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DOLE BLUDGERS OR ECONOMIC VICTIMS?
AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH LAY EXPLANATIONS
FOR UNEMPLOYMENT.

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of the requirements for the degree
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Tracey R Hodson

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ABSTRACT

Societal reactions to unemployment are linked, in part, to how the cause of unemployment is perceived. This study investigated the underlying structure, and determinants of lay explanations for unemployment in four socio-economic groups; namely student, retired, employed, and unemployed groups. The study examined which types of explanations were rated most important, and the extent to which demographic and personality factors were associated with the types of explanations endorsed. Results showed that overall, societal factors were rated most important, followed by individualistic, then fatalistic factors. Significant effects were found for group membership where individualistic factors were rated less important by the unemployed, societal factors were rated less important by students and the retired, while fatalistic factors were rated less important by the employed. Significant effects were found for education, religious activity, vote, and length of unemployment. The Protestant work ethic, conservatism, and belief in a 'just world' were related to individualistic explanations for unemployment. Findings were discussed with reference to the increase in unemployment, the influence of the media, and to developing public policy, and programmes in relation to unemployment.

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Societies throughout the Western world have traditionally placed much emphasis on paid employment. Consistent with this emphasis previous research has associated paid employment with a number of positive outcomes; these include an imposition of time structure, an opportunity for social interaction, and to develop identity and self esteem (Shirley, 1990). Also provided is an opportunity to participate in a legitimate relationship with society where individuals receive economic reward for their labour (Hartley, 1980).

Given the emphasis on paid employment it is not surprising that unemployment is associated with negative outcomes such as social stigmatisation and isolation. Such outcomes occur because the unemployed have traditionally deviated from the majority of the population who are "earning a living", or "making a worthwhile contribution to society" (Craig, Briar, Brosnan, & Obrien, 1992).

Such reactions to the unemployed are linked, in part, to how the cause of unemployment is perceived; specifically whether the cause is attributed to the person or society. Research which has examined commonly offered explanations for unemployment suggests that these lay explanations are multidimensional, and that such dimensions broadly pertain to individualistic, societal and fatalistic factors.

Research further suggests that lay explanations for social phenomena such as unemployment are associated with demographic factors such as age, sex, education,

employment status, length of unemployment and political vote. These explanations are also associated with personality factors such as conservatism, the belief in a 'just world', and the Protestant work ethic.

Lay explanations concerning the cause of unemployment are influenced by societal factors where underlying many official regulations is the notion that the unemployed should be spending time looking for work (Watts,1983). Furthermore, government policies to reduce unemployment, such as work and training schemes, implies that the unemployed lack the skills and training needed to get a job and are therefore responsible for their plight (Campion, 1992).

One factor which influences societal reactions to the unemployed is the level of unemployment. In times of full employment there is an expectation that everyone can obtain work. This gives rise to a tendency to blame the unemployed for their plight where failure to obtain work is attributed to factors such as lack of skill and low work motivation. This in turn contributes to the stereotyped "dole bludger" image (Shouksmith & Hesketh, 1984).

Previous research suggests that increased unemployment serves to promote more sympathetic attitudes towards the unemployed. This trend occurs because as unemployment increases so does public and media interest in its economic origins; factors which are beyond the control of individuals. Also increased in times of high unemployment is the probability that individuals from a wider range of backgrounds will be effected. Such socio-economic conditions make it more difficult for the unemployed

to be considered a deviant minority, or to be attributed as responsible for their plight (Kelvin, 1980).

The level of unemployment in New Zealand has increased markedly; from 4% in 1987 to 10% in 1992 (Dept. of Statistics, 1992). Hence, the focus of the present study was to investigate public perceptions about the responsibility for unemployment by determining whether the cause of unemployment is attributed to societal or individual factors. Such an investigation is deemed useful given that the development of social and economic policy, and programmes to assist the unemployed stems in part from how the cause of unemployment is perceived within the general population. The present study also investigated the extent to which lay explanations for unemployment were associated with demographic and personality factors with a view to extending the findings of previous research.

To follow is a review of previous research which has examined the underlying structure of lay explanations for social phenomena. Also reviewed are two psychological theories which provide useful conceptual frameworks within which to examine lay explanations for social phenomena; these are attribution theory and the theory of social representations. Following this is a review of societal factors which mediate these lay explanations, namely culture, the level of unemployment, and the mass media. This is followed by a review of the demographic and personality variables which have been associated with lay explanations for unemployment. Concluding this review are the objectives and hypotheses of the present study.

LAY EXPLANATIONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

Previous research has examined lay explanations for a range of social phenomena such as health and illness Herzlich (1976, cited in Furnham, 1982b), wealth (Forgas, Morris & Furnham, 1982), poverty (Feagin, 1972; Feather, 1974; Furnham, 1982b), and unemployment (Furnham, 1982c).

Research which has examined the underlying structure of lay explanations for social phenomena suggests that these explanations are multidimensional and that these dimensions broadly pertain to individualistic, societal, and fatalistic factors (Feagin, 1972 and Feather, 1974). Furnham (1982c) predicted that the structure of lay explanations for unemployment would be multidimensional, and that these dimensions would be labelled individualistic where the unemployed are regarded as responsible for their plight, societal where external or societal factors are seen as the major causes of unemployment, and fatalistic where unemployment is seen to be caused by fate, chance, or uncontrollable factors.

Furnham's study derived 5 factors, three of which contained items which loaded on more than one factor. A similar result was later obtained in a study of the wider Australian community (Heaven, 1989), and in Barbados (Payne & Furnham, 1990). Other studies have demonstrated that these factors can be combined (Webley & Wrigley, 1983) or further subdivided (Feather, 1982; Furnham, 1982a,b,c; Furnham & Hesketh, 1988; Lewis, Snell & Furnham, 1987). In using more specific explanations among certain groups alternative factors have been derived (Doring, 1984). Despite such terminology differences the threefold individualistic, societal and fatalistic classification system has received adequate support (Payne & Furnham, 1990).

Lay beliefs about social phenomena appear to form consistent and coherent patterns. Lewis & Furnham (1986) noted that the solutions people gave for social problems reflected the way they in which they explained the cause of such events where those who attributed the cause of poverty to individualistic factors were likely to advocate solutions that involved individual rather than social reform. Individuals are also consistent in the type of explanations they give for social phenomena to the extent individuals who explain the cause of poverty in individualistic terms tend to explain the cause of unemployment and wealth similarly (Furnham, 1982b).

To summarise, previous research suggests that lay explanations for events, such as unemployment, are multidimensional and that these dimensions broadly pertain to individualistic, societal, and fatalistic factors. A conceptual framework within which to examine lay explanations for social phenomena is provided in both attribution theory and the theory of social representations.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY AND THE THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

Attribution theory analyses how individuals judge the cause of their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. Variations of attribution theory share a common assumption that in seeking to make sense of their world, individuals attribute behaviour to either internal or external causes, and that is done in fairly logical ways (Myers, 1988).

