grown up without a religion

(12.9%). A small proportion of other respondents (5.7%) did not answer the question

or specified other spiritual/religious heritages, e.g. Jewish, Native American spiritual

heritage, Hindi.

Respondents also were asked to indicate the extent to which their

religious/spiritual affiliation or heritage influenced their attitudes about poverty and the

poor and had influenced their decision to become a social worker. Respondents

answered by marking a continuum of influence which ranged from 0 (No influence at

all on "my attitudes about poverty", "my decision to become a social worker") to 180

(Greatest influence of all on "my attitudes about poverty", "my decision to become a

social worker"). Both distribution of influence estimates ranged from 0 to 180 for

influence variables.   Influence of religion on attitudes toward the poor had a mean of

81.3 and standard deviation of 50.0. Influence of religion on decision to become a

social worker had a mean of 78.4 and standard deviation of 54.8. Both distributions

were slightly platykurtic (-1.1), neither was skewed. The research questions were

examined with respect to influence of religion on attitudes about poverty and on

decision to be a social worker. In both instances the questions posited that for those

individuals reporting religion or spirituality had greater influence on their decision to

become a social worker, or on their attitudes about poverty, would have more positive

attitudes toward poverty and the poor.   One-tailed Pearson correlation coefficients

were calculated. There were no significant relationships between each variable and the

four attitude subscales. The observed strengths of associations were uniformly weak

(no $r > \pm .17$).

Geographic effects

Finally, comparison had been planned for students living and attending school in upstate regions through the school's MSW distance education program (n=9) and those attending the MSW program on the main campus (n=61). Respondents studying in comparatively more rural areas may have had more positive attitude scores given that exposure to poor people and poverty would be a more common experience and might help to challenge stereotypes. A t-test for independent samples revealed only one significant difference on attitude subscales. This finding was an unexpected one given the disproportionate numbers of respondents in the two groups (i.e. 9 versus 61). Despite the sample size discrepancy, students in the distance education group had significantly lower, i.e. less positive, belief subscale scores (M = 68.7) than the group of students enrolled at the main university campus (M=74.0) (t=2.01, p < .05, two-tailed). However, the group differences were in an opposite direction to that suggested by the research question. The relevance of this discrepancy will require additional research. No significant differences were found for the other three subscales.

Findings Overview

The analysis results described above addressed the primary and secondary purposes of the research. Evidence was reviewed regarding replication of the original ATP scale and enhancements to the scale were detailed. The descriptive function of the study was addressed through systematic exploration of demographic variable categories with respect to the attitude subscales.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the exploratory findings. Discussion is followed by conclusions, and a review of the implications of the study for the larger

issue of evaluating social work education. The limitations of the study are described in

detail. Directions for further research are suggested.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This final section of the report is divided into four topics. Discussion of the analysis results will be organized around the two purposes of the study. Each core purpose is discussed separately. Implications of the study results for social work education follow the summary and discussion of findings. The chapter concludes with a critique of the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

The findings reported in the preceding chapter can be understood in a variety of ways. This multitude of meanings illuminates the multi-faceted nature of psychosocial phenomena like professionals' attitudes toward poverty and the poor. The attitudinal data reflect the complexities inherent in measuring attitudes and hypothesizing their effects on professional comportment, i.e., demeanor and behavior.

Summary and discussion

The primary purpose of the study was to replicate the Atherton, et al. scale development research (1993), including comparison of descriptive statistics, scale reliability analysis, factor analysis, and inter-item correlations. The second study purpose was to examine research questions about the relationships between attitude scores and: traditional socio-demographic characteristics related to dimensions of social inequality; religious affiliation, heritage and influences; political orientation, voting behavior, worldview and influences; history of using government assistance; and professional interests and social work specialization; and regional differences. Findings informing each purpose are reviewed briefly and discussed in the context of the evaluation logic model presented in Chapter 1.

Replication

The 1993 Atherton, et al. ATP scale development was replicated successfully. A brief critique of the scale development report is offered. As stated in Chapter 1 the journal article that introduced the scale did not report individual item variances. It would have been useful to inspect item variability and compare the figures for the two different student samples – social work/sociology and business students – for the original study. Access to the 1993 descriptive statistics also would have allowed for comparisons with the MSW student sample used in this study.

