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Attitudes to Chronic Poverty in the "Global Village"

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Attitudes to Chronic Poverty in the “Global Village”

Armando Barrientos/Daniel Neff

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Attitudes to Chronic Poverty in the “Global Village”

Abstract

The paper explores attitudes to chronic poverty in a cross-section of developed and developing countries based on data from the World Values Survey Wave Three (1994-1998). The analysis finds a consistent belief among a majority of respondents that poverty is chronic. This paper also explores the factors that influence public attitudes to chronic poverty and finds that interests, position, knowledge, and shared values relating to social justice are important.

Keywords: attitudes, chronic poverty

JEL-Code: I30, I32, I38

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Zusammenfassung

Einstellungen bezüglich chronischer Armut im „globalen Dorf“

In dem vorliegenden Arbeitspapier werden Haltungen zu chronischer Armut anhand von Querschnittsdaten aus Entwicklungs- und Industrieländern auf der Basis der dritten Runde des *World Values Survey* (1994-1998) untersucht. Die Ergebnisse verdeutlichen, dass die Mehrheit der Befragten Armut als chronisch ansieht. Die Untersuchung zeigt zudem die jeweiligen Einflussfaktoren auf die öffentliche Meinung zu chronischer Armut auf, von denen insbesondere Interessen, Stellung, der Wissensstand als auch gemeinsame Werte bezüglich sozialer Gerechtigkeit von Bedeutung sind.

Attitudes to Chronic Poverty in the “Global Village”

Armando Barrientos/Daniel Neff

Article Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Our “Global Village”: Notes on the Dataset
- 3 Attitudes to Chronic Poverty
- 4 What Factors Influence Attitudes to Chronic Poverty?
- 5 Conclusions

1 Introduction

The paper¹ characterises public attitudes to chronic poverty in a cross-section of countries we denote as the “global village”. The motivation for this paper is to establish whether there are shared public perceptions of poverty, and in particular chronic poverty. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been instrumental in encouraging a global perspective on poverty, in part by defining the global target to halve extreme poverty² by 2015 (Hulme 2010). Increasing global economic interdependence makes the existence and distribution of poverty in the world a global issue, as much as a country-specific one (Pogge 2002). It is therefore important to explore the extent to which a global policy on poverty could be underpinned by shared public attitudes.

¹ We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (www.chronicpoverty.org). We thank Jann Lay, Hisako Nomura and an anonymous referee for their helpful comments; the errors that remain are ours.

² Extreme poverty refers to individuals and households living below the food poverty line.

The literature on attitudes to poverty is scarce. In developed countries, a related literature on public attitudes to redistribution has emerged, provoked by welfare state reforms in the 1990s.³ There is also a small but important literature on attitudes to international aid, with implications for attitudes towards poverty in developing countries on the part of developed country populations.⁴ There are studies focusing on attitudes to poverty in individual countries, and from different disciplinary perspectives.⁵ However, to our knowledge, there are no comparative studies on attitudes to poverty among developing countries. Similarly, there is no literature available on attitudes to chronic poverty. This is not surprising, given that we could only identify a single comparative dataset currently available to support such research. This is regrettable in view of the fact that an estimated 1.4 billion people today live in extreme poverty, and that addressing this global problem should therefore be an urgent priority.

This paper focuses specifically on public attitudes to chronic poverty, which is defined as poverty that persists over an extended period of time. There is a wide consensus in the poverty literature that chronic poverty merits especial attention (CPRC 2005). Chronic poverty is associated with greater vulnerability and harm, especially as human and productive assets and entitlements become more depleted the longer people are in poverty. Poverty persistence can lead to poverty traps (Barrientos 2007). The Chronic Poverty Report 2004-05 estimated that as many as 40 per cent of people in poverty in developing countries are in chronic poverty (CPRC 2005). Research conducted by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre finds that chronic poverty can be tackled more effectively with multidimensional and sustained interventions (CPRC 2008). Understanding public attitudes to chronic poverty is especially relevant to the process of identifying the range of policy options available to address poverty and vulnerability.⁶

Our objective is to throw light on globally-shared attitudes to (chronic) poverty, as opposed to taking a narrower look at country-specific attitudes, or public attitudes in high-income country populations to poverty in low income countries. This approach reflects the emergence of a global perspective on poverty and chronic poverty. The empirical work makes use of data from close to fifty countries contributing to the World Values Survey Wave

³ See recent reviews and summary of main findings in Gelissen (2000) and Jaeger (2006).

