Lay Beliefs About Developing Countries in Relation to Helping Behaviors

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ABSTRACT. We study the beliefs in a developed country about the attribution of responsibility for the situation in developing countries, in relation to helping behaviors and level of commitment. Two samples were used: one for the synthesis of knowledge ($N = 527$) and a second for the synthesis of beliefs ($N = 287$). From the results, we analyze the synthesis of beliefs and obtain the structure of beliefs. The synthesis of beliefs sample was made up of 137 individuals who help developing countries and 150 who do not. ANOVAs show that developed countries activate three implicit theories as beliefs to explain poverty in developing countries. Attribution external to the actor is more significant at higher levels of commitment to help. The implications for social communication campaigns in the developed world are discussed.

Keywords: beliefs, helping behaviors, poverty

GIVING HELP DEPENDS to some extent on the social perception of the recipient; specifically, on the type of explanation the potential giver formulates about poverty (e.g. Betancourt, 1990; Latané & Darley, 1970; Weiner, 1985, 1986). In other words, it is a process of social attribution made on the basis of the potential giver's beliefs. Lay beliefs about poverty in developing countries are mental representations that explain both their need for help and the reason why they are in this situation of poverty. They prescribe related behaviors (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995; Gioia & Sims, 1989; McConnell, 2001; Sternberg, Conway, Ketron, & Bernstein, 1981; Rodrigo, Rodríguez, & Marrero, 1993). Therefore, from this perspective, a differentiated mental representation of developing countries is an underlying factor in whether a person helps or not. The main aim of this study is to discover how the developed world represents the problem of poverty in developing countries and its relationship with helping behavior. The first of our more

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specific aims is to develop an instrument to measure the beliefs that individuals in rich countries formulate to explain poverty in developing countries. Our second aim is to compare the beliefs formulated by individuals who give help to developing countries with those of individuals who do not. The third objective is to analyze whether the type of involvement with the help given explains differences in the formulation of the beliefs about who or what is responsible for poverty in developing countries.

What explanations might we expect individuals to give for poverty in developing countries? To answer this question, we must first have access to an instrument that measures the perception of the population in the developed world. Existing scales have certain limitations in this respect. One of the most widely used scales in this research field is that of Hine and Montiel (1999). These authors replicated the scale developed by Harper, Wagstaff, Newton, and Harrison (1990) to construct a new scale based on the literature and on open interviews with a selected sample of activists and non-activists in a first-world nation and a developing nation. The resulting scale is based on a sample that included only 40 individuals from the first world. For its part, Harper colleagues' (1990) causes of third-world poverty scale was based on that of Feagin (1972), which concerns domestic poverty. There is therefore no measurement scale based on the developed world's social judgment of poverty in developing countries.

A scale constructed on the basis of the developed world's lay perceptions will not be expected to provide new results on the structure of attribution of responsibility for poverty in poor countries. However, a range of explanatory factors are found in the literature, whether individualist, societal (government, conflicts, structural, exploitation) or fatalist (e.g., Hine & Montiel, 1999; Harper, et al., 1990; Morcol, 1997; Nasser & Abouchedid, 2006). The structure of attributional content in the first world may be different from that of the developing world. Because there is no scale available that takes its starting point in the developed world, we do not know what content is taken into account to explain poverty in the developing world.

Research into the attribution of the causes of poverty indicates that the first world, as an observer, is more likely to make external attributions of a societal nature than internal attributions (Carr & MacLachan, 1998; Hine & Montiel, 1999). When the situation is particularly relevant to the perceiver, he or she will place attribution there, considering aspects of the situation that he or she regards as most relevant (e.g. Nisbett, Peng, Choi & Norenzayan, 2001). Individuals' perception of poverty in developing countries, in as far as it is explained by situational factors, must be different from other types of explanations. But moreover, from the point of view of lay social judgment, focusing on the situation implies explaining poverty in the developing world as something that can be modified (Dweck, et al., 1995). Individuals can attribute poverty to different circumstances, depending on historical and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the variety of explanations suggests that people do not observe a fixed reality, but rather they

interpret it. In this vein, Hintzman's (1986) Multiple-Trace Memory Model enables us to explain how individuals can be exposed to two different information-processing demands: (1) that of recognizing and discriminating between different ideas about poverty in developing countries, and (2) that of contributing their own point of view, which in this case entails carrying out a process of attribution. These two levels of representation have not been considered in the construction of questionnaires on poverty in developing countries.

Is helping behavior related to explanations of poverty in developing countries? Studies suggest that when individualist factors are perceived as the causes of poverty, in general people are less willing to help (Zucker & Weiner, 1993) and are less likely to accept social aid or support policies, give money (Campbell, Carr & MacLachan, 2001; Carr & MacLacham, 1998), or participate in anti-poverty activities (Hine & Montiel, 1999). Research by Hine and Montiel (1999) shows that attribution to exploitation increases anti-poverty activities, while individualist attribution inhibits it. These studies analyze levels of help according to the locus of attribution and suggest that a person who does not help attributes responsibility for poverty to the poor, while a person who does help attributes responsibility to the rich nations. According to Latané and Darley's (1970) decision tree, people must first take responsibility for the situation before they will offer their help. We might therefore expect that individuals who give most help will be more likely to offer explanations in which they attribute responsibility for poverty either to their own reference group or to themselves personally.