This replication study had a lower, but still acceptable level of internal scale reliability than was reported in 1993 by Atherton, et al. Item-to-total correlations also were lower than those found by the scale developers. Item-to-total correlations in the current research suggested that it may be possible to adequately measure attitudes about poverty with fewer than the original 37 items, or 54 items as in this study. Shorter surveys are less time consuming for respondents to answer, are less resource intensive to code and analyze, and therefore, are preferable to longer surveys. Scale content can be reduced further and with greater confidence if restricted response ranges consistently are observed across studies for particular items. Knowing individual item distribution characteristics from multiple studies would have made possible comparison of item means and variability. Until the ATP scale is used with more samples, no change or reduction in items is warranted.

Factor analysis of the replication survey data produced results similar to those reported by the scale developers. No factor structure is inherent in the ATP scale. However, the factor rotation method used in both studies - Varimax - assumes that if subscales exist they are orthogonal, that is to say, uncorrelated with each other. Given

the realities of poverty and the complexity of attitudes and beliefs, the assumption of orthogonal factors may not be realistic. Future factor analysis should explore the possibility of inter-correlated factors. An oblique rotation approach should be used to detect factors.

The study results indicated factors could be constructed conceptually instead of empirically. A literature-based argument can be made for a conceptual approach to subscale or factor identification. The studies on student attitudes from the 1960's and 1970's, reported on by Sharwell (1974) and Orten (1976) and summarized in the review of empirical studies, used a conceptual approach to measuring attitudes toward poverty and the poor. From an evaluation standpoint, it is important to separate into subscales the items of the ATP that potentially can be changed through social work education from those statements that reflect a particular worldview about human nature or political viewpoint about the proper role of government. Worldviews or political viewpoints may be amenable to change but would require more and different effort than may be achieved by presenting factual information acquired through research.

As mentioned in the study methodology, Chapter 3, item review suggested acceptable face and content validity. However, items appeared to be based on gross stereotypes or global attributions about "the poor" as a unitary group. The reviewed literature clearly notes that social work students do have a more positive attitude toward the disadvantaged, than either students from other disciplines or the general public. More refined distinctions in attitudes may go undetected by blanket statements or oversimplified items.

There is reason to believe that self-reported attitudes toward specific subpopulations of the poor, (e.g., single mothers, or unique individuals), specific cases

encountered in practice settings or through vignettes, may differ from espoused attitudes which take as their referent the unitary construct of "the poor" (Tamoush, 1998). The implications of group versus individual representations of the poor for measurement of attitudes should be the focus of ongoing research.

At least 33 of the 54 scale items were worded to include *all* poor people or refer to poor people as a homogeneous group. Tamoush (1998) indicates that the nature of the referent of poverty attitudes, i.e., group versus individual stimuli, affects attitudes toward poverty and the poor. The specification of a poor individual in a given item, as opposed to referring to the "poor" as a group, was related to different attitudes among the general public Tamoush sampled. Tamoush addresses the historical and ongoing relevance of the concepts of deserving and undeserving poor to public discussion. Future research should consider the importance of deservingness of particular individuals or subgroups of the poor for assessing attitudes among professional social workers and the profession, as a whole.

Overall, the current study findings support use of the ATP scale as a valid and reliable attitude assessment tool. To more comprehensively validate the instrument, the ATP survey should be used in longitudinal studies with samples of social work students and practicing social work professionals. The scale also should be tested with other student groups and non-student populations such as poor people, working class individuals, voters, and civil servants and other employees of public assistance programs. In addition, the relationship of social work student and professional attitudes to actual service delivery behavior and professional demeanor with disadvantaged clients should be assessed. Attitudes can be somewhat predictive, but are not a perfect predictor or cause, of behavior, professional or otherwise (Azjen & Fishbein, 1975). Knowing the

extent to which the ATP can predict professional behavior would be relevant for establishing the scale's scope of usefulness for evaluating social work educational outcomes related to social work values.

Socio-demographics, personal characteristics and background variables

The second purpose of this study was exploratory and descriptive. Research questions were posed to direct the examination of relationships between ATP sub scale scores and a variety of socio-demographic, life experience, and professional interest variables.

Table 13

Findings for non-directional research questions.

Attitude scores will:

(1)	be related to age	no significant correlation
(2)	differ among social work study specializations.	no significant differences
(3)	differ among members of specific religions or spiritual traditions	no significant differences
(4)	be correlated with frequency of attendance at religious services	no significant correlation
(5)	be related to degree of change in social class or economic status from family of origin to just prior to beginning MSW education	significant, weak direct correlation

Nine research questions implied the nature and/or extent of relationships among personal characteristics or background variables to attitudes. In Table 14, each question is repeated and the corresponding result is indicated.

