

U.S. ATTRIBUTIONS OF THIRD-WORLD POVERTY  
AND DONATING BEHAVIOR: A STUDY OF THE  
EFFECTS OF EDUCATION IN SOCIAL  
STRATIFICATION

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The presence of poverty around the world, and as almost a form of epidemic in third world countries, is an important current issue to national governments and international organizations. Currently, over one billion people live under the poverty line. Nongovernmental organizations have sprung up in the last 50 years in an attempt to reach out and alleviate this problem, and have found varying levels of success. As nonprofit organizations and concerned governments move ahead to fight poverty, donations of private individuals become an important factor in determining the effectiveness of the mission of these organizations.

The issue of poverty in third world countries also brings up a debate over its causes; ultimately, who is to blame for the plague of the poor. Are the poor themselves at fault, because of some flaw in attitudes towards work or personal capabilities? Or are external forces to blame—possibly the government, the weather, or another even the imposition and/or exploitation of other governments? Schools of thought have developed in the field of attributions of poverty. The current literature divides attributions of poverty into two sources: individual and structural. Studies that began with Feagin (1975) have measured these attributions and have categorized these reasons in the responses of surveys into these two sources.

In studies following Feagin, attempts have been made to discover what personal characteristics and attributes are associated with each of the two attributions of poverty.

The literature shows that national, cultural, socio-economic, religious, and political views are all associated with definite poverty attributions. In short, individuals that are wealthy or middle-class, Christian-Protestant, conservative, and/or from first world countries, are more likely to be associated with individualist beliefs about the causes of poverty. They tend to blame the poor themselves for their dire economic situations. In contrast, individuals that are poor, Catholic or non-Christian, liberal, and/or from third world countries tend to attribute structural causes to poverty. These causes may include a corrupt government, an inefficient economic/political system, fatalistic sources, and other external factors.

This literature has been complemented by studies of the correlation between people's attributions of poverty and their intention to donate to the poor or charities that will alleviate third world poverty. Cheung and Chang, the most prominent in this field, have found that individuals associated with structural attributions of poverty are more likely to donate than those that attribute individualist causes to poverty (2000). This study begs the question, is it possible to alter individual attributions of poverty? If so, the implications are monumental for charitable organizations. If individuals can be educated, for example in the subject of poverty, their attributions may be able to be changed, and thus their donating behavior could possibly increase as a result. The current study is an attempt to measure the possible changes of attributions of poverty in an educational setting to determine if a shift can be made (from individualist to structural attributions) in the opinions of individuals and if this shift in turn changes the donating behaviors of such individuals.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### *Attributions of poverty*

There has been substantial research completed on attributions of poverty, beginning in the 1970s and continuing up to the present time. Feagin initiated much of this research, and in a 1969 nationwide survey created a list of 11 items that attributed (explained) the causes of poverty. He phrased these items as the “reasons some people give to explain why there are poor people” (1975:95). They were then separated into three categories of causes and included in the results a percentage of positive responses respondents gave in each item and then grouped in each category. The three categories were: “1) Individualistic explanations, which place the responsibility for poverty primarily on the poor themselves; 2) Structural explanations, which blame external social and economic forces; and 3) Fatalistic explanations, which cite such factors as bad luck, illness, and the like” (1975:95). Most studies from the 1970s onward have used the definitions brought about by Feagin (1972, 1975) to distinguish attributions for poverty, from blaming the poor to blaming governments of poverty stricken regions. Studies have also used his survey as a basis for research in defining attributions with some minor variations. Results in all areas have shown lines of distinction among different cultures, group memberships, personal characteristics of participants, and in specification of the target poor.

#### *Culture/Nationality*

One consistent finding has been that attributions of poverty vary from one culture/nation to another. In multiple studies, it was found that Americans most often attributed individualistic explanations as the causes of poverty (Feagin 1972, 1975; Kluegel 1987). On the other hand, many studies based in other countries showed a tendency to attribute poverty to structural causes. As an example, Morcol (1975) conducted a study on causal attributions of poverty in Turkey among high and low income groups within the country. He surveyed 550 people using Feagin's three categories of attributions, and found that although attributions for poverty differed in tangible and abstract explanations, all groups favored structural causes of poverty, unlike the United States. Results showed also a systematic variance in responses among educational levels, gender, age, and economic status within the structural category.

Similarly, in a study comparing Australian and Malawi participants' attributions of poverty, nationality/culture played an important role in determining which category of causes was favored (Campbell 2001). In this study, Campbell used the same process of gathering participants in both countries by selecting every tenth customer entering a shopping center and asking a set of questions also based on Feagin's three categories. The results showed that Australians were mostly likely to choose individualist attributions to poverty, and that Malawians chose structural attributions the most often as causes of poverty. The study supported the hypothesis that participants of third world (poor) countries consistently attribute poverty to structural causes, contrasting with first world (rich) countries who give individualist explanations to poverty.

To explain this phenomenon, Feagin (1972; 1975) and Huber and Form (1973) independently concluded that an American ideology, referred to as the "Dominant



American Ideology,” and based on an “ideology of individualism,” exists and affects citizen opinion of attributions of poverty within the United States. This ideology is based on capitalism and the belief that competition is healthy and produces fair rewards founded on the efforts of individuals. Within the ideology, opportunities are assumed to be available to all classes, and so economic failure can be traced back to the individual for reasons of laziness or defect of character. This same ideology can be found in many first world nations, such as Australia and Britain, which reported similar results as American studies in attribution literature.

### *Economics*

The pattern of national differences in attributions of poverty suggest a possible correlation of individual economic status with individualist attributions. Research performed on the connection of socio-economic status with opinions in attributions of poverty confirms this correlation. In a study by Abouchedid and Nasser (2001), a random sample of 232 students was taken out of a population of 1,400 at a Lebanese university to fill out a survey about attributions of poverty. The survey was formatted like Feagin’s 1972 questionnaire, except that instead of using his three point scale, it used a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Results showed two patterns: first, in confirmation of previous research (Lebanon treated as a “poor” country), participants generally weighed structural attributions stronger than individualist attributions; second, participants with parents of higher socio-economic status generally exhibited more individualist attributions than those with parents of a lower class. This finding further perpetuates the theory that socio-economic status of individuals affects their attributions of poverty. The results of

Morcol's study, as referred to previously, also showed a similar pattern. Although all socio-economic groups of the study in Turkey produced generally structural attributions, poorer participants gave tangible structural explanations for poverty and nonpoor participants gave abstract structural explanations, as a general rule. Thus, various studies support the hypothesis that outcomes vary according to socio-economic status, whether in individualist versus structural attributions of poverty, or tangible versus abstract attributions. Other studies (Griffin and Oheneba-Sakyi 1993; Bullock 1999) support this conclusion as well.

#### *Religious/Political Views*

However, other studies suggest that religious and political ideologies also play a part in determining attributions of poverty. In Furnham's study (1982), a sample of 120 people in Great Britain was taken to determine if a pattern of political affiliation was correlated with responses in attributions of poverty. Results showed there was a positive correlation between conservatives and individualist attributions; labor voters generally used structural explanations to account for poverty. A parallel study using Americans for participants was completed by Pellegrini (1997) with 400 people, and similar results were found: a positive correlation existed between Republicans and individualist attributions, as opposed to Democrats, who favored structural/fatalistic causes (also see Griffin 1993).

Studies approaching the possible correlation in religious beliefs with attributions also proved positive. In Feather's study (1974) with Australian participants, Feagin's 11 questions were asked, in addition to personal information, such as religious affiliation. Between Protestants and Catholics, Protestants were found to be more likely to attribute

individualist causes to poverty than other groups. This finding was confirmed in Hunt's study (2002) as well. Interestingly enough, Weber, in 1958, connected religious orientations with the Dominant American Ideology in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, noting that throughout the history of the country, Protestantism and the founding capitalistic principles of the nation were intertwined to form a strong individualistic base to American thought.

#### *Attribution Link to Donating Behavior*

We can thus conclude, based on the results of mentioned studies, that within the present area of study (the U.S.), the dominant American ideology has produced a general tendency toward individualistic attributions of poverty. This conclusion begs the question, what actions are associated with this ideology? Specifically, how does the American perspective on the causes of poverty affect donating behavior? The question of whether a correlation exists between attributions of poverty and actions to relieve poverty has been approached in numerous studies.

In 2001, Campbell, Carr and MacLachlan published a study done in Australia and Malawi, simultaneously, to discover varying attributions of poverty and their connection to donating behavior. In this study, 98 Malawian and 100 Australians were given the Cause of Third World Poverty Questionnaire and the Australians were given two additional sections about charitable behavior and reasons for donating or not donating. The test was measured on a six point scale, from never to always, about how often participants donated money to charities. The results of the charity section were then taken and compared with answers in the attributions of poverty section. Post-hoc Newman-Keuls tests revealed that those who donated the most often were the most likely

out of all participants to attribute poverty to war and exploitation, reasons which fall under Feagin's structural category. The test also revealed that non-donors were least likely to believe that the poor in third world countries had little or no control over their situation, which correlates to individualist attributions of poverty.

These results have many implications within the world of charitable organizations. They show a correlation in the donating actions and attributions people give for poverty. Thus, if an individual believes that poverty is caused by a factor that is not the fault of a charity recipient, the individual is more likely to give to a charity that will benefit that person. Some of these studies have been questioned as to whether or not participants in the studies actually follow through with intentions to donate, and if planning to donate has the same implications as actual donating behavior.

Zucker and Weiner partially respond to this question in their study of the sources of intentions to help (1993). In the study, they administered questionnaires that measured participants' opinions as to 13 causes of poverty (11 taken from Feagin). For each cause of poverty, the questionnaire also included questions of perceived importance (of that cause), attributions of controllability by the poor, blame of the situation on the poor, and emotions, such as pity and anger, the level of desire to help, and opinions on whether the poor deserve welfare. The results of the study found connection between the ideology of participants and attributions to poverty. In addition, a connection was found between attributions and emotions, which were then correlated with behavioral intentions of participants. For example, pity is positively correlated to the level of personal desire to help; attributions of responsibility and political ideology were linked to welfare.

Therefore, the study contributed to making the connection between attributions, emotions, and actions in helping the poor.

However, Zucker et al.'s study does not specifically link actions to donating behavior. Other following studies do take into account this question by approaching donating behavior and reasons for variance in these behaviors. Carr and MacLachlan's study in 1998 provides a background by finding a correlation between those who blame the poor and those who least believe in contributing to charities. In the 1998 study, Carr et al. appropriate a series of survey questions to students at the University of Malawi and the University of Newcastle in Australia. Among these questions was "Do you believe in giving money to aid programmes for work in 'developing' countries?" (Carr et al. 1998, 193). The response options listed six choices ranging from against (very sure) to in favor (very sure), with levels of uncertainty in between. In addition, participants were asked their reasons for giving (or not giving). A Student-Newman-Keuls procedure measured the participants who were very sure about their opinion in donating and differentiated them according to their belief in blaming the poor. Results of the study showed a general positive correlation between situational attributions of poverty and the desire to donate based on empathy and moral obligation, and a corresponding link between dispositional attributions and skepticism in donating.

In addition, Cheung and Chan (2000) published research that revealed factors contributing to donating behaviors. In their study, a telephone survey was administered to randomly selected participants in an interview in Hong Kong. The survey included five-point Likert-type statement items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items included questions about intentions to donate to charity and specifically to

international relief organizations (IROs), individual explanations for poverty and many others. Results were compiled in a LISREL equation model to measure the causal relationship of the data, and showed a moderate level of individualist explanation for poverty correlating to a moderate level of the public's intention to donate.

These results "suggest that the public's level of social-cognitive factors were not highly supportive of donation to charity, especially the IRO" (Cheung, p. 247, 2000). However, the study did not go into depth regarding the nature of the relationship between individualist explanations for poverty and the intention to donate of participants. While concluding that social-cognitive factors, such as self-efficacy and belief in positive outcome, are positively correlated to actions (such as intent to donate), the study does not suggest how these factors can be modified or altered with education/learning.

