

Poverty Attribution as Additional Pathway in Predicting the Reaction of Disadvantaged Groups and Persons to Inequality and Injustice

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ABSTRACT The literature on collective action focuses on instrumental and affective antecedents. However, recent studies showed that these contribute insignificant variance to action, indicating that there are other factors meriting attention. Using an integrated Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT), Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Five Stage Model framework (FSM), this study showed how disadvantaged group members' responses to deprivation proceeded as predicted by the FSM from acceptance to collective action mediated by their poverty attributions. In a survey with a sample of 383 research subjects, the study showed that respondents' patterns of poverty attribution shaped their 'predisposition to act' and the type of action taken. When respondents attributed poverty to individual or fatalistic factors they adopted individual action, whereas when attributions were structural, responses were collective. Paucity of action when structural attribution predominated was due to dual consciousness. It was recommended that attribution analysis be extended to enhancing micro-mobilization against hegemonic forces.

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of forces that motivate disadvantaged persons and groups to react to their situation is crucial for the maintenance of social order. In the same vein, this knowledge is useful to organizations interested in fostering social change (van Zomeren and Iyer 2009). Reaction to inequality has however been conceptualized from a plethora of perspectives. Most prominent have been the arguments within the social movement literature regarding the salience of instrumental and affective antecedents of action (Klandermans 2002; Hornsey et al. 2006; Stürmer and Simon 2009; Giguere and Lalonde 2010; van Zomeren et al. 2010). Despite wide acclaim, these conceptualizations have barely met tests of statistical significance as instrumental and affective considerations have contributed limited statistical variance to action in the face of injustice (Bliuc et al. 2007; Ginges and Altran 2009; van Stekelenburg et al. 2009). This indicates that there are 'missing variances' that could be accounted for by other factors (Bliuc et al. 2007). As these analyses have been within the purview of the Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT), Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT), Social Identity Theory (SIT) and the Five Stage

Model (FSM) of intergroup relations, there have been claims that these perspectives neglect the role of consensually shared beliefs and social structure in shaping responses to injustice (Kluegel and Smith 1986). As Rothenberg et al. (2002) recently argued, the effects of beliefs are coming back into reckoning in the form of frames that enhance micro-mobilization.

The present study contributes to this debate by uncovering the role of beliefs about the causes of poverty as a mediator to reaction to injustice and thus one of the factors possibly accounting for the said missing variance. This assertion supports the conclusion that the neglect of beliefs and frames by the social movement literature is perhaps misplaced (Rothenberg et al. 2002). Recently scholars within the poverty attribution paradigm have begun to argue for the valid use of knowledge from attribution research to enhance political action in the fight against poverty. The study thus contributes to the understanding of mediators of action. On the other hand, the study contributes to the use of poverty attribution research in explaining social phenomena and in this instance, the possibilities of attaining micro mobilizations of the deprived to counter hegemonic forces,

moving the attribution paradigm away from recent claims by Harper (2003: 188) that; *'by ignoring such issues, traditional attribution research on poverty explanations has itself been politically and ideologically conservative ... It has failed to deliver findings that might be of use in acting politically and socially, against poverty...'* Lepianka et al. (2009: 422) provided further impetus to the above assertion when they argued that perceptions of causes of poverty *'...provide important insights into the legitimacy of social and economic inequality, as well as the legitimacy of collective responses ...'* These scholars therefore provide justification for the introduction of poverty attribution into the framework of reaction to inequality by the disadvantaged.

Social and Psychological Motivators and Impediments to Action in Response to Injustice and Inequality

Greater injustice will breed greater discontent; this has been the arguments of most theories and theorists concerned with inequality and injustice (Lichbach 1990). Most renowned in this tradition are the Relative Deprivation Theory (Runciman 1966; Gurr 1970), The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986), The Frustration-Aggression Model (Hepworth and West 1988), The Self Evaluation Theory (Della Fave 1980) and The Distributive Social Justice Theory (Hegtvedt and Markosky 1995). In summary, these theories argue, inequitable resource distribution produces emotional distress in the aggrieved and forces people to secure a fairer share by violent means (Cramer 2005). Gurr (1970: 73) argued that *'...the more widespread and intense deprivation is among members of a population, the greater is the magnitude of strife'*. Scholars agree that deprivation emanates when a discrepancy exists between what people get and what they believe they ought to get (Gurr 1970; Hegtvedt and Markovsky 1995), which justice exists when there is congruence between expectations and outcomes, and that perception of injustice leads to emotional distress and often, attempts to restore justice. Della Fave (1980) put the argument succinctly, proposing that justice exists when there is congruence between expectations and outcomes based on normative rules, and that perception of injustice leads to emotional distress and attempts to restore justice.

However, while it is reasonable to expect that absence of feelings of dissatisfaction may lead to inaction, the presence of these feelings does not necessarily lead to action (Martin 1986: 238). In fact the system justification theory hypothesizes that disadvantaged people are more likely to justify existing social systems (Jost and Hunyadi 2003). While scholars are in agreement that perceptions of injustice leads to anger and emotional distress which actors may attempt to remove by attempting to restore justice (Hegtvedt et al. 2003), the relationship between discontent and strife (Gurr 1970) or 'injustice feelings' and 'reactions to inequality' has remained a trouble spot in the literature (Wright et al. 1990: 995). Scholars have thus attempted to unravel what factors mediate emotional response to inequality and resultant actions.