Table 14

Findings for directional research questions.

More positive attitudes will be reported by respondents:

(6)	With lower socioeconomic class scores from pre-MSW student status and family of origin	Significant, weak correlation between current social class and poverty beliefs, no significant correlation with family of origin social class
(7)	Who indicated they were now or had ever been poor or that their parents or grandparents had grownup poor or that they have known someone who was poor.	No significant differences
(8)	with personal experience in receiving government assistance and for those with more extensive involvement with government assistance.	No significant differences or correlations
(9)	expressing specific interest and reporting giving more thought to working with the poor as professional social workers.	No significant differences for expressed interests in work with the poor. Significant direct correlations with policy attitudes, verifiable opinions, tax preferences.
(10)	who affiliated with the Democratic party as opposed to Republican, or rated their political orientation as more Liberal than Conservative.	Political party affiliation had restricted variability and was not analyzed. Significant correlation between more Liberal worldview and all subscales.
(11)	for religions, now or heritage from family of origin, for whom religion or spiritual tradition had greater influence on their decision to become a social worker and on their attitudes about poverty and the poor.	No significant differences for current or family of origin religious affiliations. No significant correlations between any influences on social work decision and poverty attitudes.
(12)	for whom their political orientation as a liberal or conservative had greater influence on their decision to become a social worker.	Significant correlations on each subscale with worldview influence on poverty attitudes and worldview influence on social work decision.
(13)	taking classes in more rural, impoverished areas of the state through a distance education program.	Significant difference between campus of study for poverty beliefs. No significant differences on remaining subscales.

In addition to the statements about attitude scale scores, several other questions had been proposed. Respondents, who had received food stamps, unemployment compensation, Aid to Dependent Children, general assistance or SSDI, were expected to have more positive attitude ratings for specific scale items related to the corresponding assistance program. Recipients of federal student financial aid were expected to have more positive ATP scale scores.

Table 15

Findings for differences between recipients and non-recipients on program-related ATP scale items.

Recipients of	Related ATP item	Number of Recipients (non-recipients)	Analysis results
Food Stamps	7. An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off the system. 31. Poor people use food stamps wisely.	12 (57)	No significant differences
Unemployment	14. Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder	12 (57)	No significant differences
	26. Out of work people ought to have to take the first job that is offered		Significant disagreement
AFDC, GA, & SSDI	25. If I were poor I would accept welfare benefits	10 (59)	No significant differences
Financial Aid	ATP scale score	50 (20)	No significant differences

The majority of the original 15 questions were answered. Of the ones that showed statistically significant results, two findings were not surprising. The more thought a student gives to working with the poor, the more positive their attitudes toward

the poor. The more Liberal a student identifies as a worldview or in their political orientation, the more positive their attitudes toward the poor.

Findings for two of the hypotheses were noteworthy. The non-directional hypothesis that degree of class mobility would be related to attitude was confirmed. Students, who experienced greater downward mobility, indicated less positive attitudes toward the poor. The experience of downward mobility may prejudice individuals about poverty and the poor.

The second unexpected finding was that the 10 individuals who reported having received Aid to Dependent Children, General Assistance, or Social Security Disability Insurance did not express significantly more agreement with the item "*If I were poor I would accept welfare benefits.*" Since these respondents had a history of accepting welfare benefits they reasonably could be expected to have more agreement with the hypothetical situation posed by the statement. It is not uncommon for individuals, who are members of, or fear becoming members of, a stigmatized group to hold negative or stereotypic beliefs about other group members (Goffman, 1963; Miller, 1976; Crosby, Pufall, Snyder, O'Connell & Whalen, 1989; Beigi, 1998). Explicit examination of alternative explanations for the findings is necessary. And, replication of these findings, and deeper investigation of their meanings, is needed before credible interpretation can be offered with confidence.

