Examining Attitudes and Exposure to Poverty among Undergraduate Students: Contextual Factors

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Recommended Citation
McAuliff, Kathleen Elizabeth, "Examining Attitudes and Exposure to Poverty among Undergraduate Students: Contextual Factors" (2012). College of Science and Health Theses and Dissertations. 38.
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EXAMINING ATTITUDES AND EXPOSURE TO POVERTY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

A Thesis
Presented in
Partial Fulfillments of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science

BY
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my gratitude to my thesis chair and advisor, Dr. Joseph Ferrari. His support and wisdom have been tremendous assets during my graduate school career. His encouragement for me to persevere during adversity truly facilitated my progress. Furthermore, I would like to thank Dr. Theresa Luhrs for her support and advice. Her support and helpfulness were invaluable during this process.

Thank you to Mark Laboe for presenting this opportunity to me and for supporting my research project. Thank you also to Kevin Blair for providing me with this survey, and providing me with advice.

I also express my gratitude to my family, particularly my parents, for encouraging me and believing that I can pursue a doctoral degree. Their confidence and faith in me have helped me to not only become the person I am, but to have the courage to face my fears and to “keep on going.” Thank you also to my grandmother, Mama, for always being supportive of both me and our family, and to my grandmother who passed, Mimi, for encouraging me to go to graduate school.

I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students, particularly Shannon, Andrew, Monika, Roberto, and Todd, for always being there to give me advice and support. You have all provided me with a tremendous amount of support, laughter, and always an ear to listen.
Thank you to the refugee family I tutor for constantly providing inspiration to me.

Thank you to all of my friends in Dallas and in Chicago for supporting my decision to get my doctorate. Caitlin, Sabrina, Melissa, Emily, Ellesse, Ann, Mary, Cara, Nicole, and Alli – you all have been particularly supportive and helpful.
VITA

The author was born in Dallas, Texas, on April 23, 1985. She graduated from Lake Highlands High School in 2003 and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Loyola University Chicago in 2007.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Poverty Rates

There were a series of events that contributed to the economic recession of 2008. The combination of the sub-prime mortgage lending crisis, high unemployment rates in the U.S., failing banks, and rising food and gas prices affected the economy both in the U.S. and abroad. In light of these recent events, poverty is becoming a more pressing concern. Poverty is defined by the U.S. government as receiving less than a specific income level (Sandoval, Rank, & Hirschl, 2009). The income level is determined by the bare minimum required to meet certain needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter for the year. In comparison to the 1970s and 1980s, adult Americans in the 1990s faced a greater risk of poverty than they did in previous decades, and that most Americans will face poverty at some point in their life (Sandoval, Rank, & Hirschl, 2009).

A more recent survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau on rates of poverty, health insurance, and income (cf. DaNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2010), showed that poverty rates increased from 2008 to 2009. More specifically, statistics showed that real median income (defined as income adjusted after inflation rates) declined significantly for Black households (4.4%) and non-Hispanic white households (1.6%) from 2008 to 2009. In the U.S., real median income declined in the Midwest (2.13%) and the West (1.9%) regions during the same time period.
Full-time employment (defined as individuals working 35 or more hours a week) also decreased significantly from 2008 to 2009 (DeNavas-Walt et al., 2010). For instance, men 15 years and older, there was a 2.1 million decrease in full-time employment; for women, there was a 1.6 million decrease. The real median earnings decreased from 2007 to 2009 for both male workers (4.1%) and female workers (2.8%). Although there has been some contention as to whether the most recent economic downtown defined as a recession, since 1969 there has been “no other set of income years that has experienced such a large decline in the number of years of male and female full-time, year-round workers (DeNavas et al., 2010). Approximately 43.6 million (14.3%) of people were living in absolute poverty in 2009, compared to 39.8 million (13.2%) in 2008.

Although chronicity of poverty, (living three or more years of poverty) is a serious issue (Sandoval et al., 2009), episodic poverty, defined as periods of poverty lasting 2 months or less, is also an issue in the U.S. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 31.6% of the population had at least one episode of poverty lasting at least two months from 2004 to 2007 (DeNavas et al., 2010). Real per capita income, defined as the income per person in a population, declined by 1.2% for the total population from 2008 to 2009.

Increasing rates of poverty were not only indicated by overall decreases in income rates. There was an increase in the Gini coefficient, (an index of income inequality ranging from 0 to 1), from 0.452 to 0.458 from 2008 to 2009, suggesting an increase in income inequality (DeNavas et al., 2010). Increasing income inequality is an important factor in regards to poverty. Fosu (2010)
reported that global poverty rates from 1980 to 2004 states the addressing inequalities in income distribution may be linked to poverty reduction programs.

These increasing rates of unemployment and decreases in wages are both indicators that nationally, poverty is becoming a more serious threat. Considering that rates of poverty are increasing, understanding attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors surrounding those living in poverty, as well as support for poverty alleviation programs, is imperative.

_Different Explanations for Poverty_

Individuals may have different explanations for why poverty exists, as well as why some individuals are poor. One of the most seminal studies conducted on explanations for poverty by Feagin (1972) yielded 3 main types of individual’s explanations for poverty. These three types included individualistic (e.g., lack of effort or overspending), structural (e.g., discrimination and lack of job opportunities), and fatalistic (e.g., bad luck).

Individuals who think that poor people are poor because of their own decisions may believe that it is the poor person’s responsibility to change him or herself in order to change his or her financial well-being. Conversely, an individual who believes that poor people are poor because of structural reasons may believe that poverty exists because of deeper societal issues, such as discrimination, and may believe that in order to alleviate poverty, certain structures would have to change. Individuals who think poor people are poor because of bad luck may think that poor people do not have a great deal of control over their financial state, and may think that there is not a way to change poverty.
Feagin’s (1972) study was replicated (Feagin, 1975; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Feather, 1974). Results from these studies showed similar explanations (individual, structuralistic, and fatalistic) for poverty. Personal explanations, such as individualistic, structuralistic, and fatalistic, for poverty may predict attitudes towards poverty alleviation programs. An individual who believes that poverty exists because of structural reasons may be more supportive of structural change in the form of poverty alleviation programs as opposed to someone who believes poverty exists because of an individual’s bad financial decisions.

In Turkey, a study (Morçöl, 1997) revealed that poor and nonpoor persons favored structural explanations over individual explanations for poverty. The preference for structural explanations for both poor and nonpoor persons suggest that beliefs in causes of poverty transcend one’s own personal socioeconomic status, and support the idea that there are some contextual factors, such as culture, government structure, and/or history, that contribute to one’s understandings and explanations for poverty in Turkey. In a cross-sectional study of Lebanese, South African, and Portuguese undergraduate students (Nasser, Abouchedid, & Khashin, 2002), perceptions of the causes of poverty were more structuralistic than fatalistic or individualistic for all of the three nationalities. Considering South Africa and Portugal are considered more Westernized than Lebanon, the consistency of structural explanations for poverty for all three nations suggest that there may be additional factors, aside from culture, that influence explanations for poverty.
Plausible reasons for the preference for structuralistic explanations may be a high incidence of poverty in these nations, as well as historical factors, such as the apartheid in South Africa and the political unrest in Lebanon. In contrast, studies in the U.S. (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Kluegel & Smith, 1986) showed that individuals favor more individualistic explanations for poverty than structuralistic or fatalistic reasons. One possible explanation for the individualistic explanation for poverty in the U.S. is a strong belief in the Protestant work ethic (MacDonald, 1972; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Cozzarelli et al., 2001) and, more specifically, the belief that an individual’s financial status is solely related to the individual’s industriousness and talents.

If individuals are socialized to believe that each person is responsible for their own financial success, then it would be plausible that a "poor person" is poor because of their own irresponsibility or unwillingness to work hard. An individualistic explanation for poverty that emphasizes a meritocracy would probably discourage structural change or initiatives towards alleviating poverty, such as welfare, because the brunt of the responsibility would lay with the individual. Changes in poverty rates therefore, would only occur if the individual changed. Furthermore, using an individualistic explanation for poverty may also de-emphasize structural reasons for poverty because it assumes that poverty is an individual issue that is attributable to personal character flaws. The overall prevalence of individualistic explanations for poverty in the U.S. versus the prevalence of structuralistic explanations in other countries further support the idea there are contextual factors in the U.S. that differ from certain influences in
other countries. However, some recent studies suggest that there are additional explanations for poverty beyond the original three (Feagin, 1972) dimensions. The Shek (2002) Perceived Causes of Poverty Scale included personal problems of poor people, lack of opportunities to escape from the poverty cycle, exploitation of poor people, and bad fate as explanations for why poor people are poor.

Understanding undergraduate attitudes towards poverty may help illuminate the reasons why college students think financially poor people are poor. Through examining college students’ attitudes, we can also start to see if certain explanations for poverty have already developed and factor one explanation over another. Differences for explanations for poverty have been found among undergraduates in different areas of the world, suggesting that something salient is occurring in the culture or environment that is shaping attitudes towards poverty, either before or during the college experience. Western societies may differ from other cultures in their explanations for poverty.

Studies in other less-Westernized parts of the world, such as Lebanon (Nasser & Aboucehdid, 2001), undergraduates factored more structural explanations for poverty as opposed to individualistic explanations. The discrepancies in explanations may suggest that culture influences reasons why people believe poverty exists. More Westernized cultures that emphasize individuality may favor more individualistic explanations for poverty, as opposed to less-Westernized cultures that are more collectivist.
Furthermore, exposure to poverty may be related to a person’s explanations for why people are poor. The amount of exposure to poverty, either through direct contact or personal experiences, may influence attitudes towards poverty. According to Lott’s (2002) social distancing theory, “a dominant response to the poor is that of distancing in the form of exclusion, separation, devaluing and discounting . . . poor people tend to be seen as other and lesser in values, character, motivation, and potential. Such beliefs complement the deliberate or indirect exclusion of low-income people from full participation in social institutions” (p. 11).

Therefore, financially secure individuals may see the poor as lazy, less moral, less capable, and, overall, characterize them as different from themselves. By creating the character difference between poor people and themselves, financially secure people can create a distance between themselves and the poor. Creating the distance also allows individuals to use an individual explanation for poverty, and blame the poor for their own financial condition. If someone is not poor, and is socially distant from the poor and sees them as “other,” it may be more likely that the person believes the poor are poor because of individual choices or characteristics.

**Media Portrayals and Stereotypes**

Students who are distant from the poor may rely on media portrayals of the poor to develop their perceptions and beliefs of the poor. Relying on media images can be particularly problematic when the images portrayed are inaccurate. In a study (Gilens, 1996) that examined media and public images portrayng the
poor, African-Americans were over-represented as 49% of the poor, when in reality, they represented 27% of those living in poverty. Additionally, a study by Iyengar (1990) showed media images of the poor and asked for poverty explanations from viewers. Results found that poor Caucasian children were considered to be more deserving of sympathy than poor African-American children. Therefore, attitudes towards the poor may be even more negative for African-Americans than Caucasians or other ethnic groups.