⁴ Chong and Gradstein review the literature on international aid and provide empirical findings (Chong and Gradstein 2006). See also European surveys of public opinion on aid and poverty and exclusion (European Commission 1999, 2007a, 2007b).

⁵ Some recent studies on attitudes to poverty are: Hopkins 2008 (sociology), Nasser 2007 (psychology), Misurelli and Heffernan 2001 (anthropology), Gustafsson and Yue 2006 (economics).

⁶ The Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia allocated 75 per cent to programme expenditure to support households in poverty but with work capacity; and 25 per cent to households in poverty without work capacity. This reflects government concern to minimise the chances that support will generate dependency. Governments in low income countries that focus resources on supporting the moderately (or transient) poor as a means to move closer to the MDG1 poverty reduction target implicitly assume that public attitudes do not discriminate between extreme/chronic and moderate/transient poverty.

Three dataset, providing partial coverage of developed and developing countries. While we take care to acknowledge the limitations of the data, our analysis of the data can provide powerful insights into shared global attitudes to chronic poverty. This paper will also identify the factors that influence public attitudes to chronic poverty.

Understanding attitudes to chronic poverty is essential for gauging the priority afforded to anti-poverty policy in national and international policy circles, and the likely public support given to policies addressing chronic poverty and vulnerability. Many fear that the present global crises will relegate global poverty policy further down the international community's list of priorities. There is also concern that assistance to the growing number of poor and vulnerable people in high-income countries will trump the importance of assisting the poor and vulnerable in low-income countries. Changes in the global economic architecture are bringing forward the time when the emerging economies of India, China, Brazil and others will be expected to step up their international assistance to low-income countries. Previously aid recipients, these countries will become aid donors. Will their populations support this new role? In many low-income countries, national governments have willingly delegated the fight against poverty to international donors, perhaps because politicians in those nations felt there were few votes to be gained from activism on poverty reduction. Is this likely to change in the near future? To address these concerns, knowledge of global attitudes to poverty is essential.

We find that survey respondents in our "global village" show a strong measure of consistency in their understanding of chronic poverty. There appears to be a wide measure of agreement on the perception that the opportunities to escape poverty are limited, and as a consequence chronic poverty is viewed as the norm. We also find that epistemic factors and shared values on justice are central to shaping public attitudes to poverty.

This paper is divided into three main sections, followed by a conclusion. The next section (Section 2) describes the demographics of our "global village". Section 3 reports on unconditional estimates of attitudes to chronic poverty. Section 4 explores associations between attitudes to chronic poverty and particular values, processes, interest and issues. The conclusion then clarifies our main findings.

2 Our "Global Village": Notes on the Dataset

Our "global village" is not the world. It is essential to understand the characteristics of the dataset we use, and the subsequent limitations it places on our findings. The data we use in our empirical work is limited to countries included in Wave Three (1994-1998) of the World Values Survey (WVS3) (World Values Survey 2000, see also Inglehart 2000). The World Values Survey is currently the largest non-profit survey research project supporting the analysis of attitudes and cultural change on a global level. The project is funded by various scientific

foundations, and data are publicly available online.⁷ There are currently five waves available and a sixth is in preparation. The WVS3 contains data from attitudinal surveys in 58 countries/regions and is the only wave containing information on attitudes to poverty. The analysis below pools individual responses from 49 countries with information on the variables of interest. Table 1 below indicates the participant countries by region.⁸

Table 1 Countries included in Wave Three of the World Values Survey (1994-1998)

Western Europe	Central Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa	South Asia	North America & OECD
Czech Republic Croatia Finland Germany Great Britain Hungary Norway Spain Sweden Switzerland Bulgaria Czech Republic Serbia & Montenegro Macedonia Slovakia Slovenia Latvia Turkey Albania	Azerbaijan Armenia Ukraine Georgia Romania Russian Federation Estonia Belarus Moldova	Nigeria South Africa	Bangladesh India Pakistan	Australia New Zealand USA
			East Asia	South America
			China Taiwan Japan Republic of Korea	Argentina Brazil Chile Colombia El Salvador Mexico Peru Uruguay Venezuela

Source: Own classification of countries sampled by World Value Survey (2000), Wave Three (1994-1998)

Looking at Table 1, it is clear that only a subset of countries is included in the sample. The sample has a fairly comprehensive representation of high-income countries, a good representation of transition countries and Latin American countries, very limited representation of Sub-Saharan Africa and of South and East Asia, and no representation of North Africa and the Middle East. Therefore, our "global village" cannot be taken as representative of the world population.