#### *Effect of Education on Attributions*

The correlation between attributions and donating behavior leave questions as to how these attitudes are developed in individuals and whether or not the attitudes can be altered through education and learning. The process of formulation of opinions and attitudes of individuals is significant in determining the answer to the latter question. Over the last 20 years, research has produced general theories about social-cognition in describing the donation process. Among these theories are the social cognitive theory and the cognitive consistency theory. Generally speaking, these theories outline the process experienced by individuals in learning. Awareness, exposure to information, and other forms of education begin the learning process and contribute to future action, according to Bandura (1986, 1994) and Inglehart (1991). Chueng and Chang (2000) use this theory to support their study, as covered above.

However, studies to test the ability of individuals to learn and modify attributions of poverty are scant. Currently, only one major study has approached the concept of educational factors in determining attribution attitudes. Guimond performed a study in Quebec, Canada, to test the differences of attributions students gave at different levels of education and in different majors (1989). A total sampling of 675 students was taken from three different levels of education—end of high school, CEGEP (equivalent to grade 13 of secondary school, and university undergraduate—and also three different fields of study—science, administration, and social sciences. Each participant filled out a questionnaire consisting of three sections with six items each, allowing a range from one to five in determining importance. Among the sections is one titled “The Causes of Poverty,” which gives a listing of individual, structural, and fatalistic causes to choose from in completing the responses. A statistical analysis measuring the interaction among level of education, field of study, and attributions of poverty was taken using a regression equation. The results showed that until the university level, a majority of students from all three areas of study attributed individualist causes for poverty. However, at the university level, social science students were generally found to place structural attributions more than any other group tested.

These results bring up many questions that have not yet been answered. Foremost, what caused the change in responses from the high school level to the university level? Personality variation among participants of different areas of study may not be used as the cause because students from pre-undergraduate levels in all three areas of study proved to respond with the same basic attributions. Thus, some sort of educational experience in the field of social science at the university level must be

attributed to this variation; although the study establishes the correlation between some sort of college education and changing attributions, it does not trace the change to a certain structured educational class format or experience. If the cause of such change is found, it could be used as an educational tool in many settings.

The implications of such a tool are also relevant to the present literature that links donating behavior with structural attributions of poverty. If personal attributions of poverty can be changed through an educational instrument, then it is possible that the change of attributions will lead to greater action in donating behavior. This knowledge may be useful in many arenas. Charities may take advantage of this information to affect greater donations by educational programs; governments may also use this knowledge to encourage more donations and help in federal aid projects. On a small scale, social inequalities may be leveled to the extent that the wealthy may attribute the economic hardships of the poor to external causes and be proactive in poverty relief.

The present study is an effort to bridge this gap in knowledge left by Guimond in determining whether a certain educational instrument will be successful in changing attributions of poverty among a set of participants. A study of this scope will take the current literature in attributions of poverty and give it practical significance beyond an academic standpoint. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and other charities will find its application useful in raising funds and relieving worldwide socio-economic woes.

Thus, the purpose of the present study is to determine the effects of an educational tool in developing donating behaviors to alleviate third world poverty. The test will use a social stratification course offered at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma,



to perform this experiment. Specifically, the intent is to discover if the course changes perspective on attributions of poverty and consequently donating behavior towards charity organizations dedicated to relieving third world poverty.

### *Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses for this study are presented:

1. It is hypothesized that in the pretest more students will attribute poverty to individualist causes than structural causes (including fatalistic).
2. It is hypothesized that in the posttest, participants' attributions of poverty will be more situational than at the pretest.
3. The ultimate intent of this study (as stated) is to discover whether attributions of poverty can be changed with education, and ultimately if this change affects donating behavior of individuals. The three hypotheses mentioned are an attempt to measure this change and its relation with donating behavior.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

At Oklahoma State University, students that choose sociology as a major are required to take certain courses as major requirements. One of these courses is Social Stratification (see Appendix D). It is usually one of the beginning major courses that sociology students take as an introduction to some of the higher level major required courses. This study involved the participation of students who take this course.

#### *Materials*

The survey administered was a compilation of various questionnaires used in the current literature, with an addition of a few items about giving to charities in simulated situations and a section including demographic questions about the participant (see Appendix A). A copy of the survey is found in Appendix B of the study.

*Just World Scale (JWS)*. The first of the questionnaires in the survey is a replica of the Just World Scale created by Rubin (1975). This survey is composed of 20 items with a 6 point Likert scale that asks the participant to mark his/her level of agreement (strongly agree = 6 to strongly disagree = 1) with certain statements. These statements measure the level of luck and fairness associated with the activities of life; in short, they measure whether the person feels he/she lives in a just world where people receive what they deserve. This questionnaire was included in the survey because it helps to determine a participant's attitude toward causes of poverty and whether they are based on forces beyond the control of the individual or not. These causes can be defined as structural

and/or fatalistic causes of income in wealth distribution and more; someone who attributes poverty to these causes would tend to agree with the idea that attributions of poverty are not individually caused, and someone who agrees with the idea of a just world would be more likely to attribute individual causes to poverty. In effect, this questionnaire will help give more substance and detail to the opinions of the participants and will give a fresh side to the analysis of attributions theory.

*Causes of Third World Poverty Questionnaire (CTWPQ)*. The second measure in the survey is taken from the Causes of Third World Poverty Questionnaire used by Harper (1990). It was originally used in Feagin's study in 1972 and has been modified and updated by Harper. It is composed of 18 items and is again based off of a 6 point Likert scale that determines the level of agreement with certain statements. These statements ask the participant to rate the relevant causes of third world poverty through a listing of possible reasons. These reasons are categorized into four parts for analysis, including blame the poor, blame the government, blame nature, and blame exploitation; some questions include a mix of these factors. This questionnaire has been used empirically in attributions study and is the basis of research in this field today.

*Intentions to Donate (ItoD)*. The third questionnaire has been taken from Cheung and Chan's study (2000) relating attributions of poverty to intentions to donate. This questionnaire has 17 items and is based on a Likert scale (ranging from 5 = very true to 1 = very false). It focuses on the participant's opinion of international relief organizations and his/her interaction with organizations that promote giving. It also measures the willingness of participants in general to donate to organizations that aid the poor. Alterations have been made only in the referral of "IROs" in the survey to be represented

in full written form as “international relief organizations” for the benefit and clarity of current participants. These items help to determine the participants’ attitude toward giving in a clear, straight-forward manner. The inclusion of this questionnaire in the survey will place a connection between participants’ attributions of poverty and intentions to donate at each stage of the study.

*Scenarios of Wealth (SofW)*. The final section of the survey includes seven items that have been constructed by the author. These items request a “yes” or “no” response, and with a “yes” response, ask for details and estimations of behavior to be given by participants. These items include scenario situations that allow the participants to respond as to what they would do under certain situations. This section has been included because of the nature of the participants. Because all participants will be college students, it is very probable that many subsist on low incomes and strained budgets for the temporary period in which they attend school. In this case, it is likely that many will not have the means to donate to charities that they may develop as their income generating power increases over the years and they achieve higher salaries. Thus, this section allows college students in this situation to be credited for their intentions to donate at their average income level over their lifespan, creating a more accurate view in the study of donating behavior even with the unique circumstances of university attendees. Together, all sections of the survey, including general demographic information retrieval, make up 74 items covered in 5 sections.

### *Procedure*

To fully test the feasibility of using educational factors to alter attributions, the classroom was found to be the most fertile option for the experiment. The classroom is

the most common form of public instruction/education, and is structured in a way that new material may be added easily and will have the potential to ultimately reach a very large number of people. In the present study, a college classroom at Oklahoma State University was used as a testing ground for study. The design for the study may be classified as quasi-experimental because it includes subjects chosen for study, rather than a complete random sample of the population. The subjects are random in that none are aware of the study when joining the class and the class is a requirement for all students entering the sociology program. It also may be taken as an elective by other students at the university. Participants in this class will be compared to a control group class. The control group class is a course offered by the same department focusing on research methodology.

The design is in a two-group pretest-posttest format. A questionnaire (as discussed in the above section), asks information about personal attributions of third world poverty and intentions to donate to international relief organizations and was given to all students enrolled in Social Stratification SOC 4384 and Research Methodology SOC 4133 at the beginning of the semester. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete and will be administered in class during the first week of the course. After the four-month course, students in the same courses were given the same questionnaire and asked to fill out responses again. The two sets of questionnaire responses were then be compared to each other to ascertain whether there are changes in responses, and if so, in what areas the changes are.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### *Participant Demographics*

Pretest surveys were collected from 83 participants currently enrolled in one of two Sociology courses (Sociology 4383 – Social Stratification and Sociology 4133 – Research Methods) at Oklahoma State University. Participants were split between courses in that 58% of the participants were enrolled in the Social Stratification course ( $N = 48$ ) and 42% were enrolled in the Research Methods course ( $N = 35$ ). The sample included 57% female participants ( $N = 47$ ) and 43% male participants ( $N = 36$ ). The average participant age was 22.71 years ranging from 19 years to 52 years, with a modal age of 21 years. All but one participant were of U.S. nationality and the large majority of participants (80.5%) were of Caucasian ethnicity. Other ethnicities represented in this sample included African American (8.5%), Native American (8.5%), and Hispanic American (2.4%).

The sample was largely composed of college undergraduate students with 66.3% being undergraduate seniors, 22.9% being undergraduate juniors, and 2.4% being undergraduate sophomores. Only 7.2% of the participants endorsed already having completed a Bachelor's degree and only one participant endorsed being enrolled in graduate school. Students in this sample were enrolled in a wide variety of majors, the two most common being Sociology (66.7%) and Applied Sociology (13.1%). Participants ranged from having taken 0 previous Sociology courses ( $N = 1$ ) to 15+

Sociology courses ( $N = 16$ ) with 50% of the participants having taken 7 or more Sociology courses. Finally, when asked about socio-economic status 6% of participants endorsed “upper” class status, 27.7% “upper-middle” class, 45.8% “middle” class, 16.9% “lower-middle” class, and 3.6% endorsed “lower” class status. Significant differences on any of the demographic variables were not observed between the two groups at pretest.

Posttest surveys were collected from a total of 62 participants with 45.2% of the participants from the social stratification course and 54.8% of the participants from the control course. Interestingly, the social stratification course showed a higher attrition rate of participants (with only 58.33% of the original participants completing the posttest survey) than did the control course (with 97.1% of the original participants completing the posttest survey). A possible reason for this high attrition rate is talked about in the Discussion section. Of the posttest participants the average age was 22.95 years ranging from 19 years to 52 years, with a modal age of 22 years. The sample included 54.8% female participants and 45.2% male participants. All participants were of U.S. nationality and the large majority of participants (80.3%) were of Caucasian ethnicity. The sample was largely composed of college undergraduate students who most commonly endorsed being Sociology (71%) and Applied Sociology (11.3%). Significant differences on any of the demographic variables were also not observed between the two groups at posttest.

#### *Analyses for Hypothesis 1 – Pre-class Attributions*

Hypothesis One predicted that at pretest (before attending the social stratification course), participants would be more likely to have individualist attributions of poverty as compared to structural attributions. At pretest only 16.05% of participants were labeled

as having individualistic attributions of poverty (a score of 4 or above on the blame the poor subscale of the CTWPQ) across both classes. Chi-square analysis revealed that a significantly greater number of participants were low on individualistic attributions of poverty as compared to the 16.05% of participants that were high [ $\chi^2 (1, 81) = 37.35, p < .001$ ]. On the other hand, at pretest 70% of participants were labeled as having structural attributions (an average score of 4 or above on the blame the government, the blame the environment, and the blame exploitation subscales of the CTWPQ) across both classes. Chi-square analysis revealed that a significantly greater number of participants were high on structural attributions of poverty as compared to the number of participants that were labeled as low [ $\chi^2 (1, 81) = 10.38, p = .001$ ]. In summary, the results indicated that the first hypothesis was not supported, specifically a large majority of participants were labeled as low in individualist attributions and labeled as high in structural attributions of poverty.