Furthermore, since the media portrays African-American as the majority of those living in poverty in the U.S., this misrepresentation may distract from the poor that are not represented in the media. In the Gilens (1996) study, Caucasians were represented in only 33% of the images showing poverty, whereas 45% of those living in poverty are Caucasian. In the same study, poor individuals who were considered to be “deserving” of sympathy, such as the elderly and working poor, were under-represented. More specifically, only 30% of the media images represented as the working poor, when in reality, 50% of the poor are considered working poor.

Lack of representation may also contribute to the idea of institutional distancing that Lott (2002) mentioned. If the problem of poverty across different ethnic and age groups is not acknowledged or illustrated by the media, it becomes easier for the individual consumers of media to ignore it. The lack of acknowledgement of the problem also fosters the idea that a person experiences poverty for an individualistic reason, as opposed to seeing it as a structural or
societal cause. Therefore, the media misrepresentations may encourage individualistic explanations for poverty.

Media misrepresentations of the poor are problematic for developing attitudes towards those living in poverty. Furthermore, the stereotypes that are perpetuated by society and the media are also influential. In a study by Kluegel and Smith (1986), participants were asked to characterize people living in poverty. The poor were seen to be poor because of a “lack of effort” and “loose morals and drunkenness.” In addition, individuals receiving welfare benefits were perceived to be “taking advantage of the system.” The poor have also been described as “criminals and drug addicts” (Gans, 1994), as well as “lazy, sexually irresponsible, and deviant” (Parisi, 1998). The negative ways in which the poor are stereotyped contribute to negative attitudes towards those living in poverty. Individuals who are not poor may believe that poor people behave in a certain way because of a lack of morals and “a rejection of mainstream norms” (Gans, 1994). By characterizing the poor as morally bereft and lazy, it allows individuals to distance themselves from the poor because it creates an “other.”

If the poor are believed to reject societal norms, it essentially makes the poor social deviants. A deviation from the norm also allows the socially dominant ideology of capitalism to prevail. If capitalism assumes that those who work hard will reap the financial benefits, it also assumes that those who are not financially secure have not worked hard enough, or are poor because of some individual flaw, such as laziness or lack of morals. If the poor are poor because of individual characteristics, the need for structural or societal solutions for poverty is seen as
illogical. This individualistic explanation for poverty may, therefore, impede support for poverty alleviation programs, which are seen as structural solutions for poverty.

Conversely, individuals who have high exposure to poverty, either through volunteering, personal experience, or having friends or family who are poor, may be less socially distant to the poor. The smaller the amount of social distance an individual has to the poor, the more likely they will see themselves as similar to the poor, and therefore, may not devalue or discount them. Individuals who are less socially distant from the poor may also offer different explanations for poverty than those who are more socially distant. People who create a difference between themselves and the poor may also avoid exposure to the poor, including activities such as volunteering.

*Surveying Undergraduates and Exposure to Poverty*

Much of the development of scales assessing attitudes towards poverty used undergraduate populations (Shek, 2001; Atherton & Gemmel, 1993, Cozzarelli, 2001). Through examining undergraduate attitudes on poverty, universities may start to understand how their students are perceiving poverty and individuals living in poverty. For universities that have a strong mission statement associated with service to the poor, surveying attitudes towards the poor may be of particular interest. Universities may, in turn, create university programming and curriculum to address perceptions and attitudes of poverty.

One method universities employed to increase an understanding of poverty is *poverty simulation activities*. Several poverty simulation activities
(Davidson, Preez, Gibb, & Nel, 2009; Nickols & Nielsen, 2011; Steck, Engler, Ligon, Druen, & Cosgrove, 2011; Vandsburger, Duncan-Daston, Akerson, & Dillon, 2010) conducted at universities across the U.S. The premise behind the simulation learning activities is to replicate a situation or set of circumstances in order to better understand the participant would be behave if they were actually in the situation (Walford, 1981, p. 114; as cited in Davidson, Preez, Gibb & Nel, 2009).

Through engaging in a certain situation, the participant may gain a new understanding for what it’s like to be for others in the same situation. The simulation activity may decrease the social distancing from the poor. This new understanding may be linked to a change in explanations for poverty or attitudes towards poverty. If simulation activities change attitudes towards poverty, this supports the idea that the less socially distant an individual is from poverty, the more likely the individual is to not blame the poor for being poor.

Another method that universities have been employed for increasing understanding for the poor and examining attitude changes has been through service learning, which incorporates volunteering with coursework (Schamber & Mahoney, 2008; Simons et al., 2010). By providing and promoting volunteer opportunities through the university, particularly volunteering with economically poor individuals, universities may increase student exposure to the poor. If universities increase student exposure to poverty, students may, in turn, provide different explanations for poverty or perceive poverty differently than before.
Additionally, with the current economic downturn and budget cuts for social services, researchers have noted that there is an increasing dependence on volunteers to fill the gaps (Poptachuck, Crocker, and Schechter, 1997; as cited in Reitsma-Street, Maczewski, and Neysmith, 2000). This increasing dependence on volunteers may provide more opportunities for individuals to engage directly with individuals living in poverty. Participation in certain volunteer programs, such as emergency feeding programs for the homeless that involved direct exposure to individuals who are homeless, has been shown to change beliefs and attitudes towards homelessness (Ostrow, 1995).

Furthermore, volunteering for a long period of time with impoverished populations may lead to greater understanding for why individuals are poor. In one example (Kawecka Nenga, 2011) that involved undergraduates who were of high socioeconomic status, a longer volunteer commitment, combined with education about structural reasons for poverty and positive interactions with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds encouraged undergraduates to challenge ideas about economic privilege. Volunteering that involves direct exposure to individuals living in poverty, therefore, may change attitudes towards individuals living in poverty through decreasing the amount of social distance.

Considering that direct exposure to poverty has been shown to potentially influence attitudes towards those living in poverty (Ostow, 1995), it may be that there is something about exposure that is influential. If through direct exposure to poverty, attitudes change towards those living in poverty, then the explanations for poverty may also change. Furthermore, attitudes towards poverty may also be
shaped by personal experiences with poverty. Landmane and Renge (2010) found that higher identification with individuals living in poverty predicted stronger structural and fatalistic attributions for poverty as opposed to individualistic attributions. Additionally, more individualistic explanations for poverty predicted more negative attitudes towards individuals living in poverty.

Therefore, individuals who have more experiences with the poor through volunteering or self-identifying as experiencing poverty (e.g., receiving TANF or identifying as low-income), might have different explanations for poverty than those individuals who have little exposure to poverty.

Social Justice

The discipline of community psychology has seven core values that it promulgates. One core value is social justice (Kloos et al., 2011). Social justice may be defined as the “idea of creating an egalitarian society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being” (Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006). Therefore, means that a society treats each individual as an equal member in a community, with respect and dignity, and provides the same opportunities to each person. Social justice is the “raison d’être” for community psychology’s dedication towards serving disempowered and marginalized groups (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997, as cited in Drew, Bishop & Syme, 2002). Community psychology also supports the well-being of all people through policy, research and action (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2006).
In conjunction with the value of social justice, community psychology also has a commitment to empowering populations experiencing social injustice, such as underserved and marginalized populations. In order to promote social justice and empowerment for the economically poor, community psychology must first address how poverty is understood.

Those individuals living in economic poverty are marginalized by limited educational and employment opportunities, the challenges of day-to-day living, and the potential of being negatively stereotyped because of their socioeconomic status. Understanding attitudes towards these groups would help illuminate how others perceive a disenfranchised population. Though there has been some research on social justice attitudes towards specific social justice issues (Holley, Larson, Adelman, & Treviño, 2008), there is a dearth of general social justice attitude research in psychology literature and, more specifically, community psychology literature. Furthermore, with increasing poverty rates in a struggling economy, it is imperative to evaluate attitudes towards federally-sponsored initiatives designed to serve marginalized populations, such as government-subsidized housing, food stamps, and other forms of public assistance.

Bullock and Lott (2001) revealed that while there is research on sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination, there is a lack of research on classism, specifically discrimination towards individuals living in poverty. The fact that some individuals provide different explanations for economic poverty, some individuals may not see poverty as an issue of classism, but rather as an individual choice. The concept of “blaming the victim” (Savani, Stephens, & Markus, 2011)
entails blaming the individual for his or her own problem or experience. When someone uses the lens of blaming the victim as an explanation for poverty, he or she may also ignore other factors that contribute to poverty, such as certain ecological systems or other contextual factors.

In contrast, framing the dilemma of poverty as a deeper, systemic issue of social injustice is fundamentally different than perceiving it as a problem of the individual person. If poverty is an example of social injustice, then the responsibility of reducing poverty lays with institutional and structural change.

If a person has negative attitudes towards systemic solutions to alleviate poverty, then the individual may not see a need for structural change or a social justice movement in order to reduce poverty. Some individuals may have negative attitudes towards poverty alleviation programs and may believe that poverty alleviation programs actually perpetuate poverty. Therefore, there may be a relationship between the explanation for poverty and perceiving poverty as a social justice issue. It is important, therefore, to simultaneously understand a person’s attitudes towards social justice, explanation for why poverty occurs, and attitudes towards structural poverty alleviation programs.

Mission Statements

A university’s mission statement and mission-driven activities may be influential in shaping the beliefs and values of students. Using Bryke and Driscoll’s (1988) conceptualization that a community would “exhibit a system of values which are shared and commonly understood among the members of the organization” (p. 6), we may start to understand how students may share a certain
core set of values that the university promotes. The university may promote these values through its mission statement. The mission statement of a university may be more or less salient to the identity of the student, depending on the students’ perceptions of the university, as well as the mission-driven activities of the university itself.

A university’s mission statement may be key in structuring the course curriculum of the university, as well as developing moral and spiritual development (Carroll, Blumberg, & Petroff, 2008; Chapman, 2007). Religious universities with particular charisms, such as Vincentian or Jesuit universities, traditionally embed the values of the mission within the curriculum, as well as the activities provided on campus (Ferrari & Velcoff, 2006; Ferrari & Janulis, 2009; Filkins & Ferrari, 2004; Mohr, 2009). University leaders in faith-based universities were shown to have relatively high scores on measures of mission-driven activities and perceptions of the university’s mission as promoting the values of the university (Ferrari, Cowman, Milner, Gutierrez, & Drake, 2009; Ferrari, Cowman, Milner, & Gutierrez, 2010).