Our data are also unrepresentative of the world population in other important respects— the samples for each of the countries in Table 1 should not be taken as fully representative of their respective populations. The sampling at country level varies from country

⁷ See <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>.

⁸ We have adjusted the WVS3 by dropping Taiwan and Puerto Rico. We further combined samples for Serbia and Montenegro, samples for Tambov and Russia; samples for Andalusia, Galicia, Valencia and the Basque Country (Spain); samples for Republika Srpska and Bosnia; and finally samples for East and West Germany. This leaves us with data for 49 countries.

to country, with a generally stronger representation of urban residents. For example, the coverage of the survey in China is limited to the central regions. Most importantly, the size of each country's sample does not correspond the ratio of the country's population to the world population. For example, Colombia's sample size is almost five times that of Brazil's size, and four times that of China's.

As part of the research for this paper, an exhaustive search of attitudinal data on poverty, especially comparative data among different countries, was carried out. We found that of all the currently available datasets, only the WVS3 surveyed developing countries *and* contained direct questions on poverty.⁹ The data contained in the WVS3 cover the period 1994-1998. It is possible that responses to questions on poverty could have been influenced by the issues dominant in policy discussions at the time, particularly the 1997 East Asian financial crisis. However, more recent data are not available. In the analysis below, we also explore the relative significance of possible influences on the formation of public attitudes.

The aforementioned characteristics and level of coverage of the WVS3 data demonstrate the need for careful consideration of which research questions to pursue, and which empirical methods to employ. The data *could* provide only limited support for a fine-grained analysis of country-specific differences in public attitudes to poverty. However, our analysis demonstrates that the data can be appropriate, even invaluable, in supporting an analysis of shared attitudes to poverty in the cross-section of countries sampled. If the analysis finds that there is a good measure of consistency in attitudes to poverty across the countries involved, it matters less that our sample has the imperfections noted above. That is to say, if a majority of Colombians, a majority of Brazilians and a majority of Chinese in the sample share a specific perception of poverty, it matters less that Colombians are over-represented. Keeping the limitations of the WVS3 data in mind, we are confident that our analysis below can throw valuable light on attitudes to chronic poverty.¹⁰

3 Attitudes to Chronic Poverty

The WVS3 dataset includes a set of questions specifically about individual perceptions of poverty across a large number of countries. There are questions on whether respondents perceive a change in poverty trends; on the proximate causes of poverty; on perceptions of government efforts in poverty reduction domestically and internationally; and a question on whether, in the view of the respondents, poverty is persistent.¹¹

⁹ The European Union conducted a recent regional study of attitudes to poverty and exclusion (European Commission 2007b). We examined regional attitudinal surveys, the Latinobarometer and Afrobarometer, but the rounds currently available do not include direct questions on attitudes to poverty which could be analysed on a comparative basis.

¹⁰ As noted in the Introduction, to our knowledge, there is no available literature on attitudes to chronic poverty in a cross-section of developed and developing countries.

¹¹ See Annex 1 for a detailed description of the relevant questions.

Responses to this last question can provide information on perceptions of chronic poverty. This question reads:

In your opinion, do most poor people in this country have a chance of escaping from poverty, or is there very little chance of escaping?

1. They have a chance.
2. There is very little chance.

We interpret the responses to this question as follows: those who agree that there is a chance for the poor to escape from poverty are likely to see poverty mainly as transient, or at least they do not see poverty as chronic. On the other hand, our analysis is that those who believe people in poverty in their country have little chance to escape are more likely to see poverty as chronic. We have therefore used the responses to this question to gauge public attitudes to chronic poverty.

Table 2 (below) shows the frequency of responses to this particular question. For the pooled sample, a substantial majority perceive poverty as chronic, given the fact that 61.7 per cent of respondents agree with the statement that there is little chance of escaping from poverty. The sampled respondents believe that there is a distinction between transient poverty and chronic poverty and, in the view of the majority, falling into poverty is a persistent state for those affected. They perceive chronic poverty as the rule, given the limited chance to escape from poverty.