#### *Analyses for Hypothesis 2 – Change in Beliefs and Attributions*

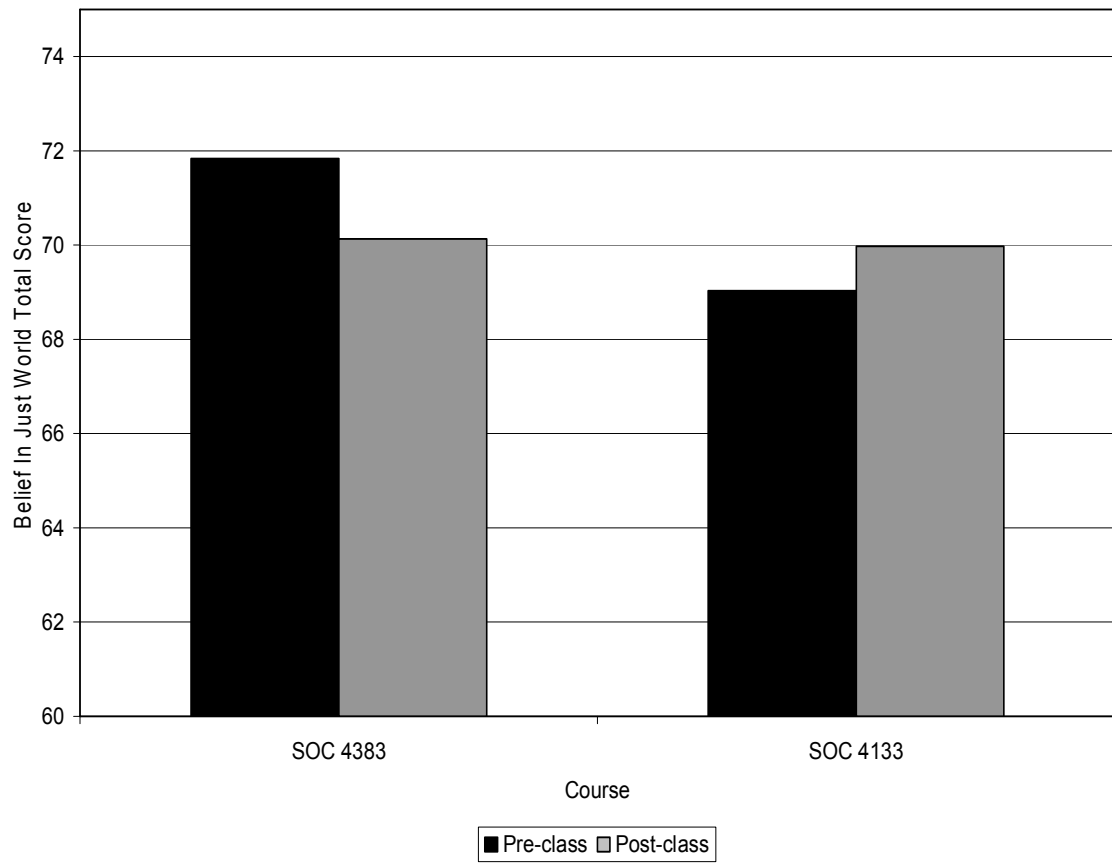
Hypothesis Two predicted an interaction such that students in the social stratification class would experience a greater change in beliefs and attributions after attending the course as compared to students in the control class.

A 2 x 2 between subjects analysis of variance was conducted in order to determine whether or not a greater change in beliefs (as measured by the JWS) occurred for those students attending the social stratification course. At pretest students in the social stratification course had an average total score of  $M = 71.84$  ( $SD = 8.15$ ), whereas at posttest the students in this course had an average score of  $M = 70.13$  ( $SD = 7.52$ ), a difference of  $M_{diff} = 1.71$ . At pretest student in the control course had an average total



score of  $M = 69.03$  ( $SD = 8.02$ ), whereas at posttest the students in this course had an average score of  $M = 69.97$  ( $SD = 9.67$ ), a difference of  $M_{diff} = -0.94$ . The statistical test indicated a non-significant interaction [ $F(1,145) = 0.92, p = .34$ ], thus indicating that while participants in the social stratification course did experience a small decrease in their overall belief in a just world, it was not significantly different from the change in beliefs that occurred in control course. A visual comparison of these changes can be viewed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Change in belief in a just world scores between groups across time.

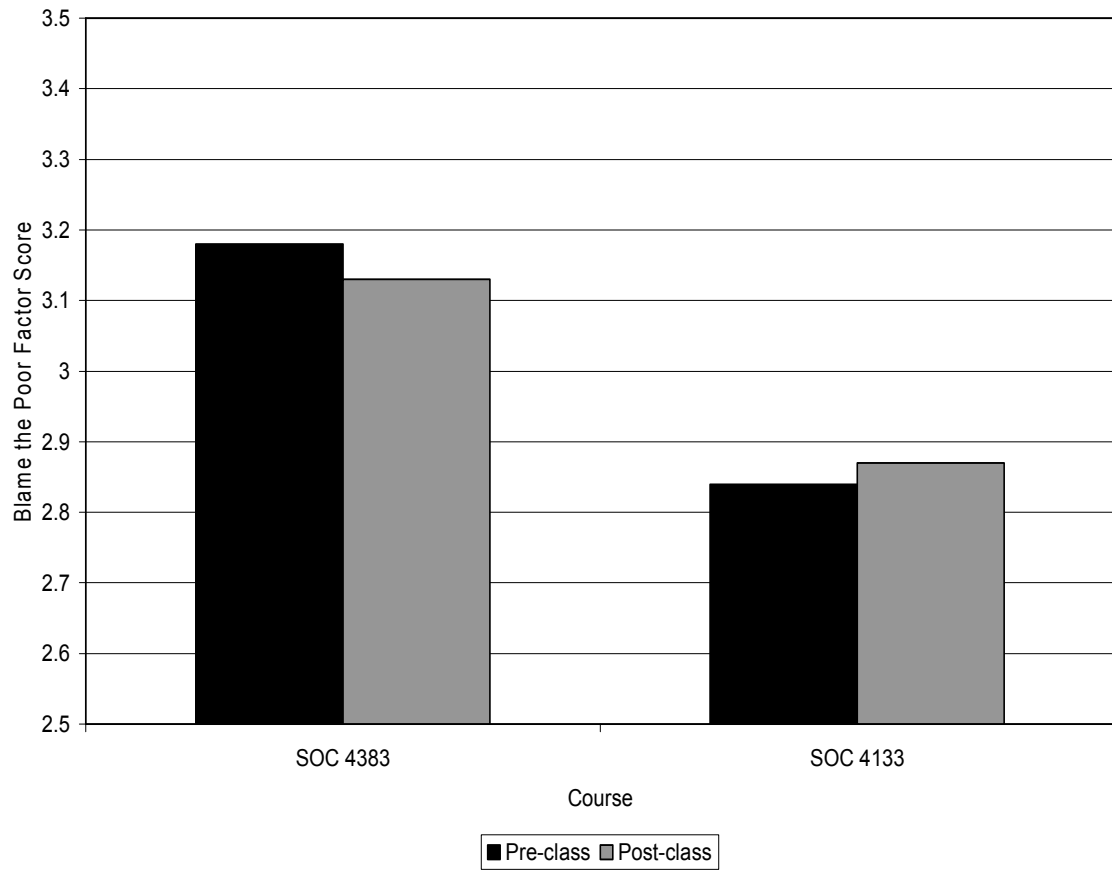


Attributions of poverty were also analyzed. At pretest the mean scores for the entire sample, on a scale of one to six (one being strongly disagree to six being strongly agree), were as follows: blame the poor ( $M = 3.01, SD = .91$ ); blame the government ( $M = 4.354, SD = .70$ ); blame the environment ( $M = 3.89, SD = .69$ ); and blame exploitation ( $M = 4.30, SD = 1.03$ ). A one-way Analysis of Variance indicated that these attributions were rated significantly different by participants [ $F(3, 234) = 59.30, p < .001$ ]. Post hoc contrasts further indicated that participants' blame of the government and blame of the exploitation were rated highest (but not significantly different from each other) [ $F(1, 78) = 0.25, p = .62$ ], followed by blame of the environment [ $F(1, 78) = 13.47, p < .001$ , when compared to blame of exploitation], and finally by blame of the poor [ $F(1, 78) = 58.46, p < .001$ , when compared to blame of the environment].

A 2 x 2 between subjects analysis of variance was also conducted in order to determine whether or not a greater change in attributions (as measured by the CTWPQ) occurred for those students attending the social stratification course. At pretest students in the social stratification course had an average individualist attribution score (blame the poor subscale score) of  $M = 3.18 (SD = 0.99)$ , whereas at post test students in the course had an average score of  $M = 3.13 (SD = 0.96)$ , a difference of  $M_{diff} = 0.05$ . At pretest students in the control course had an average individualist attribution score of  $M = 2.85 (SD = 0.80)$ , whereas at post test students in the course had an average score of  $M = 2.87 (SD = 0.96)$ , a difference of  $M_{diff} = -0.02$ . A non-significant interaction was again observed [ $F(1,143) = 0.06, p = .81$ ], indicating that the changes in individualist attributions that occurred in the social stratification course over time were not

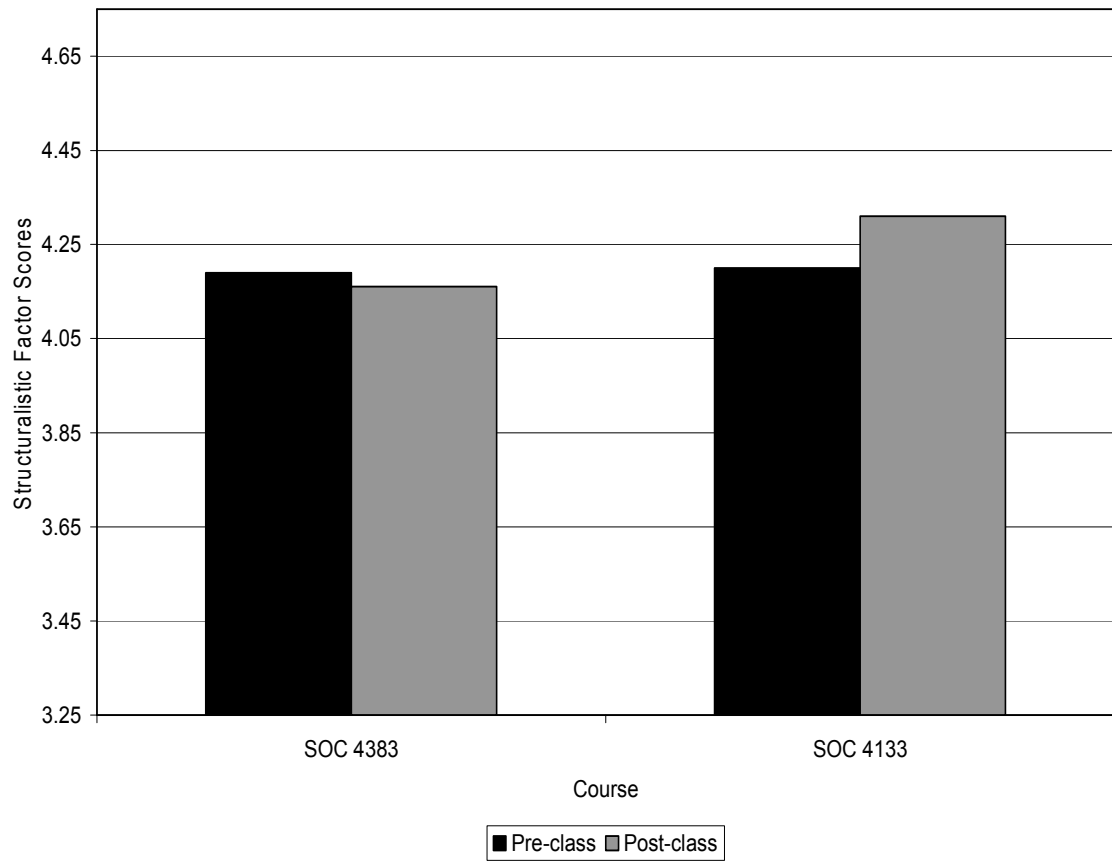
significantly different from the changes that occurred in the control course. A visual comparison of these changes can be viewed in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Change in individualistic attributions between groups across time.