If university leaders place a great emphasis on the mission-driven activities and perceptions of the university’s mission, it is essential that the students are surveyed as well. Assessing perceptions of the university’s mission and mission-driven activities is important in order to determine whether the students’ perceive that the university’s mission is relevant, and also to see if students believe that the university is creating activities and curriculum that reflect the university’s mission. Additionally, if a university’s mission emphasizes
educating students about social justice, then it is imperative that the university garner an understanding of how students perceive social justice education and activities at the university.

For a school with a Vincentian charism that places a special emphasis on serving the poor, as well as helping marginalized populations, promoting social justice, welcoming people of all faiths and ethnicities, the perception of the university’s mission as well as the perception of the activities that should support the mission seem to be of particular importance. Through conceptualizing the university as a contextual influence, the perceptions of the community’s mission may illuminate the values of the individual, and to what degree the individual believes their university promotes these values.

*Rationale:*

One issue with previous measures of attitudes towards poverty is the lack of information with the students’ personal experiences with poverty. Without capturing information about the student’s experiences, it is difficult to determine potential relationships may exist between experiences and attitudes. To the author’s knowledge, there has been a dearth of published research that assessed explanations and attitudes towards poverty while also including related contextual factors, such as personal experiences with poverty.

Therefore, by including questions that ask about personal experiences with poverty and poverty alleviation programs, researchers can explore a richer view of a student’s perception of poverty and potential contributing factors. More specifically, through assessing both experiences and exposure to poverty
simultaneously, researchers may be able to identify potential relationship between exposure and attitudes. By measuring exposure and experiences with poverty, universities may also be able to develop appropriate initiatives designed to influence attitudes towards poverty.

Additionally, including a measurement for exposure to poverty may also add a contextual framework to help better explain attitudes towards poverty. While previous research (Nasser, Abouchedid, & Khashan, 2002) has suggested cultural differences in explanations for poverty, there has been a dearth of other measurements for exposure to poverty. Although socioeconomic status was found to be a predictor for explanation for poverty (Nasser & Abouchedid, 2001), there is still a dearth of research that includes contextual factors, such as exposure to poverty, with explanations for poverty. By including multiple indicators of experiences and exposure to poverty, it may be possible to examine the influence of both personal socioeconomic status and experiences with poverty.

If individuals who volunteer with impoverished populations, have lived in poverty, or who have engaged in poverty simulation activities tend to offer different explanations for poverty, or tend to not “blame the victim,” when compared to students who have little experience with individuals living in poverty, this supports the idea that social distancing allows a different explanation for poverty.

The present study will examine if there is as potential relationship between exposure to poverty and attitudes towards poverty. Additionally, it will examine to see if there are certain characteristics that cluster together. A cluster analysis
(Hair & Black, 2000) will be used. Cluster analysis allows the researcher to group scores on individual cases. Using a cluster analysis approach may also help to explore attitudes and explanations for poverty using social distancing theory (Lott, 2002).

Through examining means for several measures an individual, certain patterns among dependent variables may emerge. For example, if students have high exposure to poverty through volunteering and receiving poverty alleviation initiatives, (e.g. receiving TANF), perhaps they would have a lower score on the “Poor are Different” measure. Using cluster analysis allows the research to explore the relationship between different forms of poverty and attitudes towards poverty. Furthermore, we can examine to see if there are any patterns between scores of perceptions of the university’s mission statement and social justice attitudes. Cluster analysis allows us to examine several potential relationships for a multitude of variables.

A measure of social desirability (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960) will be used (Ferrari, Bristow, & Cowman, 2005; Ferrari, Mader, & Milner, 2010), which demonstrated social desirability tendencies as a significant predictor of perceptions of the university’s mission statement. In self-report measures, providing socially desirable responses, particularly in ones that discuss socially sensitive or ethical topics such as poverty, may lessen the validity of the responses. Therefore, in order to conduct analyses, social desirability was controlled for as a covariate.
Students who were engaged in campus-related activities were found to have significantly higher mean scores on the DePaul Mission and Values Inventory (DMV) (Ferrari, McCarthy, & Milner, 2009). Therefore, it may be likely that students who are engaged in either campus ministry activity and volunteering may have higher scores on the DMV.

Additionally, by examining the perceptions of the mission-driven activities, a relationship between the university’s commitment to individuals living in poverty and attitudes towards poverty may be discovered. Using a measure of mission-identity perception at a school that is supposed to serve the poor may demonstrate a relationship between explanations for poverty. It is excepted that students who are engaged in campus ministry activities will have higher scores on the global and urban engagement subscale and innovative and inclusive subscale of the DMV.

It is expected that students who have higher exposure to poverty through volunteering, receiving forms of poverty alleviation, or who self-identify as having low socioeconomic status will have lower scores on certain measures of the Undergraduate Perceptions of Poverty Tracking Attitudes Survey (UPPTS), including the poor are different, belief in equal opportunity, and welfare attitude subscales, and higher scores on other measures of the UPPTS, such as the need to do more, social empathy, and access to resources subscales. Individuals who have a high amount of volunteering are expected to have higher scores on each of the four social justice attitudes subscales, including intentions to engage, perceived
behavioral control around social justice, subjective norms around social justice, and intentions to engage in acts of social justice.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

Participants in the current study were students enrolled at a large, urban, Catholic university located in Chicago, Illinois. The university follows a Vincentian tradition, (i.e., follows the patron saint of poverty, St. Vincent DePaul: see Appendix A for details). At the time of the present study, approximately 25,398 study participants (64.5% of whom are undergraduates) were enrolled full-time at this target university. The sample included undergraduate students enrolled in an introduction to psychology course and students involved in campus ministry activities.

Psychometric Measures

Undergraduate perceptions of poverty tracking attitudes survey. All participants will complete the Undergraduate Perceptions of Poverty Tracking Attitudes Survey (UPPTS, Blair, Taylor, Schoepflin, & Brown, 2011), a 43-item, multi-dimensional measure assessing undergraduates’ attitudes towards individuals living in poverty and poverty alleviation programs. Items in this scale were rated on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (See Appendix B for scale). Through factor analysis, the authors reported that the UPPTS contained eight subscales.

One subscale was labeled the social welfare attitude subscale (13 items, author $M = 40.08$, $SD = 6.02$, $\alpha = 0.86$), and assessed support for welfare and attitudes towards welfare recipients. Sample items included There’s a lot of fraud
among welfare recipients and Welfare makes people lazy. A second subscale was labeled The poor are different (5 items, author M = 12.42, SD = 4.80; α = 0.70), assessing perceptions of the poor as different from non-poor populations. Sample items included I believe poor people have a different set of values than do other people and Poor people act differently. The third subscale is labeled the belief in equal opportunity for all in U.S. subscale (4 items, author M = 12.01, SD = 4.47; α = 0.74) investigated if the poor have the same opportunities as the non-poor in the U.S. Sample items included Any person can get ahead in this country and The poor have the same opportunities for success as everyone else. The fourth subscale is labeled the need to do more subscale (6 items, author M = 23.29, SD = 5.47; α = 0.81) and examined perceptions of whether various institutions and/or individuals should do more to help the poor. Sample items included Individuals should do more to help the poor and Society has the responsibility to help the poor. The fifth subscale is labeled basic Rights (3 items, author M = 13.36, SD = 2.59; α = 0.83) and examined perceptions of shelter, food, and healthcare as basic human rights. Sample items included Everyone regardless of circumstances should have a place to live and Everyone regardless of circumstances should have enough food. The sixth subscale is labeled access to resources (4 items, author M = 15.32, SD = 3.41; α = 0.59) and assessed perceptions of challenges for the poor. Sample items included Lack of education is a major challenge for the poor and Lack of social support is a major challenge for the poor. The seventh subscale is labeled social empathy (3 items, author M = 8.61, SD = 3.18; α = 0.56) and investigated exposure and empathy towards the poor. Sample items included I feel
that I know what it is like to be poor and I feel that I have enough direct
experience with the poor. The eighth subscale is labeled flawed character (author
M = 8.38, SD = 3.32, α = 0.66) and examined whether the poor were responsible
for their poverty and contained 2 items. Sample items included People who are
poor should not be blamed for their misfortune and People are poor due to
circumstances beyond their control

Additionally, the UPPTS contains 10 items that inquire about a student’s
volunteer experiences with the poor, personal socioeconomic status, and if they or
their parents ever received any welfare benefits. Sample items included, How
many hours have you volunteered in the past six months? and Have you or your
family ever received the following supports? TANF, Supplemental Security
Income, Heating Assistance, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and/or Heating Assistance?

Social desirability. Also, participants will complete the Reynolds’ (1984)
M-C Form C (author M = 5.67, SD = 3.20; α = 0.76), a shortened version of the
original Marlowe-Crowne measure of social desirability 33-item scale (Crowne &
Marlowe, 1960) (see Appendix C for details), used to determine whether
participants were providing socially desirable responses. Previous research
(Ferrari, Bristow, & Cowman, 2005) demonstrated that providing socially
desirable responses significantly predicted scores on the perceptions of the
university’s mission, so social desirability was used as a covariate in analyses.
The 13-item M-C Form C is a uni-dimensional true-false measure (true = 1, false
= 0) from the original 33-item measure (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), and sample
items included *I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable* and *There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.*

*Social justice.* Also, participants will complete the *Social Justice Attitudes Scale* (Torres-Harding, Siers, Schulz & Olson, 2009) (see Appendix D for details), a 29-item, multi-dimensional measure examining attitudes, behaviors, norms, and intentions to engage in acts of social justice. Items in this measure were on a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 7 = *Strongly agree*). Through factor analysis, the authors reported that this scale contained four subscales. Sample items for the social justice attitudes subscale (11 items, *author M* = 65.46, *SD* = 11.01, *α* = 0.93) included *I believe that it is important to act for social justice* and *I believe that it is important to respect and appreciate people’s diverse social identities*. Sample items for the social justice perceived behavioral control around social justice (9 items, *author M* = 52.76, *SD* = 9.47, *α* = 0.85) included *I am certain that if I try, I can have a positive impact on my community* and *I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering*. Sample items for the subjective norms around social justice subscale (4 items, *author M* = 20.01, *SD* = 4.56, *α* = 0.89) included *Other people around me are aware of issues of social injustices and power inequalities in our society* and *Other people around me are engaged in activities that address social justice issues*. Sample items for the intentions to engage in acts of social justice (4 items, *author M* = 21.32, *SD* = 4.90, *α* = 0.77) included *In the future, I intend to engage in activities that will promote social justice* and *In the future, I intend to
work collaboratively with others so that they can define their own problems and build their own capacity to solve problems.