Heider (1980) suggested that in making causal inferences about their own behaviour, individuals tend to view the cause in situational terms while when explaining the cause of another's behaviour there is a tendency to focus on the individual or trait factors. It is suggested that this is a result of the different perspectives held by the actor and observers of behaviour where actors are more aware of the impact of external factors while observers generally lack these situational cues Jones (1976, cited in Watson, 1982).

The tendency to overestimate the power of dispositional factors while underestimating the power of the situation when making causal inferences about the behaviour of others underlies what is commonly termed the 'fundamental attribution error'. Critics have suggested that while this attribution bias may occur it does not necessarily produce error. However, numerous experiments have found that the perceptual bias of the observer often does lead them to err in their judgement of others (Myers, 1988).

The attribution error is more likely to occur when making causal inferences for a negative event such as interpersonal conflict, poverty, or unemployment. For example, individuals will attribute their own unemployment to the unavailability of work, but will attribute the cause of another's unemployment to personal factors such as laziness, or inability. There

is evidence that this self serving bias operates to protect the self esteem of those experiencing undesirable outcomes such as unemployment (Schaufeli, 1988).

The attribution error is termed fundamental because it affects attitudes and actions towards groups such as the poor and unemployed (Pandey, Sinha, Kasha & Tripathi, 1982). Research suggests that those who attribute poverty or unemployment to personal dispositions tend to adopt less sympathetic, political positions than those who make more external attributions. It is suggested that the accuracy of these attributions may be less important than the consequences for the unemployed where the stereotyped "dole bludger" image is a function of the fundamental attribution error (Shouksmith & Hesketh, 1988). Other research suggests that an awareness of the fundamental attribution error may help correct negative reactions to such groups as the unemployed (Myers, 1988).

The type of explanations given for events such as unemployment can be understood not only as products of cognitive processes but as social products which reflect an individual's background and experience. These products, derived from socialising agents such as school, family, and the media, provide a framework for making sense out of the information encountered in daily life to guide thought and action (Feather, 1983; Moscovici, 1981).

The influence of socio-cultural factors on the type of explanations given for events such as unemployment is described in the theory of social representations. Farr & Moscovici (1984) define these as self concepts, statements, or explanations which originate in the course of daily life via inter-individual communication. Gaskell and Smith (1985) suggest

that the attributions made about events such as unemployment are manifestations of such broader ideologies or representations.

In reference to unemployment some may view the unemployed as lazy, unlucky or incompetent, while others may consider them to be the victims of economic downturn or of social injustice. These divergent viewpoints are attributed to respective social representations where the former emphasises personal responsibility, individual effort, and individual solutions to a problem. The latter representation alternatively emphasises social injustice, social responsibility, and collective solutions to a problem (Forgas, 1981; Moscovici, 1981).

Moscovici (1981) differentiated between social representation theory and attribution theory in suggesting that the latter explains how individuals attribute causes to events belonging to their experience. Such attributions are considered a product of perceptual or motivational processes within the individual. Social representation theory is alternatively concerned with how groups or individuals create a stable world from one which is diverse, unfamiliar and unpredictable by giving meaning to behaviors and events. This perception of reality is considered a product of socio-cultural factors.

To summarise, the theory of 'social representations' and attribution theory provide useful conceptual frameworks within which to examine lay explanations for social phenomena. It is further suggested that societal factors mediate lay explanations for social phenomena; such factors include culture, the level of unemployment and the media.

SOCIETAL FACTORS

Culture

Miller (1984) noted that in Western cultures the separation and independence of the agent from the context is underscored where the individual is treated as the primary unit of right and moral responsibility, and deviance is seen as arising from dispositional factors within the person.

Non Western cultures emphasise the openness and interdependence which characterises the individual's relationship with the environment. Deviance is thus viewed in interactional terms or as resulting from some disequilibrium in the person's relationship with the environment. Miller (1984) noted that such divergent cultural views are expressed in the individually centred practises of many Western cultures when dealing with mental illness, which contrasts the general absence of such practices in non Western cultures.

In reference to unemployment Howard (1984) suggested that an emphasis on individualistic explanations is likely in Western societies given the existence of a "you can do it", positive thinking culture, which assumes that with the right attitude and disposition, that anyone can succeed, or surmount any problem. Such a view would give rise to the assumption that individuals rather than the situation are the source of what happens.

Economic Factors

Cross national differences in lay explanations have also been examined to determine the extent to which pure economic factors influence lay economic beliefs. Furnham (1982c) found that the British rated societal explanations for poverty as important while Americans

and Australians favoured individualistic explanations. Payne & Furnham (1985) found that economic inequality accounted for numerous national differences in explanations for poverty in the West Indies. Furnham & Hesketh (1988) compared lay explanations for unemployment in the U.K. to those in New Zealand, and found that the former country placed more emphasis on societal explanations. This finding was attributed to the different national levels of unemployment. Furnham & Hesketh (1988) noted that longitudinal studies are useful to determine changes in lay explanations for unemployment at different times such as when the unemployment rate has significantly risen or fallen.

Research has demonstrated that as the level of unemployment increases, the tendency to endorse societal explanations for unemployment is generally increased (Furnham, 1982; Furnham & Hesketh, 1988). A reason for this is that a rise in unemployment is generally coupled with an increase in the range of individuals who constitute the unemployed. Hence, while the unemployed have traditionally included members of the working class the present day unemployed consist of a broad middle range of workers, among whom are technologists, managers, teachers, and public servants (Kelvin, 1980).

The increased number and diversity of individuals who make up the unemployed is in turn predicted to influence public and political attitudes towards the unemployed. Kelvin (1980) predicted that as the level of unemployment increases there will be a shift in attributing the cause of unemployment from the individual to the societal level. This will occur because as the unemployed become more representative of the normal population it will become increasingly difficult for the unemployed to be rejected, or to be attributed as responsible for their plight.

This change in attitudes has been described as an adaptation level phenomena where as the level of unemployment increases, individuals will become adapted to the possibility of unemployment among "ordinary" persons like themselves. The change in attitudes toward the unemployed has also been interpreted in the framework of self perception theory, Bem (1972, cited in Kelvin, 1980) where within the next generation of widespread structural unemployment, the term "unemployed" will become an accepted term of reference for young people as did "skilled" and "manual worker" for the previous generation. Stirling (1982) similarly suggested that unemployment will become part of the "process of organisational experience" rather than an isolated, abnormal event.

