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ABSTRACT ***Objective:*** This article reports the initial validation of the Human Rights Lens in Social Work (HRLSW) scale, a tool designed to measure a social worker's ability to see individual and social problems as resulting from human rights violations. The purpose of the research was to gather evidence regarding the validity of this multidimensional measure of a new construct, i.e., *human rights lens*. ***Method:*** Data from a convenience sample of 1,014 licensed clinical social workers were collected by electronic survey, and the sample was split to conduct discrete exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. The exploratory factor analysis was performed on half of the sample ($n = 507$) to establish the underlying factor structure of the construct; the other half of the sample ($n = 507$) underwent a confirmatory factor analysis to examine the subsample's psychometric properties. ***Results:*** A respecified model using only one error covariance fit the data very well. All fit indices were within their critical values (χ^2/df ratio = 1.5; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .03). Thus, factor analysis confirms a two-factor, 11-item model for the HRLSW scale, consisting of two subscales, *clients seen as experiencing rights violations*, and *social problems seen as rights violations*. ***Conclusions:*** This scale is a useful tool for educators, researchers, and practitioners who want to practice—or promote the practice of—social work as a human rights profession.

KEYWORDS: social work, social workers, human rights, human rights practice, validation studies

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Scholars assert social work's long history as a human rights profession (Healy, 2008; Staub-Bernasconi, 2012). They point to social work reformers such as Jane Addams in the U.S. and Eglantyne Jebb in England and argue that—in accordance with the fundamental values of human rights—social workers have proud traditions of advocacy and treating impoverished people with dignity. More

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recently, social work—as represented by professional organizations including the U.S.-based National Association of Social Workers (NASW)—has officially embraced human rights (Reichert, 2011). In 2000 the International Federation of Social Workers even included human rights principles as "fundamental" to its definition of the social work profession:

> The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (Definition of social work)

In the U.S. specifically, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) included human rights as a core competency for social work education for the first time in 2009, and the 2015 edition of the educational policy and accreditation standards stated that the purpose of social work is "actualized through . . . the prevention of conditions that limit human rights" (CSWE, 2015, p. 5).

Beyond these explicit statements, scholars note that traditional social work ethical codes echo the Universal Declaration of Human Rights even when they do not specifically mention human rights (Reichert, 2011), and that social work's ethical commitments compel social workers to advocate for human rights (Androff, 2010; Buchanan & Gunn, 2007; Cemlyn, 2011). Perhaps the clearest link between social work and human rights exists within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself; Article 25 elaborates the right to "necessary social services":

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and *necessary social services*, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. (emphasis added; United Nations, 1948)

Not all social work, however, is rights-based social work. Taking a human rights-based approach to practice requires the social worker to recast the client as a rights holder and to assess and push back against the structural inequalities that affect the client's life. A rights-based approach to social work practice requires an assessment that moves beyond individual diagnosis and focuses on larger environmental and sociopolitical concerns. A rights-based social worker acts as an ally or partner to the client in the fight for social justice. As Gude (2013) wrote,

> The discourse of rights [is a discourse] of human agents claiming what's theirs instead of asking permission from the powerful . . . Dignity, not charity, is the animating principle. People earn access to the rudiments of life (food, healthcare, shelter) by virtue of their humanity. (p. 1)

To take a rights-based approach, therefore, a social worker must learn to see clients as rights holders who may be vulnerable to violations of those rights; a social worker also must understand how social inequities—as well as forces like racism, sexism, and homophobia (among others)—can lead to human rights violations on a larger scale. Seeing through this human rights lens informs the social worker's assessment: It reframes social problems by foregrounding discrimination and human dignity and has the potential to focus social work practice on social justice and social change (Mapp, 2008).

Human Rights Lens in Social Work

The Human Right Lens in Social Work (HRLSW) scale focuses on the social worker's orientation to practice and therefore allows social workers (as well as their supervisors and researchers) to measure their approach to assessment. As assessment guides intervention, a human rights-based approach to practice must begin by learning to see. The HRLSW measure also emerges as part of a larger project that defines human rights practice in social work as practice that sees the world through a human rights lens, is accomplished using rights-based methods, and aims toward human rights goals (McPherson, 2015). The HRLSW, which measures a social worker's orientation to practice, is the first scale to measure *human rights practice* within the social work context (McPherson, 2015). In the field of social work and human rights, measurement is a young field. Indeed, only two previously validated scales measure human rights within the social work profession: the Human Rights Exposure in Social Work scale (HRXSW; McPherson & Abell, 2012) and the Human Rights Engagement in Social Work scale (McPherson & Abell, 2012). The HRXSW measures a social worker's exposure to human rights and focuses on social work education. *Human rights engagement* is a composite construct that combines endorsement of human rights principles, a belief in their relevance to social work, and the commitment to putting principles into practice. Neither of these existing scales isolates the social worker's orientation to practice or the importance of the assessment process.

This paper reports on the development and validation of the HRLSW, a scale designed to measure social workers' tendency to see individual and social problems as resulting from human rights violations. Advocates have argued that human rights are a more tangible and defined way of setting goals for social work action than the traditional aim of social justice (Mapp, 2008; Pyles, 2006); the HRLSW can help social workers to test this proposition.

Human rights often are described as a way of seeing, both in the social work and international development literature (Gruskin, Bogecho, & Ferguson, 2010; Mapp, 2008; Reichert, 2011; Uvin, 2004). Thus, a human rights lens represents an orientation to practice. Looking through this lens enables social workers to see rights rather than needs, rights holders rather than charity seekers, and human rights violations rather than individual pathologies. Seeing through a human rights lens helps us to contextualize the lives of social work service users, for example, as Gruskin et al. (2010) wrote, "A human rights lens . . . helps shape understandings of who is disadvantaged and who is not; who is included and who is ignored; and whether a given disparity is merely a difference or an actual injustice" (p. 129). This lens also focuses attention on macro forces at work, as well as on the need for intervention on the macro level: "A human rights lens implies a process of looking at root causes and policies of exclusion and discrimination, [so] advocacy seems a logical consequence" (Uvin, 2004, p. 143).