Table 2 Attitudes to chronic poverty

Responses to the following question: In your opinion, do most poor people in this country have a chance of escaping from poverty, or is there very little chance of escaping?			
	"a chance" (%)	"little chance" (%)	n
"Global village"	38.3	61.7	70473
<i>Region</i>	"a chance"	"little chance"	n
Western Europe	44.9	55.1	15960
Eastern Europe	29.6	70.4	17310
Central Europe	25.6	74.4	13349
South Asia	53.0	47.0	3797
East Asia	81.4	18.6	3502
South America	38.5	61.5	12080
Sub-Saharan Africa	40.0	60.0	4475
<i>Level of Development</i>	"a chance"	"little chance"	n
Low income	44.5	55.5	5561
Low middle income	37.1	62.9	25643
Upper middle income	31.6	68.4	21358
High income	46.2	53.8	17911

Source: Own classification of countries sampled by World Value Survey (2000), Wave Three (1994-1998)

It is useful to explore whether attitudes to chronic poverty among sub-groups in the sample differ from each other in significant ways. Although the nature of the sample makes this task difficult, our concern here is with testing whether this finding that a majority perceive poverty as chronic is simply a factor of aggregation, or whether there is a measure of consistency in responses across sub-groups.

We first examine whether there are regional differences in attitudes to chronic poverty. Table 2 provides the relevant information. In European countries, the majority of respondents see poverty as chronic. This is particularly the case in Central and Eastern Europe. This finding also carries over to the South American and Sub-Saharan African regions, where the pattern of responses observed for the full sample applies. However, great care must be taken to avoid extrapolating the responses for the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa, as the only Sub-Saharan countries sampled were Nigeria and South Africa. In comparison, it appears as if attitudes to the persistence of poverty are markedly different in the sampled Asian regions. In East Asia, respondents who believe that their societies provide escapes from poverty outnumber those who believe that poverty is chronic by three to one. However, the limited range of countries involved (Japan, Taiwan and China only, as this question was not included in the South Korea survey) requires that we must again exercise caution in extrapolating this result to the region as a whole. In South Asia, respondents who believe that there is a chance to escape from poverty also outnumber those who believe that poverty is chronic, but the margin is much narrower. The majority in the sample perceive poverty in their societies to be chronic, but those from Asia, and especially East Asia, have a view that differs substantially from the majority view.

A different, more reliable perspective on potential differences in perceptions of chronic poverty can be achieved by grouping countries according to their level of development, as identified by the World Bank classification. The relevant figures in Table 2 suggest a remarkable similarity in attitudes to chronic poverty across the different strata. Low-income countries and high-income countries show a smaller percentage of respondents who believe there is little chance to escape from poverty, but the differences are not that pronounced. Independently of the level of development in their own countries, respondents show a consistent attitude to chronic poverty.

Next we explore the extent to which populations in Asian countries in the sample have attitudes to poverty that are distinct from the rest of the sample. This can be achieved by grouping responses to the question on the proximate causes of poverty. The question reads:

Why, in your opinion, are there people in this country who live in need? Here are two opinions: Which comes closest to your view?

1. They are poor because of laziness and lack of will power
2. They are poor because society treats them unfairly

Table 3 (below) provides the frequency of responses grouped by region and level of development. As the table shows, a majority of respondents believe that people are in poverty primarily because society treats them unfairly. When disaggregated by region, sample countries in East Asia show responses that contradict those of other regions. In East Asia, 67.5 per cent of respondents attribute poverty primarily to personal failings on the part of the poor. Interestingly, respondents from South Asia tend to follow the majority view on this issue that people are in poverty because of unfair treatment by society. When countries are grouped by level of development, as in Table 2, there is overall consistency in the responses. Only in the sampled countries from East Asia do attitudes to poverty appear to diverge from the majority view.

Table 3 Attitudes to the proximate cause of poverty

Responses to the following question: Why, in your opinion, are there people in this country who live in need? Here are two opinions: which comes closest to your view?			
	"lazy" (%)	"unfair society" (%)	n
Western Europe	29.5	70.5	13529
Eastern Europe	23.5	76.5	15993
Central Europe	17.4	82.6	12821
South Asia	38.8	58.6	3648
East Asia	57.5	42.5	4396
South America	27.7	70.1	12627
Sub-Saharan Africa	28.1	71.3	4337
	"lazy" (%)	"unfair society" (%)	n
Low income	30.8	67.5	5455
Low middle income	24.9	74	25690
Upper middle income	26.3	73.5	19755
High income	32.5	67.5	16451

Source: Own classification of countries sampled by World Value Survey (2000), Wave Three (1994-1998).
Due to missing observations, percentages may not add to 100%.

