

The Absolute - Relative Deprivation Dichotomy in Estimating Variations in Reaction to Inequality: Comparing Antecedents of Collective Action among Disadvantaged Groups

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KEYWORDS Inequality. Injustice. Social Exclusion. Poverty. Collective Action

ABSTRACT The conceptualization of poverty lines has often relied on the absolute measure of deprivation. However, scholars have for long agreed that feelings of injustice accompanying experiences of deprivation becomes active when such experiences are negatively compared with similar others. This sort of analysis presumes that absolute deprivation itself is not a sufficient condition for frustration. This study compares the reaction of a sample of low income urban dwellers (n=383) on indices of absolute and relative deprivation to determine which measure better predicts respondents' willingness to engage in collective action as a result of deprivation and actions they recently participated in. The results of the study showed that neither construct predicts willingness to embark on collective action or actual action. It was therefore recommended that Social Movement organizations willing to foster change should emphasize more on changing structural conditions and resources for mobilization rather than the victim's feelings or experiences of deprivation.

INTRODUCTION

Scholarly interests in poverty and inequality are preponderantly focused on poverty indices which aggregate aspects of absolute and relative deprivation (Chakravarty and D'Ambrosio 2006; Lemmi and Betti 2006; Bossert et al. 2007). Therefore, in addition to evidence of the existence of want, the parameters peculiar to these indices encompass sensitivity of poverty measurement to 'exclusion' or 'relative-deprivation' aversion (Duclos and Gregoire 2002, 2003). Sordo and Ramos (2011) proposed a class of poverty measures based on ranks that generalized among other measures, the class of linear indices earlier discussed by Hagenaars (1987) and the class of equally distributed equivalent (EDE) poverty gaps developed by Duclos and Gregoire (2002). Cross-country analyses of the effects of absolute deprivation on relative deprivation revealed that poverty is dependent on the presence of relative deprivation. Consequently, increased attention is being paid to inequality rather than the incidence and the intensity of poverty. This underscores the acceptance among scholars that relativity was also important in assessing poverty (Townsend 1979). Sen (1981: 21) argued that absolute deprivation, defined as a person's capabilities, relates to relative deprivation otherwise conceptualized as the comparative

access to commodities, incomes and resources. Recent studies have identified several classes of multidimensional poverty measures, discussed their properties, and highlighted important issues for future work (Alkire and Foster 2011; Calvo 2008). D'Ambrosio and Frick (2007) explored the relationship between individual self-reported level of satisfaction with income, and relative deprivation operationalizing both concepts using micro panel data and concluded that subjective well-being depends more on relative deprivation than on absolute levels of income.

Economists have therefore compiled poverty indices by developing measures that combine concerns of both absolute deprivation and relative deprivation. This sort of index conceptualizes absolute deprivation in terms of levels of starvation, malnutrition and sundry signs of visible hardship. On the other hand, relative deprivation has been taken to connote the social and psychological reactions to the experience of absolute deprivation, for example, different types of alienation (Durant and Christian 1990: 210). Relative deprivation is linked to discrimination, feelings of injustice and subjective ill-being used to interpret measures of inequality and income redistribution. Relative deprivation therefore increasingly supplements notions of absolute poverty as the most important factor in understanding the objective

and subjective consequences of inequality. The increased prominence of relative deprivation in inequality research is due to the failure of measures of absolute poverty to adequately describe the experiences and consequences of economic inequality in societies with differing living standards, or within countries that, in spite of increasing levels of national income, still experience deprivation for populations at the lower rungs of the income distribution spectrum. Furthermore, relative deprivation relates more to social exclusion. Thus whilst absolute poverty connotes material deprivation and subsistence, relative deprivation better encompasses facets of deprivations related to psychosocial factors and discrimination and their consequences for the overall experiences of poverty.

Rational action theories advance the arguments that conflict results from rational choices of individuals as a result of self-referential tradeoffs when individuals attempt to maximize opportunities (Collier 2000). This sort of proposition has influenced recent analysis of violence related to ethnic, religious and regional inequality in many developing countries (see Nafziger 2006). These studies, have unveiled relationships between the propensity for conflict and the land / income *gini* coefficients of developing countries (Lichbach 1990). The empirical evidence therefore shows that absolute income inequality correlate with social discord and reportedly led to lowered investments. Nafziger (2006: 14-19) argued that while conflicts are prevalent in countries with low GDP, inequality spurs further forms of deprivation which leads to social discontent and motivate collective action that often graduate to large scale political violence and wars. In response, elites use force to maintain hegemony, thereby further exacerbating the cycle of violence and deprivation and leading deprived groups to mobilize and thus increasing the salience of the effects of deprivation feelings in stimulating collective responses.