As first proposed, the HRLSW was hypothesized to consist of three subscales. The first—*clients as rights holders*—was designed to measure social workers' tendency to see, and therefore treat, their clients as rights holders. The second subscale—*needs as lack of access to rights*—was designed to measure social workers' propensity to see clients' needs as resulting from violations of clients' human rights. The third subscale—*social problems as rights violations*—was designed to measure social workers' ability to see the human rights violations that exist within chronic social problems. Seen in this way, for example, the problem of homelessness reflects a large-scale violation of citizens' right to housing; hunger and malnutrition are understood to result from violations of the right to food; and family violence is a violation of the victims' right to security. Through a human rights lens, access to decent housing, food, and personal safety are viewed as legitimate entitlements and not privileges—they are rights, not merely needs. Thus, the human rights lens tends to shift responsibility for problems from individuals to societies and governments ("duty bearers," in human rights terminology). As with social work's person-in-environment perspective, this shift does not remove personal responsibility, but it does require that individual problems be seen and understood in their larger social contexts.

Method

Instrument Development and Deployment

Scale development. For each proposed HRLSW subscale, provisional items were developed according to the domain sampling method (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A team of three individuals familiar with the HRLSW construct and measurement methodology worked together to produce items reflecting the content of the construct definition as fully as possible. From this provisional list, items

were trimmed to eliminate duplication of ideas, and edits were made for comprehensibility and cohesion. Items for the three subscales of the provisional HRLSW were unified by use of a common stem, "In my view." The provisional item pool for the HRLSW comprised 27 items distributed over three subscales; the number of items per subscale ranged from eight items (for the *clients as rights holders* and *needs as lack of access to rights* subscales) to 11 items (for the *social problems as rights violations* subscale). The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at a university in the southeastern United States.

Content Validation. The content of the HRLSW provisional item pool was validated by a 10-member panel of experts selected to represent both expert practitioners (the sample for the validation study) and subject-matter experts. Thus, the expert panel comprised four licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) and six scholars in the area of social work and human rights. The expert panel was invited to judge the goodness-of-fit between the subscale construct definitions and the provisional subscale items. Experts were asked to rate the goodness-of-fit for each item to its relevant subscale definitions on a 5-point Likert scale, with a score of 5 indicating best fit.

The *clients as rights holders* subscale had the lowest goodness-of-fit mean at 4.39, and *social problems as rights violations* was highest at 4.73. Lowest scoring items were removed from all three provisional subscales. For psychometric reasons, no subscale was reduced to fewer than six items (Abell, Springer, & Kamata, 2009). Overall, expert review input reduced the provisional item pools for the three HRLSW subscales from 27 to 21 total items. After expert review, the *clients as rights holders* and *needs as lack of access to rights* subscales had six items each, and *social problems as rights violations* had nine items. Each item in the HRLSW is scored using a 7-item Likert response range from *completely disagree* (1) to *completely agree* (7), and seven items (items 2, 6, 8, 11, 15, 19, and 21) were reverse coded.

Sample. The target population for this validation study was LCSWs licensed in the State of Florida. Because the HRLSW addresses the orientation toward practice of professional social workers, professional social workers were the ideal population in which to validate the scale. The registry of LCSWs is public information in Florida, and 6,699 Florida LCSWs had provided the state with valid e-mail addresses at the time of this study. All 6,699 LCSWs were contacted via e-mail in September 2014 and invited to participate in the study. All targeted individuals were eligible for inclusion.

Instrumentation. The HRLSW was administered as part of a 152-item online survey including the HRLSW (21 items), questions related to demographics and social work experience (12 items), a human rights knowledge question (1 item), and additional scales and items for testing construct validation hypotheses. Written instructions for completing the survey were included in the instrument. LCSWs were contacted using Qualtrics survey software (Version 60,114; 2014).

Despite concern that Internet surveys may be especially prone to low response rates, the literature also confirms that participants prefer web-based surveys to those administered by telephone or mail (van Gelder, Bretveld, & Roeleveld, 2010). To improve the likelihood of maximizing response, the data collection method for this study was adapted from Dillman's tailored design (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). First, the survey was piloted to social work doctoral students ($N = 11$) in summer 2014 before the survey went live to potential participants. Data collected in the pilot were discarded, and multiple changes were made in survey appearance and flow in response to respondents' comments. For example, item numbers were eliminated and the font size was increased.

Following Dillman and colleagues (2009), potential participants were notified by e-mail that they had been selected to participate in a study on social work and human rights. Five days later, a follow-up e-mail was sent out containing (a) a cover letter explaining the survey and a description of the project, (b) a statement about the risks involved for participants and a statement of Institutional Review Board approval, (c) the principal investigator's contact information, and (d) a hyperlink to the electronic survey hosted on Qualtrics. Participants were asked to complete the self-report questionnaire within 7 days. The cover letter also explained the project, identified the researcher as an LCSW, and explained the importance of the respondent's potential contribution. The survey remained open for 29 days, during which time four reminder e-mails were sent to all targeted LCSWs.

Finally, 1,014 LCSWs completed questionnaires, producing a survey completion rate of 15.1%. Dillman and colleagues (2009) wrote that Internet-based survey return may be as low as 10 percent. Within the social work discipline, recently published Internet surveys of professional social workers reported response rates ranging from 6.5% (Gray, Joy, Plath, & Webb, 2015) to 22% (Feldman & Freedenthal, 2006). No systematic review of the social work literature has been attempted here, but these studies indicate that the response rate reported here is similar to those reported in other studies.