Scholarly resolution of this paradox has been guided by Olsen's (1968) dilemma of collective action which proposes that rational individuals will take a 'free ride' where benefits of collective action accrue to all irrespective of level of participation. While Olsen's proposal seemed to answer the question relating to why people do not participate in collective action, it does not explain why some people do (Klandermans 2002). Gurr (1970) posited that the discontent-strife relationship is mediated by the extent of the coercive potential of the state, institutionalization, social facilitation and legitimacy. Zelditch and Walker (1984) confirmed that collective support for an allocator (legitimacy) alters perception of unfairness and diminishes possibilities of action. Darhrendoff (1959) proposed an inverse relationship between openness of classes and intensity of conflicts arguing that the weight and intensity of conflict decreases as social mobility and group openness increases. Hegtvedt et al. (2003) showed that reaction to injustice is contingent upon perception of fairness of distributive procedures and a comparison of one's justice judgment with others. Results from Relative Deprivation and distributive justice research however showed limitations in their applicability given difficulties in conceptualization of individual and collective feelings of deprivation (Kawakami and Dion 1995). Resource Mobilization (RM) approaches (McCarty and Zald 1977) attempted to fill this gap by showing that action would ensue only when structural conditions are rife and resources for mobilization (weapons and money) are available,

regardless of ideology or feelings of injustice (Brush 1996). While RM arguments were stunningly supported by the much quoted work of Ellemers et al. (1993) which cast doubts on the validity of feelings as antecedents of action, later works of Mummendey et al. (1999) showed that when RDT and SIT are combined, clearer paths from feelings to action could be discerned. Recently therefore, the infusion of SIT into RDT research has led to the development of pathways for explaining motivations and impediments to action in terms of a combination of instrumental and affective routes to action. It has thus been reported that the extent of 'group identification' (Klandermans 2002; van Zomeren et al. 2010) and perception of group 'efficacy' or 'empowerment' (Hornsey et al. 2006; Giguere and Lalonde 2010) mediate willingness to engage in collective action and actual action. Stürmer and Sturmer (2009) recently motivated for an addition pathway, 'emotion' (see also Smith et al. 2008). Other scholars have argued for supplementary pathways including willingness to express one's view or ideology, the protection of sacred values (Ginges and Altran 2009; van Stekelenburg et al. 2009) and individual enhancement motive (Tropp and Brown 2004). Bluić et al. (2007: 19) however showed that while group identification and efficacy influence collective action, the statistical variance contributed to action by these variables has been weak, indicating that there are other mediating factors meriting attention beside these instrumental concerns. These studies have therefore not generated effective conclusions about the discontent-strife relationship and hence the 'trouble-spot' persists in the literature rendering virtually all theoretical explanations incomplete. There is however, a notable exemption in the literature of an analysis of the effects of consensually shared beliefs and social structure in producing and sustaining inequality (Kluegel and Smith 1986). The only notable exceptions to this have been Shepelak (1987), Castillo (2007) and Martin (1996) who studied the effects of existential and utopian justice beliefs (egalitarianism and inegalitarianism) on reaction to injustice excluding an analysis of the mediating effect of beliefs that govern the realities of daily life like beliefs about causes of poverty. The social movement literature has downplayed the role of attitudes and beliefs as motivators or impediments to mobilization to redress grievances. However,

matters of attitudes and beliefs are creeping back in the forms of logics, frames and discourses that spur micro-mobilization (Rothenberg et al. 2002).

Limitations of the Social Identity-Inspired Mediation Paths

Successful attempts by Relative Deprivation (RD) studies to link discontent with action have been rare. Where this had occurred (Martin 1986; Wright et al. 1990), scholars have failed to establish any statistically sound relationship. In most cases therefore Social Psychological studies have concentrated on studying feelings alone thereby neglecting action (Wright et al. 1990). The biggest problem of RD it has been argued, has been its failure to predict collective action even when Fraternal (group/collective) Relative Deprivation exists (Brush 1996). Scholars in the Resource Mobilization tradition have largely abandoned RD (Wilkes 2004: 572) concentrating instead on studying the rate and intensity of riots, finding out why some groups participate in collective action or not, a methodology that often does not provide information about those who did not participate (Wilkes 2004: 572). As those studies which gathered data on cities where riots did not take place (for example, Olzak 1992) did not find evidence in support of RD, these findings were seen as a '*final nail in the coffin of RD*' (Wilkes 2004: 573). However, Belanger and Pinard (1991: 449, quoted in Wilkes 2004: 538) argued that '*groups must be disadvantaged enough to be dissatisfied but must also be resource rich enough to challenge dominant groups.*' Although there is a seeming consensus in the RM literature that deprivation does not influence mobilization (Wilkes 2004: 583), SIT has rescued RD from its demise. It argues that the perception of 'cognitive alternative' to existing intergroup structure determines if action of group members will be individual or collective (Wright et al. 1990). SIT studies showed that the level of group identification and perception of group efficacy determines participation in collective action (Klandermans 2002). SIT however does not specify when the action will be normative or non normative, a gap filled by FSM's proposition that the dynamics of the beliefs in the social philosophy guiding stratification determine if actions will be individual or collective, normative or non normative. FSM's

operationalizations have however been based on group openness and legitimacy of group boundaries (Boen and Vanbeselare 1998, 2000; Wright et al. 1990), neglecting the central tenet of FSM regarding the dynamics of the social philosophy guiding stratification (Taylor and Moghaddam 1987). However, statistical support for these SIT and FSM constructs has been weak. Bluic et al. (2007: 19) argued for example that while evidence abound that strong group identification makes group-based collective action likely, these claims mask the fact that these links are small. Scrutinizing recent findings, Bluic et al. (2007: 19) found that statistical variance reported by De Weerd and Klandermans (1999) and Simon et al. (1998) showed that identification accounts for a mere 10% of variance in protests. They therefore concluded in line with McGarty (2001) that *'social identity anticipated that identification should be a predictor of behaviour in interaction with other factors'* (Bluic et al. 2007: 20). Hornsey et al. (2006: 1714) also showed evidence that suggested that measures of efficacy proposed by SIT play a limited role in predicting willingness to embark on collective action when differently conceptualized. In addition, Ginges and Altran (2009: 115) argued that there is little empirical evidence for the hypothesis that collective identification is sufficient to motivate participation in collective action without a guarantee of selective incentives. Indeed, group identification and efficacy have contributed barely significant variance to collective actions in many studies connoting that there are factors being ignored by these studies. As Hornsey et al. (2006:1718) argued, *'...there may be other motivations that have yet to be discussed'*. Giguère and Lalonde (2010: 244) also conceded that while emotion related to group identification applied to action, other motivators may operate simultaneously and *'incite individuals to engage in collective action'* (emphasis ours). While these factors may be structural as the Resource Mobilization arguments seem to connote, they may also relate to beliefs and attributions of causes of inequality, a proposition that has rarely been tested (Kluegel and Smith 1986; Rothenberg et al. 2002). As van Stekelenburg et al. (2009) recently argued, SIT's reduction of motivations for collective action to rational processes neglects other salient reasons why people do or do not take part in collective action. No doubt, the narrow focus on instru-