The type of involvement with helping might also explain the differences in attribution of responsibility. The role the type of involvement with help plays has been analyzed in terms of the resources given in helping (Khanna, Posnett & Sandler, 1995; Weisbrod & Domínguez, 1986 Rose-Ackerman). The social movements literature suggests that donors' commitment varies according to their level of participation (e.g. Snow, Soule & Kriesi, 2003). Financial donors have a more distant, uninvolved relationship with the receiver than those who are involved in collective actions or who devote their own time to helping others. However, no empirical studies have analyzed the differences in beliefs about responsibility for poverty in relation to the type of involvement with helping. The behavior of helping others has essentially been studied in relation to the bystander. However, help in relieving poverty in developing countries is set within a context in which the person who needs help is perceived through the mass media or opinion leaders. The involvement of an individual who gives his or her help in person differs from help that is mediated by the media, and it is lower in this latter case (Hannah & Cafferty, 2006). The individual can either offer help by becoming involved personally (e.g. as a volunteer) or more distantly (e.g. anonymous donations). The study by Zucker and Weiner (1993) suggests there is a difference in the perception of the situation of need when an individual becomes involved personally and when this involvement is limited. Their results show a direct relation between high

levels of personal involvement and the tendency to attribute responsibility to factors external to the actor.

The present study analyzes the attributions activated by observers in the developed world to explain the situation in developing countries and their relation to helping behaviors. The research was carried out in two stages. In the first, we aimed to discover the beliefs that act in processes of attribution of responsibility for the situation in developing countries. In the second stage, we used these beliefs to analyze whether their activation was related to helping behavior. We put forward the following hypotheses to this end:

Hypotheses

> Hypothesis 1: The explanations the observer makes will include external and internal as well as societal and individual attributions.
> Hypothesis 2: People in the first world will be significantly more likely to attribute the situation of developing countries to factors external to the actor than to internal factors.
> Hypothesis 3: Individuals who help, as compared to those who do not, will be significantly more likely to attribute the situation of developing countries to factors external to the actor than to internal factors.
> Hypothesis 4: Individuals who do not help, as compared to those who do, will be significantly more likely to attribute the situation of developing countries to factors internal to the actor than to external factors.
> Hypothesis 5: Individuals with higher levels of commitment to giving help, as compared to those with lower levels of commitment, will be significantly more likely to attribute the situation of developing countries to factors external to the actor than to internal factors.
> Hypothesis 6: Individuals with lower levels of commitment to giving help, as compared to those with higher levels of commitment, will be significantly more likely to attribute the situation of developing countries to factors internal to the actor than to external factors.

Method

Hintzman's (1986) Multiple-Trace Memory Model distinguishes between the storing of information, in the form of examples, and its retrieval, in the form of synthesis or active representations, which can be activated according to demand by means of interpretive schemas. These interpretive schemas are inaccessible to the conscience and operate as inconsistent beliefs (Furnham, 1988; Wegner & Vallacher, 1977). The dynamism of Hintzman's (1986) model allows us to consider the dual function of the representations. The first function draws on the stored knowledge of the social phenomenon studied, which can be activated for declarative use (Syntheses of knowledge). The second is a prescriptive function

in the form of beliefs (Syntheses of beliefs). The Syntheses of knowledge cover the range of cultural models on poverty in developing countries that are incorporated into the individual's cognitive world through social interactions. Thus, when the demand requires us to distinguish between various ideas or reflect on the explanation we assume as our own, we activate a synthesis that functions on a declarative level. At this level of operation, the individual identifies opinions and ideas but does not own them. Another significant function of syntheses of knowledge is that of enabling change in a subject's beliefs. The possibility of constructing syntheses of knowledge other than one's own will encourage one to question one's own beliefs and change them if necessary. On the other hand, the Syntheses of beliefs represent the particular way in which the individual has assumed some of the cultural models and also the way we attribute other social agents' behavior. In other words, it represents the explanation for poverty in developing countries that we personally assume, as well as the explanations we attribute to other people. Therefore, individuals activate their synthesis of beliefs when they are operating at a pragmatic level in which they have to interpret situations, solve problems, and plan behaviors. Their content is somewhat conventional as they are formed at the heart of small groups close to the individual. For this reason, people tend to share the same beliefs as the other members of their own group. In the first part of this study, we analyzed the synthesis of knowledge about responsibility for poverty in developing countries. In the second part, we obtained the synthesis of beliefs and tested the study hypotheses.

First Part: Synthesis of Knowledge

Procedure and Participants

In accordance with the theoretical proposal, the research process has three sequential stages: exploratory analysis, analysis of the synthesis of knowledge, and analysis of the synthesis of beliefs. In the first stage, exploratory analysis, we sought external a priori knowledge that can become objective, and to this end, we chose the historical review technique to build an analyzable corpus. The initial choice of statements was made from a variety of written and audiovisual information sources taken from the mass media. We looked for statements that would express some kind of explanation for poverty, or an attempt to understand it, in developing countries. From the material analyzed, a total of 179 statements was selected.