Institutional mission identity: Participants will also complete the DePaul Mission and Values Inventory (DMV; Ferrari & Velcoff, 2006), a 39-item, multi-dimensional measure assessing university stakeholders’ perceptions of their university’s mission, vision and values. Through factor analysis, the authors reported that the DMV contained two distinct mission-identity sub-sections with items rated on 7-point scales (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). The first section addressed the university’s Institutional Identity and the second section addressed Mission-Driven Activities (Ferrari & Velcoff, 2006) rated on a 4-point scale. The present study will only use one mission-identity subscale (i.e. innovative and inclusive, author M = 63.17, SD = 9.16, α = 0.76) (Ferrari & Velcoff, 2006), which included 10 items and reflected participants’ perceptions of the university’s willingness to assume risks in the development of new programs and educational initiatives. Two items in this subscale included *I believe that we manifest personalism by our care for each member of the university community* and *I support our current approach to expressing its (university’s) identity.*

In addition, the present study will include one mission-activity subscale (i.e. global and urban engagement, 8 items, author M = 26.52, SD = 5.46, α = 0.86) which reflected the perceptions of opportunities that promote civic engagement and cultural diversity. Specific items included *How important to you is the community-based service learning?* and *How important to you are the international students on campus?* (See Ferrari & Velcoff, 2006, regarding
psychometric outcomes; also, Appendix E for specific items included in each subscale.)

*Demographic items.* Several questions will be included in the questionnaire to capture descriptive information from participants including age, involvement in campus ministry activity, year in college, religious affiliation, and racial identification (see Appendix F).

*Procedure*

Students who participated in campus ministry activity were recruited through an email from a university administrator. To encourage participation, campus ministry participants were entered in a raffle for an IPad. Students who were not involved in campus ministry were enrolled in an introduction to psychology course, and will be recruited through an online email from the psychology department. The survey was available online and will take approximately 50 minutes to complete. All participation was voluntary. The scales were counter-balanced in order to prevent survey fatigue. All responses were kept confidential. Surveys were available online for participants for approximately 4 weeks. If students started to complete the survey, but did not finish it, they had the option to save their responses, and go back to finish the survey.
Statement of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: There will be a statistically significant interaction regarding mean scores of the Basic Rights, Do More, and Access to Resources subscales of the UPPTS for students across different socioeconomic statuses (wealthy/upper-class, middle-class, and working class/poor), volunteer hours (students who have volunteered for more than 20 or more hours, 10-20 hours, and less than 10 hours), and campus ministry activity (students who are engaged in campus ministry versus students who are not engaged).

Hypothesis II: There will be a statistically significant interaction regarding mean scores of the Social Justice Attitudes and Intentions to Engage in Social Justice subscales of the Social Justice Attitudes Scale for students across different socioeconomic statuses (wealthy/upper-class, middle-class, and working class/poor), volunteer hours (students who have volunteered for more than 20 or more hours, 10-20 hours, and less than 10 hours), and campus ministry activity (students who are engaged in campus ministry versus students who are not engaged).

Hypothesis III: Both innovative and inclusive subscale and global and urban engagement subscales individually will significantly predict the Basic Rights and Do More subscales of the UPPTS.
Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between level of exposure to poverty (through volunteering or personal experience) and attitudes and explanations for poverty?

Research Question 2: Do scores on subscales of the DMV significantly predict subscales on the UPPTS?
Results

Preliminary Analysis

A bivariate correlation determined the relationship between household income and self-reported socioeconomic status. The two variables were strongly negatively correlated, \( r(273) = -0.70, p < 0.01 \). Additionally, a bivariate correlation was conducted between the scores on the social desirability scale and scores on the Basic Rights, Do More, and Access to Resources subscales of the UPPTS subscales, as well as the Social Justice Attitudes and Intentions to Engage subscales of the Social Justice Attitudes scale. Social desirability was not significantly related with the Basic Rights \( (r = 0.01, p = 0.92) \), Do More \( (r = -0.08, p = 0.19) \), or the Access to Resources \( (r = 0.05, p = 0.44) \) subscale of the UPPTS. Consequently, social desirability scores were not controlled for as a covariate in any further analysis with the UPPTS subscales.

Social desirability, however, was found to be significantly related with the Intentions to Engage subscale \( (r = 0.13, p < 0.05) \), but not the Social Justice Attitudes subscale \( (r = 0.10, p = 0.12) \). Consequently, social desirability scores were controlled for as a covariate in any analysis involving the Intentions to Engage subscale, but not the Social Justice Attitudes subscale in the following analyses.

**Hypothesis I:** There will be a statistically significant interaction regarding mean scores of the Basic Rights, Do More, and Access to Resources subscales of the UPPTS for students across campus ministry activity (students who are engaged in campus ministry vs. students who are not engaged), volunteer hours (students who have...
volunteered for more than 20 or more hours vs. 10-20 hours vs. less than 10 hours), and across different socioeconomic statuses (wealthy/upper-class, middle-class, and working class/poor).

Three separate 2 (campus ministry engagement: engaged, not engaged) x 3 (socioeconomic status: wealthy/upper-class, middle-class, working class/poor) x 3 (volunteer hours: volunteered more than 20 hours in the past six months, 10-20 hours, and less than 10 hours) between groups factorial analysis of variances (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine if there is a statistically significant interaction regarding mean scores of the Basic Rights, Do More, and Access to Resources subscales of the UPPTS.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the Basic Rights subscale per group. On the Basic Rights subscale, there was no statistically significant three-way interaction between campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 243) = 1.18, p = .32$. The overall model was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .157, F(17, 243) = 1.57, p = .07$. In addition, there was no significant two-way interaction between campus ministry involvement and volunteer hours, $F(2, 243) = 1.74, p = .18$, or between campus ministry involvement and socioeconomic status, $F(2, 243) = 2.66, p = .82$. However, there was a significant two-way interaction between volunteer hours and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 243) = 2.72, p < .05$. A post-hoc Bonferroni correction revealed a significant difference between scores of individuals who volunteered a medium amount, $M = 7.59$, and individuals who volunteered a high amount, $M = 6.04$. Graph 1 shows the interaction between volunteer hours and
socioeconomic status. There was also not a significant main effect for campus ministry engagement, $F(1, 243) = 1.48, p = .22$, volunteer hours, $F(2, 243) = 2.36, p = .10$, or for socioeconomic status, $F(2, 243) = .38, p = .68$.

*Graph 1*
Table 1

Mean Scores on Basic Rights by Campus Ministry, Volunteer Hours, and SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Hours</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Ministry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>3.63 (1.77)</td>
<td>8.40 (4.16)</td>
<td>8.67 (4.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>7.29 (4.63)</td>
<td>3.00 (0.00)</td>
<td>6.75 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>5.79 (4.32)</td>
<td>5.40 (2.51)</td>
<td>7.50 (2.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>5.64 (3.66)</td>
<td>8.14 (5.11)</td>
<td>8.00 (3.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>7.00 (3.38)</td>
<td>7.24 (4.05)</td>
<td>6.98 (3.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>5.40 (2.46)</td>
<td>9.60 (4.35)</td>
<td>5.92 (3.52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations

On the Do More subscale, there was no statistically significant three-way interaction between campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 247) = .34, p = .85$. However, the overall model was statistically significant, $R^2 = .12, F(17,247) = 1.90, p < .05$. There was no significant two-way interaction between campus ministry involvement and volunteer hours, $F(2, 247) = 1.13, p = .32$, or between campus ministry involvement and socioeconomic status, $F(2, 247) = 1.84, p = .16$. There was also
no significant two-way interaction between volunteer hours and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 247) = 1.26, p = .29$. There was a significant main effect for campus ministry engagement, $F(1, 247) = 2.58, p < .05$, but not for volunteer hours, $F(2, 247) = 2.59, p = .08$, or for socioeconomic status, $F(2, 247) = 0.48, p = .62$.

Additionally, Table 2 presents the mean scores for the *Do More* subscale per group.

Table 2

*Mean Scores on Need to do More by Campus Ministry, Volunteer Hours, and SES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Hours</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wealthy SES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>13.24 (4.13)</td>
<td>11.50 (3.54)</td>
<td>16.00 (3.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>13.93 (5.75)</td>
<td>13.80 (5.85)</td>
<td>16.00 (2.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>13.69 (4.19)</td>
<td>16.14 (6.01)</td>
<td>16.44 (3.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>15.00 (3.80)</td>
<td>14.67 (3.64)</td>
<td>14.94 (3.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>13.69 (4.47)</td>
<td>15.80 (3.74)</td>
<td>14.27 (3.32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations*
On the Access to Resources subscale, there was no statistically significant three-way interaction between campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 249) = .99, p = .41$. The overall model was not statistically significant, $R^2 = .07, F(17, 249) = 1.05, p = .41$. There was no significant two-way interaction between campus ministry involvement and volunteer hours, $F(2, 249) = 1.60, p = .20$, or between campus ministry involvement and socioeconomic status, $F(2, 249) = .14, p = .87$. There was no significant two-way interaction between volunteer hours and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 249) = .68, p = .61$. There was a not significant main effect for campus ministry engagement, $F(1, 249) = .35, p = .55$, volunteer hours, $F(2, 249) = 2.59, p = .08$, or for socioeconomic status, $F(2, 249) = 0.49, p = .62$.

Additionally, Table 3 presents the mean scores on the Access to Resources subscale per group.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Hours</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Ministry</strong></td>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>7.44 (2.70)</td>
<td>9.60 (1.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>9.71 (3.31)</td>
<td>11.00 (7.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>10.07 (5.75)</td>
<td>9.40 (1.95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Scores on Access to Resources by Campus Ministry, Volunteer Hours, and SES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Students</th>
<th>Wealthy SES</th>
<th>Middle SES</th>
<th>Poor SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.71 (3.62)</td>
<td>10.57 (2.33)</td>
<td>9.64 (2.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.71 (4.64)</td>
<td>10.52 (3.80)</td>
<td>12.30 (3.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.22 (2.29)</td>
<td>10.01 (2.30)</td>
<td>10.08 (2.97)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations*

**Hypothesis II:** There will be a statistically significant interaction regarding mean scores of the Social Justice Attitudes and Intentions to Engage in Social Justice subscales of the Social Justice Attitudes Scale for students across different socioeconomic statuses (wealthy/upper-class, middle-class, and working class/poor), volunteer hours (students who have volunteered for more than 20 or more hours, 10-20 hours, and less than 10 hours), and campus ministry activity (students who are engaged in campus ministry versus students who are not engaged).

Because social desirability was found to be significantly correlated with the Intentions to Engage subscale, social desirability scores were controlled as a covariate in the analysis. A 2 (campus ministry engagement: engaged, not engaged) x 3 (socioeconomic status: wealthy/upper-class, middle-class, working class/poor) x 3 (volunteer hours: volunteered more than 20 hours in the past six months, 10-20 hours, and less than 10 hours) between groups factorial analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used.