At pretest students in the social stratification course had an average structural attribution score (average of blame the government, blame the environment, and blame exploitation scores) of  $M = 4.19$  ( $SE = 0.10$ ), whereas at post test students in the course had an average score of  $M = 4.16$  ( $SE = 0.12$ ), a difference of  $M_{diff} = 0.03$ . At pretest students in the control course had an average structural attribution score of  $M = 4.20$  ( $SE = 0.11$ ), whereas at post test students in the course had an average score of  $M = 4.31$  ( $SE = .11$ ), a difference of  $M_{diff} = -0.11$ . A non-significant interaction was also observed [ $F(1,143) = 0.06, p = .81$ ], indicating that the changes in structural attributions that occurred in the social stratification course over time were not significantly different from the changes that occurred in the control course. A visual comparison of these changes can be viewed in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Change in structural attributions between groups across time.



Further, the structural attribution subscales (blame the government, blame the environment, and blame exploitation) were individually analyzed to determine whether or not differences in change occurred at these levels. These 2 x 2 analysis of variance comparisons also indicated no significant differences in change across time between these two groups. These results can be viewed in Table 1.



Table 1.

Comparison between groups across time on the structural subscales.

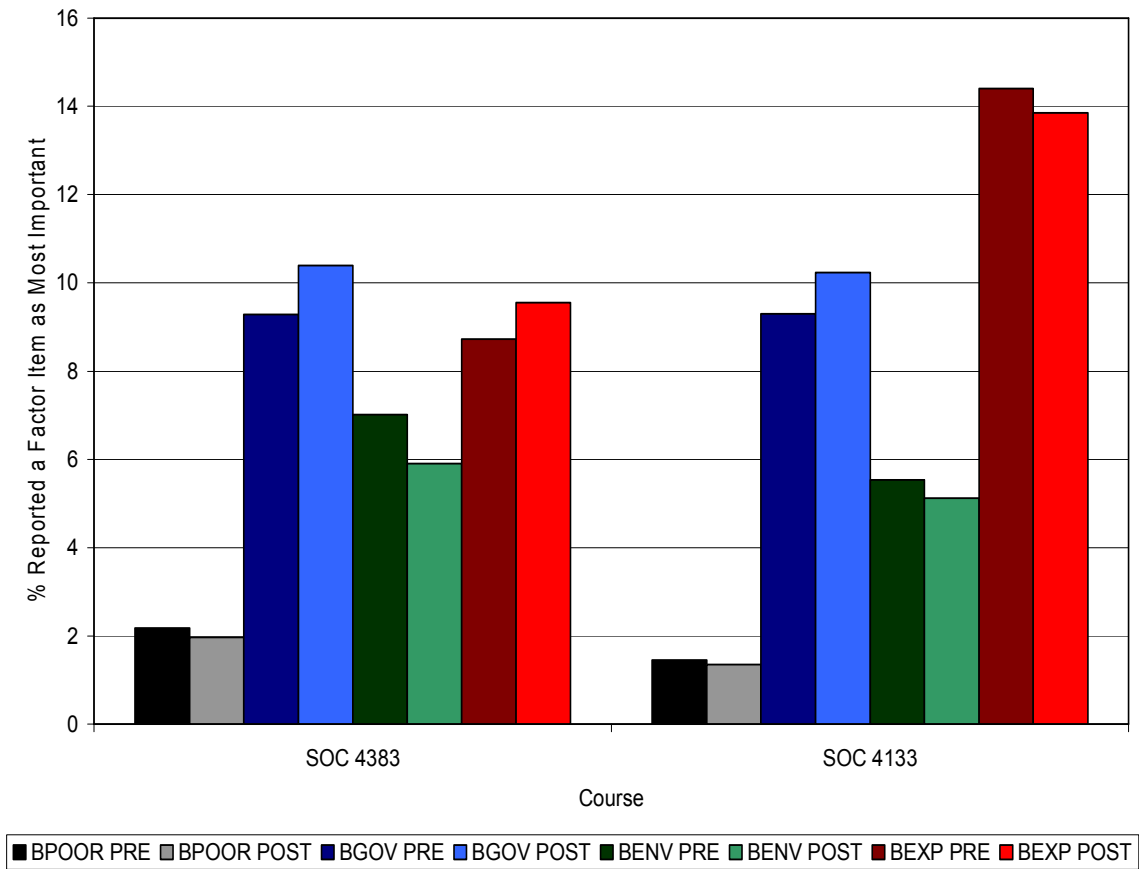
	SOC 4383			SOC 4133			<i>F</i> -test	<i>p</i> -value
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Blame gov.								
Pretest	47	4.38	0.68	35	4.36	0.74	0.13	.72
Posttest	32	4.38	0.81	34	4.44	0.65		
Blame env.								
Pretest	47	3.96	0.63	35	3.82	0.75	1.98	.16
Posttest	32	3.88	0.84	34	4.08	0.71		
Blame expl.								
Pretest	48	4.23	1.08	35	4.41	0.95	0.00	.98
Posttest	32	4.23	0.93	34	4.41	1.11		

*Note.* SOC 4383 represents social stratification course, SOC 4133 represents control group course. *F*-tests were for the course\*time interactions. No interactions were significant.

The CTWPQ also included a question asking participants to indicate the three most important contributors to poverty. At pretest the students in the social stratification course reported a given blame the poor item an average of only 2.18% of the time, a given blame the government item an average of 9.28% of the time, a given blame the environment an average of 7.01% of the time, and a given exploitation item an average of 8.72% of the time. At posttest the same group reported a blame the poor item 1.97% of the time, blame the government item 10.4% of the time, blame the environment 5.9% of the time, and blame exploitation 9.55% of the time. At pretest the students in the control course reported a given blame the poor item an average of 1.45% of the time, a given blame the government item an average of 9.30% of the time, a given blame the environment item an average of 5.53% of the time, and a given blame exploitation item an average of 14.4% of the time. At posttest this same group reported a blame the poor item 1.35% of the time, a blame the government item 10.24% of the time, a blame the environment item 5.12% of the time, and a given exploitation item 13.85% of the time. In summary, there is a trend for both groups to indicate an individualistic item less often and a structural item more often at posttest. This trend can be viewed in Figure 4.

In general hypothesis two was not supported. Participants attending the social stratification course did not exhibit a change in beliefs or attributions across time that was different from the change that occurred in the control course group.

Figure 4. Comparison of most important attributions between groups across time.

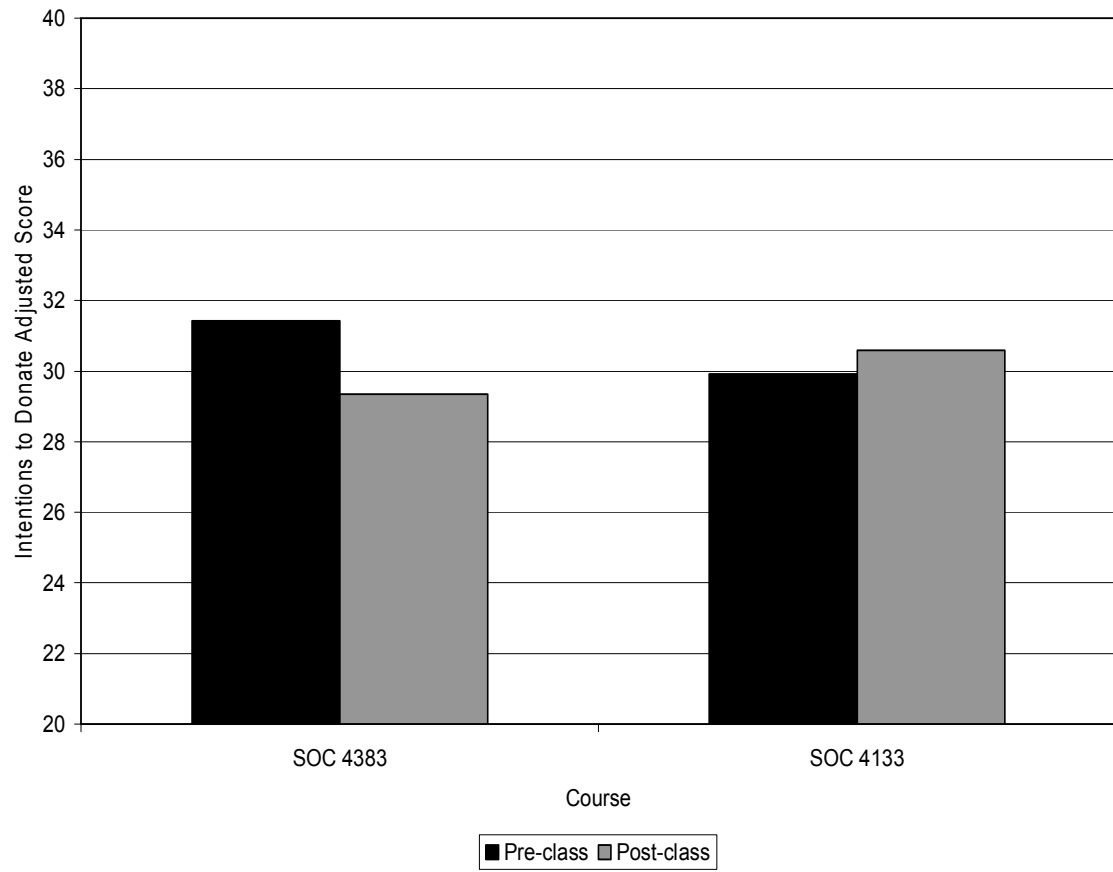


### *Analyses of Hypothesis 3 – Change in Intentions*

Hypothesis 3 predicted an interaction such that students in the social stratification class would experience a greater change in intentions to donate as measured by the ITO scale and the Scenarios of Wealth questions after attending the course as compared to students in the control class group.

Intentions to donate were first measured by the Intentions to Donate scale. Only items directly pertaining to intentions to donate (items 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 16) on this scale were used in this analysis. At pretest students in the social stratification course had an average intention to donate score of  $M = 31.42$  ( $SD = 3.77$ ), whereas at post test students in this course had an average score of  $M = 29.34$  ( $SD = 4.63$ ), a difference of  $M_{diff} = 2.08$ . At pretest students in the control course had an average intention to donate score of  $M = 29.91$  ( $SD = 3.94$ ), whereas at post test students in this course had an average score of  $M = 30.59$  ( $SD = 4.11$ ), a difference of  $M_{diff} = -0.61$ . A 2 x 2 analysis of variance indicated that there was a significant interaction [ $F(1,145) = 4.11, p = .04$ ], indicating that while the students in the social stratification course actually showed a slight decrease in intentions to donate over time, students in the control group showed a minor increase. These comparisons can be viewed visually in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Comparison of intentions to donate between groups across time.