On the contrary however, Collier (2000) proposed that a high level of income inequality is a disincentive to rebellion and that violent conflict is caused by factors other than income inequality. Collier therefore hypothesized that ethnic diversity and political rights are better predictors of conflict in highly diverse and fractionalized societies like those of Africa. The ambiguity in results from the rational actor model

has led to the speculation that deprivation and conflict perhaps have no relationship whatsoever. Cramer (2005: 36) concluded '*one can ... discard the problem and push an alternative claim about the causes of violent political conflict. However,...inequality might still be significant, at least sometimes to the origins...of some conflicts...*'. Lichbach (1990) however, argued that the reported spurious correlation between absolute deprivation and conflict may have been due to the fact that human interaction is often governed by an 'invisible hand', which produces 'unintended consequences'. Cramer (2005) adduced the failure of the absolute deprivation - violence thesis to mediating factors, notably justification from culture.

Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative deprivation has been used to connote people's perceptions of their well-being relative to comparative others (Souffer et al. 1949). Well-being is often assessed based on a number of dimensions, including income, status, power and prestige. Crosby (1976: 88) argued that '*relative deprivation is (also) used to refer to the emotion one feels when making negatively discrepant comparisons*'. Relative deprivation theories therefore propose that in understanding the reaction of people to their circumstances, it is insufficient to examine objective factors alone; instead, we must '*delineate the factors that regulate the relationship between objective and subjective status*' (Crosby 1976: 88). The basic assumption of this proposition is that absolute or objective conditions may have little effect on people's actions, as their perceptions of these conditions may be different from actuality. Whilst objective deprivation is important, subjective interpretation of the same experience of deprivation is often more important. Relative deprivation therefore measures people's subjective assessment of their economic position with associated social comparison. The social referential aspect of relative deprivation is based upon the recognition that people often evaluate themselves in relation to comparative others. Consequently, relative deprivation is regarded as a more important measure in predicting people's action as a consequence of deprivation, in comparison to absolute or objective

deprivation. Scholars conceived of relative deprivation as an emotion, rather than a perception (Crosby 1979: 109). Thus a distinction exists between the recognition that one is deprived (cognitive relative deprivation) and the emotions attached to the actual experience of deprivation (affective relative deprivation). Relative deprivation is therefore underscored by feelings of despair, frustration, grievance and anger. Davis (1959) argues that people will experience relative deprivation when they lack a desirable good, perceive that comparative or similar others have the good, and feel entitled to it. This basic proposition was extended when Runciman (1966) added further that the individual must think it feasible to obtain the said object. Crosby (1976) however argued that in addition to the conditions set out by Davis and Runciman, individuals must also lack a sense of responsibility for failure to possess the desired object. Runciman conceptualization of relative deprivation contains a distinction between what he termed 'egoistic' and 'fraternal' relative deprivation. He asserted that whilst the former occurs at the individual level, the latter becomes salient when individuals compare their in-groups with 'reference groups'.

Relative deprivation is perhaps best epitomized by the works of Gurr (1970) who emphasized the tensions emanating from the discrepancy between individual value expectations and value capabilities. Although Gurr has rejected the original form of his theory following unfavourable empirical results, the formulation remains a powerful tool for social scientists (Brush 1996: 525-526). Gurr's prognosis is rooted in Aristotelian and *Tocquevillean* thinking of the link between frustration and political violence, as well as earlier works of the frustration - aggression nexus originally developed by Dollard et al. (1939) who averred that aggression is always a consequence of frustration. This simple proposition implies that aggression presupposes the presence of frustration and conversely, frustration inevitably leads to aggression (Dollard et al. 1939). Gurr argued that discontent arises when there is a perception of a discrepancy between what people have and what they think they should have and that '*the greater the frustration, the greater the quantity of aggression against the source of frustration*' (Gurr 1970: 9). This gap, which Gurr termed 'relative deprivation', is the

basis for action in the frustration-aggression nexus (Brush 1986: 527). As Gurr (1970: 73, 79) noted, the intensity of deprivation increases with the discrepancy between potential and actual conditions, and with the length of time that deprivation persists. Gurr provided three distinct types of deprivation demonstrating separate ways whereby individuals' expected outcomes can exceed their actual outcomes; 'aspirational', 'decremental' and 'progressive'. In each way, Gurr argued, people feel deprived when they perceive that they fail to obtain outcomes to which they feel they are entitled or when individuals perceive that the attainment of desired outcomes is not feasible