Media

A societal factor which influences lay explanations for unemployment is the media to the extent individuals seek a framework upon which to attach their views (Mosley,1983). Through the mass media the public are also informed about the economic and structural bases of unemployment (Payne & Furnham, 1985).

The media is also deemed instrumental in distracting attention from government policies which might be seen as being responsible for high unemployment levels. For example, Mosley (1983) showed how newspapers which supported varying political parties placed differing emphasis on unemployment with regard to its consequences, causes, and cures.

Lewis, Snell & Furnham (1987) similarly noted the role of editorial priorities in specifying the economic crisis of the day and their solution.

Golding & Middleton (1982) suggested that the media is instrumental in perpetuating the

popular myths which have surrounded the unemployed, for example that the unemployed are idle, poorly qualified, and content to live off welfare. Marsden (1982) noted that while these myths are based on a minority of cases their salience influences public attitudes towards the unemployed. Also noted is that such myths persist even in times of high unemployment suggesting that they may serve to protect the self esteem of individuals experiencing the change and confusion of increased unemployment (Deacon, 1978).

To summarise, previous research suggests that lay explanations for unemployment are mediated by societal factors such as culture, the level of unemployment, and the media. Research further suggests that lay explanations for unemployment are associated with demographic factors namely age, gender, education, employment status, and political vote.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

A) Age

Research which has examined the effects of age on lay economic beliefs has noted developmental trends in a child's economic thinking which involves a shift from conceiving the economic world in individualistic terms to understanding the complexity of economic systems and relationships.

Webley & Wrigley (1983) compared pre-adolescents and adolescents in their concept of unemployment by asking questions such as: Do unemployed people differ to those who have a job? What causes a person to be unemployed? Can men and women be unemployed? Would you like to be unemployed? Varying types of replies were attributed to different stages of conceptual development where intellectual maturity was suggested by greater complexity and elaboration of answers.

The study further found that when these explanations were categorised according to Furnham's a priori scheme that pre-adolescents generally gave an individualistic explanation which referred to undesirable features or characteristics within the person. In contrast, adolescents gave societal and fatalistic explanations which was attributed to their greater understanding of economic relationships.

Payne & Furnham, (1990) reported a marginal age difference in lay explanations for unemployment where younger respondents placed more emphasis on personal ability and possession of qualifications. Feather (1985) similarly found that secondary school students endorsed individualistic explanations for unemployment.

Feather (1983) suggested that students attribute the cause of unemployment to internal, dispositional factors such as lack of motivation, ability, and effort because they generally lack first hand experience of the work situation, of finding permanent employment, and of the problems associated with this. It is noted however that this tendency is as likely to be a function of the emphasis placed on motivation and achievement in the school environment, than a function of the observer effect.

Schaufeli (1988) found that causal attributions did not change as a function of a change in actual employment status where societal explanations were rated important both prior to and in the event of unemployment. Such a finding was attributed to economic factors such as the high local level of unemployment where as the threat of unemployment becomes more salient, a change in employment status has little effect (Warr, 1984). The emphasis on societal factors was also attributed to the sample which consisted of graduate students for whom the threat of unemployment was perhaps more salient than for younger respondents.

Feather (1983) found that public school boys, traditionally from richer middle class backgrounds, rated individualistic explanations as more important than comprehensive schoolboys who, traditionally from poorer backgrounds, rated societal explanations as more important. Similar findings emerged when comparing Public and Comprehensive school boys in their explanations for poverty (Furnham, 1982d).

Research in this area thus provides little support for the assumption that younger respondents will endorse individualistic explanations for unemployment as a function of

their observer perspective. Rather, the type of explanations endorsed by youth is mediated by factors such as socio-economic background, and the personal significance of unemployment implying that it is inappropriate to treat adolescents as a homogenous group when examining their social and economic beliefs.

Relevant to the present study is the finding that unemployment in New Zealand falls heavily on young workers with 15 to 24 year olds making up 42% of the unemployed (Dept. of Statistics, 1992). It was against this background that the present study examined the association between age and lay explanations for unemployment.

Fewer studies have specifically examined the effects of older age on lay explanations for unemployment. However, relevant to the present study is the finding that older age is associated with conservatism, a personality dimension which underlies a range of social and economic attitudes (Furnham, 1984c). Hence, it may be predicted that older people will rate concrete, individualistic factors as more important causes of unemployment than abstract, societal factors.

B) Gender

A large body of research has examined the extent to which males and females differ in their expectations and attributions for events belonging to their own experience. Some research suggests that where sex differences exist in generalised locus of control beliefs, that females are more external (Feather, 1983; Furnham & Lewis, 1986; O'Brien & Kabonoff, 1981).

Deaux (1984) proposed that such observed sex differences in causal attributions are a function of situational factors and socialisation experiences rather than reflecting enduring innate differences between males and females.

Observed sex differences in lay explanations for a general event such as unemployment have been attributed to social and economic factors. Furnham (1982c) found a difficult job market for females was associated with their tendency to rate discrimination and prejudice as important factors. Feather (1983) linked females holding lower expectations about finding employment to their disadvantage in gaining employment. Similarly, Furnham (1984) found that females, for whom unemployment was statistically more probable, made more external attributions about finding employment.

A study of lay explanations for unemployment in Barbados reported sex differences to the extent women scored significantly higher on the fatalistic factor (Payne & Furnham, 1990). This finding was attributed to the nature of woman's work in that country which was largely unskilled and therefore at higher risk of redundancy and regular seasonal unemployment. Furnham (1982c) found few significant sex differences in the U.K and attributed this to that country's relatively high level of sexual equality in work opportunity.

The above findings suggest that gender differences in causal attributions for unemployment are a function of socialisation experiences, gender relations, and perceptions of economic reality such as the differential unemployment rates for males and females.

Recent statistics suggest that 59% of the unemployed in New Zealand are male while 41%

of the unemployed are female (Dept. of Statistics, 1992). The percentage for women may be conservative however, given that a study by Shipley (1982) found that women were more likely than males to be underemployed (working less hours than they would prefer), and discouraged workers (would like a job but are not actively seeking work because they feel constrained by labour market, domestic, and personal factors).

It was against this background that the present study examined the association between gender and lay explanations for unemployment.

C) Education

Previous research suggests that type of educational training influences lay explanations for unemployment where social science students rated societal explanations as more important than business or technology students (Guimond, Begin and Palmer, 1989). This finding was attributed to the fact that social science emphasises the influence of societal forces on behaviour.

Of interest is whether the influence of educational training on lay explanations is a result of socialisation or of a self selection process. The latter hypothesises that an emphasis on external explanations is a result of liberal students being attracted to social science as opposed to being a result of training or socialisation.