Additional measures. The investigators used previously validated measures to explore the HRLSW's convergent and discriminant validity. The Short Social Domination Orientation (SSDO) has four items and is scored on a 10-point Likert scale with higher scores indicating a higher degree of social dominance orientation. The SSDO "correlates positively with endorsement of ideologies that legitimize inequality, such as racism, sexism, and nationalism . . . and negatively with endorsement of ideologies that advocate for greater inclusiveness and equality, and with support for policies that would promote these principles" (Pratto et al., 2012, p. 588). Given that the human rights lens has, at its core, a belief that human beings are equal in dignity and rights, it is hypothesized that the SSDO scale can be used as measure of convergent validity (i.e., the HRLSW and the SSDO will be slightly and inversely correlated). In its initial validation, the SSDO authors reported solid reliability

(α = .80) in an Internet survey of 153 U.S. resident adults (Pratto et al., 2012). Several scholars in the area of human rights attitudes—including Cohrs, Maes, Moschner, and Kielman (2007); McFarland and Mathews (2005); and McPherson and Abell (2012)—have used the social-dominance-orientation construct as a convergent indicator in their research. Use of the SSDO, therefore, places this study in conversation with other researchers in the human rights field. An additional validity hypothesis was tested between the HRLSW and self-reported conservative political views. The hypothesis was based on previous research showing a negative relationship between human rights endorsement and conservative politics (Mann & Steen, 2012).

To test for discriminant validity, the HRLSW was compared to the earlier HRXSW. The 11-item HRXSW measures the experience and education related to human rights principles that is a prerequisite, but not the same as, viewing through a human rights lens. Like the HRLSW, it is scored on a 7-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of human rights exposure. A test of discriminant validity examines the relationship between similar (but not identical) measures to ascertain that they are measuring different constructs. Thus, we hypothesized a small positive correlation between the HRXSW and the HRLSW because the latent constructs are related but different.

Single-item validity indicators were constructed for each of the three HRLSW subscales because no valid scales exist to measure their targeted constructs. Each single-item indicator is a restatement of the construct definition for its subscale; scores on each HRLSW subscale are hypothesized to correlate positively with scores on its single-item indicator.

Demographics. Demographic and professional information comprises the final portion of the survey instrument. Participants were asked to report their age, gender, race/ethnicity, and political affiliation. Additionally, they were asked about themselves as social workers: degrees earned, type of practice preferred, supervisory experience, overall number of years in practice, and whether they were currently practicing.

Data Analysis Strategy

Data from completed surveys were entered into IBM SPSS (Version 22). Initial analyses were conducted in SPSS to evaluate missing data, assess initial scale and subscale reliabilities, run exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and establish a description of the sample. Following the EFA, data were entered into Mplus (Version 7.11) to complete the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). To prepare data for analysis, variable names were assigned to each of the 21 items in the initial HRLSW: *clients as rights holders* (items H1–H6), *needs as lack of access to rights* (items N1–N6), and *social problems as rights violations* (items V1–V9). Reverse-coded items—H2, H6, N2, N5, V3, V7, and V9—were recoded. Table 1 provides variable names and content for pro-

Table 1
Name and Content for Proposed HRLSW Variables

Variable	Proposed Content
H1	It is common for U.S. social work clients to experience violations of their human rights.
H2(r)	My clients generally have access to their human rights.
H3	Just because my clients don't know about their rights doesn't mean those rights don't exist.
H4	My clients have a right to the services I provide.
H5	My clients have human rights, even if they don't currently have full access to them.
H6(r)	Human rights are more relevant to practitioners of international social work.
N1	Clients' needs are often related to violations of one of their human rights.
N2(r)	My clients generally present problems they have brought upon themselves.
N3	When I look at my clients, I see rights violations where others may see failure or pathology.
N4	Clients generally need social services because their human rights have been violated.
N5(r)	My work is not usually about fulfilling clients' human rights.
N6	The problems I address in my social work practice tend to be violations of my clients' human rights.
V1	Hunger at the community level stems from the government's failure to protect people's human right to food.
V2	If the human right to housing were protected, many fewer people would be homeless.
V3(r)	Domestic violence is a problem, but not a human rights concern.
V4	Lack of access to medical care is a human rights violation.
V5	Poverty is a violation of the human right to a decent standard of living.
V6	Racial discrimination is a violation of the human right to equality.
V7(r)	A community's lack of adequate employment is not a human rights issue.
V8	Unequal access to goods and services in society is a human rights issue.
V9(r)	When families don't have enough to eat, it's usually because they mismanage their monthly funds.

Note. HRLSW = Human Rights Lens in Social Work scale. Items marked (r) are reverse scored.

posed HRLSW items. (Reverse-coded items are noted in this text and accompanying tables by an (r).)

In the final sample (N = 1,014), only .002 percent of the data were missing on the item groupings for the proposed new HRLSW scale. In SPSS, the HRLSW missing values were replaced using expectation maximization (Schafer & Graham, 2002) to minimize bias and maximize sample size (Dempster, Laird, & Rubin, 1977). In Mplus, full-information maximum likelihood (not available in SPSS) addressed

missing data and allowed all analyses to be run on the complete sample size (N = 1,014). Missing data on other survey items were allowed to remain missing.

An EFA was chosen as the first method of analysis, to be followed by a CFA. Although several authors have used the visual metaphor "lens" when speaking about reframing practice in human rights terms (Gruskin et al., 2010; Mapp, 2008; Reichert, 2011; Uvin, 2004), no previously published work has attempted to identify the components of that lens. Thus, the proposed three-element HRLSW is an entirely novel elaboration of the construct. Additionally, evidence from content validity analysis and initial reliabilities did not support the proposed three-element HRLSW: the *clients as rights holders* subscale received low ratings in expert review relative to the other two proposed subscales and initial reliability analysis (α = .46) confirmed the negative results of expert review. The six items that were proposed to comprise that subscale had poor corrected item-total correlations (range: .10–.36), indicating that the items were not representative of the intended construct (DeVellis, 2012). EFA, which is used to "identify the factor structure or model for a set of variables," was chosen as the tool to determine the correct HRLSW factor structure (Bandalos, 1996, p. 389).