Our next objective was to classify the various statements according to the similarity and coherence of the opinions they reflect. To this end, we formed a discussion group of six people, from various sectors of society, to select the statements that best represented social attribution of poverty in developing countries. Over the space of a week, the six members analyzed and organized the statements individually. The group members then held a 5-hour discussion to debate their

analyses of the statements. They were asked to (1) reach a consensus on the importance and meaning of the statements, (2) eliminate redundant items from the list, (3) propose their classification into categories (theories to explain the phenomenon) and (4) name the categories so as to reflect their semantic content. The discussion resulted in 67 statements (Table 1), classified in 5 empirical theories (Table 2). The synthesis of knowledge questionnaire was then constructed from these 67 statements.

The second stage consisted of analyzing the synthesis of knowledge. The aim of this stage was to verify that the five empirical theories selected in the previous stage actually existed in people's minds. This task was designed to determine the structure of the synthesis of knowledge. The study was carried out on a sample of 521 university students. They were asked to complete a questionnaire comprising the 67 selected statements. All the students were required to respond to all the items, not by giving their own opinion, but rather according to the opinion of a third party. Five different questionnaires were prepared for this purpose. Each of the five questionnaires included a conversation between two people that clearly reflected one of the five empirical theories. Five groups of randomly chosen students answered each one of the five questionnaires. The students were required to respond to each of the 67 items as though they were the main speaker in the conversation.

The data analysis aimed to value the extent to which each item belonged to the different theories. To this end, we carried out an analysis of the authenticity and polarity of the items. Items representative of each theory were considered to fulfill the following conditions: (1) items with significantly high authenticity and polarity scores in one theory but low in the others; (2) items with an authenticity score of over 5. This resulted in a final total of 20 items representative of the five theories identified (Table 3), which make up the "Beliefs about Responsibility for Poverty in Developing Countries" (BRPDC) questionnaire.

Second Part: Synthesis of Beliefs

Procedure and Participants

Participants in the study were asked to complete a three-part questionnaire. The first part consisted of a demographic survey that included questions pertaining to sex, level of education, and age. In the second part, they completed the BRPDC, and the third part asked them to describe the type of help they offer to developing countries (Table 1). Participants were selected to ensure a composition of a similar number of individuals who help and others who do not, and also a similar number of people according to the type of help they give. The study participants were 287 Spanish people, of whom 149 were men (51.9%) and 138 women (48.1%). A total of 113 had primary education or no formal education (39.4%), 82 (28.0%) had completed secondary education, and a further 92 (32.1%) had university-level

TABLE 1. Results of the Exploratory Analysis (Synthesis of Knowledge Questionnaire)

N°	Statement	Theories
1	Developing countries are poor because they have had the chance to develop their culture.	Cultural
2	Developing countries had the same chances to develop as rich countries, but their cultural shortcomings prevented them from doing so.	Cultural
3	Developing countries cannot escape from poverty because of their cultural limitations.	Cultural
4	Superstitions in developing countries prevent them from escaping their poverty.	Cultural
5	Poverty in developing countries would be eradicated if their society was developed.	Cultural
6	The poorest countries in the world are those with the lowest levels of literacy.	Cultural
7	Developing countries have not known how to adapt to technological-scientific change.	Cultural
8	The cultural backwardness of developing countries is responsible for their poverty.	Cultural
9	Lack of education in developing countries is responsible for their poverty.	Cultural
10	Developing countries will stay poor as long as the evolution of their culture stands still.	Cultural
11	The ignorance of a people leads to poverty, and these countries are ignorant.	Cultural
12	States should not provide the solution to the problem of social inequality between countries.	Powers that be
13	Developing countries should be set free from the constraints of a development model that takes advantage of their resources.	Powers that be
14	Poverty in developing countries is a consequence of the exploitation of their resources by Western powers.	Powers that be
15	The precarious working conditions imposed by the multinationals prevent developing countries from getting rid of poverty.	Powers that be
16	The large multinationals live off the economic resources of the developing countries.	Powers that be
17	First world multinational powers have finished off the wealth in the developing countries.	Powers that be
18	Poverty in developing countries is caused by their debt to the rich countries.	Powers that be
19	Rich nations have historically prevented developing countries from growing economically.	Powers that be
20	The policies of first world states are always damaging to those most in need in developing countries.	Powers that be
21	The development of Western societies has created poverty in developing countries.	Powers that be
22	Economic policies in the first world are responsible for poverty in developing countries	Powers that be

(*Continued*)

TABLE 1.   (Continued)