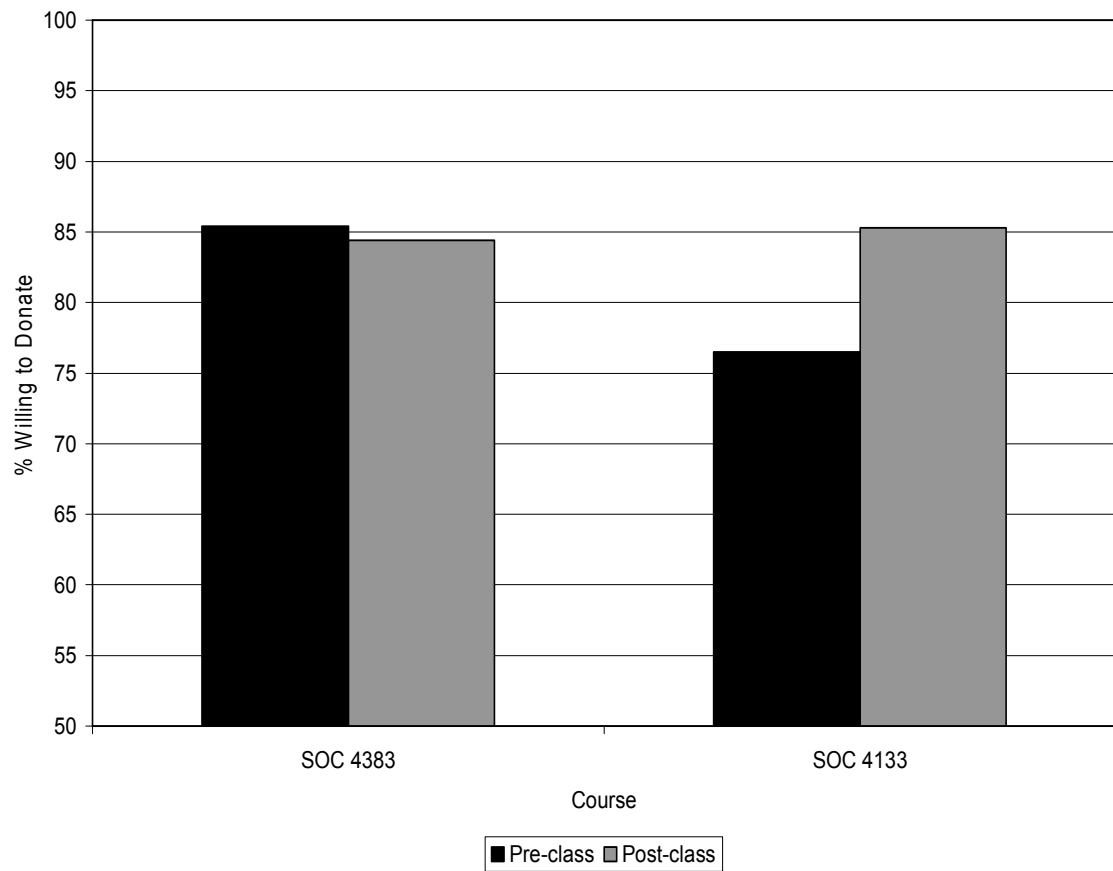
Intentions to donate were further evaluated through the use of scenarios of wealth. The following results were found at pretest. When asked “If you won a lottery tomorrow of \$1,000,000, would you donate any of that money to the poor?” 82% of participants answered yes. The second question asks “Do you donate to the poor now?” As a response, 42% of the entire sample replied yes. To the third question, “After you graduate from college, do you plan to donate to the poor?” 78% of participants answered yes. When asked, “If you earned \$20,000 to \$60,000 per year, would you donate to the poor?” 70% responded yes. For the fifth question, “If you earned \$60,000 to \$100,000 per year, would you donate to the poor?” 84% answered affirmatively. In response to the sixth question, “If you earned \$100,000 or more per year, would you donate to the poor?” 88% said yes. Finally, for the seventh question “Do you believe it is important to donate to the poor?” 84% replied yes. The eighth question was formatted to request the participants to name three charitable institutions that they would prefer to donate to in order to alleviate poverty. In response, 28.91% of participants could name three organizations, and 69.88% could name one. 30.22% could not name any charitable institutions.

For the second part of the question, responses were analyzed to discover mean, median, and modal amounts for participants only who responded affirmatively to the first part. To those who answered affirmatively to the question, “If you won a lottery tomorrow of \$1,000,000, would you donate any of that money to the poor?”  $M = \$63,691.91$  when questioned how much. The median = \$15,000.00 and the maximum = \$500,000.00. Among the participants that answered yes to “If you earned \$20,000 to \$60,000 per year, would you donate to the poor?”  $M = \$1,294.49$  for amount they would

donate. The median = \$200.00 and the maximum = \$20,000.00. In affirmative responses to “If you earned \$60,000 to \$100,000 per year, would you donate to the poor?” participants stated amounts  $M = \$3,870.52$ , with a median = \$1,000.00 and maximum = \$40,000.00. Finally, among participants who answered “yes” to the question “If you earned \$100,000 or more per year, would you donate to the poor?”  $M = \$6,566.67$  and the median = \$5,000.00 and maximum = \$50,000.00.

These scenarios of wealth were further evaluated for change across time between the two courses. At pretest 85.4% of the students in the social stratification course reported “yes” to the first scenario of wealth, whereas at posttest 84.4% indicated that they would donate. At pretest 76.5% of the students in the control course indicated that they would donate in this situation, whereas at post test 85.3% of the students in this course indicated that they would. Based on these results it is seen that the change in intention that was observed in the students attending the social stratification course was not as great as the change in intention that occurred in the control course group. A graph of these comparisons can be view in Figure 6.

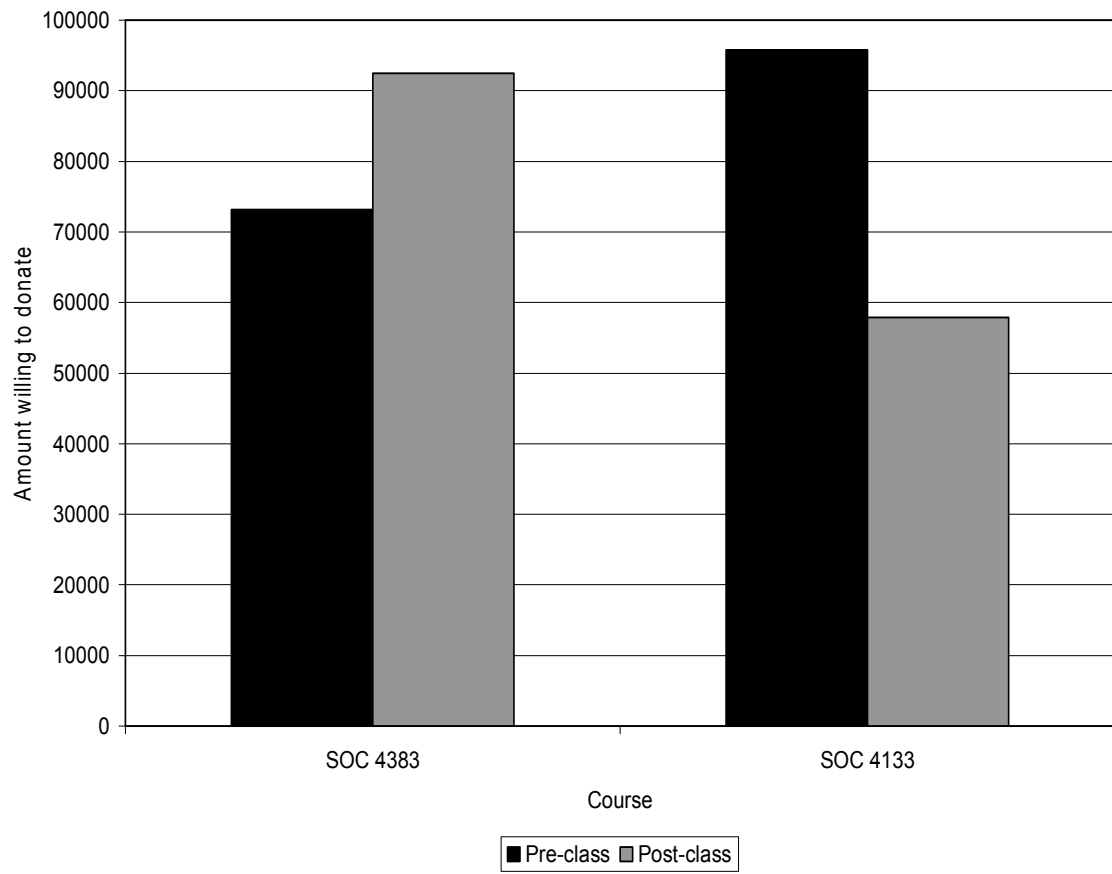
Figure 6. Change in scenario of wealth one between groups across time.





A 2 x 2 analysis of variance indicated an opposite, but still non-significant, effect [ $F(1,94) = 1.18, p = .280$ ] when comparing the amounts willing to donate in scenario one. At pretest those students from the social stratification course who reported that they would donate also reported that they would donate an average of \$73,198.49, whereas at posttest the students who reported that they would donate also reported an average of \$92,477.87. At pretest those students from the control course who reported that they would donate reported that they would donate an average of \$95,755.00, whereas at posttest the students who reported that they would donate reported an average of \$57,928.57. Figure 7 shows a visual comparison of these changes.

Figure 7. Change in amount in scenario of wealth one between groups across time.



Results from the other scenario of wealth questions can be viewed in Table 2 and Table 3. In summary, the third hypothesis was only partially supported in that participants attending the social stratification course showed less or no difference in change on intentions to donate over time when compared to participants in the control course. However, when comparing the amounts that participants were willing to donate, students in the social stratification course showed greater, although non-significant, improvements than did participants in the control course group.

Table 2.

*Scenario of wealth comparisons between groups across time.*

	SOC 4383			SOC 4133		
	<i>N</i>	% Yes	% No	<i>N</i>	% Yes	% No
<b>SofW2</b>						
Pretest	48	39.6	60.4	35	45.7	54.3
Posttest	32	25.0	75.0	34	47.1	52.9
<b>SofW3</b>						
Pretest	48	87.5	12.5	35	65.7	34.3
Posttest	31	71.0	29.0	33	81.8	18.2
<b>SofW4</b>						
Pretest	48	72.9	27.1	35	65.7	34.3
Posttest	32	68.8	31.3	33	72.7	27.3
<b>SofW5</b>						
Pretest	48	89.6	10.4	35	77.1	22.9
Posttest	32	87.5	12.5	34	79.4	20.6
<b>SofW6</b>						
Pretest	48	91.7	8.3	35	82.9	17.1
Posttest	32	93.8	6.3	34	91.2	8.8
<b>SofW7</b>						
Pretest	48	87.5	12.5	35	80.0	20.0
Posttest	32	75.0	25.0	34	91.2	8.8

*Note.* SofW represents scenario of wealth, SOC 4383 represents social stratification course, SOC 4133 represents control group course. *F*-tests were for the course\*time interactions. No interactions were significant.

Table 3.

*Scenario of wealth amount comparisons between groups across time.*

	SOC 4383			SOC 4133			<i>F</i> -test	<i>p</i> -value
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<b>SofW2 amount</b>								
Pretest	5	2.82	2.34	8	1.50	1.92	1.31	.27
Posttest	2	0.55	0.07	4	2.03	3.46		
<b>SofW4 amount</b>								
Pretest	17	13.15	12.76	16	8.72	7.69	0.23	.63
Posttest	14	14.74	19.94	13	7.15	4.27		
<b>SofW5 amount</b>								
Pretest	27	47.37	58.06	14	37.46	43.28	0.00	.95
Posttest	18	31.61	28.03	17	20.47	15.20		
<b>SofW6 amount</b>								
Pretest	26	86.38	98.21	19	65.37	67.65	0.37	.55
Posttest	22	52.63	41.32	19	49.84	42.07		

*Note.* SofW equals Scenario of Wealth, SOC 4383 represents social stratification course, SOC 4133 represents control group course. *M* and *SD* values are expressed in hundreds terms. *F*-tests were for the course\*time interactions. No interactions were significant.