Consequences of Deprivation

Social scientific understanding of behaviour that undermines the equilibrium of society has traditionally been studied under the prism of 'collective behaviour' (Brush 1996: 526). It was widely held that such behavior was attributable to irrational individuals who instigate others through the process of symbolic interaction (see Rule's 1989 'scum of the earth' hypothesis). However, as Brush (1996: 526) argued, the spread of civil right movements in the USA in the 1960s made social scientists to realize that collective actions were rational actions to achieve specified objectives. This was the foundation of Olsen's (1968) rational choice, self-interest based hypothesis that proposed that groups will mobilize if they perceive that benefits of success outweigh the costs. Violence is thus seen as a goal-directed behaviour. This manner of theorizing became the centerpiece of the work of Tilly (1978) and the Resource Mobilization and Political Process School (MacCarthy and Zald 1977), presupposing that economic inequality and deprivation are the driving forces for collective action. However, despite the long history of inequality-conflict theorizing and research, or what Lichbach (1989: 431) termed the 'Economic Inequality-Political Conflict' (EI-PC) nexus, not much certainty has been attained (Cramer 2005). In fact, there have been doubts about whether claims about inequality fit into any precise theories of conflict, leading many theories to be referred to as 'stories' riddled with unresolved puzzles (Cramer 2005), lacking in empirical validity, but passed around because great thinkers from Aristotle through Marx to

Huntington thought that economic inequality is 'at least a potential source of dissent' (Lichbach 1990: 1050).

Disadvantaged people have not always accepted their situation. Rather, under some circumstances they have attempted to change the status quo through what has been termed 'collective action' (van Zomeren and Iyer 2009). Wright (2009) defined collective action as any action that aims to improve the status, power and influence of a group rather than individual members. This simple definition has been widely adopted by scholars as the basis for the conceptualization of collective action (van Zomeren and Iyer 2009: 646). Scholars have used the collective action framework to study a range of challenges to systems of ethnic and gender discrimination (Stürmer and Simon 2004) as well as collective action against injustice exemplified by protests against 'unjust' foreign policies of powerful nations (van Zomeren and Iyer 2009: 646). Collective action therefore connotes a range of protests and demonstrations as well as individual petitions and changing voting behaviours orchestrated by actions of Social Movement Organizations (Klandermans 1997). Given the enormous social effects of collective action, scholars have been interested in understanding factors that move people to take or join collective action and the attendant social consequences (Louis 2009).

The Present Study

The current literature on the consequences of relative and absolute deprivation suffers from several drawbacks. For example, while the construction of poverty lines now incorporates relative deprivation measures into poverty lines fundamentally based on absolute measures and measures of social consequences preponderantly focus on the salience of relative deprivation, there is almost a complete neglect of the need to integrate both measures in a comparative analysis of the consequences of deprivation. The present studies therefore attempts to take an initial step to compare the importance of both measures for disadvantaged groups' response to perceived income inequality. The study therefore hypothesized as follows:

H1: Experience of absolute deprivation is correlated with socio-demographic factors.

H2: Experience of absolute deprivation is significantly correlated with respondents' willingness to engage in collective action.

H3: Experience of absolute deprivation is significantly correlated with respondents' participation in collective action.

H4: Perception of relative deprivation is correlated with socio-demographic factors.

H5: Perception of relative deprivation is significantly correlated with respondents' willingness to engage in collective action.

H6: Perception of relative deprivation is significantly correlated with respondents' participation in collective action.

The overall aim of the study was therefore to assess the statistical significance of both measures against respondents' willingness to engage in collective action and their actual participation in collective action as a result of deprivation.

METHODOLOGY

In a survey using a five-level Likert scale, respondents' perceptions of relative deprivation, their actual experience of deprivation, their levels of willingness to embark on collective action and actions taken in the preceding year in reaction to deprivation were deciphered. Respondents (n=383) were sampled from Badia, a low income community in Lagos, Nigeria. Sample size was determined using *Raosoft* sample size calculator online, and the sample was selected using a multi-stage sampling strategy. In the first stage of data analysis, responses were reduced using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) to determine how questionnaire items contributed to variables under consideration. PCA revealed Kaiser Mayer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) results for the sample. Subsequently, variables were extracted and saved in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme and used as dependent and independent variables in the analysis. The variables extracted include; Absolute Deprivation (ABDEP), Relative Deprivation (RELDEP), Willingness to Engage in Collective Action (WILENAC) and Preferred Action (PREFACT). Scale reliability was determined using the *Cronbach's* alpha. The effects of Social Economic Status (SES) variables on ABDEP and RELDEP were discerned using a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Furthermore, the relationships between each of RELDEP and ABDEP on both WILENAC and PREFACT were determined using bivariate correlations.

RESULTS

Ten questionnaire items were used to elicit the experiences of absolute deprivation and the responses were processed to derive one variable, ABDEP, for analysis. In order to determine mean rating of these items and the extent of each individual item's contribution to the extracted factor, factor reduction was conducted using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with *Kaiser Normalization* on the afore-mentioned ten items. The results of the test showed that PCA was appropriate for the items given a Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) = .88, BTS, $\chi^2 = 3667.018$ (df = 45), $p > 0.01$. One factor, ABDEP, accounting for 69.6 % of variance in the outcome was extracted (see Table 1) bypassing factor rotation. The contributions of

other possible factors diminish significantly after ABDEP was extracted. The component matrix showing *eigen* contributions of each item is presented in Table 2.