Guimond & Palmer (1990) found that differences in attributions did not appear until after students had received academic training thereby supporting the socialisation hypothesis. They also found that the pattern of attributions became increasingly different as the level

of education increased where situational factors become more important for social science students though not for students in other academic fields.

A cognitive interpretation of this finding would suggest that students in different fields acquire different knowledge about the world which leads them to find different causes for social events. In contrast, a social interpretation would stress the role of peer pressure, conformity processes, and the influence of teachers.

Understanding how education effects social beliefs through political ideology is deemed useful given that the effects of education appear to be long lasting rather than affected by factors such as entering or leaving the job market (Guimond & Palmer, 1990).

In investigating the influence of length of educational training on lay explanations for unemployment Furnham (1982c) hypothesised that moderately educated (secondary schooling) and highly educated (university educated) persons would explain unemployment in societal and fatalistic terms while those with intermediate levels (some tertiary education) would explain unemployment in individualistic terms. This hypothesis was based on the findings of Feagin (1971), and Feather (1974) where an inverted 'u' relationship occurred between education and explanations for poverty.

Furnham's study found no evidence of such a relationship to the extent the lowest educated group rated both individualistic and societal explanations more highly than the highest education group. It was noted that the relationship between length of education and lay explanations for unemployment was only a matter of degree given that societal factors were

rated more important than individualistic factors in all groups.

The present study investigated the extent to which length of education was associated with lay explanations for unemployment with a view to contributing to the findings of previous research.

D) Employment Status

In investigating the effects of employment status on attributions for a general event such as unemployment research has predicted that the employed and unemployed will differ in their causal attributions as a function of their different perspectives (Jones & Nisbett, 1971). This prediction stems from an hypothesis within attribution theory which suggests that it becomes easier to blame the individual when judging failure in others, while when judging failure in oneself there is a tendency to attribute the cause to external factors.

Research which has investigated this hypothesis has generated mixed findings. In examining the effects of employment status on school leavers Feather & O'Brien (1986) found that unemployment led to an increased tendency to blame youth unemployment on factors such as recession, and a decreased tendency to blame it on lack of motivation; the reverse occurred for those who were employed.

Gurney (1981) found that while employed school leavers shifted to more internal attributions, the unemployed did not shift to more external attributions as expected. This finding would suggest that young people derive a sense of competence or self esteem from factors other than work, such as peer group or parental evaluation. Furnham (1982c) found

that employed respondents rated individualistic explanations as more important than the unemployed however this was only a matter of degree as both groups rated societal explanations more highly than individualistic explanations.

Breakwell (1983, cited in Webley & Wrigley, 1983) found that unemployed youth explained general unemployment in terms of the system but explained their own unemployment in terms of personal inadequacies. Those on youth training schemes did not see past unemployment as personally determined.

A longitudinal study by Schaufeli (1988) demonstrated that causal attributions did not change as a function of a change in actual employment status. This finding was attributed to the high local level of unemployment, and the sample which consisted of graduate students for whom the threat of unemployment was perhaps more salient.

Such findings then contradict the prediction that the employed and unemployed will differ in the type of explanations they endorse as a function of their different perspectives. Indeed, research shows that societal explanations tend to be rated highly by both the employed and unemployed suggesting that individuals in general, may be motivated to endorse external explanations as a defence against the possibility of becoming unemployed themselves (Furnham, 1982c).

The present study investigated the extent to which unemployment was associated with lay explanations for unemployment. On the basis of previous research it was predicted that that societal explanations would be rated more important than individualistic explanations

in all groups. However, the unemployed would rate individualistic explanations would be less important than the other groups because they would be motivated to avoid blame for a negative event such as unemployment.

E) Political Vote

Research which has investigated the influence of political vote on lay explanations for unemployment has generated mixed findings. Gaskell & Smith (1985) found political orientation to be a weak predictor of youths' attributions for unemployment. Lewis, Snell & Furnham (1987) found that Labour and Conservatives favoured economic explanations equally while Liberals gave more non economic explanations suggesting that Liberals believed the causes of unemployment to be more complex than Conservative or Labour voters. In contrast, Furnham (1982b) found that Liberals were more radical in their general views but more conservative in their economic attitudes.

Other research has derived more consistent findings where Conservative (right wing) voters endorsed individualistic explanations for unemployment while Labour (left wing) voters endorsed societal explanations (Furnham, 1981). Similar findings were obtained in investigating lay explanations for wealth (Forgas, Morris & Furnham, 1982), poverty (Furnham, 1982; Pandey et al, 1982; Wagstaff, 1983), unemployment (Furnham, 1982, 1984; Heaven, 1989), and suggestions to reduce unemployment (Heaven, 1990).

A comparison of lay explanations for unemployment in New Zealand and the U.K. found that individual explanations were largely endorsed by right wing (National) voters while left wing (Labour) voters rated less important explanations which referred to the policies

of the present government (Furnham & Hesketh, 1988; Heaven, 1989).

In light of these findings Furnham (1982c) suggested that Conservative voters are more likely to endorse individualistic explanations because they are traditionally middle class, wealthier, and less likely to become unemployed. It was suggested that Labour voters are more likely to endorse societal factors because they are traditionally working class, poorer, and more prone to unemployment.

The present study investigated the extent to which political preference was associated with lay explanations for unemployment. On the basis of previous research it was predicted that Labour voters would rate societal explanations as more important than individualistic explanations. In contrast, it was predicted that National (right wing) voters would rate individualistic explanations as more important.

SUMMARY

Much of the research which has investigated the association between demographic factors and lay explanations for unemployment has been cross sectional, therefore strong causal links cannot be established. This aside, some general findings have emerged.

Previous research suggests that younger respondents tend to endorse concrete, individualistic factors although this relationship is influenced by other factors such as the school environment, and socio-economic background. The influence of gender on lay explanations for unemployment is influenced by socio-economic factors where females, if disadvantaged in the job market, are more likely than males to endorse societal

explanations for unemployment. Job market factors also mediate the influence of employment status on lay explanations for unemployment where individuals in general rate societal explanations as more important as the level of unemployment increases. The effect of length of education on lay explanations for unemployment is unclear given that previous research findings have been mixed. Type of education appears to influence lay explanations for unemployment where societal factors are rated more important by social science students compared to students in other academic fields. Political vote influences lay explanations for unemployment where Conservative or right wing voters tend to rate individualistic explanations important while Labour or left wing voters rate these least important.

Such findings suggest that a complex relationship exists between demographic factors and lay explanations for unemployment where social, political and economic factors, particularly the perceived significance of unemployment, is influential.

In addition to investigating the demographic determinants of lay explanations for unemployment the literature has examined the influence of personality and trait factors. The next section reviews three salient personality dimensions, namely the Protestant work ethic, conservatism, and the belief in a 'just world'.