4 What Factors Influence Attitudes to Chronic Poverty?

The main objective of this section is to explore what factors influence attitudes to poverty. We begin with a brief review of the literature on attitudes to poverty, and of theories on the factors that influence attitudes to poverty. The review helps identify possible influences on attitudes to poverty. We then tests for the extent to which these influences on attitudes to poverty can be observed in the WVS3 dataset.

The earliest literature on attitudes to poverty comes from social psychological studies in the USA. Feagin surveyed 1,017 Americans regarding their perceptions of the causes of poverty and identified individualistic, structural and fatalistic explanations of the causes of poverty. Responses varied by ethnicity, region, age, income and level of formal education

(Feagin 1972). Another strand in the literature has studied attitudes to poverty in public opinion polling. As early as 1964, the Gallup organization asked a sample of white Americans their opinions on the causes of poverty. The respondents were evenly distributed across three groups: those blaming poverty on lack of effort on the part of the poor; another third emphasising the role of societal circumstances; and another group pointing to a combination of these two factors (Alston & Dean 1972). This literature has been reviewed by Kreidl (2000).¹²

Two distinct strands have emerged within development studies regarding attitudes to poverty. First, and most prominent, there has been a trend within poverty research to focus on perceptions of poverty by elite classes, especially by elite classes in developing countries (e.g. Reis and Moore 2005). Broadly speaking, the assumption has been that elites hold power, hence their attitudes to poverty are much more valid to understanding relevant policies than the attitudes of the lower classes. In part as a response to the focus on elites, a second strand shifts the focus from elites to "the poor" (e.g. Narayan et al. 2000, Misturelli and Heffernan 2001, Shek 2003). On the whole, these studies are more concerned with exploring the causes of poverty and the impact of poverty on people's lives, and less attention is paid to the attitudes of the poor towards poverty. However, to our knowledge, cross-country comparative studies on attitudes to poverty in developing countries are scarce (Carr et al. 1998, Paxton and Knack 2008).

More recently, attention has been focused on attitudes to poverty in developing countries by respondents from developed countries. The EU, as well as several non-EU Western countries, regularly conducts similar opinion polls on domestic perceptions of poverty and attitudes towards international aid (CEC 1977, EC 2007a, EC 2007b, AusAID 2005).

A related literature considers public attitudes to redistribution in developed countries. This literature could also provide some pointers as to the factors shaping public attitudes to poverty and public attitudes to poverty reduction policy.¹³ The literature aims to identify underlying notions of justice and solidarity, which are shown to inform attitudes to poverty and poverty policy. While egalitarian and poverty concerns often go together, their distinctiveness also needs to be kept in mind. In terms of the actual processes and institutions underpinning redistribution, for example, the notions could look quite different when they are motivated primarily by a concern with equality as opposed to a concern with poverty¹⁴. In particular, poverty policy is concerned with achieving a basic or minimum social standard. As a consequence, attitudes to poverty could be said to have perhaps a greater urgency and definition than attitudes relating to gradual progress towards greater equality.

¹² Many studies have challenged the emphasis on single-cause explanations of poverty; see Verkuyten and Hunt cited in Harper (2001).

¹³ See Taylor-Gooby (1985) for a review of the literature and Gelissen (2000) for an update. Oorschot (1999) reviews the sociological literature on attitudes to solidarity.

¹⁴ In a cross-cultural study Alesina and Angeletos (2005) compared the attitudes of US citizens to those of Western European citizens, using the World Values Survey. The authors conclude that the vast majority of the Americans (71 per cent) but only 40 per cent of the Europeans agreed with the proposition "The poor could become rich if they worked hard enough".

Factors that May Shape Attitudes to Chronic Poverty

In the following analysis, we test the joint effects of several factors that may shape attitudes to poverty. They are described below, along with an indication of the variables that could capture their influence on attitudes to poverty.

Personal characteristics. Indicators such as age, sex or marital status could influence people's attitudes to chronic poverty.

Interest and position. Personal interest could be a contributing factor too, which could be influenced by people's dependent status or own vulnerability to poverty. The model below tests strength of personal interest and social position by identifying a class or group of people likely to require support from others for long periods of time, such as students, retired people and housewives. In studies of attitudes to redistribution this group is unhelpfully referred to as a "transfer class". We also use a variable that measures, on an extended scale, self-reported perceptions of life satisfaction. We use this as a means of capturing the influence of interest understood in a broader sense.