The results further showed (see Table 2) that the item 'could not pay children's school fees', mean = 3.06, SD = 1.52, is the most important item describing respondents' experience of absolute deprivation, while the item 'could not buy new clothes/furniture', mean = 2.51, SD = 1.23 is the least rated option, indicating that for poor respondents, the desire to educate their children surpasses the desire to procure luxuries like clothing and furniture.

Correlates of ABDEP

The variable ABDEP was saved in SPSS after PCA for further analysis to determine how ABDEP correlates with other variables. The new scale (n =10) has an 'excellent' Cronbach's alpha of .95, mean= 26.9, SD= 11.02. A one way ANOVA was conducted to determine how respondents

Table 1: Total variance explained for ABDEP

Component	Initial eigen values			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	6.962	69.620	69.620	6.962	69.620	69.620
2	.738	7.378	76.998			
3	.569	5.690	82.688			
4	.496	4.957	87.645			
5	.379	3.788	91.433			
6	.249	2.490	93.923			
7	.188	1.879	95.801			
8	.178	1.776	97.578			
9	.157	1.572	99.150			
10	.085	.850	100.000			

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

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for ABDEP

	Components	Mean	SD
Defaulted on rent	.823	2.35	1.439
Could not buy new clothes/furniture	.883	2.54	1.225
Could not afford food	.840	2.51	1.234
Sought financial help from friends/family	.822	2.52	1.085
Could not afford transport to work	.902	2.57	1.338
Sold property to raise money	.761	3.02	1.393
Defaulted on bill payments	.809	2.61	1.293
Experienced difficulty raising money in an emergency	.862	2.84	1.353
Could not pay children's school fees	.761	3.06	1.523
Could not get medical treatment due to lack of money	.867	2.79	1.358

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

Table 3: ABDEP correlates using ANOVA

	<i>Sum of square</i>	<i>df.</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Gender	88.2	52	1.7	105.2	.000
Age	84.7	51	1.7	103.1	.000
Education	351.1	52	6.8	18.1	.000
Income	520.9	52	10	137.3	.000
Work type	166.8	52	3.2	199.1	.000
Position at work	306.1	52	5.9	62.6	.000
Ethnicity	322.3	52	6.2	85	.355
Religion	88.5	52	1.7	140.5	.136

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

Table 4: Total variance explained for RELDEP

<i>Component</i>	<i>Initial eigen values</i>			<i>Extraction sums of squared loadings</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of variance</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of variance</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>
1	4.526	41.147	41.147	4.526	41.147	41.147
2	1.196	10.874	52.021			
3	1.106	10.055	62.076			
4	.886	8.053	70.130			
5	.809	7.353	77.483			
6	.742	6.741	84.225			
7	.521	4.737	88.962			
8	.387	3.516	92.478			
9	.352	3.202	95.680			
10	.250	2.272	97.952			
11	.225	2.048	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Source: A printout of a table derived from the data and findings of this study.

differed in their levels of ABDEP by socio-demographic factors. The results of the study (see Table 3) show that except for ethnicity, $F = 85$, $p < 0.05$ and religion, $F = 140.5$, $p < 0.05$, all other variables examined showed statistically significant relationships with ABDEP at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance.

Relative Deprivation

The Relative Deprivation (RELDEP) sub-scale was constructed by applying PCA on the eleven items eliciting responses on the extent to which respondents experienced subjective feelings of deprivation emanating from comparison with their neighbours in Badia, the more affluent people that live in the neighbouring Apapa Government Reserve Area, colleagues at work, and the effort they put at work. As the total number of items for this category was 11, the maximum scale score is 55 while the lowest is 11. Higher scores indicate higher feeling of

relative deprivation. This measure of deprivation bridges conceptualization of feelings of unfairness in Relative Deprivation research (Crosby 1976; Martin 1986) and Distributive Justice research (Hegtvedt et al. 2003). Studies have shown that reaction to deprivation is contingent upon whether perceived deprivation was individual or group based (Kawakami and Dion 1995). As most studies, especially within the social movement literature, have been interested in showing evidence of collective action (van Zomeren and Spears 2009; Klandermans 2002; van Stekelenburg et al. 2009), they often omitted measures that enhance the ability to measure reaction in a continuum. The measure of RD used which is 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

Table 5: Descriptive statistics for RELDEP

	<i>Commonalities</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Rich people live in mansions and leave us to rot in this hell	.665	3.72	.877
It is unfair that amenities in GRA are better than in Badia	.611	3.47	1.127
It is unfair that government provides poor services in Badia	.606	3.91	.784
The ‘National Cake’ has not reached me and there is no sign it will	.604	3.63	1.089
Everyday oil is drilled in Nigeria but I am getting nothing	-.581	3.89	1.067
The poor are suffering in Nigeria while the rich are enjoying	-.409	3.97	.929
It is unfair that rich people’s children are the ones getting the opportunities		3.98	.961
It is unfair that people are not in positions because of merit		3.01	.874
My income is not enough to cater for my needs		3.60	1.146
Money I get at work is not enough compared to my mates		4.01	1.196
My income is not commensurate with the work I do		3.18	1.287