PERSONALITY FACTORS

A) Protestant Work Ethic

The theory of the Protestant work ethic (PWE), as conceived by Weber (1904), assumes that Godliness is achieved through hard work, and that work is means of discipline, a prescription against religious doubt, and is the purpose of life. The PWE has in turn been linked to behaviors such as hard work, ascetism, postponement of gratification, and thrift (Furnham & Muidheen, 1984).

MacDonald (1971) found that high PWE believers endorsed beliefs in social responsibility to the extent the source of injustice was seen as residing in the individual rather than in societal institutions. High PWE has also been linked to high levels of authoritarianism, expectancy for internal control (Mirels & Garrett, 1971), and to values such as ambition and self control (Feather, 1985).

The link between religion and the PWE was made by McClelland (1961, cited in Furnham, 1990) who suggested that PWE values were associated with certain child rearing practices such as mastery and independence training. Later research linked the PWE to affiliation with dominant ethnic and religious groups, and with having more conservative political views (Beit-Hallahmi, 1979; Chusmir & Koberg, 1988; Ray, 1982).

Ray (1982) described the PWE as an atheist ethic upon finding that non believers, atheists, and agnostics were more highly work and achievement orientated than denominational adherents. Giorgi & Marsh (1990) made reference to a modern work ethic which was vocational in that it offered opportunity for self expression and fulfillment.

Research which has investigated the relationship between the PWE and employment status has generated mixed findings. A cross sectional study by Feather (1982) found that unemployed males held lower PWE than their employed counterparts. A longitudinal study by Feather & O'Brien (1986) noted similar differences between the employed and unemployed on the PWE, and found that those who were employed then became unemployed showed a significant decrease in PWE while the reverse occurred for those who went from unemployment to employment.

Thompson (1984) linked the PWE to non work activities rather than to paid employment. Shamir (1986) alternatively demonstrated a spill-over effect where stable intellectual and motivational styles associated with the PWE in the occupational role were transferred to non work activities. This finding implies that the PWE is a relatively stable dispositional factor which endures throughout unemployment.

Consistent with these findings Feather (1982) suggested that to assume the unemployed have a lower PWE than the employed undermines the complex, social, political and economic forces which underlie present day unemployment. It was also suggested that this assumption does less than justice to the many unemployed people who are making an effort to find work.

The rise in unemployment throughout the Western world has invited speculation about the future of the work ethic. Kelvin (1980) predicted that the significance of work will be greatly reduced to the extent being unemployed will become an accepted and normal situation as opposed to a deviant one. Such an outcome seems likely given that strong

work ethic values in times of high unemployment would be inappropriate.

Furnham and Bland (1983) argued that there is no reason to expect the decline of the PWE if children in the Western world continue to be socialised in the traditional middle class values of independence, mastery, saving, and achievement.

In investigating the relationship between the PWE and social attitudes research has generated consistent findings where the PWE predicts negative attitudes towards social phenomena such as poverty (MacDonald, 1972; Mirrels & Garrett, 1971; Wagstaff, 1983), taxation (Furnham, 1983a, 1984b), and social security (Furnham, 1983b, 1984b, 1985a). In examining lay explanations for unemployment Furnham (1982c) and Feather & O'Brien (1987) linked a high PWE to negative, individualistic explanations such as laziness, and lack of ability. Such negative individualistic explanations for social phenomena are consistent with the emphasis on self reliance and hard work which underlies the PWE.

Given its salience as a predictor of attitudes toward social phenomena the present study investigated the extent to which the PWE was associated with lay explanations for unemployment. On the basis of previous research the present study predicted that high PWE would be associated with a tendency to rate individualistic factors as important causes of unemployment.

In addition to finding that the PWE determines lay explanations for unemployment, previous research suggests that lay explanations for unemployment are associated with other personality dimensions, namely conservatism, and the belief in a 'just world'.

B) Conservatism

Wilson (1973) defined conservatism as a general factor which underlies a wide range of social attitudes. Underlying the 'conservative attitudes syndrome' is a generalised susceptibility to experience threat or anxiety in the face of uncertainty. As a result individuals avoid both stimulus and response uncertainty, and this is reflected in their verbal attitudes and other aspects of behaviour.

Wilson (1973) suggested that conservative beliefs serve to simplify perceptual processes, needs, and feelings by suppressing these to rigid and simplistic codes of conduct thereby reducing the conflict and anxiety which would accompany an "awareness of the freedom to choose among alternative modes of action" (p.26).

Thus, characteristics which have been linked to conservatism include a fundamentalist religious orientation, political leanings that are pro establishment, a tendency to support the status quo, strict rules, punishments, and militarism, to be ethnocentric, intolerant of minority groups, and to prefer what is conventional, traditional, and familiar (Wilson, 1973).

Feather (1979) linked conservatism to values which involved attachment to rules and ego defense. These were labelled instrumental values such as cleanliness, politeness and obedience, and terminal values such as sense of accomplishment, family and national security, and salvation (Joe, Jones & Miller, 1981).

Other studies have linked conservatism to Protestant work ethic values such as hard work,

self discipline, denial of pleasure for its own sake, and individual activism (Feather, 1985; Feather, 1984; Furnham, 1984c; Furnham & Bland, 1983).

Research which has examined the relationship between conservatism and demographic factors has found that conservatism generally increases with age, is higher for females, and is lower for higher levels of education (Wilson, 1973; Feather, 1975). However, it seems that the relationship between conservatism and demographic factors is influenced by the context or subject matter Nelson (1988, cited in Smith & Walker, 1991).

In investigating the relationship between conservatism and social attitudes research has generated consistent findings where conservative values have predicted negative attitudes towards social phenomena such as taxation (Furnham, 1984), recipients of social security benefits (Furnham, 1985, 1983b), poverty (Feather, 1975), and unemployment (Feather, 1985).

Feather (1985) found values such as world peace, freedom, and equality were higher in importance for those who blamed unemployment on societal factors such as recession, social change, and defective job creation. Such values were lower in importance for those who blamed unemployment on individualistic factors such as lack of motivation, skill, and competence.

Such findings suggest that where equal opportunity is highly valued and competence devalued relative to other values, that structural rather than individualistic factors become more prominent explanations for social phenomena such as unemployment.

Feather (1979) suggested that it may be possible to manipulate attitudes and values to alter explanations for events in predictable ways. For example, by changing the relative importance of the value equality it may be possible to modify how individuals explain an event such as unemployment. Alternatively, it may be possible to modify an individual's values and attitudes by influencing how they explain events. Such manipulations may ultimately have the effect of modifying interconnected beliefs, attitudes, and values as well as an individual's own behaviour.