mentality inhibits our understanding of other motivations and impediments. Introducing an attribution path therefore contributes to new frames of understanding which incorporate 'expressive' motivations (van Sterkelenburg et al. 2009) side-by-side instrumental motivations. Clearly, belief about the causes of poverty is a motivation that has yet to be discussed extensively within the collective action literature. The literature on procedural and distributive studies (Hegtvedt et al. 2003) has attempted to integrate attributions into the reaction to injustice framework by suggesting that where people attribute sources of procedural unfairness to an external allocator they are likely to react. However, these propositions have only been tested in organizational and laboratory settings. Perhaps in a real world context, these propositions can be better confirmed. By examining the effects of socially transmitted attributions, the present study moves beyond the focus on the individual in isolation from others. In addition, emphasizing the role of attributions augments existing theoretical literature on how injustice feelings relate to actions within the cognitive explanatory domain of the aggrieved. In particular, the present study extends the literature on Social Movement Organizations' (SMOs) mobilization by introducing the role of 'perceived causes' in understanding why people respond or fail to respond to an unjust system and how barriers caused by socially transmitted explanations can be removed to enhance participation in collective action. In addition, from the literature, it is clear that much research has focused on predicting interest in or intention to engage in collective action while neglecting action itself. This highlights the need to study both interest and actual participation in collective action as intentions to engage in action do not always result into actual action (Kelly and Breinlinger 1996).

Poverty Attribution: Uses and Consequences

Although attribution studies are rooted in the earlier works of Heider (1958), Feagin (1972) pioneered the study of perceptions of causes of poverty among American adults, advancing three categories of attributions of poverty:

1. *Individualistic*: Attributing responsibility for poverty to the poor themselves, including lack of thrift and effort, and loose morals.

2. *Structural*: Encompassing the external and economic forces, including wages, access to good education, lack of jobs, and discrimination.
3. *Fatalistic*: Entailing forces beyond individuals' control, including bad luck and illness.

Attribution research is however disproportionately focused on the psychological processes preceding attributions, with considerably insignificant attention devoted to the effects of attributions and their applied and societal consequences (Shirazi and Biel 2005: 97). Poverty attribution studies have generated considerable evidence that attribution is explainable by the Social and Economic Status (SES) of the respondents (Nasser et al. 2005; Wollie 2009). Harper (2003: 187) however recently noted that the poverty attribution literature is bereft of an analysis of the social functions of the explanations as most studies establish relationships between causal attributions and sundry social and psychological variables as well as demographic factors, but often overlook the need to explain further. These accounts therefore are void of explanations of how ideology structures actions and reactions, giving the wrong impression that the explanations exist in a vacuum, devoid of any social or political functions.

In socio-scientific attempts to explain action, attributions are often used as explanatory constructs. However, given the gulf between intentions and actual behavior, poverty attributions may not be important precursors to action (Hine and Montiel 1999: 945). While attribution may not be the sole determinant of action, research tying attributions to some types of behaviour suggests that it may be useful in understanding other forms of action. Attributions have been linked to emotions (anger and disgust) towards the poor (Zucker and Weiner 1993). Studies of attributions of poverty have been very useful in determining perceptions of causality, predisposition and actions, and are therefore useful for policies of poverty removal (Pandey et al. 1982). Attributions influence ideologies, consciousness and judgments (Feagin 1975; Hunt 1996), and therefore influence actions and predispositions. Increased structural attribution has been found to enhance donor consciousness and sympathy, with regard to willingness to provide international aid (Bolitho et al. 2007). Studies have linked attribution with political mobiliza-

tion in respect of social welfare and affirmative action programmes (Bullock 2006; Lepianka et al. 2009), helping behavior (Weiner 1995), and withholding or making donations (Zucker and Weiner 1993; Cheung and Chan 2000). In addition, Hine and Montiel (1999) found that attributions determine willingness to act and action in relation to anti-poverty activities and assistance to the poor. In fact an earlier study by Kluegel and Smith (1996) adduced reduced commitment to welfare provision to the growing beliefs that the causes of poverty are to be located in individual morals and behavior.

Poverty attribution has been studied in relation to attitudes towards policies and research shows that attributions signify behavioral intent and are therefore indicators of political mobilization for or against the status quo (Bullock 2006). There have therefore been propositions that attributions likewise could be useful for conscientization to enhance political actions against poverty (Harper 2003) and thus for micro mobilization to counter hegemonic forces. As Shek (2003) noted, if the poor perceive poverty as the result of personal inadequacy they may become despondent and dejected. If they attribute poverty to fate they may become dejected. However, if they attribute poverty to an identifiable external oppressor, they are not likely to support the status quo.