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

Table 6: RELDEP Correlates Using ANOVA

	<i>Sum of square</i>	<i>df.</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Gender	5.208	4	1.302	5.576	.000
Age	5.862	4	1.465	1.239	.294
Education	68.697	4	17.174	16.001	.000
Income	138.834	4	34.708	32.299	.000
Work type	13.228	4	3.307	7.867	.000
Position at work	45.587	4	11.397	14.778	.000
Ethnicity	19.638	4	4.910	5.679	.000
Religion	3.898	4	.975	4.155	.003
Marital status	11.902	4	2.975	12.334	.000

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

Matheson 1995). Factor reduction using PCA with *Kaiser Normalization* on the eleven RELDEP items produced one factor, RELDEP, accounting for a total of 44.147% variance (see Table 4). Factor contributions of subsequent components diminish significantly after the extraction of variable RELDEP. Thus no other factor was extracted. The RELDEP scale has a ‘very good’ KMO = 0.79, and BTS, $\chi^2 = 1647.702$ (df = 55), $p < 0.05$. These results indicate that the factor analysis procedure was acceptable for the sample. As the results in Table 5 further showed, the item ‘people are not in positions because of merit’ with mean = 4.01, SD = 0.87 was the most highly rated item in the RELDEP category. In addition, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.91, mean = 20.35 and SD = 7.86, the RELDEP scale developed is a valid and reliable measure of feelings of injustice.

Correlates of RELDEP

The relationship between the variable RELDEP and Social Economic Status variables were deciphered using a one-way ANOVA. The

results of the test (see Table 6) show that except for age, $F = 1.239$, $p < 0.05$ all other variables examined showed statistically significant relationships with REDEP at the 0.05 level of significance. In addition, all variables were significant at the 0.01 level of significance except age ($p = .294$) and religion ($p = .003$).

Relative Deprivation, Absolute Deprivation and Consequences for Collective Action

The aim of this study is to correlate respondents’ willingness to engage (WILENAC) in collective action and their preferred (actual) reactions (PREFAT) in response to both actual deprivation (ABDEP) and the feelings of deprivation (RELDEP). However scale construction for WILENAC and PREFAT are discussed below.

Willingness to Embark on Collective Action (WILENAC)

Willingness to embark on collective action was elicited using seven items from the research

Table 7: Total varinace explained for WILENAC

Component	Initial eigen values			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	2.214	31.635	31.635	2.214	31.635	31.635
2	1.415	20.208	51.842			
3	.997	14.250	66.092			
4	.776	11.091	77.183			
5	.580	8.293	85.476			
6	.546	7.796	93.272			
7	.471	6.728	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. *Source:* A printout of a table derived from the data and findings of this study.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for WILENAC

	Commonalities	Mean	SD
Things are so bad in Nigeria that if I have the opportunity I will engage in violent attacks on rich people and the government	1.74	1.192	.614
Collective action is the sole tool to pressurize governments	3.47	1.106	.468
My ethnic group is discriminated against so it is just to seek redress by any means	3.06	1.184	.438
People do not cooperate enough to fight injustice	3.94	.751	.665
If I were in government, I will change my present economic situation by whatever means	3.48	.951	.701
The government in Nigeria needs to be changed	3.93	.937	.577
It is better to die than live in poverty	2.02	1.340	.402

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

instrument. The highest possible scale score is 35 and the lowest is 7. Higher scores mean higher willingness to embark on collective action. The seven items were put through PCA to determine item contributions to the scale. PCA showed an acceptable KMO = 0.64, BTS, $\chi^2 = 385.016$ (dF=21), $p \leq 0.01$ indicating sample size adequacy for factor reduction procedure (see Table 7). The scale is averagely reliable given Cronbach's alpha = 0.60, mean = 21.64, SD = 4.09. It is noticeable that the mean score of 21.64 indicates that average endorsement of items was averagely at 62% which is rather weak statistically. PCA however, extracted one factor named willingness to embark on collective action (WILENAC), contributing a total of 31.66% of variance (see Table 7) while a second and third factor could have contributed an additional 20.21% and 14.25% variance respectively, but were not extracted for the lack of a theoretical ground to extract such factors. Thus while the two additional factors could have enhanced factor output, this was not done to avoid theoretical confusion.

The descriptive statistics displayed in Table 8 show that the item 'people do not cooperate enough to fight injustice' with Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.751 has the highest rating and is therefore the most important item in understanding willingness to embark on action. On a five point Likert scale, this score barely exceeds an average mark. However, the item 'if I was in government, I will change my present economic conditions' contributes the highest commonality of 0.701 to factor loading on the variable.