A general comment about the study, overall, should be made. Few variables showed any relationship to ATP scale scores. The few correlations that were significant, were weak; no coefficient was greater than .47 - for worldview influence on attitudes toward poverty and the tax preference subscale variable. The sample was sufficiently

homogeneous that a number of variables did not have more than a few students who differed in their responses from the majority of the respondents - knowing someone poor (almost all did), political party (too few Republicans to analyze for differences), being a recipient of most forms of government assistance (too few in various assistance categories to analyze). A larger sample of social work graduate students, drawn from multiple schools of social work in multiple areas of the state or across regions of the country, may lead to samples with enough heterogeneity to permit analyses having reasonable levels of statistical power.

A final note about measurement is also offered. Eight variables were assessed using a modified magnitude estimation measurement technique. As described in the Methods section, respondents were directed to mark a continuum, represented by a solid line, with an **X** at that place that best described each of the following: Social class/economic status just prior to starting the MSW program and for family of origin; amount of thought given to working with the poor; political orientation varying between Liberal and Conservative; and amount of influence religion/spiritual tradition had on decision to become a social worker. Significant correlations were detected between four of these variables and the ATP scale score.

This measurement approach appears to hold promise as a means of generating variables with an interval/ratio level of measurement that can then be analyzed with the stronger, parametric statistics (Pearson r, Student's t, ANOVA). The eight variables examined in this study using magnitude estimation are generally assessed by offering respondents ordinal level, ranked answer choices that are most appropriately analyzed with less powerful non-parametric statistics (Spearman rho, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-

Wallis K). This modified use of magnitude estimation validates the technique as a tool for gathering self-reported ratings on background, attitudinal, and other variables commonly assessed by social science researchers.

Implications for social work education

The study intent was to craft an improved measure of values related to poverty and economically disadvantaged people. The study purposes were achieved; an enhanced, valid, and reliable scale of Attitudes Toward Poverty was tested and exploratory analyses of MSW student sample characteristics were conducted. The import of the study lies in the heuristic value of this preliminary research.

A logic model for evaluating social work education for values outcomes

The logic model for social work education, detailed in Chapter 1, provides a roadmap for ongoing evaluation of educational outcomes in Social Work. The survey can serve educational evaluation by providing outcome measures. Selected course evaluations could include measuring changes in student beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and preferences. These variables can be assessed at the start and end of a course, the beginning and ending of the foundation year, the specialization year, or the entire period of graduate education.

The ATP survey and subscales provide one vehicle for advancing the profession's journey to evidence-based educational practice. The survey and its subscales fulfill several assessment tasks. The logic model included both inputs and outputs. Inputs were comprised of students, faculty, and courses, among others. The ATP can be used to assess the value orientation of incoming students, current faculty, and course content with respect to poverty attitudes. The ATP also can be used to create a standard based on

social work educator attitudes toward poverty and the poor. The measure can be used to craft a standard, informed by the faculty, by the CSWE, or some other group of professionals, against which student perspectives can be compared.

The survey provides a beginning point for assessing the influence of the profession's beliefs. The ATP also offers a means for contrasting social work professionals' attitudes with those held by the general public. Such comparisons will help to locate the profession within the larger exosystem. The scales also may be helpful in addressing social workers in mesosystems within the social environment. More specifically, the ATP can help the profession examine the influence of practitioners' attitudes. Ultimately social workers' attitudes need to be assessed within the dynamic systems that form at social intersections where social workers meet the populations we help.

Study Limitations

As with all research, this study had a number of limitations. Social work values were presumed to be a unitary concept. Using the NASW *Code of Ethics* as "the" source of the profession's values risks hiding the multi-faceted opinions of multiple social work practitioners and educators. Relying on the current *Code of Ethics* also misrepresents the profession's history that resides in the collective, public mind. This collective memory also is a valid indicator of the profession's values and ought not be disregarded. This limitation delineates the larger challenge of locating indicators or selecting valid measures of the social profession's values. Despite this issue the results have heuristic value in that they help to refine the variables and questions to investigate in future research.

The nature of the sample and the sampling procedure were not probability-based. Probability sampling is needed to increase confidence in the generalizability of findings. Sample selection was timed poorly. Students in the first HBSE theory course were enlisted to the study twelve weeks into a fifteen-week semester. Students already had been introduced in the theory course to poverty issues, poverty statistics, and policies and theories related to poverty and the poor. Therefore the sample was not drawn from the population of students that, normally, would not have had exposure to graduate-level information regarding the study topic.