Poverty salience. People's attitudes to poverty could also be shaped by the degree to which poverty is regarded as an important social issue. In the model below we identify two variables capable of capturing this dimension: respondents' sense of changes in poverty in the last ten years, and the level of development of the country in which they live. Chronic poverty is likely to have stronger salience in low-income countries.

Epistemic. It is likely that attitudes to poverty and chronic poverty have been shaped by epistemic processes. In fact, many of the dimensions identified here reflect, in some sense, education about poverty, experiential or otherwise. Respondents who believe poverty is caused by structural factors, for example, are more likely to perceive poverty as chronic. By contrast, respondents who believe poverty is caused by personal misfortune or laziness are more likely to see poverty as transitory. We aim to capture this dimension by testing for whether the understanding of poverty as primarily explained by unfairness in society correlates to reported attitudes to chronic poverty.

Values. It can be argued that attitudes to chronic poverty are linked to the strength of the value of solidarity in the given society. Here we test the influence of this value in comparison with self-reported responses on political views. We also test for the influence of views on inequality. The inequality variable captures whether respondents believe their societies would be improved by less or more inequality.

Process effectiveness. The literature on the attitudes of residents of high-income countries to international aid has often noted the important role of perceptions of agent effectiveness in shaping attitudes to aid. Studies show that respondents who believe governments and associated agencies are effective in bringing about improvements in assisted countries are also more likely to take a positive attitude to aid. Extending this finding in the context of attitudes to poverty, it can be hypothesised that a respondent's positive perception of the effectiveness of public institutions is more likely to lead to the perception that it is possible to escape from

poverty, and therefore that poverty is less likely to be chronic. We aim to capture this possible relationship by testing for the influence of "satisfaction with government" on attitudes to chronic poverty.

Model and Variables

Table 4 reports on variable construction and provides descriptive statistics.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics

Variable name	Variable description	Variable type	Mean	S.D.	valid n.
Poverty exit	1=if little chance of exiting poverty 0=otherwise	Binary	0.61	0.48	70471
Age	Age of respondent	Continuous	40.90	16.06	82783
Female	1=if male; 0=otherwise	Binary	0.51	0.49	82934
Married	1=if marital status is married; 0=otherwise	Binary	0.57	0.49	82943
Life satisfaction	Measured on a 10-point scale from low to high	Ordinal	5.35	0.49	80141
Poverty change	1=if poverty in country is perceived to have increased in last 10 years 0=otherwise	Binary	0.70	0.45	73026
WB country classification	1=if low income 2=if lower middle income 3=if upper middle income 4=if high income	Categorical	2.74	0.94	82943
Poverty cause	1=if poverty is mainly due to unfairness in society 0=otherwise	Binary	0.71	0.45	67351
Political position	Measured on a 10-point scale from left to right	Ordinal	5.41	2.06	76383
Inequality	Measured on a 10-point scale from society could be improved by less inequality to society needs more inequality	Ordinal	5.75	2.98	77131
Transfer class	1=if economic activity is reported as student, pensioner or housewife 0=otherwise	Binary	0.34	0.47	79636
Upper class	1=if social class is self-reported as high/upper 0=otherwise	Binary	0.17	0.37	82847
Working class	1=if social class is self-reported as low income or working class; 0=otherwise	Binary	0.41	0.49	82847
Satisfaction with government	Measured on a 4-point scale, 1=if very satisfied; 2=if satisfied; 3=if dissatisfied; 4=if very dissatisfied	Ordinal	2.89	0.82	71398

Source: Own classification of countries sampled by World Value Survey (2000), Wave Three (1994-1998)

We are now in a position to estimate the joint effects of the explanatory variables on the likelihood that respondents perceive poverty as chronic. The binary nature of the dependent variable (the variable takes a value of 1 if the respondent perceives poverty as chronic, and 0 otherwise) suggests estimation with a limited dependent variable model. Table 5 reports on

the parameters estimated with a probit model of the joint influence of the selected variables on whether respondents believe there is very little chance to escape from poverty in their country.