RELDEP, ABDEP and the Willingness to Embark on Collective Action

Ratings of WILENAC were computed for each respondent to operationalize levels of willingness to embark on collective action. Scores on all items were added for each respondent and the total scores were divided by the total number of items (n = 7). Mean scores ranged from 1 to 5. Respondents were subsequently rated as 'not willing' where mean scores ranged from 1 to 1.9, 'willing', 2 to 3.5,

Table 9: Levels of WILENAC

<i>Level of willingness</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Not willing	191	49.47
Willing	142	37.08
Very willing	50	13.05
Total	383	100

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

and ‘very willing’ from 3.5 to 5. As Table 9 shows, a total of 191(49.47%) respondents were ‘not willing’, 142(37.08) were ‘willing’ while 50 (13.05%) were ‘very willing’ to embark on collective action.

Respondents’ levels of willingness to embark on collective action were correlated with ADDEP and RELDEP to determine which of the two independent variables better predicts WILENAC. The results (see Table 10) showed that RELDEP has a significant negative relationship with WILENAC, $r = -.107$, $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed). However, the results further indicated that ABDEP does not predict WILENAC, $r = .060$, $p > 0.05$. The implication of these results is that neither ABDEP nor RELDEP sufficiently predicts WILENAC.

Preferred Action (PREFACT)

Factor analysis using Principal Component Analysis was attempted to reduce the 30 items on action, 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 item scores were heavily skewed towards certain items, especially the individual normative items, at the expense of the collective action options. Table 11 derived from the PCA procedure depicts the descriptive statistics of the items. The item ‘sought special prayers at my place of worship’ with mean = 3.37, SD = .994 was the most highly rated of the items. The mean results for other 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 indicates poor ratings of items and 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 place of worship’, mean = 3.37, recorded above 50% on rating the scale. More striking is the fact that items relating to collective non-normative action (For example, the item ‘participated in Land invasion/kidnappings’) received no endorsement. For example, the items ‘joined a group advocating for change in government policies to ensure fair distribution of economic benefits’ and ‘participated in land invasion/kidnappings’ receive an unequivocal response of ‘never’ from all respondents while other items eliciting collective action were mostly not endorsed. While not many other studies in the literature have reported this sort of low endorsement of action, many had reported weak endorsement of collective action (Wright et al. 1990). It is common knowledge that collective action is never the preferred reaction to injustice by disadvantaged

Table 10: Correlation coefficients for WILENAC, ABDEP and RELDEP

	<i>Absolute deprivation</i>	<i>Relative deprivation</i>
Willingness to Embark on Collective Action		
Pearson Correlation	.060	-.107*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.244	.036
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	22.071	-41.055
Covariance	.058	-.107
N	383	383

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Table 11: Descriptive statistics for action categories

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Prayed and fasted	3.36	1.03
Consulted spiritualist	3.08	1.31
Sought special prayers in my place of worship	3.37	.994
Carried out rituals to avert bad destiny	2.48	1.29
Carried out rituals to get rich	1.60	.910
Started a new business to get extra money	2.26	1.29
Obtained financial help from family or friend	2.27	1.15
Approached union/cooperative for assistance	1.54	.903
Presented complaint about poor services to a government official/office	1.20	.491
Sought to leave Nigeria for greener pastures	1.68	1.20
Wrote a complaint to the press	1.04	.200
Deliberately reduced productivity at work	1.35	.861
Voted against a non-performing public official/party	1.15	.463
Collected bribes/cheated to augment salary	1.12	.394
Deliberately went late/absent to work	1.22	.650
Joined a community betterment group/association	1.50	.853
Joined/contributed money to an NGO fighting poverty	1.18	.704
Participated in protest for better service delivery	1.06	.341
Made efforts to improve skills/education	1.56	1.12
Joined in protest against IMF/austerity measures	1.11	.386
Participated in marches for political/human rights	1.08	.302
Participated in a strike	1.16	.684
Joined/contributed money to an organization fighting injustice	1.02	.152
Became more active in partisan politics	1.45	.807
Changed to membership of an opposition party	1.08	.388
Joined a group advocating for change in government policies to ensure fair distribution of economic benefits	1.00	.000
Joined/contributed money to ethnic militia representing my tribe	1.04	.220
Participated in Land invasion/kidnappings	1.00	.000
Participated in acts to sabotage government revenues. For example, pipeline vandalization	1.01	.114

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

groups (Klandermans 2002; Olsen 1968). However despite this common knowledge some studies using the Five Stage Model have reported higher endorsement of collective action. Boen and Vanbeselaere (1998) reported that most of their subjects overwhelmingly chose collective action before adopting individual strategy, a result that questions the Five Stage Model's prediction that individual strategies will always be adopted first. Boen and Vanbeselaere (1998) in fact found that the normative/non normative dimension was more salient in their sample than the individual/collective distinction. Save for the latter, scholars seem to be in

agreement that disadvantaged groups initially adopted individual actions in response to inequality (Wright et al. 1990).