To summarise, the literature describes conservatism as a belief-attitude-value syndrome, which arises as a means by which individuals simplify, order, and control their external and internal worlds. This in turn gives rise to a tendency to focus on concrete, observable factors as opposed to abstract societal factors when explaining the cause of social phenomena.

Given its salience as a predictor of attitudes towards social phenomena the present study investigated the extent to which conservatism was associated with lay explanations for unemployment. On the basis of previous research it was predicted that conservatism will be associated with a tendency to rate individualistic factors as important causes of unemployment.

A personality dimension which is associated with both conservatism and the Protestant work ethic is the belief in a 'just world'. This personality dimension has similarly been associated with negative reactions to victims of misfortune such as the poor, and unemployed.

C) The Belief in a 'Just World'

The belief in a 'just world' (BJW) has been linked to a tendency to blame the individual rather than external factors for unjust or negative events such as unemployment (Lerner, 1980).

The theory of the BJW assumes that individuals are motivated to believe that people generally get what they deserve, in order to confront their own environment as though it were stable, orderly and predictable (Lerner & Miller, 1978). Hence, the belief that "I am a just person living in a just world" gives rise to an assumption that those who are punished must be deserving of their fate, while success is taken as a sign of virtue, and physical attractiveness as a sign of sensitivity and kindness (Rubin & Peplau, 1975).

Such observations led Heider (1958) to view the BJW as a pervasive cognitive tendency which stems from the general principle of cognitive balance where the coexistence of happiness and wickedness is disconcertant. Heider made a link between this balance principle and BJW in proposing that the relationship between goodness and happiness, and between wickedness and punishment is so strong that given one of these conditions the other is frequently assumed.

In reference to the development of the BJW Rubin & Peplau (1975) considered a number of interrelated approaches. The socialisation approach suggests that the BJW is fostered in children of the Western world through parents, literature, and through educational and religious institutions. The developmental approach suggests that for children to delay gratification in order to set and achieve goals they need to believe that will get the

outcomes they deserve. The cognitive approach suggests that children abandon the BJW as they mature and experience injustice in the world.

In examining personality factors research has found that the BJW is related to high levels of religiosity, authoritarianism, internal locus of control, and the Protestant work ethic (Smith & Green, 1984; Wagstaff, 1984).

In examining demographic correlates Smith & Green (1984) linked the BJW to perceptions of social inequality, social identity, and political preference. Other research has suggested that the BJW is mediated by the direct experience of injustice and has therefore predicted that BJW will be lower for women, older people, and the poor (Furnham & Procter, 1989; Rubin & Peplau, 1975).

Consistent with these predictions Furnham & Gunter (1984) found that the BJW was higher in those who were employed and retired while lower in those who were unemployed and employed part-time. Few significant findings have been obtained for sex or class suggesting that while less privileged groups encounter personal and social problems the prevailing ideological climate may not lead them to experience this as injustice. This phenomena is deemed less likely in societies which emphasise equality in many aspects of life (Rubin & Peplau, 1975).

Research suggests that a more consistent relationship exists between the BJW and social attitudes where high BJW has been linked to negative reactions to victims of misfortune such as the poor, and unemployed (Furnham & Gunter, 1984).

Such negative reactions have been attributed to the tendency of the BJW to support existing social institutions (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), and to the notion that individuals may avoid confronting the threat of misfortune by believing that it effects only those who are lesser in character than themselves. Watts (1983) alternatively suggested that a sense of guilt at an individual's own relative privilege might be alleviated by blaming a victim of misfortune.

While such forces motivate people to perceive justice in the world Lerner & Miller (1978) noted situational and individual variations in the perception of justice. For example, while people are more likely to see someone else's suffering as more deserving than their own, they are less likely to derogate a victim if they expect to be placed in a similar situation. The BJW has also been linked to altruistic behaviour when the help is relatively easy to provide, does not counter firmly entrenched social attitudes such as prejudice, and has the sanction of authority.

In reference to its social consequences Rubin & Peplau (1975) described the BJW as a double edged sword where on one hand the belief provides a basis for law and order and hard work. On the other hand the BJW may become a barrier to correcting real social injustices given the tendency to support existing political and social institutions.

Rubin & Peplau (1975) suggested that the BJW is conditioned by cultural phenomena such as religious, legal, and economic systems which prevail in society. They suggested that 'unjust world' beliefs are likely to be held in societies where there exists stratified, inflexible class or economic systems.

A cross cultural study by Furnham (1985b) found that English speaking South Africans held stronger BJW than their British equivalents. Furnham in turn proposed that the victims of apartheid are condemned in order to justify the apparent injustices in their society, and because such beliefs help individuals to cope with disturbing or threatening events they are retained and socialised into succeeding generations.

This would suggest that an individualist and societal functionalism underlies the BJW where the former is associated with personal pathology or experience, and the latter associated with societies or groups impressing certain beliefs in their own interests.

In reference to its conceptualisation and measurement Ashmed & Stewart (1985) described the BJW as a unitary trait although this is questionable given that psychological concepts are rarely unidimensional. Indeed, Furnham & Procter (1989) described three worlds. These were a 'just world' where people get what they deserve, an 'unjust world' where good is unrewarded or punished while evil succeeds, and a 'random world' where nothing occurs consistently.

Other research suggests that the BJW applies differently in different contexts where people may believe that some aspects of life are 'just' as in interpersonal relations, while unjust in others as in social and political happenings Paulhus (1983, cited in Furnham & Procter, 1988).

Lerner (1980) suggested that the BJW might be better conceptualised as an index of different styles that individuals use to maintain the BJW rather than a measure of the

degree to which they believe in a just world. This would imply that it may be easier to change or strengthen styles of thinking than stable dispositions.

To summarise, the above research suggests that the belief in a 'just world', conservatism, and the Protestant work ethic are personality factors which are associated with a tendency to blame individuals for their misfortune.

Given that these personality dimensions are salient predictors of attitudes towards social phenomena the present study investigated the extent to which these dimensions were associated with lay explanations for unemployment.

SUMMARY

Research which has investigated the underlying structure of lay explanations for unemployment suggests that these explanations are multidimensional and that these dimensions broadly pertain to individualistic, societal and fatalistic factors. A conceptual framework within which to examine lay explanations for unemployment is provided in both attribution theory and the theory of 'social representations'. Societal factors such as culture, the level of unemployment, and the media, are shown to influence lay explanations for unemployment. Research further suggests that demographic and personality factors are associated with lay explanations for unemployment.

THE PRESENT STUDY

A previous study of lay explanations for unemployment was conducted in New Zealand by Furnham & Hesketh (1988) who found that lay explanations for unemployment were multidimensional, and that these dimensions approximated the individualistic, societal, fatalistic categorisation of earlier research (Furnham, 1982).