N°	Statement	Theories
23	Financial-economic institutions do not act in favour of development in developing countries, but rather act to make the rich countries even wealthier.	Powers that be
24	With just some of the investment made in arms development, millions of people who die of starvation every day would live.	Powers that be
25	By helping, NGOs help prevent rich countries from accepting responsibility for the poverty in which developing countries live.	Powers that be
26	First world economic policies do not make the problems of poorer countries any more acute.	Powers that be
27	First world financial-economic institutions are responsible for the economic underdevelopment of the poor countries.	Powers that be
28	Protecting the poorest people in poor countries prevents them from fending for themselves.	Individualist
29	The poor in impoverished countries are poor because they want to be.	Individualist
30	The poor in impoverished countries prefer to take advantage of money from public funds and continue to live in poverty.	Individualist
31	The poor in impoverished countries have the means to live but they do not manage them well.	Individualist
32	Impoverished countries are poor because they have abandoned their traditional ways of life.	Individualist
33	Many poor countries are rich in resources but they do not take advantage of them.	Individualist
34	Poor countries are underdeveloped because their populations have a passive attitude to life.	Individualist
35	The internal corruption of their populations has led developing countries into poverty.	Individualist
36	Developing countries are not opposed to change.	Individualist
37	The poor in developing countries let the first world manage their resources because they have no initiative of their own.	Individualist
38	The poor in developing countries could escape from their situation if they made an effort to reduce their poverty.	Individualist
39	The poor in developing countries are responsible for their poverty.	Individualist
40	The poor in developing countries would be better off if they did not have so many children.	Individualist
41	The poor in developing countries are poor because they don't want to work.	Individualist
42	People in need in developing countries waste the aid they receive.	Individualist
43	Poor countries remain poor because they have got used to their poverty.	Individualist

44	Government corruption in developing countries is the cause of their poverty.	Individualist
45	The interests of the politicians in developing countries is what makes their countries poor.	Individualist
46	The poor in developing countries are naturally weak people.	Natural
47	The poor in developing countries are a result of survival of the fittest philosophy that makes the strongest more prosperous.	Natural
48	The world has not always been divided into rich and poor.	Natural
49	The rich are the same as the poor; they are just people and it isn't their fault they've got money.	Natural
50	In the same way that some animals are naturally weak, some people are naturally poor in developing countries.	Natural
51	It's just some people's lot to be poor. There's nothing we can do about it!	Natural
52	The fact that there are poor people is not fair, but this injustice is better than disorder.	Natural
53	There will always be rich and poor people; that's life.	Natural
54	If you get rid of the difference between rich and poor, you kill off any motivation to work.	Natural
55	God created the world so there would be rich and poor.	Natural
56	The existence of developing countries is an inevitable fact of life.	Natural
57	Inequalities between rich and developing countries make all of us poorer.	Self-responsibility
58	It is not fair that the populations of rich countries should contribute to reduce poverty in developing countries.	Self-responsibility
59	Allowing the oppression of the poor in developing countries goes against the spirit of society.	Self-responsibility
60	There would be no more poor people in developing countries if all the world's assets were well distributed.	Self-responsibility
61	It is not the responsibility of those that make the most money to share part of their profits with the poor in developing countries.	Self-responsibility
62	Poverty in developing countries is everyone's responsibility.	Self-responsibility
63	Developing countries deserve the social support of those in rich countries, not sanctions.	Self-responsibility
64	The inequality between rich and developing countries is a social problem.	Self-responsibility
65	In one way or another, we are all responsible for the poverty in developing countries.	Self-responsibility
66	The West has caused the poverty in developing countries by forcing them to live in a way they are not ready for.	Self-responsibility
67	The poor in developing countries are poor because they don't know how to tackle the problems that the people in the West put in their way.	Self-responsibility

TABLE 2. Empirical Theories on the Responsibility of the Situation in Developing Countries to Emerge From the Exploratory Analysis

Attribution	Category
External to developing countries	*Powers that Be Theory*: responsibility for poverty in developing countries lies with the economic and political powers in the developed countries.
	Self-responsibility Theory: responsibility for poverty in developing countries lies with all citizens in developed countries: poverty is the result of an erroneous social order.
Internal to developing countries	*Individualist Theory:* responsibility for poverty in developing countries is attributed to the developing countries themselves that do nothing to rid themselves of poverty.
External to the poor	*Naturalist Theory:* responsibility for poverty in developing countries lies in fate and the forces of nature; poverty is a natural fact of life, it has always existed and it will always exist.
Internal to the poor	*Cultural Theory:* responsibility for poverty in developing countries is attributed to the existing culture in the developing countries, which prevents them from developing.

studies. Age distribution was as follows: 148 participants (51.6%) were between 17 and 34, 89 (31%) between 35 and 49, and 50 (18.4%) between 50 and 76.

Measures

Helping behavior. This was a dichotomous variable. Participants were asked whether they helped developing countries in any way. Specifically, the following question was asked: Do you help the third world in any way? Possible responses were (1) Yes, (2) No. We selected a group of 150 (52.3%) people who claimed not to help developing countries in any way, and a group of 137 (47.7%) people who claimed they gave some type of help to these countries.