To create discrete samples for the different factor analyses, the primary sample (N = 1,014) was randomly split into two equal subsamples using Excel's random number generator: Sample 1 (n = 507), and Sample 2 (n = 507). After the random division, samples 1 and 2 were compared and no significant demographic differences were found between them. Sample 1 was then used for EFA as the "primary development sample," and Sample 2 was used to "cross-check the findings" (DeVellis, 2012, p. 113) in CFA. Finally, after factor analysis, bivariate correlations were computed to assess evidence of construct validity of the new measure.

Sample Characteristics

As reported in Table 2, respondents were predominantly female (82.7%), middle-aged (M = 53.1 years; SD = 12.28; range: 26–87), and non-Hispanic White (81.6%). Although the final sample for this study is comprised of 1,014 LCSWs, not all respondents answered the demographic questions. For these items, results are reported based on the number of respondents who answered each question; thus, a unique n is provided for each analysis. Table 2 provides more demographic detail and also shows how this sample compares to an NASW national workforce sample of licensed social workers (NASW Center for Workforce Studies, 2006). Like the NASW workforce study, this sample supports the hypothesis that "social workers are not as diverse as the populations they serve in terms of race, ethnicity and gender" (NASW Center for Workforce Studies, 2006, p. 9). Just over 90% of respondents (n = 945) reported that they are currently practicing social work, and over 80% of respondents (n = 791) indicated that they had at least 10 years of social work experience. Of the 946 respondents who reported political affiliation, 11.5% identified

Table 2
Respondent Characteristics as Compared to the U.S. Social Work Workforce

	Frequency	%	U.S. Social Workers (NASW, 2006)
Gender (n = 953)			
Female	788	82.7	81%
Male	160	16.8	–
Other	5	0.5	–
Age (n = 935)			
25–34	88	9.4	16%
35–44	161	17.2	22%
45–54	222	23.7	33%
55–64	279	29.8	24%
65+	185	19.8	5%
Race & Ethnicity (n = 970)			
White Non-Hispanic	792	81.6	86%
Black Non-Hispanic	45	4.6	7%
Hispanic	91	9.4	4%
Asian	10	1.0	1%
Native American	10	1.0	1%
Self-Identification	22	2.3	–

Note. NASW = National Association of Social Workers.

as conservative, 25.1% identified as moderates, and self-identified liberals made up the majority of the sample (63.3%).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Using Sample 1, HRLSW items were initially examined by evaluating their inter-item correlations, their distributions, and their factor structure using EFA. An inspection of the correlation matrix (see Table 3) indicates very low correlations among the proposed H items, as the highest shared variance among this group of items was 14%, and the average inter-item correlation among these items was .14 (2%). Three items—H3, H5, and H6(r)—were correlated with the other lens items at less than 4%. Those three lowest performing items were removed from the item pool before the EFA. Removing H3 also removed the only negative correlation among the item group.

In this sample, only two items—V1 and V2—correlated above .7 (r = .74). These highly correlated items address the social problems of hunger and housing, respectively, so their content was determined to be related but not obviously redundant; thus, neither item was removed prior to factor analysis. Prior to EFA, all items were

Table 3

Correlation Matrix for the Proposed HRLSW Items (Sample 1)

Item	H1	H2(r)	H3	H4	H5	H6(r)	N1	N2(r)	N3	N4	N5(r)	N6	V1	V2	V3(r)	V4	V5	V6	V7(r)	V8
H2(r)	.30																			
H3	.12	−.13																		
H4	.15	.05	.21																	
H5	.24	.08	.37	.27																
H6(r)	.09	.14	.01	.09	.09															
N1	.49	.30	.11	.21	.22	.14														
N2(r)	.19	.18	.00	.04	.09	.12	.12													
N3	.42	.21	.10	.18	.17	.15	.59	.20												
N4	.40	.31	.10	.18	.15	.08	.56	.20	.69											
N5(r)	.17	.27	.04	.19	.15	.25	.36	.22	.38	.36										
N6	.38	.33	.05	.22	.15	.15	.52	.18	.55	.58	.40									
V1	.35	.18	.04	.22	.15	.09	.38	.27	.41	.47	.23	.33								
V2	.35	.17	.07	.18	.16	.04	.39	.27	.46	.49	.20	.36	.74							
V3	.15	.05	.19	.21	.10	.11	.20	.15	.22	.23	.18	.23	.26	.25						
V4	.31	.19	.05	.32	.15	.10	.32	.24	.41	.35	.20	.32	.55	.57	.28					
V5	.31	.19	.03	.26	.14	.14	.40	.29	.47	.45	.26	.41	.67	.68	.23	.66				
V6	.18	.08	.16	.24	.21	.10	.21	.12	.28	.28	.10	.23	.36	.40	.22	.49	.41			
V7(r)	.27	.20	.01	.20	.10	.14	.33	.26	.39	.42	.27	.31	.51	.52	.30	.46	.60	.23		
V8	.26	.20	.02	.22	.13	.16	.31	.21	.40	.38	.25	.31	.50	.52	.33	.60	.56	.42	.49	
V9	.16	.14	.09	.15	.15	.08	.22	.36	.24	.24	.15	.14	.39	.38	.26	.33	.36	.24	.31	.27

Note. HRLSW = Human Rights Lens in Social Work scale. Items marked (r) are reverse scored.

reviewed for distribution, skewness, and kurtosis. Item V6 was removed from the item pool at this point due to its nonnormal distribution (skewness = −2.7; kurtosis = 9.2) and high mean (m = 6.3). EFA was then performed with 17 items.