In examining the importance attributed to these dimensions Furnham & Hesketh (1988) found that overall, societal explanations were rated more important than individualistic, and fatalistic explanations for unemployment.

The present study investigated the underlying structure, and the manifold determinants of lay explanations for unemployment at a time when the national level of unemployment has markedly increased. Since this increase has been coupled with increased public and media interest in the economic causes of unemployment it was expected that more importance will be placed on societal rather than individualistic factors as causes of unemployment.

The present study sought to extend the findings of previous research by investigating the importance attributed to individualistic, societal, and fatalistic explanations for unemployment in four socio-economic groups, namely student, retired, employed, and unemployed groups. Also investigated was the extent to which demographic and personality variables were associated with lay explanations for unemployment.

Based upon previous research findings the following hypotheses were investigated.

HYPOTHESIS 1.

It is predicted that lay explanations for unemployment will be multidimensional, and that the following dimensions will be identified: individualistic, societal, and fatalistic.

HYPOTHESIS 2.

It is predicted that in general, societal explanations for unemployment will be rated more important than individualistic explanations for unemployment.

HYPOTHESIS 3.

It is predicted that lay explanations for unemployment will be determined by group membership where the unemployed will rate individualistic explanations less important, and societal explanations more important than the student, retired, and employed groups.

HYPOTHESIS 4.

It is predicted that those who have been unemployed for longer will rate individualistic explanations less important, and societal explanations more important than those who have been unemployed for a shorter length of time.

HYPOTHESIS 5.

It is predicted that lay explanations for unemployment will differ according to age, sex, education, vote, and religiosity.

HYPOTHESIS 6.

It is predicted that higher Protestant work ethic, conservatism, and the belief in a 'just world' will be associated with a tendency to rate individualistic explanations important and societal explanations less important.

METHOD

SUBJECTS

A total of 202 subjects participated in the study. The sample consisted of 4 groups: students (n=50), retired (n=48), employed (n=48), and unemployed (n=56).

Group 1

50 first year undergraduate students were drawn from the halls of residence at Massey University. This group consisted of 24 females and 26 males. Their ages ranged from 18 to 22 yrs with a mean age of 18yrs (s.d.= 1.12).

Group 2

48 Retired subjects were drawn from local recreational and sporting clubs, and from members of the local Grey Power Organisation. This group consisted of 16 females and 32 males. Their ages ranged from 50 to 81yrs with a mean age of 67yrs (s.d.= 5.8).

Group 3

48 employed subjects were drawn from extra mural students who were enrolled in a 2nd year psychology course. Questionnaires were mailed to this group as part of a course information package. Of 100 questionnaires sent out 48 were returned giving a response rate of 48%. This group consisted of 13 males and 35 females. Their ages ranged from 20 to 56 yrs with a mean age of 34yrs (s.d.= 9.2).

Group 4

56 unemployed subjects were drawn from agencies and organisations in the community these included the Unemployed Rights Centre, a church organisation, and an Access Training Scheme. This group consisted of 32 males and 24 females. Their ages ranged from 17 to 49 years with a mean age of 30 yrs (s.d.= 9.0).

Overall 51% of the subjects were female. The ages of subjects ranged from 18 to 81yrs with an average age of 48 yrs (s.d.= 14.1) (Appendix B-1).

INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaire in this investigation consisted of two parts (see Appendix A).

Part A. measured demographic factors namely gender, age, level of education, employment status, length of unemployment, and political vote (see Appendix A-3).

Part B. measured personality factors namely the Protestant work ethic, conservatism, and belief in a 'just world'. Also included was the Explanations for Unemployment Scale (see Appendices A-4, A-5, A-6, A-7).

Protestant Work Ethic Scale (see Appendix A-4).

This scale was developed through item and factor analysis of data from 3 student samples (Mirrels and Garret, 1971). Items are attitude statements consistent with Protestant Ethic values such as industriousness, ascetism, and individualism. Examples include: Any person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding. Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusements. The self made person is likely to be more ethical than a person born to wealth.

The scale has 19 items, 3 of which are reversed scored. Responses are made on a 6 point (agree - disagree) continuum. The total scale score is obtained by summing across items; higher scores reflect an agreement with Protestant ethic ideals.

The scale is reported to have adequate internal consistency ($\alpha=.77$) and does not correlate significantly with the Crowne Marlowe scale of social desirability. Later work has revealed reasonable reliability coefficients (Kidron, 1978; Cook, Hepworth, Wall & Warr, 1981).

The scale has been used extensively in previous research investigating work related beliefs, (Furnham, 1982c), and correlates logically with other personality measures such as conservatism, authoritarianism, and internal locus of control.

Conservatism Scale (see Appendix A-5).

This scale was developed by Wilson & Patterson (1968), and consists of 50 brief concepts which represent a range of familiar and contentious social issues; examples include the death penalty, disarmament, right wing politics, and socialism. The items are rated on a 3 point scale (yes ? no)¹ which measures the extent to which respondents favour or believe in the concepts. Items are keyed in the direction of conservatism with scores ranging from 0 to 100.

Wilson & Patterson (1968) suggest that the brief item format of the scale reduces the influence of cognitive processes, grammatical confusion, and social desirability thus allowing respondents to indicate their position in relation to the items immediately

The scale is reported to be internally consistent, and to have high test re-test reliability (Wilson 1973). It has also been described as a reliable, and valid instrument (Furnham & Bland, 1983; Wilson, 1973).

Belief in a 'Just World' Scale (see Appendix A-6).

This scale was developed by Rubin and Peplau (1975) and measures an attitudinal continuum which ranges between total acceptance and total rejection of the notion that the world is a 'just place'. Half of the items refer to a 'just world' where good deeds are

¹ Positively and negatively scored items were presented in alternating order. 'Yes' to an odd number and 'No' to an even number were scored 2. Ambiguous responses were scored 1.

rewarded while the other half refer to an 'unjust world' where good deeds are no more likely to be rewarded than bad ones.

Respondents are required to indicate how much they agree or disagree with 20 items on a 6 point (agree - disagree) continuum. Scores are summed for all the items yielding a minimum score of 20 and a maximum of 120. Higher scores reflect affirmation of the 'justness' of ones world.

Items are reported to have a great deal of face validity since respondents are asked to agree or disagree with statements such as "basically the world is a just place" or "by and large people deserve what they get."

Explanations for Unemployment Scale (see Appendix A-7).

This scale was developed by Furnham (1982c) and has been used in previous research to examine lay explanations for unemployment. The scale consists of 20 items which represent a range of commonly offered explanations for unemployment. Respondents are required to rate each explanation for importance on a 7 point continuum with 1 indicating a most important, and 7 indicating a non important explanation.