Commitment to help. Those who stated that they helped developing countries were then asked to indicate, from a list of 8 types of help, the way in which they gave their help. Specifically, they were asked to respond to the following: If you answered yes, please indicate what type of help you give: (1) I work as a volunteer in developing countries; (2) I work as a volunteer to help developing countries from Spain; (3) I sponsor a child in a developing country; (4) I contribute financially to a

TABLE 3. Results of the Synthesis of Knowledge Analysis: Synthesis of Knowledge of Responsibility for the Poverty in Developing Countries (SKRPDC) Questionnaire

Statement synthesis of knowledge	Authenticity	Polarity	Reliability
Naturalist Synthesis			0.89
In the same way that some animals are naturally weak, some people are naturally poor in developing countries.	5.59	0.42	
The existence of developing countries is an inevitable fact of life.	5.26	0.33	
It's just some people's lot to be poor. There's nothing we can do about it!	5.48	0.43	
God created the world so there would be rich and poor.	5.32	0.47	
Cultural Synthesis			0.80
The superstitions in developing countries prevent them from escaping from poverty.	5.18	0.32	
Poor countries cannot escape from poverty because of their cultural limitations.	5.13	0.31	
The cultural backwardness of poor countries is responsible for their poverty.	5.15	0.25	
Individualist Synthesis			0.93
The poor in developing countries let the first world manage their resources because they have no initiative of their own.	5.26	0.35	
The poor in developing countries could escape from their situation if they made an effort to reduce their poverty.	5.42	0.35	
Developing countries are underdeveloped because their populations have a passive attitude to life.	5.21	0.36	
The poor in developing countries prefer to take advantage of money from public funds and continue to live in poverty.	5.15	0.38	
The poor in developing countries are poor because they don't want to work.	5.38	0.44	

(*Continued*)

TABLE 3. (Continued)

Statement synthesis of knowledge	Authenticity	Polarity	Reliability
Self-Responsibility Synthesis			0.81
In one way or another, we are all responsible for the poverty in developing countries.	5.23	0.44	
There would be no more poor people in developing countries if all the world's assets were well distributed.	5.13	0.33	
It is the responsibility of those that make the most money to share part of their profits with the poor in developing countries.	4.72	0.34	
Powers that be Synthesis			0.89
The poverty in developing countries is a consequence of the exploitation of their resources by Western powers.	5.23	0.36	
Developing countries should be set free from the constraints of a development model that takes advantage of their resources.	5.02	0.28	
The precarious working conditions imposed by the multinationals prevent poor countries from getting rid of poverty.	5.15	0.34	
First world financial-economic institutions are responsible for the economic underdevelopment of the poor countries.	5.05	0.35	
Economic policies in the first world are responsible for poverty in developing countries.	5.07	0.34	

development NGO; (5) I donate 0.7% of my income tax return to developmental cooperation; (6) I shop in fair-trade establishments; (7) I contribute with sporadic donations to development NGOs; (8) I sign petitions against injustices in developing countries. These helping behaviors were grouped into three categories according to the degree and type of commitment to help they represented. In the context of studies on anti-poverty social movements, distinctions are made between various participation behaviors (Khanna, Posnett & Sandler, 1995; Weisbrod & Domínguez, 1986 Rose-Ackerman, 1996). On one hand, in differentiating according to resources contributed, participants are classified according to their financial donations to nonprofit organizations and their physical donations of time expressed in voluntary activity. On the other hand, there are social movements that, rather than requesting people to donate their resources, aim to sensitize and raise ethical awareness in anti-poverty behavior. This occurs by applying political pressure to governments and economic agents and attempting to change the system by which resources are distributed by increasing awareness in civil society. Their activities include demanding that governments donate 0.7% of their GNP to developing nations, signing petitions supporting fair, anti-poverty causes, or defending fair trade through personal consumption. Following this classification, the first category represented the lowest level of commitment ($N = 50$), and referred to financial help, which we termed "financial commitment." This category covered helping behaviors that gave money without any personal involvement, distanced from the reality in developing countries.

This first category comprised the following behaviors: sponsoring a child in a developing country, contributing sporadically through donations, and contributing financially to an NGO. The second category represented a ethical commitment, as it not only involved giving money, but also an element of politics or protest was implicit in the action ($N = 50$); we termed this category "political commitment." The following helping behaviors made up this category: I donate .7% of my income tax return to developmental cooperation; I shop in fair-trade establishments; I sign petitions against injustices in developing countries. Finally, the third category represented the highest commitment, whereby the person contributed through personal effort and time to developing countries ($N = 37$), which we termed "personal commitment." We included the following actions in this category: I work as a volunteer in developing countries; I work as a volunteer to help developing countries from Spain.

Beliefs about responsibility for poverty in developing countries (BRPDC). The questionnaire consisted of 20 items. Respondents indicated their agreement with the statements on a 6-point scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) (Table 4).

Results

Exploratory factor analysis was performed. Following Hintzman's (1986) model research proposal, we assumed fuzziness in the configuration of beliefs.