On the Intentions to Engage subscale, there was no statistically significant three-way interaction between campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, and
socioeconomic status, $F(17, 243) = 1.61, p = .06$. The overall model was also not statistically significant, $R^2 = .10, F(17, 246) = 1.61, p = .06$. There was no significant two-way interaction between campus ministry involvement and volunteer hours, $F(2, 246) = .43, p = .65$, or between campus ministry involvement and socioeconomic status, $F(2, 246) = 1.61, p = .20$. There was no significant two-way interaction between volunteer hours and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 246) = .14, p = .97$. There was no significant main effect for campus ministry engagement, $F(1, 246) = 3.41, p = .07$, volunteer hours, $F(2, 246) = 1.81, p = .17$, or for socioeconomic status, $F(2, 246) = .72, p = .49$. Additionally, Table 4 presents the mean scores on the Intentions to Engage subscale per group.

Table 4

Mean Scores on Intentions to Engage by Campus Ministry, Volunteer Hours, and SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Hours</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Ministry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>26.78 (2.28)</td>
<td>24.80 (3.27)</td>
<td>26.67 (1.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>25.82 (2.81)</td>
<td>25.50 (.71)</td>
<td>22.50 (2.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>25.00 (4.39)</td>
<td>24.00 (4.74)</td>
<td>22.00 (8.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>24.47 (2.94)</td>
<td>23.86 (2.48)</td>
<td>21.78 (4.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>23.09 (3.92)</td>
<td>22.81 (4.80)</td>
<td>23.32 (3.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>23.81 (4.29)</td>
<td>24.60 (2.55)</td>
<td>23.68 (3.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations*

Because social desirability was not significantly correlated with the Social Justice Attitudes subscale, however, social desirability was not controlled for as a
covariate in that analysis.

Subsequently, a 2 (campus ministry engagement: engaged, not engaged) x 3 (socioeconomic status: wealthy/upper-class, middle-class, working class/poor) x 3 (volunteer hours: volunteered more than 20 hours in the past six months, 10-20 hours, and less than 10 hours) x 3 between-groups factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there are statistically significant between-group differences regarding mean scores of the Social Justice Attitudes subscale of the Social Justice Attitudes Scale.

On the Social Justice Attitudes subscale, there was no statistically significant three-way interaction between campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 240) = .60, p = .66$. The overall model was also not statistically significant, $R^2 = .11, F(17, 240) = 1.75, p = .04$. There was no significant two-way interaction between campus ministry involvement and volunteer hours, $F(2, 240) = .59, p = .56$, or between campus ministry involvement and socioeconomic status, $F(2, 240) = 2.16, p = .12$. There was no significant two-way interaction between volunteer hours and socioeconomic status, $F(4, 240) = .50, p = .74$. Finally, there was no significant main effect for campus ministry engagement, $F(1, 240) = 2.03, p = .16$, volunteer hours, $F(2, 240) = 2.14, p = .12$, or for socioeconomic status, $F(2, 240) = .72, p = .49$. Additionally, Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations for the Social Justice Attitudes subscale per group.
Table 5

Mean Social Justice Attitudes scores by Campus Ministry, Volunteer Hours, and SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Volunteer Hours</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>74.44 (6.25)</td>
<td>69.40 (6.11)</td>
<td>69.67 (11.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>74.12 (4.19)</td>
<td>70.50 (7.78)</td>
<td>63.75 (6.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>66.46 (16.75)</td>
<td>67.20 (13.74)</td>
<td>60.50 (23.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Wealthy SES</td>
<td>70.19 (5.74)</td>
<td>64.00 (8.81)</td>
<td>61.38 (11.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>63.57 (10.05)</td>
<td>63.24 (13.81)</td>
<td>64.77 (11.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor SES</td>
<td>66.63 (11.63)</td>
<td>69.11 (4.86)</td>
<td>67.76 (8.77)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Values in parentheses are standard deviations

Additionally, a cluster analysis was used in order to discuss how individual cases are related to each other, as opposed to variables (Luke, 2005; Metraux, Byrne, & Culhane, 2009). A cluster analysis is an exploratory methodology that groups cases, typically people, “based on their similarities and dissimilarities,” and may “reveal unknown heterogeneity” (p. 196, Luke, 2005). Through using a cluster analysis, naturally occurring groupings may be discovered. Luke (2005) recommends using cluster analyses as a research method for community psychologists in order to emphasize the value of contextualism. Therefore, in order to determine if there is a relationship between how an individual perceives poverty and exposure, a cluster analysis was conducted.
First, in order to reduce multicollinearity, a bivariate correlation was conducted between the eight subscales of the *UPPTS*, number of volunteer hours completed, and self-identified socioeconomic status. The *Need to do More, Flawed Character*, and *Poor are Different* subscales were excluded from the analysis because they were significantly correlated. A hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward’s method was conducted in order to see what patterns exist between explanations for poverty and exposure to poverty. Ward’s method was used in order to determine the optimal number of clusters to group variables. Initially, five subscales, self-identified socioeconomic status, and number of volunteer hours were included in the cluster analysis. However, this analysis did not yield a meaningful cluster analysis. Several cluster analyses were conducted using different combinations of variables. Through examining cluster membership, correlations, and using the most discrete subscales, number of volunteer hours, self-identified socioeconomic status, *Welfare Attitude, Social Empathy*, and *Belief in Equal Opportunity* were selected for the cluster analysis. Through examining the semipartial $R^2$ index for each cluster, the best number of clusters was determined to either be five or six clusters.

A K-means cluster analysis was performed in order to determine the best number of clusters. Using K-means allowed for meaningful interpretation and comparison of the clustered means. The analyses yielded five clusters as the solution that best fit the data. The largest change in variance occurred between the first and second cluster, $R^2 = 0.17$. Cluster 1 had moderate levels of volunteering, lower-middle SES, low levels of *Social Empathy*, and moderately high levels of
Belief of Equal Opportunity. Cluster 2 had moderately low levels of volunteering, upper-middle class SES, high levels of Social Empathy, moderately low levels of Belief in Equal Opportunity, and moderate levels of Welfare Attitude. Cluster 3 had low levels of volunteering, low-middle class SES, moderate levels of Social Empathy, moderately low levels of Belief in Equal Opportunity, and moderately low levels on Welfare Attitude. Cluster 4 had high levels of volunteering, middle-class SES, moderate levels of Social Empathy, low levels of Belief in Equal Opportunity, and low levels of Welfare Attitude. Cluster 5 had moderate levels of volunteering, middle-class SES, moderately high levels of Social Empathy, low levels of Belief in Equal Opportunity, and low levels of Welfare Attitude.

Three one-way analysis of variances (ANOVAs) were conducted in order to determine if there were significant differences between the clusters on Basic Rights, Need to do More, and Poor are Different subscales. Results indicated a significant main effect of Basic Rights, \( F(4, 252) = 14.97, p < .01 \), Need to do More, \( F(4, 254) = 21.61, p < .01 \), and Poor are Different, \( F(4, 254) = 21.61, p < .01 \).

After conducting a post-hoc Tukey’s test at the .05 \( \alpha \) level for the Basic Rights subscale, significant differences were found between Clusters 1 and 2, 1 and 5, 2 and 3, 3 and 5, 4 and 5, and 5 and 2. It was found that Cluster 5 was highest on Basic Rights (\( M = 12.18 \)), followed by Cluster 1 (\( M = 7.53 \)), then Cluster 3, (\( M = 7.33 \)), Cluster 2 (\( M = 5.6667 \)), then Cluster 4 (\( M = 5.6667 \)).

After conducting a post-hoc Tukey’s test at the .05 \( \alpha \) level for the Need to do More subscale, significant differences were found between Clusters 5 and 1, 5
and 2, 5 and 3, and 5 and 4. It was found that Cluster 5 scored the highest on *Need to do More* ($M = 19.59$), followed by Cluster 1 ($M = 15.16$), Cluster 3 ($M = 12.63$), Cluster 2 ($M = 13.88$), and Cluster 4 ($M = 12.88$).

After conducting a post-hoc Tukey’s test at the .05 $\alpha$ level for the *Poor are Different* subscale, significant differences were found between Clusters 4 and 3, 4 and 5, 2 and 5, 3 and 2, and 4 and 1. It was found that Cluster 5 scored the highest on *Poor are Different* ($M = 18.75$), followed by Cluster 3 ($M = 16.73$), Cluster 1 ($M = 14.33$), Cluster 2 ($M = 12.63$), and Cluster 4 ($M = 11.47$).

**Hypothesis III:** Both innovative and inclusive subscale and global and urban engagement subscales individually will significantly predict the Basic Rights and Do More subscales of the UPPTS.

Two regressions were conducted to examine if scores on the *Innovative and Inclusive* subscale and the *Global and Urban Engagement* subscale significantly predict *Basic Rights* and *Do More* subscales scores of the UPPTS. *Innovative and Inclusive* and *Global and Urban Engagement* scores were found to explain a significant proportion of variance in *Basic Rights* scores, $R^2 = .05$, $F(2, 255) = 6.18$, $p < .05$. *Innovative and Inclusive* and *Global and Urban Engagement* scores were found to explain a significant proportion of variance in *Do More* scores, $R^2 = .12$, $F(2, 259) = 18.13$, $p < .05$. 
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationships between self-identified socioeconomic status, volunteer hours, and campus ministry with attitudes towards individuals living in economic poverty. Overall, there were no large significant differences between individuals who had greater exposure to poverty through personal identification (i.e., self-identified socioeconomic status), volunteer hours, or campus ministry engagement when compared to students who did not have greater exposure to poverty through personal identification, volunteer hours, or campus ministry engagement on mean scores of the Basic Rights, Need to do More, and Access to Resources subscales of the UPPTS.

For both Hypothesis 1 and 2, contextual factors were considered in relation to attitudes towards social justice and poverty. Contextual factors were included from a theoretical standpoint, (i.e., social distancing theory, Lott, 2002), and recommendations for community psychologists to include contextualism in analyses (Luke, 2005).

In Hypothesis 1, there was no statistically significant three-way interaction between self-identified socioeconomic status, volunteer hours, and campus ministry activity on Basic Rights, Need to do More, and Access to Resources subscales of the UPPTS. However, there was statistically significant two-way interaction between volunteer hours and self-identified socioeconomic status, suggesting that students who volunteered a high amount had more structuralistic
explanations for individuals living in poverty than those who volunteered a medium amount.

Considering there was a significant two-way interaction between volunteer hours and self-identified socioeconomic status, but not a main effect for volunteering or socioeconomic status on Basic Rights, which may mean that students who volunteer a high amount already had stronger beliefs in basic rights (i.e., shelter, healthcare, and food) than individuals who volunteered fewer hours. Another possibility is that individuals who self-identify as “upper-class” may feel more privileged and more aware of their financial status as an advantage, compared to individuals who self-identify as middle-class. Identifying as “upper-class” among individuals who volunteer may be attached to stigmatization, because the groups they are volunteering with are not in the same socioeconomic status. This feeling of privilege or awareness of privilege, combined with exposure to poverty, may lead to a stronger belief in basic rights.