Objectives of the Study

This study introduces the effects of consensually shared beliefs about causes of poverty as an additional pathway for understanding motivations and impediments to action. Using Taylor and McKirnan's (1984) Five-Stage Model (FSM) of inter-group relations, it was hypothesized that reactions to deprivation and inequality are predicated upon causal attributions of poverty. The study therefore hypothesized that poverty attribution influences willingness to act and action among disadvantaged groups and persons in response to inequality and deprivation. It also hypothesized within the framework of the FSM that when disadvantaged persons and groups perceive fatalistic causes of their situation, they are likely to 'do nothing'. When they perceive that deprivation is due to personal and individual causes, they are likely to embark on individual actions because at this stage, people believe that efforts to improve their indi-

vidual positions will remove deprivation. However, when attempts at individual improvements fail to enhance living conditions, people's causal attributions are likely to become structural. Where perception of causes of poverty is structural, blame for the situation is shifted to an external source thus people are likely to adopt collective responses. However, this framework makes room for 'split consciousness' (Bobo 1991) where people simultaneously adduce poverty to more than one cause. Therefore, where structural attribution is layered upon either individual or fatalistic attributions, motivation to seek collective response is hindered. Runciman (1966) introduced a distinction between personal and group deprivation arguing that individual feelings of injustice are associated with individual action, while feelings of group injustice are associated with collective action. This approach has been embraced by recent versions of SIT (Tafjel and Turner 1979), which link perception and reaction to injustice to the stability and legitimacy of inter-group structure. Wright et al. (1990), however, argued that SIT is unreliable in that it is unable to predict what variable will determine group members' perception of inter-group structures as legitimate or unstable and is consequently unable to predict the nature and forms of action. They therefore proposed that a distinction between *collective* and *individual* actions and inaction must be made, while Martin (1986) proposed a distinction between normative and non normative actions. In this way, aggrieved persons have five options:

1. Do nothing and accept reward system
2. Take normative actions towards self improvement, for instance, attempting social mobility.
3. Participate in normative collective actions, for example, strikes and demonstrations.
4. Take non normative actions for self improvement, for instance, crime and corruption.
5. Participate in non- normative collective action, for example, revolution and terrorism.

This five option model used in previous studies adopting the FSM (Moghaddam et al. 1987; Wright et al. 1990; Schwarzwald et al. 1996; Boen and Vanbeselaere 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002; Tougas et al. 1999) was utilized for the present study. As Wright et al. (1990) noted, the path of action

chosen by actors has implications for social stability. While actions 1, 2 and 3 reinforce the status quo, actions 4 and 5 threaten the social order. The main aim of this study therefore was to decipher what actions were *recently* taken by respondents in response to feelings of injustice and how the research subjects' attributions of poverty mediated action. It hypothesized that choice of action and willingness to embark on collective action are mediated by perceptions of causes of poverty. These propositions are encapsulated within the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:

H0: Poverty attribution has no mediation effect on the relationship between feelings of injustice and willingness to embark on action.

H1: Poverty attribution mediates the relationship between feelings of injustice and willingness to embark on action.

Hypothesis 2

H0: Poverty attribution has no mediation effect on the relationship between feelings of injustice and reaction to inequality.

H1: Poverty attribution mediates the relationship between feelings of injustice and reaction to inequality.

To decipher the separate effects of the three sub-dimensions of poverty attribution on the relationship between injustice feelings and reaction, the expected effect of each attribution is separated in line with the literature. The FSM proposes that reaction will vary depending on perceived social philosophies guiding stratification, and that individual actions will be the first option among disadvantaged groups and persons (Taylor and McKirnan 1984; Wright et al. 1990). As ascription is the first stage in the FSM, it was hypothesized that fatalistic attribution will lead to individual action. In the same vein, individual attribution is hypothesized to predict individual action, while structural attribution is hypothesized to predict collective action, at the fifth stage of the FSM.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers carried out a survey using a five-level Likert scale to decipher respondents'

perceptions of feelings of injustice, their causal attribution of poverty, their levels of willingness to embark on collective action and actions taken in the preceding year. Approximately, 383 respondents were sampled from Badia, a low income community in Lagos, Nigeria. The sample size was determined using *Raosoft* sample size calculator online, and the sample was selected using a multi-stage cluster sampling strategy. In the first stage of analysis, responses were reduced using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) to determine how questionnaire items contributed to variables under consideration. Subsequently variables extracted were correlated and regressed. A stepwise hierarchical multiple regression equation was used to decipher how sub-dimensions of poverty attribution mediate the relationship between respondents' feelings of injustice and their willingness to embark on collective action. Furthermore, a 1 x 3 x 5 Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) tested the effects of attribution sub-dimensions on the relationship between injustice feelings and actions. The scales used were computed as follows:

Feelings of Injustice Scales

Della Fave (1980) proposed that a true construct of injustice feelings must necessarily encompass relative deprivation, system blaming and aversion for income inequality, the three of which are incorporated into the present study and standardized into a single measure termed Standardized Feelings of Injustice Scale (STANFI). Questionnaire items relating to these measures were reduced using PCA to derive specific sub-scales.

The Relative Deprivation (RELDEP) Scale

The RELDEP sub-scale was determined using 11 items on subjective feelings of deprivation. The maximum scale score was 55 and the lowest was 11. Higher scores indicated higher feeling of RD. This measure of deprivation bridges conceptualization of feelings of unfairness in RD (Crosby 1976; Martin 1986) and Distributive Justice research (Hegtvædt et al. 2003). RD studies have shown that reaction to deprivation is contingent upon whether perceived deprivation was individual or group based (Kawakami and Dion 1995). As the present study attempted to

assess progressive stages in reaction to deprivation from acceptance to the most radical form of action, the measure of RD used is therefore a combination of both individual and collective feelings given that Double Relative Deprivation (DRD), combining both Egoistic Relative Deprivation (ERD) and Fraternal Relative Deprivation (FRD), has been reported to be a more reliable predictor of both individual and collective action (Foster and Matheson 1995). PCA with Kaiser Normalization produced a 'very good' result from the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sample size adequacy, KMO = 0.79, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, $\chi^2 = 1647.702$ (degree of freedom (df) = 55), $p < 0.05$. These results imply that the factor analysis procedure was acceptable for the sample. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91, mean = 20.35 and standard Deviation (SD) = 7.86, the scale is a valid and reliable measure of feelings of injustice. PCA electronically extracted one factor, RELDEP, for further analysis. This factor accounted for 41.12% of total variance in the variable.