### *Secondary Analyses – Gender Differences*

After testing the original hypotheses it was thought that gender may play a role in the results. First, independent samples t-tests were conducted comparing males to females in their belief in a just world. Overall, at pretest there was not a significant difference between males and females belief in just world score. However, at posttest there was a difference [ $t(60) = 2.38, p = .02$ ] with males showing higher scores than females. When separating these results by class, in the social stratification course similar results were found: at pretest no significant difference was observed; however, at posttest males scored significantly higher [ $t(26) = 1.96, p = .06$ ] than females. On the other hand, in the control group no gender differences were seen at either pretest or posttest; indicating that the social stratification course was successful in lowering belief in a just world scores for females only. A graph of these results with labeled means can be viewed in Figure 8.

Independent samples t-tests were also conducted comparing males to females in their intentions to donate. Including all participants in the sample, at pretest females scored significantly higher [ $t(81) = 2.73, p < .01$ ] than males in their intentions to donate. However, at posttest there was not a significant difference between the male and female participants. When separating these results by class, in the social stratification course similar results were found: at pretest females scored significantly higher [ $t(46) = 2.88, p < .01$ ] than males; however at posttest no significant difference was observed. On the other hand, in the control group course no gender differences were observed at either pretest or posttest; indicating that the social stratification course was successful in raising intentions to donate for males only. A graph of these results with labeled means can be viewed in Figure 9.

Figure 8. Gender and the belief in a just world.

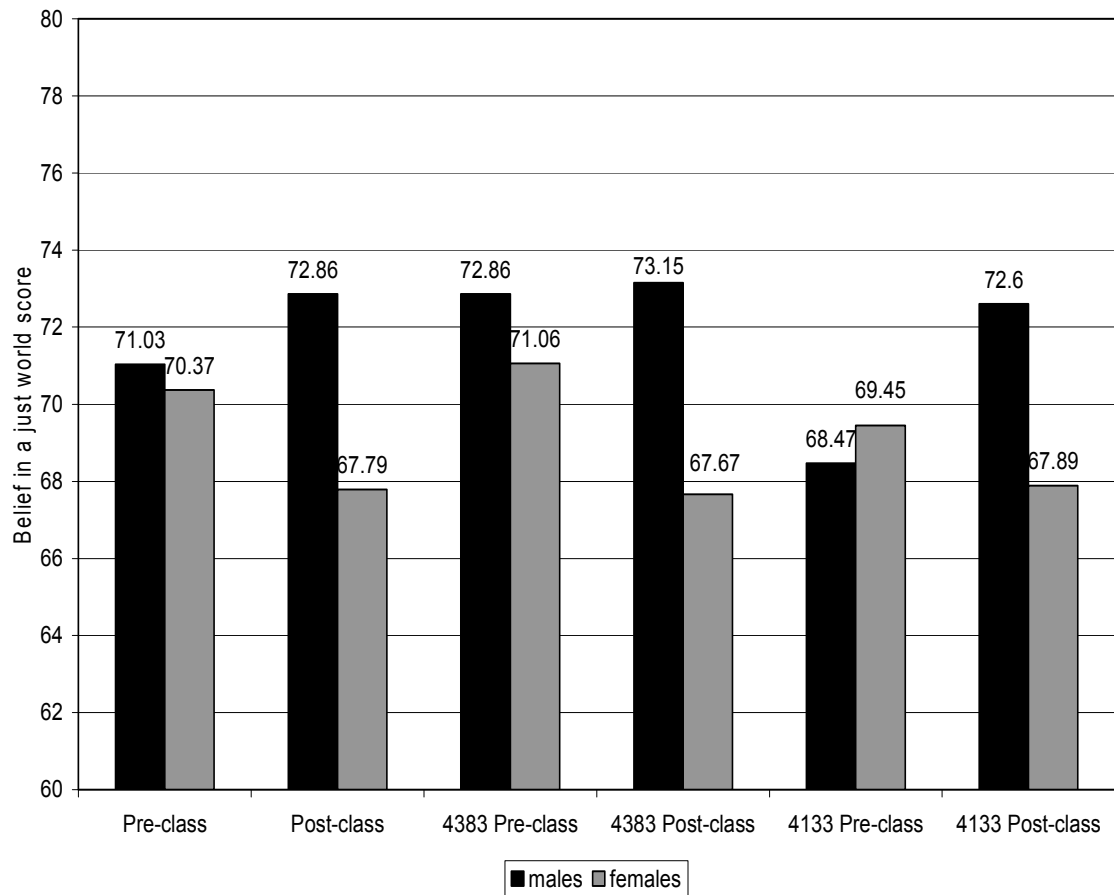
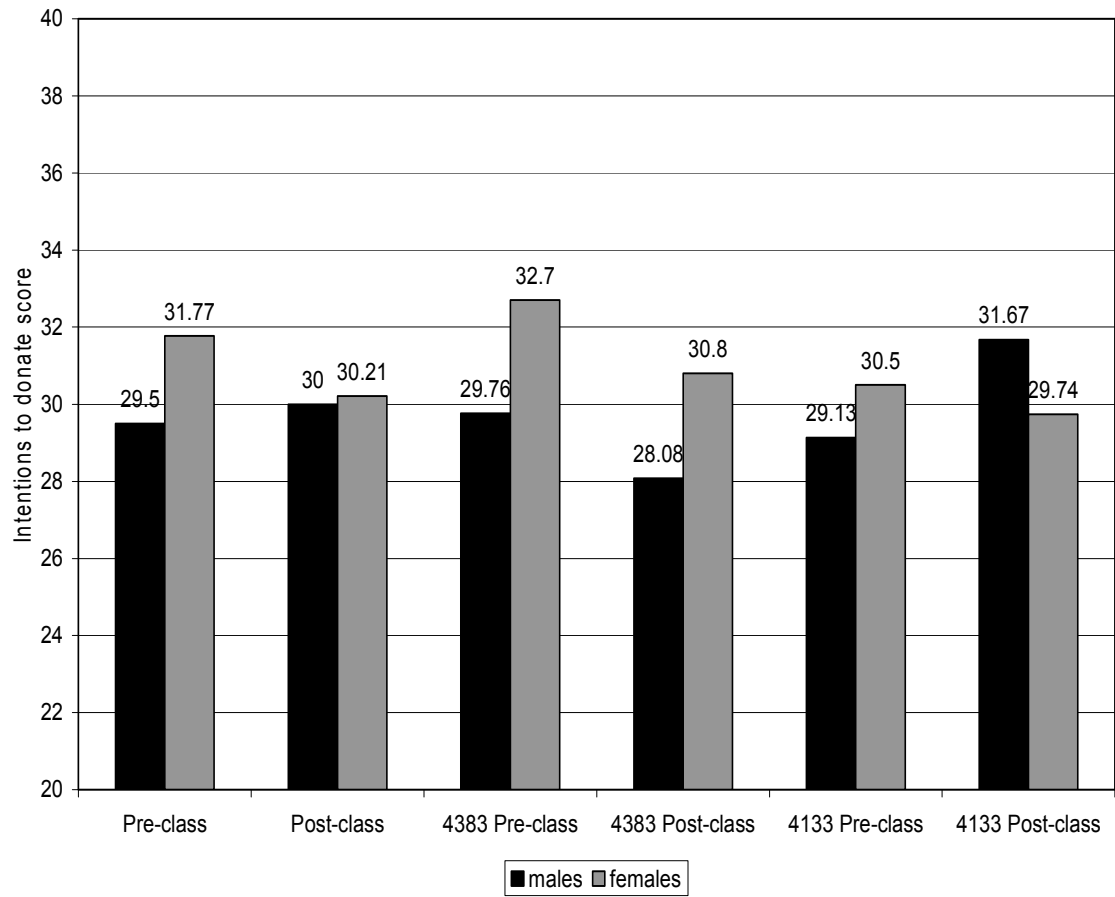


Figure 9. Gender and intentions to donate.





## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The study of attributions of poverty among different populations has seen over 30 years of research. Beginning with Feagin's study administered in 1969, a standard division of attributions has developed—perspectives placing structural causes of poverty (external forces) and those placing individual causes (internal forces) (1972). The questionnaire he used is comprised of a lead question, “there is poverty in third world countries because...” and is followed by numerous items. The participant is asked to use a Likert scale to determine how much he/she agrees with a list of reasons for poverty. Since the publication of Feagin's study in 1972, the Causes of Third World Poverty Questionnaire has been replicated among numerous populations with differing age groups, ethnicities, socio-economic status, nationalities, religious/political orientation, and so forth.

In an attempt to compare attributions of populations from the United States to those of other countries, various studies found that Americans and other populations in developed countries, such as Australia and Britain, are likely to attribute individual causes of world poverty while populations in developing countries generally favor structural causes (Feagin 1972, 1975; Kluegel 1987; Morcol 1975; Campbell 2001; Huber and Form 1973). This is perhaps because of an American ideology that favors individualism and trusts in the fairness of capitalism.

The next focus in the literature turned to socio-economic status and its effects on attributions of poverty. Studies completed in this area resulted in findings that showed populations with backgrounds with higher socio-economic status attributed more individual causes of poverty, and vice versa for those with lower socio-economic status (Abouchedid and Nasser 2001; Griffin and Oheneba-Sakyi 1993; Bullock 1999). When the study was extended to populations with varying political/religious views, divisions were again found in attributions of poverty. Across studies, it was found that those with conservative political views and also those embracing protestant Christian religious beliefs generally held to individualist causes of poverty; inversely, populations with liberal political views and either Catholic or non-Christian religious beliefs generally attributed structural causes to poverty (Furnham 1982; Pellegrini 1997; Griffin 1993; Feather 1974; Hunt 2002).

The implications of these results have been tied to literature on charitable behavior among such populations to discover a possible connection of individual attributions of poverty on philanthropic actions. These studies showed a general positive correlation between structural attributions of poverty and higher donating behavior/intentions (Campbell, Carr and MacLachlan 2001; Carr and MacLachlan 1998; Cheung and Chan 2000). This information is valuable in determining which populations are more likely to donate to charities, and which are not.

However, few studies have been completed to determine if attributions among individuals can be changed or manipulated, although numerous studies show that awareness, exposure to information, and other forms of education often contribute to change in actions (Bandura 1986, 1994; Inglehart 1991). Just one study, completed in

1989 by Guimond in Quebec, Canada, has attempted to determine possible links between education and changing attributions of poverty. Guimond found that until the university level, a majority of students in all declared areas of study attributed individualist causes for poverty. However, at the university level, social science students were generally found to place structural attributions more than any other group tested. Therefore, it can be conjectured that the specific education offered to university students in the social sciences may have been a cause of this alteration of attributions. Nonetheless, no further assumptions may be made without further research to answer the question of the possibility of education as an instrument for change in opinions regarding attributions of poverty. If so, a domino affect may be found that links changes of individual attributions to structural attributions to an increase in donating behavior.

It was the purpose of this study to answer that question: does education play a role in affecting attributions of poverty? Furthermore, does donating behavior change as a result of education? The research has shown mixed results.

In analyzing the pretest results, it was found that the first hypothesis was not supported: students in both the control group and the study group were found to have generally structural attributions of poverty, instead of individual attributions, as hypothesized. The reason for this may be found in answers provided in the demographics portion of the survey. Although the course Sociology 4383 may be taken at any time before graduation in the Sociology major, most of the students in the class of study had already completed three years of college and had already taken numerous courses in sociology. According to Guimond's study among secondary school and university students, social sciences courses (such as sociology) may impact attributions of poverty

among individuals. Therefore, it appears that this effect may have been supported by results in the current study: upper-level sociology students may be more likely to attribute structural causes to poverty than the population at large in the area of study.