This difference in topic exposure was not uniform across the four course sections. Two sections had the same instructor and the other two classes had two different instructors. Two of the three instructors had extensive experience with teaching the HBSE theory courses. One instructor was new to the school and new to the theory course material. In addition, many students, although not all, were enrolled simultaneously in a policy and social welfare course required during the first year of the full-time MSW program. These academic differences affected the type of exposure students received to the course readings and to faculty feedback during class discussions and on written assignments.

In addition to sample-related issues, study limitations can be discussed with respect to at least three different aspects of measurement in this research project. First, the ATP scale items are worded with an absolute or global language that applies each item too broadly. Twenty-four of the 37 scale items should be reworded to diminish the absolute quality of endorsing an item about *all* poor people.

Second, the rating scale also is suspect as it relates to an agreement continuum. Responses can vary between strong agreement and strong disagreement. The middle of the five-point scale is *neutral on the item*. However *neutral* is akin to no opinion. A middle anchor for the agreement rating could more realistically be phrased as *equally agree and disagree*. Respondent attitudes may be more accurately represented by a response choice that recognizes the complex issues and multiple realities underlying each item.

Third, measures also imposed limitations on the research. Although the use of magnitude estimation was intended to elevate the level of measurement for the variables evaluated with this technique, the nature of the question response items likely was new to respondents. Magnitude estimation is encountered most commonly in medical settings in which patients are asked to use a pain scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is "the most pain imaginable" and 0 is "no pain at all". Being asked to provide estimates of social class, liberalism and conservatism, amount of thought, and amount of influence on decisions is a quite different application of magnitude estimation. The import of a lack of familiarity with a measurement technique is difficult to ascertain. An additional challenge to magnitude estimation is the lack of definite positional anchors. The beginning and ending of the lines were not tied visually to the relative anchor words. A respondent's interpretation of the anchor positions was not assessed. Interpretation of the eight magnitude estimation questions was left to individual subjectivity. The potential for compromised validity exists for this measurement technique. However, the potential compromise is outweighed by the increased level of measurement and enhanced variability made possible using magnitude estimation.

With respect to the demographic, life experience, and professional interest variables, a number of problems exist. A modified magnitude estimation technique was used for the questions about social class/economic status, amount of thought given to professional work with the poor, political orientation and extent of influence of religious/spiritual affiliation on career decision. The validity of using this technique to measure self-reports of subjective states such as perceptions, influence, quantity of thought, and identification, is not documented in the literature. While published support is not essential before using novel measurement techniques, better justification should have been offered. Future use of this technique should be accompanied by explicit discussion and justification, and/or comparative use of categorical measures of the same concepts.

The sample also was not large enough to yield a substantial number of individuals with poverty related life experiences. Relatedly the lack of findings with respect to the research questions about recipients of government assistance programs was most likely related to subgroup sizes. With the exception of financial aid recipients the subgroup sizes were not sufficient to detect moderately sized differences between recipients and non-recipients of the different government assistance programs. Student samples will have to be bigger to yield enough recipients that the power of statistical testing is not compromised by small n's.

Directions for future research

Certainly the limitations mentioned above should be addressed in any future investigation of social work student attitudes toward poverty and the poor. With respect to the Atherton, et al. (1993) Attitudes Toward Poverty Scale, an elaboration of the scale

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should focus on rephrasing items to diminish the need for respondents to endorse all encompassing statements about *all* poor people. In addition, the response rating categories should be modified so that the middle of the five response choices is changed from *neutral* to *equally agree and disagree* or *both agree and disagree*. Items and response choices that recognize the complexity of the issues underlying each item may more accurately capture respondent attitudes.

Continued research also is needed to identify personal characteristics and experiences of social work students and human service workers who hold more positive attitudes toward the poor. These individuals may be disposed to serving disadvantaged people more successfully and appropriately than individuals who hold less positive or outright negative attitudes toward the poor. This information could be used to identify, quite specifically, students and workers who have positive attitudes and offer poverty-related field training or employment opportunities. Students and workers with less positive attitudes could be targeted for additional education or professional development. Used in these ways, the Attitude Toward Poverty Scale could be helpful in identifying and understanding the variability of attitudes among social workers and human service providers. Future research should strive to meet the information needs and questions of social work educators regarding student attitudes toward poverty and the poor.

Despite its limitations the Attitude Toward Poverty scale shows promise as an attitude assessment tool for social work educators, attitude researchers and evaluators. Specifically, the scale can be used to evaluate the extent to which social work curricula and courses meet the mandates of the Council on Social Work Education. The EPAS Educational Policy for BSW and MSW programs states,

The purposes of social work are to enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice. [and] ... to pursue policies, services, and resources through advocacy and social or political actions that promote social and economic justice (CSWE, 2003).