Cronbach's Alpha tests on the items combined however show that as a group they were adequate measure of action. As shown in Table 12, Cronbach Alpha for the whole scale = 0.72, mean = 45.02, SD = 7.59

As a result of the poor output, in order to use action categories for analysis, 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

Table 12: Scale statistics for PREFACT

<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
.720	.779	42.05	57.636		30

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

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 to the action type for which they received the highest mean score. Results of this procedure are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Comparative ratings of action types

	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>
Exit attempt	8	2.1	2.1
Individual normative	335	87.5	89.6
Individual non- normative	18	4.7	94.3
Collective normative	21	5.5	99.7
Collective non- normative	1	.3	100.0
Total	383	100.0	

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

As Table 13 shows, in response to deprivation 87.5% of Badia residents 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 of action. This is consistent with the findings of other studies (Wright et al 1990; Klandermans 2002). Significantly however, this study shows that the disadvantaged people preponderantly prefer individual actions. This seeming legitimization of inequality has been adduced to the prevalence of ideology (Kluegel and Smith 1986) or dual/split consciousness (Mann 1970).

RELDEP, ABDEP and the Preferred Action

Respondents’ preferred actions correlated with ADDEP and RELDEP to determine which of

the two independent variables better predicts PREFACT. The results (see Table 14) showed that the relationship between PREFACT and ABDEP is not significant, $r = .047$, $p < 0.05$. Similarly, the results showed that RELDEP does not predict PREFACT, $r = .046$, $p < 0.05$. The results of the study also showed that whilst both independent variables RELDEP and ABDEP had almost equal correlation with PREFACTS, all the relationships are not significant.

DISCUSSION

The literature on collective action is large and heterogeneous (see van Zomeren et al. 2009). Relative deprivation theory (RDT) posits that only when individuals perceive their situations are relatively deprived, they will experience anger and resentment and attempt to seek redress (Van Zomeren and Iyer, 2009). RDT further connotes that people do not merely perceive injustice or unfairness but are often emotionally aroused by it (Leach et al. 2002). It is this emotional response to actual or absolute deprivation that motivates collective action (van Zomeren et al. 2008). This idea has been the basis for the applications of group-based emotion (Leach et al. 2002) to the study of collective action. For instance, feelings of group-based anger motivate individuals’ willingness to engage in collective action (van Zomeren et al. 2004; Iyer et al. 2007). The Marxian paradigm has emphasized the greater importance of status and location within the capitalist mode of production as determinants of people’s interests, their subjective consciousness and consequent action (Szirmai 1991:234). Within this position, it is possible to explain higher feelings of injustice among the deprived as lower socio-economic status is hypothesized to be associated with stronger feelings of injustice. Easterlin (2001) suggested that the natural relationship is

Table 14: Correlations PREFACT, RELDEP and ABDEP

	<i>Absolute deprivation</i>	<i>Relative deprivation</i>
<i>Preferred Action</i> Pearson Correlation	.047	.046
Sig. (2-tailed)	.356	.370
Sum of Squares and Cross-products	9.426	9.455
Covariance	.025	.025
N	383	383

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: A printout of a table derived from the data and findings

more between subjective well-being and relative deprivation rather than between subjective well-being and income itself. Poverty measures, as other economic indices, are judged according to the axioms that they satisfy (Sordo and Ramos 2011). Different classes of poverty measures describe different aspects of poverty and represent different schools of thought.

One of the objectives of the present study was to determine the variation in the experience of deprivation, measured by ADBEP and feelings of injustice, measured by OBDEP, by the subjective status of respondents. Bivariate correlation showed that respondents' socio-demographic characteristics predicted OBDEP and ABDEP. The results indicated ABDEP or deprivation experiences are unexplainable in terms of religious and ethnic differences. Conversely however, it was shown that gender, age and the subjective class factors of income, education as well as work type and position at work predict actual experience of deprivation, ABDEP. A large body of knowledge supports the assertion that objective injustice lays the foundation for feelings of frustration and anger (Martin 1986). In addition, this supports the futility version of Relative Deprivation and its assertion that increasing objective deprivation enhances feelings of subjective deprivation (Martins 1986). However, Relative Deprivation research has shown that it is the subjective perception of unjustness rather than objective deprivation that triggers action. The mechanism for the conversion of feelings into action has been conceptualized to operate through frustration (Dollard et al. 1939; Berkowitz 1972). As the results further showed, OBDEP is correlated to relevant socio-demographic factors. This finding supports the assertion that injustice feelings increase with lower income and economic disadvantage (Runciman 1966; Martin 1986). Szirmai (1991: 233) reported that the lower people's income and standards of living are the more they are in opposition to income differences and in favour of egalitarian equalization. This self-interest hypothesis has been previously reported (Robinson and Bell 1978). RELDEP was correlated with the kind of work done; work type is negatively correlated with $r = -0.162$, $p < 0.00$ (2-tailed). The kind of work engaged in and position at work of respondents predicts RELDEP; people who were self-employed felt more deprived than those who were in paid