Factor analysis began with an unrotated principal components analysis of 17 HRLSW items using IBM SPSS (Version 22). The data were found to be appropriate for factor analysis (KMO = .91; Bartlett's test = 3,531; df = 136; $p < .001$ [Field, 2009; Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999]). An examination of the scree plot and factor matrix (eigenvalue > 1 rule) suggested three and four possible factors, respectively, although both indicators have been found to overestimate the number of factors (Henson & Roberts, 2006; Zwick & Velicer, 1986).

The data were then run through a series of principal axis factor analyses using orthogonal varimax rotation. Orthogonal rotation assumes no correlations among the measured factors (Field, 2009). Even when correlation is expected—as is the expectation for the HRLSW factors—many analysts opt to begin analysis with an orthogonal rotation (Thompson, 2004). In orthogonal varimax rotation, SPSS again extracted four factors using the eigenvalue > 1 rule, and the proportion of variance accounted for was 47.6%, with the first two factors each accounting for 17.7 and 17.3 percent of the variance, respectively. The *social problems as rights violations* ("V" items) and *needs as lack of access to rights* ("N" items) cohered as factors with no items from either scale cross-loading between them. Table 4 shows the items distributed across four factors along with their communalities (h^2).

Over several iterative analyses, the six lowest-performing items—N5(r), H2(r), H4, V3(r), N2(r), and V9(r)—were deleted due to their low communalities ($h^2 < .4$). Removing the low-performing items also eliminated the third and fourth factors. It is interesting to note that the reverse-coded items in the scale have generally performed poorly: Five were removed during the EFA, and one reverse-coded item—H6(r)—was eliminated earlier during the initial examination of the items. Only one reverse-coded item in the HRLSW item pool—V7(r)—performed acceptably, loading reasonably onto the first factor (.48) and with a communality coefficient above the .4 threshold (h^2 = .44). Item H1 was the only item retained from the *clients as rights holders* subscale, and it remained the lowest performing item in the set. When the varimax orthogonal rotation was run with the remaining 11 items, just two factors were extracted by SPSS using the eigenvalue > 1 rule, and the proportion of variance accounted for increased from 47.6% to 63.6%.

Finally, EFA was run using an oblique oblimin (delta = 0) rotation that allows the factors to correlate (see Table 5). Once again, two factors were extracted by SPSS using the eigenvalue > 1 rule, supporting the findings of the orthogonal rotation. In oblique oblimin rotation, the items load more clearly on just one factor, therefore providing the best fit to the data (DeVellis, 2012).

EFA, therefore, did not support the originally proposed three-factor model. Items from the first subscale, *clients as rights holders*, were flagged as problematic dur-

Table 4
HRLSW (17 Items): Factor Pattern/Structure Matrix Rotated to Varimax Criterion

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	h^2
V2	.812*	.275	.110	.145	.65
V1	.738*	.259	.169	.182	.62
V5	.689*	.264	.354	.158	.66
V4	.571*	.167	.490	.123	.56
V8	.488*	.205	.468	.123	.47
V7(r)	.482*	.255	.327	.208	.44
N4	.335	.717*	.116	.074	.60
N1	.226	.701*	.153	.017	.50
N3	.308	.691*	.189	.046	.59
N6	.141	.681*	.245	.057	.47
H1	.248	.489*	.065	.088	.33
N5(r)	.005	.445*	.278	.209	.27
H2(r)	.041	.387*	.068	.204	.21
H4	.125	.141	.396*	−.006	.16
V3(r)	.176	.134	.354*	.143	.19
N2(r)	.167	.130	.055	.670*	.21
V9(r)	.332	.107	.164	.401*	.27

Note. HRLSW = Human Rights Lens in Social Work scale. Items marked (r) are reverse scored.
* Indicates the factor onto which an item loads.

ing each stage of data analysis. Thus, the data suggest that HRLSW is not a three-factor model: *Clients as rights holders* is either not a component of the human rights lens, or the initial item pool did not accurately reflect the intended target construct.

In contrast to the first subscale's poor performance, the third hypothesized subscale, *social problems as rights violations*, performed very well in EFA. Six items loaded strongly onto Factor 1, with loadings ranging from .60 to .80. Four of those loadings—V2, V1, V5, and V4—were greater than .65, a magnitude which DeVellis (2012) calls "substantial" (p. 147). The second hypothesized subscale, *needs as lack of access to rights*, also performed well. After the removal of two reverse-coded items, the remaining four items in the proposed subscale factored together as hypothesized, with substantial loadings ranging from .66 to .74.

Thus, after EFA, the subscale structure of the HRLSW has been reconceptualized. Factor 1 is society focused and captures the way social workers view social problems. It is comprised of 6 items—V1, V2, V4, V5, V7(r), and V8—all from the originally proposed *social problems as rights violations* subscale. Given its close factoring with the hypothesized subscale, it can retain its initial name. Factor 2 is client

Table 5
HRLSW (11 Items): Factor Structure Matrix Rotated to Oblimin Criterion (Delta = 0)

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	h^2
V5	.862	–	.62
V4	.785	–	.59
V1	.767	–	.64
V2	.767	–	.51
V8	.623	–	.39
V7(r)	.607	–	.37
N4	–	.814	.59
N3	–	.794	.46
N1	–	.776	.56
N6	–	.702	.43
H1	–	.534	.32

Note. HRLSW = Human Rights Lens in Social Work scale. Items marked (r) are reverse scored; coefficients shown will be retained for that factor. Loadings under .2 were suppressed.

focused and measures whether social workers see their clients as experiencing human rights violations. This factor is comprised largely of items from the *needs as lack of access to rights* subscale—N1, N3, N4, and N6—with one additional item, H1, from the proposed *clients as rights holders* subscale. Item H1—*It is common for U.S. social work clients to experience violations of their human rights*—is a conceptual good fit for this new factor, even though its communality coefficient (h^2 = .3) is borderline and its loading is only moderate at .5. Due to its conceptual fit, Item H1 will be retained for now, and the new factor will be named *clients as experiencing rights violations*. Table 6 provides the content of the 11 items retained in the HRLSW at this stage in EFA.