Income Inequality Aversion (INEQUAV) Scale

INEQUAV deciphers respondents' attitudes toward income distribution. Respondents rated 10 items on their attitudes toward the way incomes are distributed in Nigeria. While the first six items were coded directly, the others were reverse-coded as the questions were asked signifying income inequality predilection. The maximum scale score was 50 and the lowest was 10. Higher scores indicated higher levels of income inequality aversion. PCA revealed KMO = 0.789, $\chi^2 = 1863.963$, (df = 45), $p < 0.05$, indicating that the sample was adequate for factor reduction. The scale reliability statistics showed a 'very good' Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, with scale mean = 27.93, SD = 6.60. PCA extracted INEQUAV which accounted for 41.15% of variance.

System Blaming (SYSBLAME) Scale

System blaming evaluates feelings of injustice through attitudinal deflection of ill feelings to the operation of the 'system'. This variable was conceptualized in the form of an anti-thesis to Jost and Hunyadi's (2003) system justification. To determine SYSBLAME, 10 items in the research instrument were utilized. The maximum scale score was 50 and the lowest was 10. High-

er scores indicated higher levels of system blaming. PCA with Kaiser Normalization produced a 'good' KMO = 0.81, BTS, $\chi^2 = 1654.450$, (df = 45), $p < 0.05$, indicating sample adequacy. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, mean = 22.57 and SD = 5.56 the scale is 'very good'. PCA produced one un-rotated factor, accounting for 43.44% of variance.

The Standardized Feelings of Injustice (STANFI) Scale

The extracted RELDEP, INEQUAV and SYS-BLAME were subsequently standardized into one single construct, STANFI, used in mediation analyses. The Cronbach's alpha for STANFI was derived by combining all three scales. The three sub-scales combined adequately into one standardized scale, STANFI, measuring the same phenomenon, namely, 'feelings of injustice'. The STANFI scale is valid and reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, mean = 74.30, SD = 2.68.

Poverty Attribution Scale

Explanations of causes of poverty were elicited using a 38-question instrument. Attributions were scored on a five-step Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree), with the highest possible score 190, and the lowest 38. Higher scores meant higher agreements with the item. Results of PCA shows that factor analysis was appropriate for the data given a KMO = 0.802 and BTS, $\chi^2 = 6612.03$ (df = 300), $p < .001$, indicating sample size adequacy. Two stages of factor analyses were run. In the first stage, factor analysis produced Eigen values for the thirty eight items before rotation. In the next stage, PCA was repeated excluding thirteen items whose Eigen values were lower than the adopted threshold of 0.05. Varimax rotation extracted three factors; individual, fatalistic and structural attributions of poverty. The three factors cumulatively accounted for 57.18% of variance in poverty attribution. Factor 1, individual attribution of poverty, with ten items accounted for 23.66% of variance while factor 2, fatalistic attribution of poverty with eight items and factor 3 structural attribution of poverty with seven items accounted for 17.85% and 15.69% of variance respectively. Cronbach's alpha for the 25 items

used for the second PCA and further analysis was 0.68 which is 'acceptable'. The individualistic sub-scale was 'excellent' given a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91, mean = 20.35, SD = 7.86, the fatalistic scale was 'very good' given a Cronbach's alpha = 0.86, mean = 27.93, SD = 6.60 and the structural sub-scale was also 'very good' given a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85, mean = 22.57 and SD = 5.56.

Willingness to Embark on Collective Action (WILENAC)

WILENAC was elicited using seven items from the research instrument. The highest possible scale score was 35 and the lowest was 7. Higher scores indicated higher willingness to embark on collective action. PCA revealed that the WILENAC scale has KMO = 0.64, BTS, $\chi^2 = 385.016$ (df=21), $p < 0.01$ indicating sample size adequacy. The scale is averagely reliable given Cronbach's alpha = 0.60, mean = 21.64, SD = 4.09. With the mean score of 21.64, it is therefore noticeable that the average endorsement of items was at 62% which is a statistically weak endorsement. WILENAC accounted for 31.66% of variance in the analysis.

Action

PCA was attempted to reduce the 30 items on reaction to inequality, and to determine item loadings into five pre-conceptualized action categories (exit, individual- normative, individual non normative, collective normative and collective non normative). PCA however failed to reduce the items because correlation coefficients could not be computed for some pairs of variables given the pattern of responses. PCA was therefore found to be unsuitable for the data. As further examination showed, PCA was hampered because items scores were heavily skewed towards certain items, especially the individual normative items, at the expense of the collective action options. The mean for items ranged very poorly from 1.00 to 1.54. On a scale of 1 to 5 for 24 of the 30 items, these means indicate poor ratings of items which in turn, are responsible for the skew of the data. Predominantly, respondents adhered to individual normative options which were the only ones that scored up to a mean of 2 on the scale. In fact only three items 'prayed and fasted', mean = 3.36, 'consulted

spiritualist', mean = 3.08, and 'sought special prayers at the place of worship', mean = 3.37, recorded above 50% on the rating scale. Items relating to collective non- normative action received no endorsement. In order to use action categories for analysis without PCA, factor reduction was done manually by adding up total scores of each item for each respondent for all pre-conceptualized categories of reaction. Total scores were divided by the total number of items in each category to produce 'mean exit attempt', 'mean individual normative', 'mean individual non normative', 'mean collective normative' and 'mean collective non normative' scores for each respondent. All mean scores were compared and respondents were categorized as preferring the action type for which they received the highest mean score. With a Cronbach's alpha (for all items) = 0.72, mean = 45.02, SD = 7.59 as a group, the action categories were an adequate measure of action. In summary, the analysis revealed that in response to deprivation, 87.5% of respondents took individual normative action while 4.7% took individual non normative action. Only 5.5% took collective normative action, while 0.3% took collective non normative action. Collective non normative action was therefore the least endorsed option.