employment. Work masked as self-employment probably involves greater drudgery and is more likely to stimulate greater feelings of injustice. This contradicts the Marxian hypothesis that class position (conceptualized as type of work reflecting position in the capitalist system) determines subjective feelings of deprivation.

The results of the study further showed that the magnitude of respondents' experience of deprivation, ABDEP, had significant effects on RELDEP. ABDEP significantly positively correlates with RELDEP $r = 0.322$, $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed). This supports the futility or pessimistic version of RD which proposes that as the magnitude of deprivation increases, people express more feelings of ERD, FRD and DRD (Martin 1986; Foster and Matheson 1995).

Furthermore, given the fact that willingness to embark on collective action has been at the heart of studies into the effect of RD feelings (Martin 1986); the present research results are therefore theoretically salient. RD theory has rested upon the proposition that RD feelings lead people to rebel (Crosby 1976). While this assertion has been empirically validated by past studies (for instance, Foster and Matheson 1995), other studies have however shown that RD does not in fact predict willingness to embark on action. For example, Elleners et al. (1993) caused a lot of apprehension when they reported that feelings of injustice did not predict action or willingness to act but confirmed the salience of 'legitimacy' and 'permeability of inter-group situation' (see also Boen and Vanbeselaere 2000). This particular finding lent credence to the argument of the Resource Mobilization and political process school (McCrthy and Zald 1977) that actions are predicated solely upon the appropriateness of structural conditions and that injustice feelings are ubiquitous and have only post hoc effects (Brush 1986). This led to the gradual erosion of the tenets and applicability of RD. However, Mummendey et al (1999) showed that RD could be revived with the infusion of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Subsequently studies have adopted an SIT – RD partnership with Taylor and McKirnan's (1984) FSM to provide new theoretical tools. The present study showed therefore supports the assumptions of RMT that feelings were not salient in action. It also indicates that even whilst absolute deprivation prevails, action may remain stifled unless resources to rebel are available.

CONCLUSION

Given the fact that willingness to embark on collective action has been at the heart of studies into the effect of RELDEP and ABDEP, the present results are therefore theoretically salient. RD theory has rested upon the proposition that RD feelings lead people to rebel. While this assertion has been empirically validated by many studies other studies have however shown that RD does not in fact predict willingness to embark on action. This has lent credence to the argument of the Resource Mobilization and political process school that actions are predicated solely upon the appropriateness of structural conditions and that injustice feelings are ubiquitous and have only post hoc effects. This led to the gradual erosion of the tenets and applicability of RD and creates sufficient ground for the infusion of Social Identity Theory (SIT). The present study provides evidence to support this. Perhaps scholars are right in proposing an SIT – RD partnership on the basis of which new theoretical tools can be provided. The present study showed support for the assumptions of RMT that feelings are not salient in action. The resource mobilization theory has advanced this argument for long and studies have shown that feelings alone do not translate to action. The sense from past studies is that collective solution and improving the position of the group is often undertaken as a last resort.

Often scholars interpreted this to mean that disadvantaged persons accepted their fate or that the injustice robs people of personal control over their situation. The results from this study confirm these propositions. The results showed that regardless of level of feelings of injustice only individual rather than collective actions are attempted. However, where this basic premise of SIT has been contradicted by some studies this has been alluded to differentials in experimental manipulation of intergroup situations. Studies showed that differentials in classes of responses may be evoked by differential manipulation of discrimination on the interpersonal-intergroup continuum. Given contradictory findings on the nature of action therefore, it seems logical to conclude that indeed feelings of injustice become active where other variable intersect with it. Or that indeed the individual-collective divide is contingent upon the strength of other mediators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of recent increases in collective action, violence and terrorism, the use of absolute and relative deprivation as explanations has waned. This has been due to the fact that many studies based on these constructs have failed to predict collective action. While many past studies had used ABDEP and RELDEP independently, the present study used both side by side. The results showed that neither constructs sufficiently predict willingness to embark on collective action or collective action itself. The results of the study therefore confirm recent arguments by scholars that these constructs may be rescued only through the infusion of other factors such as inter group hostility, efficacy or group identification. More importantly, Social Movement Organizations need to resuscitate the arguments of the Resource Mobilization propositions by generating resources and taking advantage of structural conditions that will facilitate people's willingness to protest against injustice rather than relying on their feelings or experience of deprivation.

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