Cronbach's alphas for the two newly minted scales were strong: *social problems as rights violations* (α = .891) and *clients as rights holders* (α = .841). Alpha-if-item deleted statistics recommended that alpha for *clients as rights holders* would increase by .007 if Item H1 were deleted. Given the small magnitude of the proposed alpha increase, it was decided to use the full 11-item set in a confirmatory factor analysis. For the 11-item HRLSW (α = .90), no deletions were recommended.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To confirm the factor structure established in the EFA, a CFA was performed on the 11-item HRLSW using Sample 2 (n = 507). Initial analysis of Sample 2 did not iden-

tify any problematic outliers or potential problems with serious violations of assumptions of multivariate normality. The means for all remaining HRLSW items fell below the extreme values on a 7-point scale, and none of the items were skewed or kurtotic. Given the large sample size, the lack of skewed and kurtotic items, and the fact that the items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, the data were treated as continuous. The data were thus entered into Mplus (Version 7.3), and CFA was performed using the default maximum likelihood method to estimate the level of data fit to the model. Missing data were handled by Mplus concurrently with analysis using full-information maximum likelihood.

Table 6
Human Rights Lens in Social Work Scale (11 Items)

Factor	Item Name	Item Label
Social problems as rights violations		
	V1	Hunger at the community level stems from the government's failure to protect people's human right to food.
	V2	If the human right to housing were protected, many fewer people would be homeless.
	V4	Lack of access to medical care is a human rights violation.
	V5	Poverty is a violation of the human right to a decent standard of living.
	V7(r)	A community's lack of adequate employment is not a human rights issue.
	V8	Unequal access to goods and services in society is a human rights issue.
Clients as experiencing rights violations		
	H1	It is common for U.S. social work clients to experience violations of their human rights.
	N1	Clients' needs are often related to violations of one of their human rights.
	N3	When I look at my clients, I see rights violations where others may see failure or pathology.
	N4	Clients generally need social services because their human rights have been violated.
	N6	The problems I address in my social work practice tend to be violations of my clients' human rights.

Note. Items marked (r) are reverse scored.

Although the EFA results, the revised theory, and reliability analysis all support a two-factor HRLSW model, it is traditional to begin CFA with a single-factor model (Thompson, 2004). Thus, all 11 items were entered into Mplus to measure a single factor: human rights lens. Multiple fit indices were used to assess model fit throughout the CFA process. Following conventional guidelines, a good fit would be suggested by these indicators: Tucker Lewis index (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI) values of .90 or higher (Hu & Bentler, 1999); a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .08 or lower (Hu & Bentler, 1999); and an standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of .08 or lower (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For the RMSEA, it is also traditional to report a 90% confidence interval around the estimate (Kline, 2005).

Comparing the results of the one-factor model to these indices indicated a poor model fit (see Table 7), so the two-factor model reflecting the proposed subscales was run allowing the factors to correlate.

The two-factor model was a much better fit to the data. The χ^2 was still significant ($p = 0.03$), but χ^2 is known to be very sensitive to sample size and therefore is a less useful indicator as sample size increases. The modification indices suggested that allowing four errors to correlate would improve the model: N1 with H1, N4 with H1, V2 with V1, and V4 with V1. All four of these possible modifications were within subscales, and none created a new path, as N1 and H1 are now understood to factor together within the same subscale. The largest magnitude of improvement in chi square could be gained by allowing the errors to correlate between

Table 7
Human Rights Lens in Social Work Scale (11 Items): Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Model	χ^2 (*df*)	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
1-factor	678.73 (44) $p < .01$	9.0	.75	.69	.17 (.16–.18)	.09
2-factor	154.41 (44) $p < .01$	3.5	.96*	.94*	.07 (.06–.08)	.03*
2-factor respecified**	61.36 (42) $p < .03$	1.5*	.99*	.99*	.03* (.01–.05)	.03*

Note. df = degrees of freedom. CFI = comparative fit index. TLI = Tucker Lewis index. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

* Indicates evidence of reasonable or better fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

** Permitting one error covariance within a subscale.

V1 and V2 (a decrease in chi square by 102.07). As these two items were known to correlate highly, this single error covariance was allowed and the model was run again.

This respecified model fit the data very well (see Table 7). All fit indices were now within their critical values (χ^2/df ratio = 1.5; CFI = .99; TLI = .99; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .03). Only one further modification, to correlate the errors of N1 with H1, was recommended. Although this modification made sense, given the excellent fit of the simpler model, no further modifications were made. No higher-order CFA was run on the HRLSW because the model would have been underidentified; at least three factors are required for identification (Kline, 2005). Thus, CFA confirmed a 2-factor, 11-item scale for HRLSW. See Figure 1 for standardized factor loadings and residual variances.

Construct Validity

As described earlier, two previously validated scales were included to test the convergent and discriminant validity of the HRLSW: the SSDO (Pratto et al., 2012), which measures expressed belief in social inequalities; and the HRXSW (McPherson & Abell, 2012), which measures exposure to information about human rights. Table 8 provides information on construct and discriminant validity evidence.