RESULTS

Three separate hierarchical regressions were performed to examine the effects of feelings of injustice and the three categories of pov-

erty attribution on WILENAC. The first regression equation examined the interaction effect of fatalistic attribution on WILENAC and STANFI. In two subsequent variable additions, the analysis tested the added effects of individual and then structural attributions using the stepwise method. Feelings of injustice and fatalistic attributions were entered in step 1 of the first regression equation, with WILENAC as a dependent variable. A summary of the regression model is shown in Table 1.

Step 1 showed that STANFI accounts for 27% of variance in WILENAC, $R^2 = 0.27$. However, the second model shows that fatalism accounts for an additional 10% of variance ($R^2 \Delta = .10$). The Durbin-Watson statistics of 2.02 was close to 2, showing that the assumption of independent errors is tenable (Field, 2005). ANOVA showed that the model predicts the outcome of the relationship between the variables, $F = 139.69$, $p < .001$, for the initial model and $F = 117.77$, $p < .001$ in the second model, showing that the improvement consequent upon fitting the model exceeds the inaccuracy within the model.

In summary, as Table 2 shows, the model signifies that while STANFI has a positive relationship with WILENAC, $b = .181$, with an associated $t(383) = 9.13$, $p < .001$, fatalistic attribution has a negative relationship, with $b = -.321$. In fact overall fatalism made a negative contribution in the first model with $b = -.31$ and $-.32$ in the subsequent stage. In addition, the introduction of individual attribution in step two led to an $R^2 = .000$, $b = 0.24$ indicating that individual

Table 1: Regression analysis predicting willingness to embark on collective action

		<i>G</i> "		<i>SE b</i>	<i>â</i>		
<i>Step 1</i>	Constant	-5.55		.44			
	STANFI	.193		.16		.51*	
<i>Step 2</i>	Constant	-2.68		.41			
	STANFI	.181		.15		.485*	
	Fatalistic		-.321		.41		-.321*
<i>Step 3</i>	Constant	-1.41		.039			
	STANFI	.21		.16		.567*	
	Fatalistic		-.31		.039		-.313*
	Individualistic		.24		.42		.238*
<i>Step 4</i>	Constant	-.40		.039			
	STANFI	.212		.017		.568*	
	Fatalistic		-.313		.039		-.313*
	Individualistic		.000		.042		.000
	Structural		.238		.042		.238*

$p < .001^*$ Source: Computer printout of a table derived from the data and findings of this study.

Table 2: R, R- squared, F, F- squared results for hierarchical regression on WILENAC

	R	R ² Δ	FΔ	F
Step 1	.027	.268	139.69*	139.69*
Step 2	.370	.102	61.62*	111.77*
Step 3	.421	.000	0.00	91.68*
Step 4	.421	.050	32.79*	68.58*

*p < .001

Source: Computer printout of a table derived from the data and findings of this study.

attribution did not add any additional variance to the equation. In the final stage however, when structural attribution was infused into the equation, there was a significant $R^2 = .50$ and $F = 32.79$, $p < .001$. With a beta coefficient, $b = .238$, structural attribution shows a significant addition to the equation indicating that structural attribution significantly contributes to the relationship between STANFI and WILENAC. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H₁) is supported because structural attribution showed a significant main effect on the relationship between STANFI and WILENAC, while fatalist attribution showed a significant negative effect. Past studies of factors stimulating willingness to take collective action showed similar results. Ginges and Altran (2009: 121) reported that Palestinians responded in a non instrumental manner, neglecting individual level selective incentives as motivator for action, and that moral concerns and values had more effects on willingness than instrumental values.

Test of mediation effect of poverty attribution on the relationship between STANFI and the means of the five action categories (exit attempt, individual normative, individual non normative, collective normative and collective non normative) was done by a $1 \times 3 \times 5$ MANCOVA using each of fatalistic, individual and structural attributions as mediators in succession. In the first order of analysis, a MANOVA elicited the main effect of STANFI on all action categories. The results shows that SANFI significantly predicts all action categories in all four multivariate tests at 0.01 level of significance; Pillai's test: $F(383) = 2.56$, $p < 0.01$; Wilk's Lambda: $F(383) = 4.18$, $p < 0.01$; Hotelling's Trace: $F(383) = 7.22$, $p < 0.01$ and Roy's Largest Root: $F(383) = 18.86$, $p < 0.01$. Furthermore post-hoc test of between subject effects shows a significant effect of STANFI on collective normative action $F(383) = 19.83$, $p < .01$. There was no other significant effect (see Table 3). Subsequent addition of fatalistic attribution did not alter the result of multivariate tests as all tests remained significant, $p < 0.01$. However, the post hoc test showed that fatalism had additional significant positive effect on STANFI and individual normative action, $F(383) = 1.50$, $p < 0.01$ and individual non normative action, $F(383) = 6.55$, $p < 0.01$. These results support alternative sub-hypothesis 2. Thus as fatalistic attributions increases, individual normative and individual non normative action increase at all levels of feelings of injustice, signifying a positive relationship. However, fatalistic attribution showed no significant

Table 3: Main effect of poverty attribution on feelings of injustice and action

Source	Dependent variables	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
STANFI on Fatalistic	Exit	5.83	93	.063	.937	.637
	Individual normative	68.46	93	.736	1.52	.000*
	Individual non-normative	44.82	93	.482	5.77	.000*
	Collective normative	1.19	93	.196	1.715	.091
	Collective non-Normative	2.08	93	.022	1.091	.292
STANFI on Individual	Exit	5.83	93	.063	.937	.637
	Individual normative	68.46	93	.736	1.52	.000*
	Individual non-normative	44.82	93	.82	5.77	.000*
	Collective normative	1.19	93	.196	1.715	.091
	Collective non-normative	2.08	93	.022	1.091	.292
STANFI on Structural	Exit	5.845	93	.063	.936	.640
	Individual normative	62.78	93	.675	.602	.000*
	Individual non-normative	44.785	93	.482	1.378	.000*
	Collective normative	17.719	93	.191	18.16	.000*
	Collective non-Normative	2.186	93	.024	1.192	.139

*p < .005

Source: Computer printout of a table derived from the data and findings of this study.

main effects on collective normative or collective non normative action.