TABLE 4. Synthesis of Beliefs Questionnaire: Factor Solution and Correlations

Statement	Pattern matrix		
	F1	F2	F3
2.- In the same way that some animals are naturally weak, some people are naturally poor in developing countries.			.585
3.- The poverty in developing countries is a consequence of the exploitation of their resources by Western powers.		.730	
4.- Developing countries should be set free from the constraints of a development model that takes advantage of their resources.		.716	
7.- The poor in developing countries let the first world manage their resources because they have no initiative of their own.	.623		
8.- The superstitions in developing countries prevent them from escaping their poverty.	.669		
9.- The existence of developing countries is an inevitable fact of life.			.636
10.- The poor in developing countries could escape from their situation if they made an effort to reduce their poverty.	.646		
11.- The precarious working conditions imposed by the multinationals prevent poor countries from getting rid of poverty.		.730	
12.- First world financial-economic institutions are responsible for the economic underdevelopment of the developing countries.		.732	
13.- Developing countries are underdeveloped because their populations have a passive attitude to life.	.700		.552
14.- Countries cannot escape from poverty because of their cultural limitations.	.738		

	F1	F2	F3
15.- The cultural backwardness of developing countries is responsible for their poverty.	.719		
16.- Economic policies in the first world are responsible for poverty in developing countries		.697	
17.- It's just some people's lot to be poor. There's nothing we can do about it!			.711
18.- The poor in developing countries prefer to take advantage of money from public funds and continue to live in poverty.			.663
19.- The poor in developing countries are poor because they don't want to work.			.666
20.- God created the world so there would be rich and poor.			.734
Explained variance	28.267%	13.587%	8.067%
Alpha coefficient	.779	.776	.783

Intercorrelations Between Subscales

Subscales	F1	F2
F1: Cultural Theory	1	
F2: Powers that Be Theory	-.241(**)	1
F3: Individual Determinist Theory	.527(**)	-.359(**)

**The correlation is significant at the .01 level (bilateral).

The factor analysis therefore assumed non-orthogonality of the factors. The extraction method used was that of principle axis factoring. Direct oblimin rotation with Kaiser normalization was chosen, with Delta = 0. The reliability of the questionnaire was $\alpha = .622.$, following Kaiser's criterion. The criterion followed for each factor was to consider the items with a saturation of over .5 in the configuration matrix. The factor solution was structured around four factors, which taken together explained 51.449% of the variance. Item 1 did not meet the condition of saturation above .5 in any factor and was therefore eliminated. F4 was made up of two items, item 5 (factor loading .556) and item 6 (factor loading .739). Because the reliability of this factor was very low ($\alpha = .475$), these two items were also eliminated from the questionnaire. Once items 1, 5, and 6 had been removed, the reliability of the questionnaire improved to $\alpha = .676$. The resulting three factor solution explained 49.921% of the variance. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), we considered the saturation of the values of the pattern matrix. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5

The first hypothesis predicted internal and external attributions, based on both societal and individual factors. The pattern matrix was used as a reference to interpret the latent significance of the factors. Thus, F1 refers to the responsibility of developing countries' cultural limitations for their situation. These limitations prevent them from confronting their poverty more actively and efficiently, and consequently, we named this factor "Belief in Cultural Responsibility." This factor places the locus of attribution and responsibility for poverty with the actor. F2 refers to the responsibility for poverty of the powers that be in rich countries,

TABLE 5. Descriptive Statistics

Total sample and helping behavior	Total sample N = 287		Help N = 137		Do not help N = 150	
	M	SD	M	.SD	M	SD
F1: Cultural Theory	2.5322	.81546	2.4830	.85254	2.5772	.78019
F2: Powers That Be Theory	3.8498	.78753	3.9693	.77075	3.7407	.78937
F3: Individual Determinist Theory	1.8159	.69063	1.7409	.76987	1.8844	.60385

Level of commitment to help	Financial commitment N = 50		Political commitment N = 50		Personal commitment N = 37	
	M	SD	M	.SD	M	SD
F1: Cultural Theory	2.6300	.81182	2.6967	.82251	1.9955	.76828
F2: Powers That Be Theory	3.6840	.77837	4.1120	.77213	4.1622	.65462
F3: Individual Determinist Theory	1.9233	.80405	1.8000	.76783	1.4144	.62930

and attributes poverty to societal factors of the observer. It is these powers that are responsible for the observed situation; consequently, we named it the "Belief in Responsibility of the Powers that Be." Finally, F3 embraces the beliefs related to a natural law that determines a social order that necessarily requires the existence of both rich and poor. This would be an inevitable law at the societal level ("the existence of developing countries is a fact of life"). However, at an individual level, there is sufficient permeability to access wealth, and yet the poor do nothing to get out of the situation of poverty ("they are poor because they don't want to work"). It therefore reflects a locus of internal individual attribution, as poverty is explained by a disposition to remain poor, even though the poor are not responsible for their poverty as a society. We therefore termed this factor "Belief in Individual Determinist Responsibility."

Hypothesis 2 proposed that attributions of responsibility external to the actor based on external factors would be significantly higher than attributions of responsibility internal to the actor. The results partly confirm this hypothesis (Table 6). The factor of internal individual responsibility is not sufficiently consistent. However, the differences in the scores of the beliefs are significant. The data (Table 5) confirm that participants found the theory based on external societal factors (powers that be theory) to be more credible than the other two theories.