The second hypothesis, which compares the posttest attributions of poverty and beliefs in a just world to the pretest, exhibited mixed results. As hypothesized, scores in the Belief in a Just World section among students in Sociology 4383 decreased over the course of the semester, while those in the control group did not; however, the measure of decrease was not significant. Attributions of poverty, measured in the Causes of Third World Poverty questionnaire did not significantly change.

The main question superseding these results is why participants' attributions of poverty did not change as expected. In a study done on political beliefs, results confirmed that when provided incriminating information against the presidential candidate of participants' political party, participants showed an increase in emotion and actually increased support in defense of that candidate. It appears that a common response to instruction correcting a personal belief or opinion, people commonly resist such correction and in fact, defend their stance even more. Perhaps this phenomenon occurred in this study—if participants entered the study with developed attributions on poverty and intentions to donate, the education of the course may not have had an effect on personal opinion. James Robinson found similar results in his study about attributions of poverty among volunteers for Habitat for Humanity (2004). While he expected volunteers' opinions about attributions of poverty to shift from individual to structural over their period of service (which included instruction on causes of poverty), he found that they retained their same opinions from the beginning of their service. In addition,

while it may appear that the class instruction was unsuccessful in changing attributions of poverty from individualist to structural, the cause may be due to the fact that participants in the class already maintained the desired structural attributions. Therefore, no change was actually necessary for participants to achieve the desired outcome.

The third hypothesis also showed mixed results. While the Intentions to Donate portion of the survey did not have a change in scores from the pretest to the posttest, the amount participants declared they would donate in the scenarios of wealth (among those who responded affirmatively) did increase—however, because of the variability of amounts, the change was not significant. Part of the reason for the lack of increase is because attributions of poverty did not significantly change and, as mentioned previously, intentions to donate are linked to these attributions.

On the positive side, responses in the scenarios of wealth section were quite generous among participants. Therefore, while the hypotheses may not have been proven correct, the results of the study show that generally speaking, sociology students demonstrate very structural attributions of poverty and generous intentions to donate.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

This study had some limitations. First, on the date of the posttest for the Sociology 4383 group, severe weather inhibited many students from coming to the class, and thus did not have the opportunity to take the survey. The lack of participants in the posttest survey may have affected the data and outcome of the study.

Second, although the study was structured to anticipate the extenuating and temporary financial circumstances of college students, answers to questions on a survey cannot always completely portray the future donating actions of individuals. In addition,

because the participants do not actually live the scenarios provided, they themselves often declared in the surveys that they were unable to anticipate their actions in such scenarios.

Third, the study was limited to only Sociology major students. Therefore, the data may have been confounded by the possibility that some personality attributes and opinions are common among those students attracted to the field of Sociology. In addition, the results may not be easily universalized because of the narrow and specific qualifications of participants in the study to have chosen Sociology as a major.

A final limitation is the experimental design of the study. Cook and Campbell (1979) have noted that the quasi-experimental design is a very effective form of experimentation; however, there are four main potential weaknesses to this design. One potential weakness is the history of the subjects, meaning outside events and forces that may influence the subjects of the experiment in a way that alters the results of the study. This possibility will be immaterial in the sense that experiences on a college campus are so diversified that it is very unlikely for the same personal events to affect all of the students enrolled in one specific class. In the case of the present study, the only real possibility that the same set of outside events and forces affects every participant would need to be an incident occurring on a campus wide (or larger) scale. However, no outstanding event of this sort occurred in the course of the semester.

Another possible weakness is a statistical regression that shows a low in any one year and that leaves room only for succeeding results to be higher (and thus show artificial improvement). In the case of the present study, the starting point (results from the preliminary questionnaire) is irrelevant from a sociological perspective because attitudes and actions are generally fixed over a period of time. The purpose of the study

was to measure change in one group of participants after a selected form of education. Enough studies have been completed in the past among similar participants (U.S. citizens and college students) to effectively note a consistency in results throughout numerous years. The motivation to execute this study is not based on a particular statistical high or low, but on a consistent trend noted in countless studies, and the possibilities of affecting change within this trend.

A third potential weakness is the possibility that the test or questionnaire is learnable, and because of this fact, answers change or “improve” with repetition, and not because of the effects of the actual experiment. However, in the present study, the questions were based purely on opinion and attitudes, and phrased in a neutral form, so there was nothing measured that might be affected by repetition in completing the questionnaire. In addition, there was no incentive to change attitudes or opinions, because the questionnaire is completely confidential and results will not determine any action of outcome with the participants.

Finally, there is the possibility that the instrumentation tools for measurement of change or improvement can be altered with time and external forces may lead to an inaccurate representation of the changes affected by the experiment. This potential weakness in the quasi-experimental format is also irrelevant in the present study because the pretest and posttest measurement tools were already certain and unchangeable. The same statistical analysis to measure correlation and other patterns were used to quantify the results of both tests.

*Directions for further research*

This study has opened many avenues for future research. It would be beneficial to repeat the same study in a new setting. As mentioned previously, various factors confounded possible results in the data, including adverse weather on the day of the survey, the number of sociology courses participants had already taken, and the fact that many participants in the control group had taken Social Stratification previously. A new setting might include a greater number of participants, and a makeup of participants who had not previously taken many (or any) sociology courses. In addition, expanding participants to include members of the community with varying socio-economic backgrounds would help to solidify results.

Other areas of possible research could include a follow-up study on participants of the current study in the future to confirm or negate predictions they made about donating behavior in the survey's scenarios. Doing so would substantiate the results found in this study and would validate or disprove the practice of seeking opinions in scenario situations. Another direction of research may consist of the construction of a specific course tailored to the subject of the causes of poverty and testing the effectiveness of it on a given population.

Finally, a study could be directed to those who already donate to charity in order to discover specific attributions they give to poverty, personal characteristics, and also to determine their reasons for donating. By collecting such data from those who already donate, light may be shed on the origin of such behavior and how to teach or replicate it among others.

*Conclusion*



Although the results of this study do not show significant changes in attributions of poverty and intentions to donate as a result of course instruction in social stratification, they do show a general tendency among sociology major students to express structural attributions and generous intentions to donate to charities. There are many reasons for the lack of change including but not limited to resistance to correction of personal opinions and previous sociology course work that already heightened the awareness of the issue of world poverty. The present research, while not fully proving its hypotheses, has produced results that apply to attributions studies and philanthropic/charitable organizations and institutions. Consequently, there are many avenues open to study as a result of the current research.

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## APPENDIX A

### ATTRIBUTIONS OF POVERTY SURVEY

*This survey contains 75 total items comprised in 5 sections: demographic information, beliefs in a just world, attributions of poverty, intentions to donate, and scenarios of wealth relating to intentions to donate. Thank you for your participation.*

#### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

*For the following 10 items, please select the response that is most correct as it pertains to you, or fill in the appropriate response in the space provided:*

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your gender?    Male                          Female

3. What is your nationality?

U.S. citizen    International residing in the U.S.

3. If you are a U.S. citizen, what is your ethnicity?

Caucasian/White American    African American    Native American  
Bi/Multi-racial American                          Hispanic/Latino-a American    Asian American

4. What is your level of completed education?

High School degree    One year of college                          Two years of college                          Three years of college  
Bachelor's degree                          Master's degree

5. What is the level of completed education of your father?

Some high school                      High School degree                      Some college  
Bachelor's degree                      Graduate level degree

6. What is the level of completed education of your mother?

Some high school                      High School degree                      Some college  
Bachelor's degree                      Graduate level degree

7. What is your socio-economic class?

Lower              Lower-middle              Middle              Upper-Middle              Upper

8. What is your father's occupational level?

Higher executive/major professional professional                      Business manager/midsize business owner/lesser professional  
Administrative personnel/small business owner/minor professional  
Clerical or sales worker/technician                      Skilled manual employee  
Machine operator or semi-skilled employee                      Unskilled employee/student/housewife

9. What is your mother's occupational level?

Higher executive/major professional professional                      Business manager/midsize business owner/lesser professional  
Administrative personnel/small business owner/minor professional  
Clerical or sales worker/technician                      Skilled manual employee  
Machine operator or semi-skilled employee                      Unskilled employee/student/housewife

10. What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How many sociology courses have you taken before this semester?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Section 2: Beliefs in a Just World

For the following 20 items, you will be asked to measure your level of agreement regarding each statement. Please use the following scale to rate your level of agreement:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Somewhat agree
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly agree

1. I've found that a person rarely deserves the reputation he/she has.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
2. Basically the world is a just place.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
3. People who get "lucky breaks" have usually earned their good fortune.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
4. Careful drivers are just as likely to get hurt in traffic accidents as careless ones.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
5. It is a common occurrence for a guilty person to get off free in American courts.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
6. Students almost always deserve the grades they receive in school.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
7. People who keep in shape have little chance of suffering a heart attack.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
8. The political candidate who sticks up for his/her principles rarely gets elected.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
9. It is rare for an innocent person to be wrongly sent to jail.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
10. In professional sports, many fouls and infractions never get called by the referee.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
11. By and large, people deserve what they get.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
12. When parents punish their children, it is almost always for good reasons.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
13. Good deeds often go unnoticed and unrewarded.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
14. Although evil people may hold political power for a while, in the general course of history good wins out.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
15. In almost any business or profession, people who do their job well rise to the top.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
16. American parents tend to overlook the things most to be admired in their children.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
17. It is often impossible for a person to receive a fair trial in the USA.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
18. People who meet with misfortune have often brought it on themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				

19. Crime doesn't pay.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Many people suffer through absolutely no fault of their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Section 3: Attributions of Poverty

*For the following 18 items, you will be asked to measure your level of agreement regarding each sentence completion of the statement below. The statement is in bold font. Please use the following scale to rate your level of agreement:*

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Somewhat agree
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly agree

<b>There is poverty in Third World countries because...</b>						
1. ...the people of such countries keep having too many children.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. ...of fate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. ...their governments are corrupt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. ...of the regional climate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. ...their governments are inefficient.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. ...of laziness and a lack of effort in the population of such countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. ...their land is not suitable for agriculture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. ...other countries exploit the Third World.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. ...of disease in Third World countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. ...their governments spend too much money on arms.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. ...of war.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. ...of the world economy and banking systems being loaded against the poor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. ...pests and insects destroy crops.	1	2	3	4	5	6



14. ...the population of such countries make no attempt at self-improvement.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
15. ...of a lack of intelligence among the people there.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
16. ...of a lack of thrift and proper management of resources by the people there.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
17. ...the people there are not willing to change old ways and customs.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				
18. ...of a lack of ability among the people of such countries.	1	2	3	4	5
	6				

19. Which of the above factors are the three greatest reasons for poverty? Please list three item numbers:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 4: Intentions to Donate

*For the following 17 items, you will be asked to measure the level of truthfulness of each statement pertaining to you. On item 17, please use the space provided to write your response. Please use the following scale to rate the level of consistency of the items to your life:*

- 1 = Very false
- 2 = Somewhat false
- 3 = Neither true nor false
- 4 = Somewhat true
- 5 = Very true

1. In the future one year, you will donate money to charity organizations.	1	2	3	4
	5			
2. In the future one year, you will donate money to international relief organizations.	1	2	3	4
	5			
3. In reality, you can decide whether to donate money to charity organizations.	1	2	3	4
	5			
4. If you want to donate money to charity, you have no deficit in the ability to do so.	1	2	3	4
	5			
5. Generally international relief organizations' images are good.	1	2	3	4
	5			
6. You endorse international relief organizations' notions of helping people to help themselves.	1	2	3	4
	5			
7. International relief organizations offer help to poor people.	1	2	3	4
	5			
8. Many people donate to charity organizations.	1	2	3	4
	5			
9. Local relief organizations can help people more effectively than international relief organizations.	1	2	3	4
	5			
10. You have moral obligation to donate.	1	2	3	4
	5			

11. Many charity organizations need donations.	1 5	2	3	4
12. Donating money conforms to your principles as a person.	1 5	2	3	4
13. There are many people in the world who need help.	1 5	2	3	4
14. People are poor simply because they lack skills to earn a living.	1 5	2	3	4
15. People are poor because they are unwilling to work.	1 5	2	3	4
16. You have often donated money to charity organizations.	1 5	2	3	4
17. Name three international relief organizations:	1)			
	2)			
	3)			

**Section 5: Scenarios of Wealth Relating to Intentions to Donate**

*For the following 7 items, you will be given scenarios in which you are asked to respond to with yes or no. If you answer positively, you will be asked another question that requires a dollar amount estimation. Please complete to the best of your ability.*

1. If you won a lottery tomorrow of \$1,000,000, would you donate any of that money to the poor?

Yes                      No

If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you donate to the poor now?