In the second step of the MANCOVA equation, the added effect of individual attribution on STANFI and action categories was tested (see Table 3). The results of the test showed that individual attribution did not show any statistically significant additional main effect on the equation as the tests for all dependent variables showed the same levels of significance; individual normative action, $F(383) = 1.52, p < 0.01$; individual non normative action, $F(383) = 5.77, p < 0.01$. This shows that fatalistic and individual attributions have similar effects on respondents' actions at all levels of feelings of injustice. Consequently, alternative sub-hypothesis 2(b) is supported. However when structural attribution was added to the equation, in addition to the continued statistical significance of individual normative action, $F(383) = 1.60, p < 0.01$, and individual non normative action, $F(383) = 1.37, p < 0.01$, structural attribution showed a significant main effect on collective normative action, $F(383) = 18.16, p < 0.01$ (see Table 3). However, all relationships with collective non normative action remained insignificant despite the introduction of all sub-dimensions of poverty attribution.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study thus support the hypothesis that structural attribution significantly predicts collective normative action, but not collective non normative action. Respondents with more structural attributions took more collective normative action. The results therefore confirm hypothesis 2 that proposes that while structural attribution enhances collective action, fatalistic attribution has the very opposite effect. This result is in line with the FSM (Taylor and Mckirnan 1984). It is only at the stage where group members are 'conscientized' that collective action will be taken. In earlier stages, where individual and fatalistic attributions predominated, actions were predominantly individual. Taylor et al. (2001: 268) reported similar empirical support when they found that respondents in the 'close-unjust' conditions preferred collective action, while those whose evaluations were 'open-just' preferred individual action. They also found that respondents in the 'far from gaining entry' condition adopted an attitude of defeat.

They interpreted this to mean that these respondents accepted their fate. This pattern of action was equally reported by Wright et al. (1990). While inferring these findings to ethnically disadvantaged groups who accept low status, Taylor et al. (2001: 270) concluded that; '*...the injustice robs them of personal control over their situation*'. The structural explanation therefore sheds light upon the conditions under which collective responses will be preferred over individual ones, therefore contributing to the movement from reductionism to greater emphasis on collective responses (Taylor and Moghaddam 1987; Taylor et al. 2001). Many studies using the FSM have been unable to predict collective non normative action. Wright et al. (1987) found that subjects in open and minimally open conditions preferred individual action, while collective action was favoured by subjects in the closed conditions. Many studies acquired empirical support for the FSM by reporting the effects of group openness (Ellemers et al. 1993; Lalonde and Silverman 1994). Taylor and McKrinnan (1984: 294) hypothesized that attempts at mobility will be made by only the most highly skilled members of the lower status groups, signifying an interaction between individual ability and group openness (Boen and Vanbeselaere 1998: 690). Attempts at collective action are often stifled when token members of disadvantaged groups are admitted into the high status group; a strategy described as 'individualist zeitgeist' (Lalonde and Silverman 1994). Boen and Vanbeselaere (1998: 690) adduced failure to decipher collective action to the absence of emotion in the manipulations given that groups used were artificially created thus producing insignificant group identification (Tafjel and Turner 1979), indicating that Wright et al.'s (1990) results support arguments that collective action is prevalent among ethnic groups with weak group bonds (Moghaddam and Perreult 1992). Studies have therefore shown that respondents predominantly preferred normative actions with higher preference for individual action, without endorsing non normative action (Wright et al. 1990; Boen and Vanbeselaere 1998: 694). The findings of the present study are therefore salient given that respondents overwhelmingly failed to endorse collective non normative actions and only minimally endorsed individual non normative ones. Post hoc tests showed that subjects in the structural conditions endorsed collective non nor-

mative action than others. Similarly, Bien and Vanbeselaere (1998) reported that only subjects in the completely closed conditions minimally endorsed non normative action, showing that the effects of structural attribution and closed conditions (both at the fifth stage of FSM) are similar in that they both give a similar direction. Therefore as hypothesized, this study empirically supports the prediction by the FSM that members of low-status groups prefer individual action to collective ones and that collective action will be considered only when individual attempts fail and the overriding philosophy of individualism is replaced by 'structural' beliefs and attributions. Subjects who relied on structural attributions were the ones who had higher feelings of injustice and were more willing to embark on collective action and took more of the not well adopted collective action options.

Weak adherence to action in an actual field study like the present study indicates that strong collective action reported in some studies may not occur in real life situations. Topf (1995) showed that quite often, reported willingness to act indicates what people think is right to do under certain circumstances rather than what they actually did or will do. In addition, while Boen and Vanbeselaere (1998: 695) reported that the normative /non normative distinction was more salient in their study, suggesting that FSM be rephrased in terms of the normative/non normative distinction rather than the widely used individual/collective distinction, re-echoing Lantonde and Cameron's (1993) earlier assertion that responses to discrimination vary along a normative/non normative distinction, the present study is unable to make generalizations on this distinction because of the low adherence of respondents to non normative action. In a subsequent study however, Boen and Vanbeselaere (2000: 56) reported that collective normative action was favoured in all situations except where the intergroup situation was completely closed. Recently, scholars have stressed the salience of the normative/non normative distinction (Boen and Vanbeselaere 2002: 302). For instance, on this issue, Kawakami and Dion (1995) argued that RD feelings will be aroused when social identity is salient and the intergroup relation is perceived as illegitimate, consequently group deprivation feelings will result in a preference for collective non normative action over collective normative action.