If the curriculum at any particular school of social work fulfills the CSWE mandate for educating students to have an understanding and appreciation for the plight and service needs of disadvantaged individuals, then students's attitudes reasonably could be expected to become more positive during the time they are enrolled in a social work program. Use of the Attitudes Toward Poverty scale for self-study or longitudinal curriculum evaluation will help to inform faculty, academic administrators and CSWE evaluate the effectiveness of professional training in meeting the Social Work profession's stated purpose and objectives for education.

The process of evaluating any program entails addressing the limits of change. The restrictions that programmatic resources and processes impose on program functions must be documented and recognized. The time has come for social work educators to practice the techniques and meet the standards we teach our students to use. By avoiding calls for accountability from within the communities we intend to serve, we very well may be revealed, not as scientist-practitioners, but as a community of well-educated, high minded, but shamefully misguided, professionals. The profession may find, that we have been marketing a product we do not or cannot produce, namely, alleviating poverty and enhancing the well-being of the economically disadvantaged. Through meeting the challenge of evidence-based practice, the profession will be able to claim that social work does provide specialized knowledge in unique ways; ways that ultimately enhance human well-being and diminish social injustice.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Informed consent and study disclosure form

and

survey instrument

November 2004

Dear Social Work Student:

I am requesting your help with a research project. As a doctoral student in social work I am currently working on my dissertation. I am conducting a study of social work student thoughts about poverty and the poor. My project is a replication and expansion of research published in 1993 about student attitudes in the southern United States. The benefits that will result from this study do not accrue to you directly. This project helps me fulfill a doctoral program requirement. The research also will provide ongoing information to the social work profession that can be used to assess social work education about poverty and the poor. In the long run the results of this study will be used to refine a survey instrument that can be used to expand the knowledge base for our profession.

Completing the questionnaire will take 20 minutes. Your decision to complete or not complete the questionnaire will not affect your grade in this course either negatively or positively. Your response to the questionnaire is confidential; neither the instructor nor I will know which questionnaire is yours because the questionnaire will not be identifiable as yours. Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential. Your identity and privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

As with all research projects, there are risks and benefits associated with this study. The risks to you may involve the emergence of painful memories or strong emotions that people sometimes experience when thinking about poverty and being poor. If you experience any distress or troubling thoughts as a result of completing this survey I am available to you, as is your instructor, to provide support. I can be reached at (517) 432-5912 or by e-mail sent to peg.whalen@ssc.msu.edu .

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the investigator (Peg Whalen, 153 Baker Hall, MSU School of Social Work, East Lansing, 48824, (517) 432-5912, e-mail: peg.whalen@ssc.msu.edu). If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish –Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824. The primary investigator and supervising faculty member also is available to address your concerns. You may contact Dr. Rena Harold, 254 Baker Hall, School of Social Work, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824-1118, she also can be reached by phone at (517) 353-8616, or by email to haroldr@msu.edu .

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study. This informed consent form will be collected and stored separately from the questionnaire you complete. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Since each questionnaire is not identifiable you will not be able to withdraw from the research once you have returned the completed questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Peg Whalen, MSW, ABD

Attitudes Questionnaire

Use the following scale to rate the extent of your agreement with the following statements.
Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral on the item (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA)

1.	A person receiving welfare should not have a nicer car than I do.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2.	Poor people will remain poor regardless of what's done for them.	SD	D	N	A	SA
3.	Welfare makes people lazy.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4.	Any person can get ahead in this country.	SD	D	N	A	SA
5.	Poor people are satisfied receiving benefits.	SD	D	N	A	SA
6.	Welfare recipients should be able to spend their money as they choose.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7.	An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off the system.	SD	D	N	A	SA
8.	Poor people are dishonest.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9.	If poor people worked harder, they could escape poverty.	SD	D	N	A	SA
10.	Most poor people are members of a minority group.	SD	D	N	A	SA
11.	People are poor due to circumstances beyond their control.	SD	D	N	A	SA
12.	Society has the responsibility to help poor people.	SD	D	N	A	SA
13.	People on welfare should be made to work for their benefits.	SD	D	N	A	SA
14.	Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder.	SD	D	N	A	SA
15.	Poor people are different from the rest of society.	SD	D	N	A	SA
16.	Being poor is a choice.	SD	D	N	A	SA
17.	Most poor people are satisfied with their standard of living.	SD	D	N	A	SA
18.	Poor people think they deserve to be supported.	SD	D	N	A	SA
19.	Welfare mothers have babies to get more money.	SD	D	N	A	SA
20.	Children raised on welfare will never amount to anything.	SD	D	N	A	SA
21.	Poor people act differently.	SD	D	N	A	SA
22.	Poor people are discriminated against.	SD	D	N	A	SA
23.	Most poor people are dirty.	SD	D	N	A	SA
24.	People who are poor should not be blamed for their misfortune.	SD	D	N	A	SA