In this sample, the SSDO had a Cronbach's alpha of .66, an acceptable level of reliability for a construct validity indicator (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The SSDO was hypothesized to correlate negatively with the global HRLSW. A small but significant negative relationship emerged ($r = -.37$; $r^2 = .14$). A further correlation was sought in the data between the HRLSW global subscale and self-described "conservative" political views. Indeed, a moderate negative relationship emerged between these variables ($r = -.49$; $r^2 = .24$).

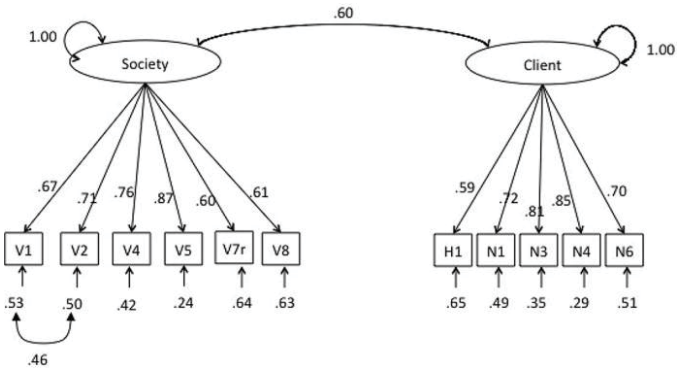

Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis of the Human Rights Lens in Social Work scale (n = 507).

Table 8
HRLSW Convergent and Discriminant Construct Validity Evidence

Scale	Indicator	*N*	*r*	*P* (two-tailed)	r^2
HRLSW global subscale	HRXSW	940	.24	1.4988E-13	.06
	SSDO	947	−.37	7.8106E-32	.14
	Conservative political views	946	−.49	2.2115E-58	.24
HRLSW client subscale	Single-item indicator, client needs	957	.54	1.3542E-73	.29
HRLSW society subscale	Single-item indicator, social problems	957	.62	7.2527E-104	.39

Note. HRLSW = Human Rights Lens in Social Work scale. HRXSW = Human Rights Exposure in Social Work scale. SSDO = Short Social Dominance Orientation scale.

The HRXSW performed well in this sample and showed very good reliability (α = .80). As hypothesized, a significant positive relationship emerged between the HRXSW and the global HRLSW scale, but the magnitude of the relationship was low (r_{HRXSW} = .24; r^2 = .06). This confirms that the HRLSW can discriminate well when compared to a similar but slightly different measure.

Each subscale was hypothesized to correlate significantly with a single-item indicator restating its construct definition. As the *clients as rights holders* subscale was eliminated from the analysis, its single-item indicator was not tested. The single-item indicator for *needs as lack of access to rights* correlated moderately with the slightly reconfigured *clients as experiencing rights violations* subscale (r = .54; r^2 = .29), and the indicators for *social problems as rights violations* both correlated strongly (r = .62; r^2 = .39) with the six-item subscale. In summary, all hypothesized construct validity tests were significant for the global HRLSW and its subscales.

The HRLSW is comprised of two discrete subscales. The *social problems as rights violations* subscale is scored by adding all six item scores together after reverse coding Item V7. The potential scores on this subscale range from 7 to 42. The *clients as experiencing rights violations* is scored very simply: Scores on all five items are added together. The potential scores on this subscale range from 7 to 35. See Figure 2 for the complete HRLSW scale.

Discussion

Application to Research and Practice

The HRLSW scale provides social work practitioners and researchers with a tool to measure a rights-based orientation to practice. We hope that the use of this tool will help to transform and reinvigorate social work practice through its focus on

human rights, the participation of the poor and disenfranchised, and the insistence on structural change to advance social justice.

The validation process reduced the HRLSW from 21 to 11 items, and from three subscales to two. On reflection and guided by the emerging evidence, the researchers decided that the human rights lens would be better described as a two-factor construct:

1. *social problems as rights violations,* and
2. *clients as experiencing rights violations.*

These constructs also comprise the human rights lens within the human rights practice in social work framework (McPherson, 2015; see Figure 3).

The division of *lens* into two elements—one focused on clients and their vulnerabilities and the other looking at the larger social context—is well supported in the literature on social work and human rights. Mapp (2008) echoes this dual focus

These 11 items explore the **HUMAN RIGHTS LENS** in social work.
Please tell us your views of your work, your clients, and the society we all live in.

If you don't currently have an active social work practice, please answer these questions based on your views of social work clients generally, clients you have had in the past, or those you might have in the future.

Please answer with your true thoughts, beliefs, and opinions according to the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please answer these questions thinking, IN MY VIEW:

1	Hunger at the community level stems from the government's failure to protect people's human right to food.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	If the human right to housing were protected, many fewer people would be homeless.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Lack of access to medical care is a human rights violation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Poverty is a violation of the human right to a decent standard of living.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	A community's lack of adequate employment is not a human rights issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Unequal access to goods and services in society is a human rights issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	It is common for U.S. social work clients to experience violations of their human rights.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Clients' needs are often related to violations of one of their human rights.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	When I look at my clients, I see rights violations where others may see failure or pathology.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Clients generally need social services because their human rights have been violated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	The problems I address in my social work practice tend to be violations of my clients' human rights.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Figure 2. Complete Human Rights Lens in Social Work scale.