Boen and Vanbeselaere (2002: 302) averred that failure of studies to find evidence of non normative action may have been due to the fact that many offered their participants only normative options. It is noteworthy that while Wright et al. (1990) used artificially created groups, Boen and Vanbeselaere (1998) used 'existing class groups'. Perhaps the difference in results could be attributed to the different methods adopted or to the fact that samples used in many studies were not 'real-life' disadvantaged persons but students with high future prospects that could not be diminished by experimental manipulation. It is possible to suggest therefore that subjects may have been influenced by the 'social desirability' effect (Martin et al. 1994) and were not emotionally involved in the situation. It is also not surprising therefore that a sample of actually deprived people overwhelmingly chose individual action. As van Aelst and Walgrave (2001: 480) showed, better-educated and higher-status groups are more amenable to protest than less-educated groups. In support of this view, Piven and Cloward (1991: 448) also showed that the institutionalization of protest behaviour has decreased the opportunities for lower-status participants. In other words, protest behavior is elitist (van Aelst and Walgrave 2001: 466).

The results of the study showed that consensually shared beliefs about causes of poverty partly explain motivations and impediments to the actions of disadvantaged persons and groups when faced with inequality or injustice. The study adopted an integration of RDT with SIT, anchoring on the FSM. This model has been applied in a variety of settings albeit with different focal points and showed that responses to injustice could be understood in a continuum on the basis of the FSM given perceptions of openness or closeness of groups and nearness to the point of entry into advantaged groups. The present study contributes empirical support to the FSM by showing that the stages of the FSM are analogous to the different stages in which causal attributions proceed. The results from the study showed that where attributions were fatalistic as analogous to the first stage of the FSM, the resultant action was individual normative. In the next stage where attributions are individual, the disadvantaged retained individual normative actions. However, where individual actions and normative attempts at breaching group boundaries fail, people realize that

continued pursuit of individual action is futile and the perception of the basis for selection into advantaged group as contingent upon personal efforts is replaced with the perception that the overriding social philosophy is faulty. At this point, individual attribution is substituted for structural attribution. It is only where structural attributions predominate and 'conscientization' occurs that the disadvantaged show interest or willingness to engage in collective action or actually pursuing this alternative. The five stage model guided the way statistical analysis was conducted in the present study. Given that attributions are usually layered and that in this study all respondents rated more than one causal attribution, the hierarchical regression model tested willingness to embark on collective action, with each attribution sub-dimension added to the equation in succession. In this way a path equation encompassing all dimensions was derived. Where the dependent variable was action, a single MANCOVA equation accommodating all five categories of action as dependent variables in one path model, showed that fatalistic and individual attributions predict respondents' participation in individual action. However, at the stage where structural attribution was included, a significant main effect was derived on collective normative action. However, like in many past studies, the emergent path model was unable to predict collective non normative action. As the results showed, while the MANCOVA equation showed a significant main effect of structural attribution on collective action, it was unable to predict collective non normative action. Initially this was adduced to dual/split consciousness and a counter hypothesis that if the equation was constructed holding layering of attribution constant, the result might predict non normative action. However, given the paucity of responses to questionnaire items relating to collective non normative action, an alternative statistical equation was doomed to futility as the number of responses would have created empty cells in the analysis and hampered analytical tools.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study situate well within the literature. While the FSM provided the theoretical plank and springboard upon which the analysis and argument of the study is made,

the results are fitted into the general framework of reaction to inequality among disadvantaged groups and persons. Unlike past models biased toward conceptualizations of collective action, the present model shows how action pursued is determined by the nature of attributions held in the light of the FSM's conception of action in stages. RM based research has been predicated upon the premise that deprivation and inequality translate into action whenever resources are available, without regard to feelings. While this assertion has received empirical support, the results from the present study contradict RM in the sense that it showed that injustice feelings are salient within the framework of action. The results of the study showed that feelings of injustice are salient in predicting willingness to embark on collective action. They also showed that while feelings of injustice do not directly predict action, where feelings of injustice are mediated by structural attribution, collective normative action ensued, confirming FSM's prediction that conscientization consequent upon failed attempts to breach group boundaries, overturns prevalent social philosophies guiding stratification making disadvantaged persons and groups amenable to collective responses. The findings showed that responses to disadvantage and inequality proceed through FSM's sequential stages through which disadvantaged groups' responses to inequality passes in sequence. The stages are marked by changes in perception of disadvantaged group members of the overriding social philosophy guiding stratification. In the first stage, stratification is guided by ascription; at this stage, group members are fatalistic in attribution, adopt individual normative action and are unwilling to take collective action. In the second stage, the overriding social philosophy becomes individual as people are motivated to believe that disadvantage is the result of individual inadequacy; poverty attribution in this stage is individualistic and individual normative action is retained. At the third stage selected members of the disadvantage groups attempt mobility. However, when these attempts fail and the perception that entry to privileged group is closed, conscientization occurs (4th stage), the overriding philosophy of individualism is jettisoned and relations arrive at the fifth stage where structural attribution becomes dominant and collective action becomes possible. While research has shown that

reaction to injustice encompasses an array of actions from passive acceptance to collective protest most of these studies have reported stronger preferences for individual action regardless of whether deprivation is individual or group based. The salience of structural attribution in the action matrix is based on the added variance reported in statistical analysis of structural attribution to action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results from the present study show that variance contribution to action is not limited to instrumental and affective considerations. This has been the conclusion of many recent studies. On the basis of the salience of structural attributions, poverty attributions may therefore become useful for Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) interested in fostering social change.

However, while the study showed that attribution influences willingness to embark on action, it does not show how attribution becomes salient in group membership. Thus there is a need for future studies to investigate how attribution affects group identification.

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