The ANOVA between the helping behavior and the beliefs (Table 7) confirms hypothesis 3, but not hypothesis 4. The results indicate that individuals who help, as compared with those who do not, attribute poverty to a greater extent to the observer, specifically, to the powers that be (Table 5). However, there are no differences in attribution of responsibility for poverty to the actor according to the type of helping behavior.

This result must be examined in greater depth however. We performed a variance analysis to check whether there were any differences in the attributions made by people that do not help and those that do, according to their commitment to help (Table 8).

TABLE 6. T test of the Related Samples Between the Implicit Theories on Poverty in Developing Countries

	t	df	Sig. (bilateral)
F2: Powers that be Theory F3: Natural Determinist Theory	28.245	286	.000
F1: Cultural Theory F2: Powers that be Theory	−17.676	286	.000
F1: Cultural Theory F3: Individual Determinist Theory	16.394	286	.000

TABLE 7. ANOVA With Helping Behavior and Commitment to Help

	Helping behavior			Commitment to help		
	df	F	p	*df*	F	p
F1: Cultural Theory	285	.956	.329	134	9.395	.000
F2: Powers that be Theory	285	6.146	.014	134	5.827	.004
F3: Individual Determinist Theory	285	3.117	.079	134	5.178	.007

TABLE 8. ANOVA Between Those That Do Not Help and Levels of Commitment to Help

	ANOVA no help and financial commitment			ANOVA no help and political commitment			ANOVA no help and personal commitment		
	df	F	p	*df*	F	p	*df*	F	p
F1: Cultural Theory	198	.168	.682	198	.855	.356	185	16.598	.000
F2: Powers that be Theory	198	.195	.660	198	8.388	.004	185	9.010	.003
F3: Individual Determinist Theory	198	.131	.718	198	.636	.426	185	17.686	.000

Results indicate, partially supporting hypothesis 4, that individuals who make a personal commitment to help, compared to those who do not help, are significantly less likely to believe in internal theories (Table 5).

Finally, the results confirm both hypotheses 5 and 6 (Table 8): The higher the commitment to help shown by the questionnaire respondents, the more likely they are to place responsibility for poverty with the powers that be. Tukey's post-hoc test revealed significant differences between the following degrees of commitment depending on the theories being tested: significant differences between financial and personal commitment (p = .001), and between political and personal commitment (p = .000), in relation to cultural responsibility. Thus, the less likely respondents were to believe in cultural responsibility, the greater their personal commitment to helping developing countries. The Tukey test on the belief of the responsibility of the powers that be indicated differences between the financial and political commitment groups (*p* = .013), and between the financial and personal commitment groups (*p* = .010). In both cases, a greater personal and political

commitment to help is significantly related to a greater belief that responsibility for poverty lies with the powers that be in rich countries.

Finally, Tukey's post-hoc test on the belief of the responsibility of individual determinism revealed significant differences between individuals with a financial commitment and those with a personal commitment ($p = .006$), and between political and personal commitment (p = .049). In both cases, personal commitment implied lower determinist attribution.

Discussion

The main aim of the study was to determine the representation of responsibility for poverty in the developing world from a first world perspective. To this end, we constructed a measurement instrument that takes into account the difference between the configuration represented by what the citizen knows and what he or she believes about poverty in developing countries. We followed Hintzman's (1986) model, which allows the distinction to be made between knowledge and beliefs. Hence, the results provide a representation of four dimensions at the knowledge level, and a second configuration of three dimensions at the beliefs level. We are thus able to verify that individuals' mental representation is different in the two spheres. Likewise, it enables us to reflect on the reasons why the mental configuration related to self-responsibility, present at the knowledge level, is not present at the beliefs level. The measurement instrument appears to have good content validity to analyze beliefs on poverty in the western world.

Our results coincide with previous attributional studies in attributing responsibility to factors internal and external to the actor. They therefore correspond with what was expected from the theory of attribution. In this line, as predicted in hypothesis 2, the results indicate a tendency to attribute responsibility for poverty in developing countries to the developed world. However, first world citizens have not interiorized the belief in their own self-responsibility for other countries' poverty. Furthermore, although they know that their lifestyle can cause this poverty, they prefer to believe that responsibility is external to themselves, yet internal to the societal condition of the developed world. In this way, they attribute responsibility to the institutions that represent development and welfare that they do not want to renounce (Belief in Responsibility of the Powers that Be). These results are in line with the negative-state relief model put forward by Cialdini, Kenrick, and Baumann (1982). According to this model, even though people know that the self-responsibility of citizens in the developed world is one way of explaining the situation in developing countries, they do not believe in this explanation and choose to place responsibility with another agent, thereby avoiding feelings of guilt. Our results are similar to findings of other studies (Hine & Montiel, 1999; Carr & MacLachan, 1998), particularly among people who help developing countries (Hine & Montiel, 1999; Campbell, Carr & McLachan, 2001). Our study incorporates a new factor, the knowledge of self-responsibility

as a cause of poverty, and therefore the potential possibility that this may be con-
figured as a belief. Previous studies had not provided evidence of this possibility
of individual internal attribution, partly because the measurement instruments
were mixed (developed world beliefs/developing world beliefs) and partly
because they did not distinguish between the structure of knowledge and the
structure of beliefs.