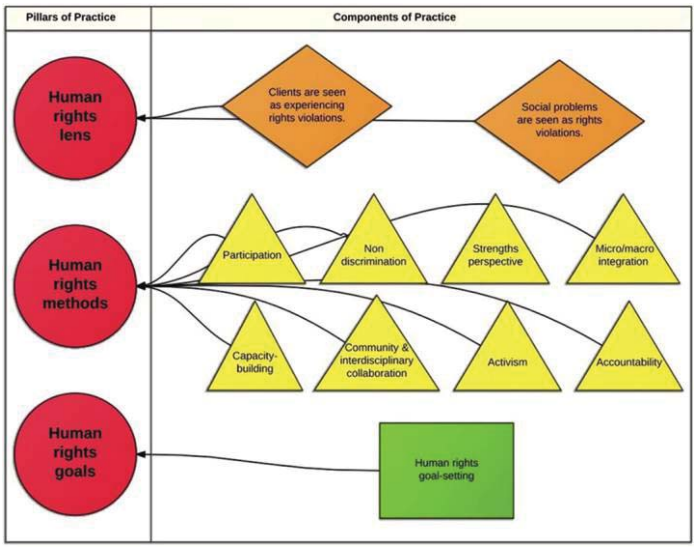

Figure 3. Human rights practice in social work.

and argues that requiring attention to the victim, as well as to the conditions that create the victimization, can move social work's focus from individual pathology to human rights. Reichert (2011) also calls for this type of double vision to help clients and improve the conditions in which they live. An additional benefit to this simplified version of the human rights lens is that it emphasizes both the person and the environment—echoing the traditional social work precept of *person-in-environment* (Gitterman & Germain, 2008)—and presages the *micro/macro integration* piece of *human rights methods* in the framework illustrated in Figure 3 (McPherson, 2015).

In social work educational settings, the HRLSW can be used as an evaluative tool. It can be used in a pretest/posttest format, or included, as in the current study, in a point-in-time survey. Results of a pretest/posttest can indicate whether exposure to certain classroom-based or experiential teaching strategies are able to increase students' right-based perspective; a point-in-time survey can provide students with an opportunity for reflection. The HRLSW will also be useful in research settings. For example, it will be important to learn the relationship between the human rights lens and social workers' job satisfaction. Research can tell us whether a human rights focus affects social workers' levels of burnout and job retention. For example, if a rights-based perspective contributes to job satisfaction, the HRLSW will help provide evidence for the importance of rights-based training in social work education. Similarly, the HRLSW can tell us whether social work field instructors see their work through a human rights lens. This is important knowl-

edge as the CSWE increases the role of human rights in its educational policy and accreditation standards (CSWE, 2015). Currently, although social work asserts itself as a human rights profession, very little data exist to back up the assertion; the HRLSW can provide data to show social work's current level of engagement with the human rights perspective and challenge us to meet our potential as rights-based practitioners.

Limitations

Certain restrictions were built into the study. For example, it would be very interesting to know how social workers internationally would respond to these scales, and yet, in this study, the authors focused on the United States. This issue can be addressed in future studies, as these measures can be adapted for use internationally and translated into other languages. Another limitation is the decision to focus on LCSWs. LCSWs are skilled social workers, but they may be more likely to work in private practice and are therefore less likely to work with clients in poverty than novice social workers. It would be interesting to compare the results of this study with one focused on social workers in public service or in a specific domain, such as child abuse or corrections.

Finally, the scale developed here measures the human rights lens at the individual level. Several social work writers have hypothesized that agency factors may inhibit individual social workers' ability to put human rights into practice. Specifically, managerial approaches, a focus on risk management or rationing, and working for the state have been identified as barriers to taking a rights-based approach to practice (Buchanan & Gunn, 2007; Cemlyn, 2011; Fenton, 2013; Ife, 2008; Yu, 2006). As Werkmeister and Garran (2013) have pointed out, individual measures are important because "such measures are helpful when addressing an individual's competency in that area, however, [they] stop short of being able to capture the culture of an institution." (p. 8). This study does not address these very important questions. Future research should certainly focus on the role that agencies play in social workers' ability to put human rights into practice.

Another limitation exists within this study's sampling approach. Although the sampling frame included all LCSWs in Florida who had supplied an e-mail address to their licensing board, those who completed the study were not randomly selected from this group. Instead, those who were most interested in completing the study opted in and are likely to be systematically different from those who did not complete the survey. Participants may, for example, be different from nonparticipants on variables relevant to the survey content (e.g., interest in and knowledge about human rights). Further, in this sample, 49.8 percent of respondents expressed a preference for micro-level work, and only 4.3 percent preferred macro-level work (42.7 percent expressed equal interest in practice at both levels). Social workers engaging in policy advocacy and community development may be under-

represented in this sample, which could bias the findings. Also, this study was limited to LCSWs licensed by the State of Florida. The LCSWs in this sample were older and more racially diverse than the national data. If findings were found to be consistent across multiple studies, the chances increase that they apply to the population or U.S.-based LCSWs as a whole.

A further threat to validity in this study is social desirability bias (Nederhof, 1984). Social desirability encourages individuals to report what they think they ought to say rather than what is true. Future research might wish to assess the degree to which social desirability is influencing responses (Haghighat, 2007). Another study weakness showed itself in the construct validity analyses reported here. One cost of the novelty of these measures is that no other scales measure these same constructs. Thus, the shared variation between the new scales and the scales chosen to validate the constructs was acceptable but lower than desired. In the future, scales should be sought (or developed) that more closely approximate the constructs being measured. Certainly, it was positive that the single-item indicators written to covary with subscale scores did generally correlate well with their targeted subscales.

Conclusion

The HRLSW scale and its companion measure, the Human Rights Methods in Social Work, are the first to focus on social workers' deployment of human rights within social work practice and will provide educators and researchers with the tools they need to expand their teaching and research into this important area. The HRLSW can be used to assess the prevalence of a human rights-based orientation to practice in social work, and, similarly, to evaluate the effectiveness of educational and training interventions aimed at increasing levels of rights-based orientation to social work practice. Seeing through a human rights lens reframes social problems by foregrounding discrimination and human dignity and has the potential to focus social work practice on social justice and social change (Mapp, 2008).

Advocates have argued that human rights are a more tangible and defined way of setting goals for social work action than the traditional aim of social justice (Mapp, 2008; Pyles, 2006; Reichert, 2011); the HRLSW can help to test this proposition.

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