Yes                      No

If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you determine this amount? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. After you graduate from college, do you plan to donate to the poor?

Yes                      No

If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you earned \$20,000 to \$60,000 per year, would you donate to the poor?

Yes                      No

If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

5. If you earned \$60,000 to \$100,000 per year, would you donate to the poor?

Yes                      No

If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

6. If you earned \$100,000 or more per year, would you donate to the poor?

Yes                      No

If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you believe it is important to donate to the poor?

Yes                      No

If yes: Should the amount you give be based on how much money you make  
per year?

Yes                      No

If yes: Should the amount you give be a percentage of your income?

Yes                      No

8. Which organizations would you be most likely to donate to in order to alleviate poverty?  
Please list three:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### SYLLABUS FOR COURSE

## Social Stratification

Sociology 4383

Instructor: Beth Schaefer Caniglia                      Email: canigli@okstate.edu  
Office: 011 Classroom Building  
Phone: 744-6122 or 743-2203 (please, no calls after 9pm)  
Office Hours: Mondays 10-11:30 a.m.; Wednesdays 12:30-2 p.m.; or by appointment

### Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to sociological theories and evidence regarding social stratification in the United States. Throughout the semester, we will examine empirical evidence pertaining to how the “goods” and “bads” of society are distributed among individuals. We will also study the relationship between stratification and social institutions, such as family, education and politics. Intersections with ethnicity and gender will also be discussed.

### Required Texts

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2001. *Nickel and Dimed*.

Gilbert, Dennis. 1998. *The American Class Structure: In an Age of Growing Inequality*.

Rimmerman, Craig. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. *The New Citizenship: Unconventional Politics, Activism, and Service*.

Waters, Mary C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*.

### Other Readings

Available to be copied as assigned.

### **How much time will this class take?**

For college level work, the general rule is that you should plan to spend two hours outside of class for every hour in. That means six hours per week outside of class. I have made assignments accordingly. If you read or write more slowly than the average student, you will need to plan additional time.

### **Plus/Minus Grading:**

Plus/minus grading will be used in calculation of individual grades. This means that the following grading scale will be applied to each category/assignment:

A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3.0; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.0; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.0; D- = .67; F+ = .33; F = 0

As you can see, getting a plus or minus can contribute considerably to your final grade. Although we cannot report pluses or minuses on your final report card, the pluses and minuses you earn throughout the semester will add up and contribute to your overall grade. Several pluses can lead your grade to round up; whereas, several minuses, can lead your grade to round down.

### **Grading Policy**

Attendance/Participation	20%	Quizzes	10%
Take-home Exams	30%	In-Class Writing	10%
Response Papers	30%		

### **Wipe outs**

Each of you may redeem three wipe out coupons during the semester. These coupons give you 100% attendance and participation for the day. You cannot use wipe outs on exam days or during the first or last week of in-class meetings. Using a wipe out does not exempt you from any deadlines that fall on that class day. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due by the end of the class period on the day listed in the course schedule (below). Late assignments will be handled according to the late policy. Only three wipe outs per person!

### **Extra Credit**

Throughout the semester, you will be given opportunities to gain extra credit. Attending campus activities that relate to our class subject is one way of gaining extra credit. I will

try to keep you informed when such opportunities arise. However, if you believe a scheduled event or meeting could provide further context for our course material, please bring it to our attention. A brief write-up summarizing and reflecting on the event you attended is required to justify the receipt of extra credit. Extra credit will only be used in cases where your grade is borderline. Keep in mind, this happens more often than any of us anticipates. Furthermore, extra credit *cannot* be earned on an individual basis or after-the-fact. Extra credit that has not been available to everyone in the class will not apply, and extra credit opportunities will not be made for those who are unhappy with their grade toward the end of the semester. Therefore, it is advised that you take advantage of extra credit opportunities when they arise.

### **Late Policy**

Late papers and assignments will not be accepted, except in cases of illness or emergency. You must contact me within 24 hours of when the assignment and/or paper is due, in order to make arrangements to turn in your work. Some acceptable options for turning in work when you are unable to attend class include faxing your assignment to the sociology office (fax number: 405-744-5780) or emailing your assignment to [canigli@okstate.edu](mailto:canigli@okstate.edu). For response papers, your grade will be reduced proportionately for each day it is late and will receive zero points after five days. No late exams are accepted.

### **Student Conduct**

In this class, every student has the right to pursue his or her education in a professional setting, free from abuse and discrimination. While we can all look forward to lively and sometimes heated academic debate, disrespectful and degrading comments and/or actions toward others will not be tolerated. Please treat your colleagues in a professional manner!

### **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism and other breaches of academic integrity will be handled according to OSU policies. All discovered instances of plagiarism will be filed with the appropriate office of the University and other penalties may apply. If you have questions concerning the definition of plagiarism, please refer to [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org).

### **Other Oklahoma State University Policies**

Please see the OSU syllabus attachment for other important policies and procedures that apply to this class. The attachment can be found on the OSU web page at the following address:

[http://www.okstate.edu/acadaffr/facultystaff/fall\\_04\\_syllabus\\_attachment.htm](http://www.okstate.edu/acadaffr/facultystaff/fall_04_syllabus_attachment.htm)

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies.  
This syllabus is subject to change.

### Reading & Assignment Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading Assignment(s)</b>	<b>Project/Paper Due</b>
<i>Week One: Class Introduction &amp; Learning Methods</i>		
8/22	Review Syllabus	
8/24	Teaching Paradigms & Learning Styles	
8/26	Discussion/In-Class Activity	
<i>Week Two: Two Theories of Social Class</i>		
8/29	Gilbert Chapter 1	
8/31	Gilbert Chapter 2	
9/02	Discussion/In-Class Activity	Quiz #1
<i>Week Three: Occupations, Wealth &amp; Income</i>		
9/05	Class Cancelled for Labor Day	
9/07	Gilbert Chapter 3	
9/09	Gilbert Chapter 4	
<i>Week Four: Socialization &amp; Social Mobility</i>		
9/12	Gilbert Chapters 5	
9/14	Gilbert Chapter 7	
9/16	Discussion/In-Class Activity	Response Paper #1
<i>Week Five: Family, Education &amp; Career</i>		
9/19	Tumin/Davis & Moore Handout	
9/21	Gilbert Chapter 6	
9/23	Discussion/In-Class Activity	
<i>Week Six: The Power Elite, Politics &amp; Class Consciousness</i>		
9/26	Gilbert Chapter 8	
9/28	This Is What Democracy Looks Like	
9/30	Gilbert Chapter 9	Take-home exam #1 Due
<i>Week Seven: Poverty &amp; Welfare</i>		
10/03	Gilbert Chapter 10	
10/05	Ehrenreich Introduction & Chapter 1	
10/07	Discussion/In-Class Activity	
<i>Week Eight: Poverty &amp; Welfare</i>		
10/10	Ehrenreich Chapters 2 & 3	
10/12	Ehrenreich Evaluation Chapter	
10/14	Discussion/In-Class Activity	Response Paper #2

<i>Week Nine: Fall Break &amp; One-on-one Meetings</i>		
10/17	Classes Cancelled for Fall Break	
10/19	One-on-one meetings	
10/21	One-on-one meetings	
<i>Week Ten: Race &amp; Civil Rights</i>		
10/24	MLK MTV Biography	
10/26	Affirmative Action & Color-Blind Racism	
10/28	Discussion/In-Class Activity	Take-home exam #2 Due

**Reading & Assignment Schedule**  
(Continued)

<i>Week Eleven: Symbolic Ethnicity</i>		
10/31	Discussion/In-Class Activity	
11/02	Waters Chapters 1 & 2	
11/04	Waters Chapters 3 & 4	
<i>Week Twelve: Symbolic Ethnicity</i>		
11/07	Waters Chapters 5 & 6	
11/09	Waters Chapter 7	
11/11	Discussion/In-Class Activity	In-Class Writing
<i>Week Thirteen: Youth Politics</i>		
11/14	Video	
11/16	Rimmerman Chapters 1 & 2	
11/18	Discussion/In-Class Activity	Quiz #2
<i>Week Fourteen: Youth Politics</i>		
11/21	Rimmerman Chapter 3	
11/23	Rimmerman Chapters 4	
11/25	Classes Canceled/ Thanksgiving Break	Thanksgiving Break
<i>Week Fifteen: Youth Politics</i>		
11/28	Rimmerman Chapter 5	
11/30	Rimmerman Chapter 6	
12/02	Discussion/In-Class Activity	Response Paper #3
<i>Week Sixteen: Wrap-up</i>		
12/05	Gilbert Chapter 11	
12/07		
12/09		
<i>Week Seventeen: Finals Week</i>		
12/13		Take-home exam #3



**Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board**

Date: Friday, January 05, 2007  
IRB Application No GU0626  
Proposal Title: U.S. Perspectives on Third-World Attributions of Poverty and Donating Behavior: A Study of the Effects of Education in Social Stratification  
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 1/4/2008**

Principal Investigator(s)

Rebecca Swift  
215 N. Murray  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Beth Schaefer Caniglia  
006 Classroom Bldg.  
Stillwater, OK 74078

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Rebecca D. Swift

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: U.S. ATTRIBUTIONS OF THIRD-WORLD POVERTY AND DONATING  
BEHAVIOR: A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATION IN SOCIAL  
STRATIFICATION

Major Field: International Studies

Biographical:

Education: Graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management  
from Brigham Young University, Provo Utah in April 2005. Received  
the degree of Master of Science in International Studies from Oklahoma  
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July 2007.

Name: Rebecca Deeanne Swift

Date of Degree: July, 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: U.S. ATTRIBUTIONS OF THIRD-WORLD POVERTY AND  
DONATING BEHAVIOR: A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF  
EDUCATION IN SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Pages in Study: 69

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: International Studies

Scope and Method of Study: The present study was designed to measure the change of attributions of poverty from individual to structural causes among individuals throughout a course in social stratification at Oklahoma State University; in addition, the study was intended to measure the linkage of change in intentions to donate as attributions of poverty shifted. Two Sociology courses at OSU were involved in this study; Social Stratification SOC 4383 (experimental group) and Research Methods SOC 4133 (control group). Students in both courses were asked to complete a survey including measures of a belief in a just world, attributions of poverty, intentions to donate, and scenarios of wealth during the first week of class and then again during the last week of class. It was thought that students in the social stratification course would show greater improvements in these areas.

Findings and Conclusions: Data from 83 students (experimental group N = 48, control group N = 35) was collected at pretest and data from 62 students (experimental group N = 28, control group N = 34) was collected at posttest. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference in the change that was evidenced by the students in the social stratification course on any of the measures (belief in a just world, attributions of poverty, and intentions to donate) as compared to the change that was seen in the control group course. Failure to find a difference may be due to the high number of sociology courses previously attended by both groups as well as a number of other factors. These results are discussed in terms of the effect of education in changing attitudes and behaviors related to donating.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Beth Caniglia, Ph.D.

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