Furthermore, this finding is consistent with previous research (Kawecka-Nenga, 2011) that demonstrated high SES students who, after an extended period of exposure to those living in poverty, had more empathetic attitudes towards the poor. This particular study, however, also looked at additional contextual factors, such as volunteer hours and campus ministry engagement, as exposure to poverty, and were added to see if these factors, combined with socioeconomic status, created a synergistic effect on attitudes towards poverty. Contextual factors were measured in this study because of the importance of understanding context in relation to attitudes towards poverty. According to Lott (2002), contextual factors,
such as exposure and identification with poverty, may influence attitudes towards poverty. Understanding and empowering marginalized groups is one of the tenets of community psychology; therefore, understanding different factors that may impact one’s attitudes towards a marginalized group, as well as understanding potential systemic causes for the marginalization, is important.

In addition, on the Do More subscale, there was a significant main effect for campus ministry engagement. Students engaged in campus ministry had a stronger belief that there is a need for society, government, and individuals to do more to help the economically poor. Ostrow (1995) demonstrated that students experienced a change in attitudes towards the homeless after working with them. Considering this study was conducted at a Vincentian university, with a charism that emphasizes helping the poor, individuals who are engaged in campus ministry would probably have stronger beliefs in the need to help the poor (Ferrari & Velcoff, 2006). Additionally, campus ministry in particular is concerned with the Vincentian values of helping the poor and may themselves be engaged in community work to help the poor. Furthermore, individuals engaged in campus ministry may hold certain religious beliefs that emphasize helping the poor.

Also, on the Access to Resources subscale, there were no significant interactions or main effects for campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, or self-identified socioeconomic status. The lack of statistically significant differences between groups suggests that there is a lack of understanding of structural issues that create and perpetuate poverty. The lack of understanding of structural issues and the preference for blaming the individual is consistent with
previous research (Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Cozzarelli et al., 2001) that suggests American students tend to choose individualistic explanations over fatalistic or structuralistic explanations for poverty.

Considering there were few statistically significant interactions between volunteer hours, engagement in campus ministry, and self-identified socioeconomic status on the three subscales, it may be that exposure to poverty or identity with poverty (i.e., defining oneself as working/class or poor), may not impact certain attitudes towards poverty as conceptualized in this study.

Although it was hypothesized that contextual factors would contribute to more structuralistic explanations for poverty (Hypothesis 1), there is little research that has measured both exposure to poverty and explanations for poverty in the U.S. Landmane and Renge (2010) and Nasser and Abouchedid (2001), for instance, found that individuals who identified with a lower socioeconomic status did correspond with more structuralistic explanations for poverty. However, both studies were conducted outside of the U.S. (Lithuania and Lebanon, respectively), so it is possible that self-identified socioeconomic status, combined with a cultural component, contributes to certain explanations for poverty.

Therefore, as suggested by previous studies (i.e. MacDonald, 1972; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Cozzarelli et al., 2001), a Western cultural norm or influence, such as a Protestant work ethic, may impact individual’s explanations for poverty. If a belief in a Protestant work ethic is more salient to an individual’s explanation for poverty than personal experiences or exposure, this may help to explain the lack of differences between groups.
Another possible explanation is that students’ perceptions of poverty are influenced more by universal, or similar, lessons in the education system regarding poverty. Considering participants’ in this study were all students enrolled at the same university, and the university is an institution whose charism emphasizes helping marginalized populations, especially the economically poor, participants’ may formulate similar opinions or attitudes towards poverty.

For Hypothesis 2, there was no statistically significant three-way interaction between self-identified socioeconomic status, volunteer hours, and campus ministry activity on the Social Justice Attitudes and Intentions to Engage in Social Justice subscales of the Social Justice Attitudes Scale. Although it was hypothesized that there would be an interaction between contextual factors and social justice attitudes, this hypothesis was constructed on the claim that poverty is a structural issue of social justice and “blaming the victim,” (Lott, 2002; Savani, Stephens, & Markus, 2011)

Therefore, it is possible that participants do not conceptualize poverty as an issue of social justice. If students do not conceptualize poverty as a social justice issue, there may be no relationship between their experiences or explanations for poverty and their attitudes towards social justice. However, if students were educated about poverty as an issue of social justice, perhaps they would offer different attitudes towards and explanations for poverty.

Additionally, while there is research on attitudes towards specific social justice issues, such as attitudes towards marginalized populations (Holley et al., 2008), to the author’s knowledge, there is little published research on general
social justice attitudes. Therefore, there may be other factors that influence social justice attitudes that were not measured in the study. If Lott’s social distancing theory (2002) was used, individuals who belong to a certain marginalized group or have greater contact with them, may have different attitudes towards that particular group when compared with individuals who do not identify or have contact. For example, if a participant self-identifies with a marginalized population or has greater exposure to a marginalized population, he/she may have stronger social justice attitudes than someone who does not belong to a marginalized population.

Furthermore, attitudes towards one specific issue of social justice, (i.e., poverty), may not translate to overall attitudes towards social justice. Individuals may have empathy towards a particular group or situation (as suggested by Lott, 2002), but this empathy may not extend to other marginalized groups or issues of social justice.

**Cluster Analysis of Volunteer Involvement, SES, and Attitudes towards Poverty**

The cluster analysis, which grouped individuals based on volunteer involvement, SES, and scores on *Social Empathy, Belief in Equal Opportunity*, and *Welfare Attitude*, suggests that individuals who had more volunteer hours, also had more empathetic and structuralistic explanations and attitudes for *Basic Rights, Need to do More*, and *are Different* towards those living in poverty than those who volunteered a moderate amount. Combined with the findings of a statistically significant two-way interaction on *Basic Rights* between the moderate volunteer and high volunteer hour group, perhaps a greater number of volunteer
hours of yields different explanations for poverty than a moderate number of volunteer hours. This finding suggests that there may be some kind of salience of high exposure or engagement in volunteering. An alternative explanation would be that individuals who volunteered the most already had pre-existing explanations and attitudes towards poverty before volunteering, which may have influenced their decision to volunteer. According to Lott’s (2002) theory, the high volunteer individuals would be less socially distant and therefore more empathetic towards the poor. Lott’s theory, however, does not predict volunteer involvement or engagement with the poor, but rather that the level of exposure or identification with the poor yields different explanation for poverty.

The cluster analysis allowed for contextual factors to be examined for explanations for poverty, and is a recommended analysis for community psychologists (Luke, 2005). Including context is an important principle of community psychology, and allows for a richer understanding of attitudes towards poverty. Additionally, although identification with poverty, and exposure to poverty have separately been linked to attitudes towards poverty, to the author’s knowledge, little to no previous published research has included different kinds of exposure to poverty (personal experience or volunteering), as well as identification with poverty, in relation to explanations and attitudes towards poverty.

For Hypothesis III, scores on the Innovative and Inclusive subscale and the Global and Urban Engagement subscale were found to significantly predict Basic Rights and Do More subscales scores of the UPPTS. This finding suggests that
beliefs in the university’s mission as innovative and inclusive were also linked to a belief in fundamental basic rights (i.e., shelter, food, and healthcare) and the need to do more to help the poor. For a Vincentian university with a mission dedicated to serving the poor, it is logical that believing that the mission is innovative and inclusive would also have more favorable attitudes towards the poor. Additionally, belief in a university’s offering of international opportunities, diversity, and, particularly engagement in the urban environment may be linked to greater exposure to instances of poverty. Stronger beliefs in importance of diversity on campus, importance of international opportunities and engagement in the urban environment may also lead to stronger beliefs in fundamental rights of all people, including the poor, and the need to more in terms of serving the poor.

Previous research (Ferrari, Cowman, Milner, Gutierrez & Drake, 2009) demonstrated that beliefs that the university’s mission as innovative and inclusive significantly predicted school sense of community. For a university whose mission is dedicated to serving the poor, this may imply that students who have stronger beliefs in the university’s mission as innovative and inclusive would also have more empathetic attitudes towards the poor. Additionally, Filkins and Ferrari (2004) demonstrated that increased exposure to mission-related activities and stronger beliefs in working towards mission-related goals, were found to have higher scores on positive perceptions of the university’s mission. Therefore, students who support the mission of serving the poor and activities that help the poor would probably have stronger beliefs that society and other entities should also help the poor.
Implications for Community Psychology

This study illustrated some of the potential relationships between contextual factors, specifically exposure to poverty and identification with poverty, and attitudes and explanations for poverty. As recommended by Luke (2005), a cluster analysis captured contextual factors in their relation to attitudes and explanations for poverty. Considering that differences were found between groups on attitudes and explanations for poverty using a cluster analysis, contextual factors may be influential in developing attitudes towards poverty. Including context for the purpose of a cluster analysis did yield significant results, so examining undergraduates’ attitudes and explanations for poverty on an individual level should be considered for future analyses in community psychology.

However, since few statistically significant differences were found between groups based on amount of volunteering, self-identified socioeconomic status, and campus ministry engagement, it may be that there may factors more salient than experiences and exposure that influence attitudes and explanations for poverty that were not included in the analysis. One explanation is that cultural factors play a more salient role in developing attitudes and explanations for poverty (MacDonald, 1974; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). The belief in a Protestant work ethic (Cozzarelli et al., 2001) may be strong across undergraduate students, so it may be difficult to change attitudes and explanations for poverty that challenge it. For community psychologists, including a measure of belief in the Protestant work ethic may help explain attitudes towards poverty.
In order to measure and account for differences in attitudes and explanations for poverty, community psychologists may want to consider a measure of a cultural belief in their survey, or looking at cross-cultural data from other countries. Additionally, community psychologists may want to examine poverty as an issue of social justice in the U.S., and potentially developing more research conceptualizing poverty as an issue of social justice. Community psychologists could also collaborate across institutions to see if there are differences between groups internationally, similar to a previous international study (Nasser, Abouchedid, & Khashan, 2002).

If community psychology conceptualizes poverty as an issue of social justice, then it is important for individuals to be educated about why it is an issue of social justice. Understanding how individuals living in poverty are marginalized from society, specifically by lack of economic opportunities, living and working in unsafe neighborhoods, and issues accessing adequate medical care, education, and other resources, helps conceptualize poverty as an issue of social injustice. It also assists in perceiving individuals living in poverty as marginalized from structural forces, as opposed to his/her own individual choices and moral deficiencies (Lott, 2002). Through understanding attitudes and explanations for poverty, as well as conceptualizing it as an issue of social justice, community psychologists can start to combat both stereotypes against individuals living in poverty as well as the structural forces that contribute to poverty itself.
Implications for Higher Education Policy

The lack of significant differences between groups based on self-identified socioeconomic differences, volunteer hours, or suggests that there may be a need to educate students on reasons why individuals live in poverty. One suggestion may be to conduct poverty simulation activities on campus (Davidson, Preez, Gibb, & Nel, 2009; Nickols & Nielsen, 2011; Steck, Engler, Ligon, Druen, & Cosgrove, 2011; Vandsburger, Duncan-Daston, Akerson, & Dillon, 2010). For students who are unfamiliar with the experience of poverty, holding poverty simulation activities on campus may be an effective way for higher education officials to teach students. Conducting poverty simulation activities may promote empathy towards individuals living in poverty, and may influence explanations for poverty.