25.	If I were poor, I would accept welfare benefits.	SD	D	N	A	SA
26.	Out-of-work people ought to have to take the first job that is offered.	SD	D	N	A	SA
27.	The government spends too much money on poverty programs.	SD	D	N	A	SA
28.	Some "poor" people live better than I do, considering all their benefits.	SD	D	N	A	SA
29.	There is a lot of fraud among welfare recipients.	SD	D	N	A	SA
30.	Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget.	SD	D	N	A	SA
31.	Poor people use food stamps wisely.	SD	D	N	A	SA
32.	Poor people generally have lower intelligence than non-poor people.	SD	D	N	A	SA
33.	Poor people should be more closely supervised.	SD	D	N	A	SA
34.	I believe poor people have a different set of values than do other people.	SD	D	N	A	SA
35.	I believe poor people create their own difficulties.	SD	D	N	A	SA
36.	I believe I could trust a poor person in my employ.	SD	D	N	A	SA
37.	I would support a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor people.	SD	D	N	A	SA
38.	Welfare discourages people from working.	SD	D	N	A	SA
39.	Poor people give up looking for work too quickly.	SD	D	N	A	SA
40.	Poor people are no different from me except in life circumstances.	SD	D	N	A	SA
41.	Poor people are more responsible for their condition than many people would like to admit.	SD	D	N	A	SA
42.	It is unfair that welfare mothers get more money if they have a baby since working parents who have another child don't receive more money.	SD	D	N	A	SA
43.	I believe people are poor because the U.S. economy excludes them.	SD	D	N	A	SA
44.	Poor people don't care about their neighborhoods.	SD	D	N	A	SA
45.	Poor people don't keep up the properties they rent or own.	SD	D	N	A	SA
46.	A person going on welfare should have to submit to urine or blood tests for drugs.	SD	D	N	A	SA
47.	I would feel uncomfortable visiting the home of a poor person.	SD	D	N	A	SA
48.	I would support an increase in the sales tax to support social programs for poor people.	SD	D	N	A	SA
49.	I would support an increase in the state income tax to support social program for poor people.	SD	D	N	A	SA

50.	I would support an increase in the federal income tax to support social program for poor people.	SD	D	N	A	SA
51.	Many poor people do work but they get paid "under the table".	SD	D	N	A	SA
52.	The government should be able to limit the ways welfare and food stamp recipients spend their benefits.	SD	D	N	A	SA
53.	Society should expect poor people to work in order to receive benefits.	SD	D	N	A	SA
54.	More and better substance abuse treatment would result in substantially less poverty.	SD	D	N	A	SA

Personal Characteristics and Background

> For each of the following questions please choose the response that most clearly describes you. If none of the answer choices listed are accurate feel free to write in your preferred response.

1. How old were you on your last birthday? _____ years.

2. Please describe your race and write in your ethnicity or nationality.
   (choose any / all that apply)

   ☐ African American / Black _____ ☐ American Indian _____
   ☐ European American / White _____ ☐ Chicano _____
   ☐ Asian American/Pacific Islander _____ ☐ Other Latino/Hispanic _____
   ☐ International student _____ ☐ Other *(describe)* _____

3. What gender are you? _____ Female _____ Male

4. On the lines below, mark with an **X** that place on the continuum which best describes your socio-economic status or social class *just prior to entering the MSW program.*

   Prior to entering the MSW program I would describe myself as:

   _____

   Poor / Lower Class   Wealthy/ Upper Class

5. On the lines below, mark with an **X** that place on the continuum which best describes the socio-economic status or social class *of your family of origin when you were growing up.*

   I would describe my family of origin when I was growing up as:

   _____

   Poor / Lower Class   Wealthy /Upper Class

6. How do you describe your current spiritual / religious affiliation AND what was your family's spiritual / religious affiliation when you were growing up? (*choose all that apply*)

I am now . . .	Denomination / Sect / Type (*please specify*)	I was raised . . .	Denomination / Sect / Type (*please specify*)
❑ None	____	❑ None	____
❑ Catholic	____	❑ Catholic	____
❑ Protestant	____	❑ Protestant	____
❑ Other Christian	____	❑ Other Christian	____
❑ Jewish	____	❑ Jewish	____
❑ Muslim	____	❑ Muslim	____
❑ Other 1	____	❑ Other 1	____
❑ Other 2		❑ Other 2	

7. Are you registered to vote?   ___ Yes   ___ No

8. How regularly do you vote in U.S. elections?

❑ Not Applicable
❑ November General Election each year
❑ Primary election each year
❑ All local, county, city elections each year

❑ November presidential elections
❑ Presidential primary elections
❑ Only particular local, county, city elections
❑ I never, or hardly ever, vote

9. What is your current political party affiliation? (*circle only one*)

None   Democrat   Independent   Republican   Other (*describe*) _____

10. On the line below, mark with an **X** the place on the continuum that most accurately describes you

Far Left	Liberal	Conservative	Far Right

11. Are you now, or have you ever been, poor? _____Don't know _____No _____Yes

12. Would you say any of your parent(s) or grandparents(s) grew up poor?

_____Don't Know _____No _____Yes
If yes, who? _____

13. Have you ever personally known someone outside your family who was poor?

____ Don't know _____ No _____Yes

14. Have you had employment, internship, or volunteer related experience with poor people or poverty?

_____Don't know

_____No

_____Yes   If yes, was your experience related to?

_____ Employment   _____Volunteer   _____ Internship/Field Placement

15. Are you currently receiving or have you ever received any of the following:
(choose all that apply)

- ❏ Aid to Dependent Children (ADC/AFDC)
- ❏ General Assistance / Welfare
- ❏ Food Stamps / Bridge Card
- ❏ Social Security Insurance (SSI)
- ❏ Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- ❏ Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
- ❏ Food Bank
- ❏ Scholarship or Fellowship
- ❏ Other (describe) _____

- ❏ Homeless Shelter
- ❏ Unemployment Compensation
- ❏ Workers' Compensation
- ❏ Medicaid
- ❏ Housing Subsidy / Assistance
- ❏ Veterans Benefits
- ❏ Federal / State / Private Student Grants / Loans (Pell, BEOG, Perkins, GSL, etc)

16. Are you currently, or do you plan to enroll, in a social work program, at MSU or elsewhere, as a:
- ❏ Clinical student, micro practice
- ❏ OCP student, macro practice
- ❏ BSW student
- ❏ Other (specify) _____
- ❏ Undecided

17. What professional interest do you have in working with poor people and/or with policies or programs for poor people?
(circle the most accurate response choice or write in your answer)

- ❏ I had not given it any thought.
- ❏ No interest, I have a specific interest in other populations.
- ❏ No interest, I would not / could not work with/for the poor.
- ❏ Some interest, I would not mind working with/for the poor.
- ❏ High interest, I specifically sought a social work degree in order to work with/for the poor.
- ❏ Other _____

_____

18. On the line below, mark with an **X** the place on the continuum that indicates how much thought you have given to working with poor people or with policies or programs for poor people?

None   A great deal

19. On the line below, mark with an **X** the place on the continuum that indicates to what extent your religious/spiritual affiliation or heritage influence your attitudes about poverty and the poor.

No influence at all   Greatest influence of all
on my attitudes about poverty and the poor   on my attitudes about poverty and the poor

20. On the line below, mark with an **X** the place on the continuum that indicates to what extent your religious/spiritual affiliation or heritage influenced your decision to become a social worker.

No influence at all   Greatest influence of all
on my decision   on my decision

21. On the line below, mark with an **X** the place on the continuum that indicates to what extent your liberal or conservative views influence your attitudes about poverty and the poor.

No influence at all   Greatest influence of all
on my attitudes about poverty and the poor   on my attitudes about poverty and the poor

22. On the line below, mark with an **X** the place on the continuum that indicates to what extent your liberal or conservative views have influenced your decision to become a social worker.

No influence at all   Greatest influence of all
on my decision   on my decision

- THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING -

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