Our study did not find a pure dispositional belief of responsibility in relation
to Individual Determinism (F3). In contrast, the respondents articulated a belief
in which bad luck and dispositional factors are related to form part of the same
explanation (Belief in Individual Determinist Responsibility). This suggests a
configuration of poverty as inevitable to some extent, something about which the
actor can do nothing but which stems from both luck and individual disposition,
brought together by destiny.

The content and structure of the Belief in Cultural Responsibility (F1), on
the other hand, contrasts with findings from other studies. Harper and colleagues
(1990) and Hine and Montiel (1999) find explanations for attribution of responsi-
bility in wars or in government corruption. Our results do not reveal these mental
representations. This may be due to the way Hine and Montiel constructed their
measurement instrument. By taking into account the mental representation of the
developing world, direct experience of the problem leads to the configuration of
a representation that is different from that obtained when only first world perception
is evaluated. Our study examines these explanations in greater detail. Results
reveal a factor in which poverty is explained by the existence of a culture that is
predisposed to manage resources individually and collectively in a way that is
corrupt, inefficient, or conflictive. Harper's (1991) results include an attribution
in which domestic poverty is explained by cultural differences between individuals
in the same society. Our study suggests that people maintain these cultural differ-
ences to explain poverty. In this way, by comparing his or her own culture (that
of a developed country) with the culture in developing countries, the actor
explains poverty in terms of the limitations of the culture of the observed country.

The survey respondents are, in general, in agreement in attributing poverty
to the institutional and financial powers in the developed world. However, there
are differences between those who help and those who do not, and between the
levels of commitment to the help they offer. Individuals who help are more likely
to attribute responsibility for poverty to the powers that be than those who do not
help, as posited in hypothesis 3. This result coincides with other studies, such as
that of Campbell and colleagues (2001), who found a greater tendency among
those who help to attribute responsibility to factors of a social nature external to
the actor. The result also corresponds with the idea presented in Latané and Darley's
(1970) decision tree, and thus the observer's assumption of responsibility should
be related to a greater probability of offering help. The inverse relation, put forward
in hypothesis 4, was not confirmed. People who do not help do not attribute
responsibility for poverty to factors internal to the actor more intensely than

those who help. This may be because citizens focus their differences on what they believe could be the cause of poverty. The surveyed population does not believe responsibility for poverty lies in the distinguishing factors of citizens in poor countries. It is important to point out that attribution of poverty to factors internal to the actor is a belief that is negatively activated in the population studied. The differences between those who help and those who do not help arise in the dominant theory explaining the situation of poverty. Those who help have a stronger belief in the powers-that-be explanation. The results suggest that the attributions of individuals with a low level of commitment who offer financial help are no different from those who do not help. Therefore, hypothesis 6, which predicted significant differences in attributions according to level of commitment, is not supported.

Hypothesis 5, however, confirms the idea that the difference in commitment and involvement with helping may be due, in part, to the configuration of the beliefs with which poverty in developing countries is explained. The results therefore confirm the importance of commitment to help. Level of commitment has a significantly higher intensity in the attribution of responsibility to societal factors external to the actor, and significantly lower in the attribution of responsibility to both societal and individual factors external to the actor. Personal involvement with help is linked to the mental representation of attribution of the problem. Since the greater the commitment and involvement in the type of help, the more significant and intense will be the belief in the responsibility of the developed world, it is worth asking what types of help would stem from a belief in the developed world's self-responsibility for poverty in the developing world.

In summary, our study highlights the need for a measurement instrument centered on the developed world's beliefs about responsibility for poverty in the developing world. It is also important to underline the differentiation between structure of knowledge and structure of beliefs. This distinction stresses the idea that beliefs can be modified. Information and educational campaigns could therefore be addressed to the first world based on potential beliefs that can emerge from the structure of knowledge, such as the concept of self-responsibility for poverty. These data may be relevant to social actions of non-governmental organizations or to leaders of social movements. In this vein, our findings contribute to a better understanding of how helping behavior and beliefs about responsibility for poverty are linked. We have seen how the type and degree of commitment to help are related to greater intensity in the dominant belief in attributions to explain poverty. What is more outstanding, however, is the fact that there are no differences in the attributions made by individuals who help financially and those who do not. This demonstrates that giving financial help is a passive, distanced way of participating in resolving the problem of poverty.

Future research should examine how to put forward strategies to raise awareness and cooperation, addressed to achieving greater societal involvement in the problem

of poverty in developing countries. A further question to explore is whether strategies designed to encourage citizens to participate financially help to raise their awareness about the problem of poverty. The present study suggests that this is not the case, or not sufficiently so, but future studies could examine this idea in greater depth. Finally, although our objective to construct a questionnaire to evaluate beliefs about poverty in the developing world has been achieved, further studies are needed to confirm its validity to satisfy the development of improved knowledge on how beliefs about responsibility for poverty evolve, and their relationship with types of help.

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