Another possibility would be to develop a course that explains the structural reasons behind poverty. Offering a course, possibly paired with a service learning component (Schamber & Mahoney, 2008; Simons et al., 2010), may help educate students on the deeper influences on poverty. Through educating students on reasons for poverty beyond individualistic explanations provided by culture (Cozzarelli et al., 2001) and media, such as “laziness and drug addictions” (Gans, 1994), students may learn about different ways poverty is both created and perpetuated. As mentioned in the introduction, students who do not have exposure to poverty may have formed opinions about individuals living in poverty based on media portrayals and stereotypes (Gans, 1994; Parisi, 1998).
Therefore, it is important that universities and other institutions of education inform students on the realities of poverty so that students may have an accurate understanding of why poverty exists and who is affected by poverty. Furthermore, by offering a course that provides structural explanations and accurate facts on poverty, students may start to understand that there may be forces beyond an individual’s work ethic that contribute to his or her socioeconomic status. Without educating students about the realities of poverty, students may continue to “blame the victim” and offer primarily individualistic explanations for poverty (Lott, 2002; Savani, Stephens, & Markus, 2011). If students continue to “blame the victim,” this may seriously impede progress on creating solutions for individuals living in poverty and support for poverty alleviation programs. Therefore, it is imperative that students receive an accurate and comprehensive education about poverty and the individuals affected by it.

Limitations of the Present Study

This study was conducted at one urban, Catholic university, whose mission is dedicated to serving the poor. Considering the mission of the university is related to serving the poor and this study examined attitudes towards the poor, these results are not generalizable to universities with other mission statements that are not so specific to poverty. Additionally, the only groups included in the study were introduction to psychology students and students engaged in campus ministry. Students who are not enrolled in psychology courses or engaged in campus ministry activity may have different attitudes and explanations for
poverty than the students included in this study; therefore, these results should not be generalized to all students.

Furthermore, since this study was conducted at a private university, the students surveyed may have been more affluent than students at other universities. Different explanations for poverty may be found in public universities or community colleges. Additionally, since this university is an urban environment, students may have greater exposure to poverty simply because of population density and seeing individuals living in poverty, so these results are not generalizable to campuses that are in suburban or rural areas.

One limitation of the study may be the self-identified socioeconomic status. That is, 41.9% of students (n=132) surveyed self-identified as “middle-class.” This overrepresentation of the middle-class may not be reflective of what “middle-class” is defined as by the U.S. Census Bureau or other entities. There may also be a tendency to report “middle-class” as a default response, since it may be more socially desirable or favorable in American society.

Additionally, students may have reported their own self-identified socioeconomic status, independent of their parents or caregivers, which may differ from the socioeconomic status of their family. Furthermore, students may have experienced different levels of poverty or wealth throughout their lifetime, due to a caregiver losing a job or perhaps caregivers experiencing a greater increase in salary, that may both influence the students’ attitudes towards poverty, as well as their identification with a certain socioeconomic status.
Although other measures of contextual experiences of poverty were included in the survey, there were not included in the analyses in interest of parsimony. If different contextual factors were considered in lieu of the chosen factors (i.e., receiving federal assistance, such as TANF), between-group differences may have been found.

The theory of social distancing from the poor may not have been an appropriate lens to examine attitudes and explanations for poverty in this study. Considering the lack of significant differences between groups based on self-identified socioeconomic status, volunteer hours, and campus ministry engagement, a different theory may be more appropriate. As mentioned in the introduction, Nasser, Abouchedid, and Khashan (2002) suggest cultural differences in explanations for poverty, so perhaps a theory that allows for culture as an influence in explanations for poverty would be more appropriate. However, the lack of research that includes contextual factors for undergraduate attitudes towards poverty merits additional study into why undergraduates believe poverty exists, and their attitudes towards poverty.

Previous research (Ostrow, 1995; Kawecka-Nenga 2011) demonstrated that direct exposure through volunteering with individuals living in poverty changed attitudes towards poverty. This finding suggests that volunteering with individuals who are poor may help volunteers develop more empathetic attitudes towards poverty. Although volunteering was measured in this study, it was not specified as direct exposure to individuals living in poverty (i.e., volunteering in a homeless shelter). Therefore, although students may have been somewhat aware
of the socioeconomic status of the individuals they were volunteering with, the measure of volunteer hours was not related to a direct intervention for individuals living in poverty. If the study did include an intervention component with a pre and post-test of attitudes and explanations for the amount of direct exposure to individuals living in poverty, perhaps there would be more structuralistic explanations and empathetic attitudes.

**Future Directions**

Research between universities across different countries may yield different explanations (Nasser, Abowied, & Khashan, 2002). Therefore, it may be interesting to include experience and exposure to poverty across different cultures. Including both culture and context may offer a richer and more thorough explanation for attitudes and explanations for poverty. Perhaps individuals in more collectivist cultures who also have high exposure and experience with poverty would offer more structuralistic explanations with for poverty than individuals in more individualistic cultures with high exposure and experiences. If this difference is found, it may be reasonable to conclude that culture is a salient factor, over and above personal experiences or exposure. Including a measure or scale that examines an individual’s belief in poverty as an issue of social justice may also yield richer data as to whether individuals believe in poverty as an individual choice or societal issue (Shek, 2002).

Considering that perceptions of the university’s mission-driven activities were significant predictors of attitudes towards poverty, future research may want to look at strengthening these mission-driven activities in order to foster more
empathetic and structuralistic explanations for poverty. Including and analyzing additional indicators and exposure to poverty (i.e., documenting employment status of parent(s)/caregiver(s), home neighborhood poverty characteristics) may also result in more significant differences between groups. To determine if attitudes and explanations for poverty can change with exposure, universities may want to implement both service-learning courses and poverty simulation activities (Ostrow 1995; Schamber & Mahoney, 2008; Simons et al., 2010; Kawecka-Nenga, 2011).

Overall, there may be several factors that contribute to explanations for and attitudes towards individuals living in poverty. Including multiple contextual factors and comparing across cultures may offer differences in explanations and attitudes towards poverty. Future studies that examine relationships between contextual factors, such as exposure and experience to poverty, and attitudes and explanations for poverty, may want to consider some of the limitations of this study, as well as the implications for both community psychology and institutions of higher education.
SUMMARY

CHAPTER V

Understanding attitudes and explanations for poverty is an issue of increasing interest at institutions of higher education. Previous measures have been used to identify attitudes and explanations for poverty (Feagin, 1972; Kluegel and Smith, 1987; Atherton et al., 1993; Cozzarelli et al., 2001, Shek, 2002). Different explanations for poverty have been found, including individualistic, structuralistic, and fatalistic explanations (Feagin, 1972). Some studies have found self-identified socioeconomic status (Nasser & Abouchedid, 2002; Landmane and Renge, 2010), experiences with poverty (Ostrow, 1995; Kawecka-Nenga, 2011), and less Westernized cultures (Morcol, 1997; Abouchedid et al., 2002) as having more empathetic attitudes and more structuralistic explanations for poverty. Additionally, at a university whose mission is dedicated to serving individuals living in poverty and marginalized populations, assessing perceptions of the mission and value of social justice may also be related to attitudes towards poverty.

The present study examined potential group differences based on campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, and self-identified socioeconomic status on measures of attitudes and explanations for poverty, as well as attitudes towards social justice. Additionally, perceptions of the mission-driven activities and mission statement as predictors of attitudes and explanations for poverty were examined.
Responses to survey measures addressing attitudes and explanations for poverty, mission-identity perceptions, social justice attitudes, and social desirability were included. 2x3x3 Factorial ANOVAs, a cluster analysis, and linear regressions hypothesized interactions, main effects, between-group differences and predictive relationships.

No statistically significant three-way interactions were found between groups based on campus ministry engagement, volunteer hours, and self-identified socioeconomic status on the Basic Rights, Need to Do More, or Access to Resource subscales of the UPPTS. One main effect was found for campus ministry engagement on the Need to do More subscale of the UPPTS. One statistically significant two-way interaction was found between the high volunteer and moderate volunteer group on the Basic Rights subscale of the UPPTS. The cluster analysis yielded meaningful relationships between individuals based on self-identified socioeconomic status, volunteer hours, and attitudes towards poverty. Perceptions of mission-driven activities and the mission statement were found to be significant predictors of attitudes towards poverty. The findings of the present study may offer insight into contextual factors that influence attitudes towards and explanations for poverty.
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Founded in 1898, DePaul is a Catholic university in the city of Chicago. DePaul is one of the largest private universities in the U.S. and is the largest Catholic school in the nation, with over 25,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

As a university, DePaul pursues the preservation, enrichment, and transmission of knowledge and culture across a broad scope of academic disciplines. It treasures its deep roots in the wisdom nourished in Catholic universities from medieval times. The principal distinguishing marks of the university are its Catholic, Vincentian, and urban character.

Catholic

By reason of its Catholic character, DePaul strives to bring the light of Catholic faith and the treasures of knowledge into a mutually challenging and supportive relationship. It accepts as its corporate responsibility to remain faithful to the Catholic message drawn from authentic religious sources both traditional and contemporary. In particular, it encourages theological learning and scholarship; in all academic disciplines it endorses critical moral thinking and scholarship founded on moral principles which embody religious values and the highest ideals of our society.

On the personal level, DePaul respects the religiously pluralistic composition of its members and endorses the interplay of diverse value systems beneficial to intellectual inquiry. Academic freedom is guaranteed both as an integral part of the university's scholarly and religious heritage, and as an essential condition of effective inquiry and instruction.
Vincentian

The university derives its title and fundamental mission from St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Congregation of the Mission, a religious community whose members, Vincentians, established and continue to sponsor DePaul. Motivated by the example of St. Vincent, who instilled a love of God by leading his contemporaries in serving urgent human needs, the DePaul community is above all characterized by ennobling the God-given dignity of each person. This religious personalism is manifested by the members of the DePaul community in a sensitivity to and care for the needs of each other and of those served, with a special concern for the deprived members of society. DePaul University emphasizes the development of a full range of human capabilities and appreciation of higher education as a means to engage cultural, social, religious, and ethical values in service to others.