**Table 5 Probit model estimates
(dependent variable is 1=if agrees that there is little chance of escaping poverty; 0=otherwise).**

(1) Variable	(2) Coefficient	(3) Robust standard errors	(4) z	(5) Marginal effect
Constant	-0.756	0.042	-17.6	
Age	0.003	0.000	8.1	0.001
Female	0.096	0.010	7.8	0.036
Married	-0.005	0.010	-0.4	-0.001
Life satisfaction	-0.055	0.002	-22.0	-0.020
Poverty change	0.319	0.013	23.5	0.121
WB country classification	-0.035	0.006	-5.2	-0.013
Poverty cause	0.913	0.010	67.9	0.348
Political position	-0.030	0.002	-10.4	-0.011
Inequality	-0.005	0.002	-2.8	-0.002
Transfer class	0.039	0.013	2.8	0.014
Upper class	-0.038	0.016	-2.2	-0.014
Working class	0.087	0.013	6.55	0.032
Satisfaction with government	0.197	0.007	26.5	0.073
		N: 52965 LL(0): -35035.16 LL(1): -29895.21 Wald chi2(13): 9116.63 Prob>chi2: 0.0000 Pseudo R2: 0.146		

Source: Own classification of countries sampled by World Value Survey (2000), Wave Three (1994-1998)

The model fit statistics suggest the probit model is reasonably well specified; the Wald test confirms that the explanatory variables, aside from the constant, contribute to the explanatory power of the model. The model slightly over-predicts the share of respondents who believe that poverty is chronic (64 per cent relative to actual 62.5 per cent). We also ran the model with an adjustment for potential clustering at country level, but this did not significantly change the results reported above.

We also implemented some checks on the consistency of the results. We ran the same model separately for different sub-groups, defined by the World Bank classification. In the main, the results above are replicated for each of the sub-groups, and the few marginal changes that occurred are unlikely to undermine the results reported. It might be useful nonetheless to discuss them briefly: Personal characteristics, age and being female turned out to be statistically insignificant when the model was estimated on low-income countries only. This could suggest a stronger consistency in attitudes to chronic poverty in low-income

countries throughout the span of an individual lifetime. The parameters on the influence of inequality values are not significant at the sub-group level, except for lower-middle-income countries. Similarly, the influence of membership of the "transfer class" turns out to be significant only for high-income countries, perhaps reflecting the fact that extensive welfare provisions are not available in most of the developing world. The only instance of a change in the sign of the variable at the sub-group level estimation was a change in the sign of the parameter "Upper class" in low-income countries from negative to positive. Again, this can be interpreted as reflecting greater homogeneity in attitudes to chronic poverty in these countries.

Main Findings

Overall, we find that the majority of the potential factors that could influence attitudes to chronic poverty identified above are significant in the empirical analysis.

If anything, personal characteristics appear to be relatively less of an influence on attitudes to chronic poverty than epistemic or social position. The estimates confirm that being relatively older and/or being female increase the probability that respondents see very little chance of escaping from poverty. However, there is no statistically significant association between being married and having a particular attitude to chronic poverty.

The personal interest and social position dimensions are also relevant to attitudes to chronic poverty. A negative association exists between subjective life satisfaction and attitudes to chronic poverty: The more satisfied people are with their lives, the less likely it is that they will perceive poverty as chronic. Being a member of the "transfer class", which includes individuals more likely to be in positions of economic dependence, raises the probability that respondents perceive poverty as chronic. As we expected, respondents self-classified as belonging to the upper classes are less likely to perceive poverty as chronic, while those self-classified as belonging to the working classes are more likely to see little chance of escape from poverty.

Experiential factors are important. There is a strong association between the perception that poverty increased in the previous decade and the perception that poverty is chronic. At the same time, perceptions of poverty as chronic are more likely to be held by respondents in lower-income countries. It seems that poverty salience in a respondent's country influences perceptions of chronic poverty.

Epistemic and value influences are important too. There is a very strong association between the perception that poverty is mainly due to unfairness in society and the perception that poverty is chronic. Political values are a factor in perceptions of chronic poverty: Respondents on the left of the political spectrum, as well as those who hold the view that society needs greater equality, are more likely to perceive poverty as chronic. The findings on the significance of epistemic and value influences are extremely important, as they suggest a

possible foundation for the shared and fairly consistent understanding of poverty observed in the sample.

The results suggest a positive association between dissatisfaction with government and the perception that poverty is chronic. This provides some support for the argument that process factors (i.e. effectiveness of actions) that have been observed to be influential in the context of attitudes to aid could also be influential in the context of attitudes to poverty.