Urban

As an urban university, DePaul is deeply involved in the life of a community which is rapidly becoming global, and is interconnected with it. DePaul both draws from the cultural and professional riches of this community and responds to its needs through educational and public service programs, by providing leadership in various professions, the performing arts, and civic endeavors and in assisting the community in finding solutions to its problems.
Appendix B

UPPTS
Undergraduate Attitudes Towards Poverty Survey

How many volunteer hours have you completed in the past six months?

- 0-10
- 11-20
- 21-50
- 51-75
- 76-100
- 100+

Type of Setting where you have completed volunteer hours (select all that apply):

- Soup Kitchen
- After School Program
- Elementary school
- High school
- Elder care
- Homeless Shelter
- Domestic Violence Program
- Community Development
- Other

Type of High School You Attended (select the answer that most closely describes your high school):

- Private Catholic
- Public Suburban
- Public Rural
- Private non-Catholic
- Public Urban
- Other

Your Family’s Household Income (per year): Which of the following best describes your family’s housing?

- $0-$8,000
- $8,001-$15,000
- $15,001-$25,000
- $25,001-$40,000
- $40,001-$60,000
- $60,001-$80,000
- More than $80,000
- Not Sure

Have you or your family received any of the following supports?

- Supplemental Security Income
- Food Stamps
- TANF (welfare)
- Medicaid
Heating assistance  O  Yes  O  No  O  Not Sure

In your opinion, which of the following best describes your family’s economic status?

O  Wealthy
O  Upper Class
O  Middle Class
O  Working Class
O  Poor

Which of the following statements describes your experience with poverty and with people who live in poverty (select all that apply to your situation)?

O  My family lives in poverty
O  Several of my friends live in poverty
O  I have worked/volunteered with people who live in poverty
O  I have little direct experience with poverty/most of what I know comes from books, movies, & television
O  I have no experience

The following items will ask you about your attitudes towards those living in poverty and your experiences with poverty.

Please indicate the degree to which you either agree or disagree with the following statements on a 5-point scale, with 1 = Strongly disagree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

A person receiving welfare should not have a nicer car than I do  1  2  3  4  5
Poor people will remain poor regardless of what's done for them  1  2  3  4  5
Welfare makes people lazy  1  2  3  4  5
Any person can get ahead in this country  1  2  3  4  5
Welfare recipients should be able to spend their money as they chose  1  2  3  4  5
An able-bodied person using food stamps is ripping off the system  1  2  3  4  5
Poor people are dishonest  1  2  3  4  5
If poor people worked harder, they could escape poverty  1  2  3  4  5
Society has the responsibility to help poor people  1  2  3  4  5
People on welfare should be made to work for their benefits  1  2  3  4  5
Unemployed poor people could find jobs if they tried harder 1 2 3 4 5
Poor people are different from the rest of society 1 2 3 4 5
Being poor is a choice 1 2 3 4 5
Poor people think they deserve to be supported 1 2 3 4 5
Welfare mothers have babies to get money 1 2 3 4 5
Children raised on welfare will never amount to anything 1 2 3 4 5
Poor people act differently 1 2 3 4 5
The government spends too much money on poverty programs 1 2 3 4 5
There is a lot of fraud among welfare recipients 1 2 3 4 5
Benefits for poor people consume a major part of the federal budget 1 2 3 4 5
Poor people use food stamps wisely 1 2 3 4 5
I believe poor people create their own difficulties 1 2 3 4 5
Poor people generally have lower intelligence than non-poor people 1 2 3 4 5
I believe poor people have a different set of values than do other people 1 2 3 4 5
I believe I could trust a poor person whom I employ 1 2 3 4 5
I believe poor people create their own difficulties 1 2 3 4 5
I would support a program that resulted in higher taxes to support social programs for poor people. 1 2 3 4 5
Everyone, regardless of circumstances, should have enough food 1 2 3 4 5
Everyone, regardless of circumstances, should have healthcare 1 2 3 4 5
Everyone, regardless of circumstances, should have a place to live 1 2 3 4 5
The poor are treated the same as everyone else 1 2 3 4 5
Governments should do more to help the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Charities should do more to help the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Businesses should do more to help the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Individuals should do more to help the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Lack of social support (family, friends, church) is a major challenge for the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Lack of education is a major challenge for the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Lack of child care is a major challenge for the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Lack of self-control is a major challenge for the poor 1 2 3 4 5
It upsets me to know that many people are poor 1 2 3 4 5
I feel that I know what it is like to be poor 1 2 3 4 5
I feel that I know why someone may be poor 1 2 3 4 5
I feel that I have enough direct experience with the poor 1 2 3 4 5
Appendix C

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability
Please read the following statements and select “True” or “False”

1. It is sometimes hard for me to go to work if I am not encouraged
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way
3. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability to succeed.
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
5. No matter whom I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener
6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone
7. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget
9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable
10. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different than mine
11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others
12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me
Appendix D

Social Justice Attitudes Scale
This following statements ask you to indicate how important or how much you value the following activities. Please answer these questions based, not on whether you actually engage in these activities, but whether you feel that these activities are important and worthwhile. Please indicate the degree to which you either agree to disagree with the following value statements on a 7-point scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

### Social Justice Attitudes subscale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I believe that it is important to....</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make sure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard, especially those from traditionally ignored or marginalized groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow individuals and groups to define and describe their problems, experiences, and goals in their own terms.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to others about societal systems of power, privilege, and oppression.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to change larger social conditions that cause individual suffering and impede well-being.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help individuals and groups to pursue their chosen goals in life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the physical and emotional well-being of individuals and groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and appreciate people’s diverse social identities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow others to have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support community organizations and institutions that help individuals and groups achieve their aims.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations, and resources in our society.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act for social justice.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following set of questions, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement on a 1-7 scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.
In the following set of questions, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement on a 1-7 scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Behavioral Control around Social Justice</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am confident that I can have a positive impact on others’ lives.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I choose to do so, I am capable of influencing others to promote fairness and equality.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I choose to do so, I am capable of engaging in activities that address social injustices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have enough time to engage in activities that promote social justice. *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I engage in activities to promote social justice, it will not make a difference.*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have too many responsibilities to engage in activities to promote social justice.*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is too overwhelming to engage in activities to promote social justice. *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am certain that if I try, I can have a positive impact on my community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Subjective Norm around Social Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Norm around Social Justice</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other people around me are engaged in activities that address social justice issues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people around me feel that it is important to engage in dialogue around societal injustices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people around me are supportive of efforts that promote social justice.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people around me are aware of issues of social injustices and power inequalities in our society.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Intentions to engage in Social Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intentions to engage in Social Justice</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the future, I will do my best to ensure that all individuals and groups in my community have a chance to speak and be heard.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the future, I intend to talk with others about social power inequalities, social injustices, and the impact of social forces on health and well-being.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the future, I intend to engage in activities that will promote social justice.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the future, I intend to work collaboratively with others so that they can define their own problems and build their own capacity to solve problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

DePaul Mission and Values Inventory
### DMV Inclusive and Innovative Subscale

All items rated on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I believe that at ——— our very diverse personal values and religious beliefs contribute to an atmosphere that fosters mutual understanding and respect.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that we manifest personalism by our care for each member of the university community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ——— University is innovative. We are never content with maintaining a “business as usual” approach. Our efforts are marked by innovation and single-minded pursuit of new and effective approaches to meet the needs of our students, society and the educational marketplace.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that——— University is inclusive. We provide access for all to higher education regardless of class, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity or economic barriers. The university community is welcoming and draws great strength from its diversities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ——— University takes risks that are consistent with its mission and values. Historically the university has always stepped outside of tradition and beyond “status quo” approaches, encouraging and demonstrating an adventurous and entrepreneurial spirit. The measure of our success has always been the measure of our risks.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ——— University is pragmatic, grounding its education in the realities of everyday life. Through its curricula and through the delivery of its programs and services, the university offers students practical solutions to their needs for higher education, career advancement and personal growth.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ——— University’s mission and values are visible to all. Its education and operations are grounded in values of service, respect, personalism, justice, holistic education, and creating quality educational opportunities, especially for the underserved and disadvantaged in our society.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I believe that our religious heritage remains relevant to the university today.

I support our current approach to expressing its identity.

I support our current approach to expressing its urban identity.
DMV Spiritual Pluralism Subscale

All items rated on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

I believe that our university invites all inquirers to freely examine Catholicism, other faith traditions, and other secular values systems in light of their respective contributions to the human enterprise.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I believe that the curricula at our schools and colleges have appropriate expressions of the university’s Catholic identity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I support our current approach to expressing its Catholic identity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

University Ministry provides a variety of services and programs designed to serve the university community and enhance the institution’s Catholic, [our patron saint] and religiously pluralistic identity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The Office of University Mission and Values provides a variety of services and programs designed to serve the community and enhance the institution’s Catholic, [our patron saint] and religiously pluralistic identity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The University sponsors a variety of services and programs to demonstrate the connectedness to the community that is characteristic of our urban identity.
**DMV Urban/Global Engagement Opportunities Subscale**

All items rated on a 4-point scale (1 = unimportant; 4 = very important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are these community initiatives such as support of Chicago public school reform?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you is the community-based service learning?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you is the Community Service Association?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the Study Abroad programs?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the international sites?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the international students on campus?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you is the faculty and staff volunteer service?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the diversity efforts?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DMV Unique Institutional Religious Heritage Subscale

All items rated on a 4-point scale (1 = unimportant; 4 = very important).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important to you is the [our patron saint] Endowment Fund (grants for faculty, staff, and student projects that enhance the university’s [patron saint] and Catholic identity)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you is the [patron] Assistance Fund (emergency financial assistance primarily for students)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the Annual [patron] Lectures (lectures devoted to the understanding of the life, times, and works of the patron saint and affiliates)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you is the Authors at Lunch series?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the orientation programs (programs for new faculty, students, and staff introducing them to the university’s mission and values)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the Mission/Heritage published materials?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you are the Faculty/Staff/Student [patron] Heritage Tours (biennial study trips for faculty, staff, and students to sites in Paris/France)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important to you is the university ombudsman?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DMV Catholic and Other Faith-Formation Opportunities Subscale

All items rated on a 4-point scale (1 = unimportant; 4 = very important)

- How important to you are Catholic worship services?  1  2  3  4
- How important to you are Catholic sacramental opportunities?  1  2  3  4
- How important to you is interfaith worship?  1  2  3  4
- How important to you are worship opportunities for other faith traditions?  1  2  3  4
- How important to you are religious education and spirituality programs?  1  2  3  4
- How important to you are service programs (winter/spring service trips, etc.)?  1  2  3  4

Thank you for the time and care that you devoted to responding to this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.

“It is not enough to do good. It must be done well.”

Vincent de Paul