The estimates of marginal effects on the probability that respondents believe that there is little chance of escaping from poverty provide some information on the relative size of the effects for the relevant variables. Because of the limitations of the data, the estimates above should be taken with a grain of salt. The marginal effects can be interpreted as the change in the probability that respondents believe there is little chance in escaping poverty, associated with a unit change in the independent variable. The marginal effects are estimated, for continuous variables, at the mean of the variables. Some information from the marginal effects might be useful. The estimates suggest that a respondent who believes that poverty is mainly due to unfairness in society would have a 34 per cent higher probability of believing poverty to be mainly chronic. Respondents who believe poverty has increased in the last ten years are 12 per cent more likely to believe that poverty is chronic. Women have a three per cent higher probability than men of believing that poverty is chronic.

5 Conclusions

The paper has attempted an examination of attitudes to chronic poverty in a cross-section of countries contributing data to the World Values Survey Wave Three (1994-1998). A pooled sample from these survey data was referred to as a "global village", and the analysis focused on identifying shared attitudes to chronic poverty. To our knowledge, this is the first time that attitudes to chronic poverty have been studied in a cross-section of developed and developing countries.

Our main finding is that a majority of respondents believe there is little chance for those in poverty to escape from it. The majority view chronic poverty as the norm. This view is consistent across the sample, and robust to disaggregation by the country's level of economic development as defined by the World Bank classification. When disaggregated by geographical region, respondents from South and East Asia appear to hold a divergent view, although the range of countries involved suggests we take considerable caution in interpreting this finding. This point notwithstanding, and keeping in mind the limitations of the sample data, we find nonetheless strong consistency in attitudes to chronic poverty.

This paper also explored other influences that potentially shape attitudes to poverty. These include personal characteristics; personal interest and social position; epistemic factors; political values; and policy processes. The findings suggest that a mix of different influences shape perceptions of poverty and chronic poverty. Older respondents and female re-

spondents are more likely to believe poverty is chronic. Respondents from countries with a high incidence of poverty (low-income countries), and/or where poverty has been on the rise, are more likely to perceive poverty as chronic. Respondents who self-identify as being on the left of the political spectrum, respondents with the view that society needs more equality, and/or those who believe that they themselves belong to lower socio-economic classes, are also more likely to perceive poverty as chronic. Respondents who believe that poverty is more due to unfairness in society, as opposed to individual failings or luck, are also more likely to uphold the majority view that poverty is chronic.

Data limitations preclude research into changes in public attitudes to poverty over time. We have identified and documented the gap in attitudinal data covering attitudes to poverty in developing countries.

What policy implications can we derive from these findings? It is encouraging to find a strong measure of consistency in attitudes to chronic poverty in our "global village". Other things being equal, the findings suggest a strong basis of public understanding and support for policies that tackle global chronic poverty. The study suggests that policy makers willing to place a greater emphasis on chronic poverty, and willing to establish institutions to tackle chronic poverty, should find a large measure of public support. This has been the experience of Latin American countries and South Africa, where poverty reduction policies tackling chronic poverty found large public support.

Upon analysing the influences on attitudes to poverty, we have identified two potentially important practical ways to influence perceptions on poverty and poverty policy: epistemics and values. Research on poverty and shared views on justice are the keys to eradicating global poverty.

Annex 1 Poverty questions in World Values Survey, Wave Three (1994-1998)

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about the problem of poverty, in this country and in other countries.

V171. Would you say that today a larger share, about the same share, or a smaller share of the people in this country are living in poverty than were ten years ago?

1. A larger share
2. About the same share
3. A smaller share

V172. Why, in your opinion, are there people in this country who live in need? Here are two opinions: which comes closest to your view?

1. They are poor because of laziness and lack of willpower
2. They are poor because society treats them unfairly

V173. In your opinion, do most poor people in this country have a chance of escaping from poverty, or is there very little chance of escaping?

1. They have a chance
2. There is very little chance

V174. Do you think that what the government is doing for people in poverty in this country is about the right amount, too much, or too little?

1. Too much
2. About the right amount
3. Too little

V175. In some economically less developed countries, many people are living in poverty. Do you think that what the other countries of the world are doing to help them is about right, too much, or too little?

1. Too much
2. About the right amount
3. Too little

V176. Some people favor, and others are against, having this country provide economic aid to poorer countries. Are you personally...

1. Very much for
2. For to some extent
3. Somewhat against
4. Very much against

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