The scale is shown to be multi dimensional (Furnham, 1982c), comprising three broad dimensions pertaining to individualistic, societal and fatalistic factors. Items pertaining to these dimensions are randomised throughout the questionnaire.

PROCEDURE

Subjects were recruited in person by the researcher, although in some cases the questionnaires were distributed by individuals other than the researcher to ease the process of distribution.

An introductory letter attached to the questionnaire outlined the aim of the research, and conditions of participation in the study (see Appendix A-1).

Ethical issues

It was assumed that subjects would be sensitive to questions about social and work related issues, hence it was important to emphasise the confidentiality, and anonymity of their responses to the questionnaire.

Before filling in the questionnaire subjects were asked to read and sign a consent form which indicated they understood the nature and purpose of the study (see Appendix A-2). Anonymity was ensured by requesting that subjects return these forms separately from their completed questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Data was loaded and analysed using the statistical package SPSSPC.

RESULTS

A) LAY EXPLANATIONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the 20 explanations for unemployment. These items were rated for importance on a 7 point scale which ranged from extremely important (1) to not important (7).

The means and standard deviations for the 20 items were presented in descending order of perceived importance (see Appendix B-2). The three explanations which were rated most important referred to world wide recession, the policies of the present government, and the policies of previous governments. The three explanations which were rated least important referred to weak trade unions, just bad luck, and lack of intelligence or ability among the unemployed.

To test the first hypothesis that lay explanations for unemployment will separate under distinct factors, a principal components analysis, followed by a varimax rotation was performed (see Table 1).

Table 1: Principal Components Analysis (varimax) rotation of Explanations for Unemployment Items.

Component	Item	Loading	Eigen	Var %
Individual	Too fussy/proud to accept some jobs	.72	4.96	24.8
	Lack of effort/laziness	.76		
	Don't try hard enough	.78		
	Lack intelligence/ability	.75		
	Can't adapt	.69		
	Can't move or travel	.72		
	Can earn enough money on dole	.70		
Societal	Strategies of previous governments	.84	2.76	13.8
	Strategies of present government	.78		
	Widespread automation	.58		
	Industries go bankrupt	.53		
	Trade unions priced members out of job	.53		
Societal/ Fatalistic	Immigrants	.72	1.62	8.1
	Sickness or physical handicap	.53		
	Weak trade unions	.72		

Table 1 shows that three components were extracted with eigenvalues > 1.00 which together accounted for 46.7% of the total variance. The first component was labelled negative, individualistic since it referred to factors such as lack of motivation, effort, and ability. This component contained 7 items and accounted for 24.8% of the total variance. The second component contained 5 items and was labelled societal since it referred to past and present government policy, automation, the closure of industry, and trade union demands. This component explained 13.8 % of the total variance. The third component was labelled societal/fatalistic since it referred to factors such as immigration, sickness, and weak trade unions. This component contained 3 items and explained 8.1 % of the total variance.

A reliability analysis of the three components produced alpha coefficients of .87 .61 and .59 respectively. Only the first component had moderate reliability at .87.

The mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha were calculated for the components for the groups separately (Appendix B-3) and for the sample overall (Table 2). The component means in Table 2 suggest most importance was attributed to the societal component ($m=3.23$), followed by the individualistic ($m=4.62$), then fatalistic component ($m= 4.71$).

Table 2: Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha for the components.

Component	Mean	s.d.	alpha
Individualistic	4.62	1.44	.87
Societal	3.23	1.23	.61
Fatalistic	4.71	1.45	.59

note 1=important 7=unimportant).

The mean component scores were calculated for each subject by summing scores on the items under each component. Individualistic factors were rated least important by the unemployed, societal factors were rated most important in all groups, while fatalistic factors were rated least important in all groups except the unemployed.

A one way ANOVA was performed to test for significant differences in the component scores as a function of group membership (see Table 3). Results showed that the unemployed scored lower on the individualistic component than the retired and employed ($F=2.98$ $df=3,191$ $p < .05$). Students and the the retired scored lower on the societal component than the employed and unemployed ($F=4.22$ $df=3,190$ $p < .05$). The employed scored lower on the fatalistic factor than the student, retired, and unemployed groups ($F=6.27$ $df=3,190$ $p < .05$).

Table 3: ANOVA (oneway) for components as a function of group.

Component	Student	Retired	Employed	Unemployed	F
Individual	4.41	4.26	4.66	5.05	2.98*
Societal	3.44	3.63	2.98	2.90	4.22*
Fatalistic	4.69	4.48	5.45	4.30	6.27*

(*p < .05)

C) DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Correlations were computed to investigate the association between the components and demographic factors (see Appendix B-4). Non significant correlations were found between age and the components.

A significant result was found between length of education and the fatalistic component (.28**) where fatalistic factors were rated less important as length of education increased.

A oneway ANOVA found a non significant result for gender (see Appendix B-5). A significant result was found for the religious factor where individualistic factors were rated more important (F=9.19 df=1,193 p<.05), as were fatalistic factors (F=5.36 df=1,192 p<.05) by those who belonged to a religious denomination (see Appendix B-6). A non significant effect was found for denomination type (see Appendix B-7).

A significant result was found for political vote (see Appendix B-8) where individualistic factors were rated more important by those who voted National as opposed to Labour or 'other' ($F=4.39$ $df=1,192$ $p<.05$).

A one way ANOVA was performed to test for significant differences in the component scores as a function of length of unemployment (see Table 4). Results showed that societal factors were rated less important by those who had been unemployed for the shortest period of time (1-3months) ($F=3.37$ $df=3,45$ $p <.05$).

Table 4: ANOVA (oneway) for the components as a function of length of unemployment.

Components	1-3mths		3-12mths		1 - 5 yrs		F
	(N=8)		(N=19)		(N = 23)		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Individual	4.57	1.74	4.91	1.92	5.22	1.30	.70
Societal	4.00	1.35	2.49	1.21	2.76	.93	3.37*
Fatalistic	4.58	1.36	4.79	1.90	3.96	1.40	1.83

(* $p <.05$).

D) PERSONALITY FACTORS

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the personality factors for the sample overall, and within groups (see Appendix B-9, B-10).

A oneway ANOVA was performed to test for significant differences in the personality factors as a function of group membership (see Appendix B-11). Results showed that students scored higher on the Protestant work ethic (PWE) than the employed, and that the retired scored higher on the PWE than all other groups ($F=5.64$ $df=1,191$ $p <.05$). The retired scored higher on conservatism than all other groups ($F=17.70$ $df= 3,192$ $p <.05$). Students scored higher on the belief in a 'just world' than the employed, while the unemployed scored higher than the employed, and the retired scored higher than all other groups ($F=7.13$ $df=3,187$ $p <.05$).

Correlations were then computed between the components and personality factors within groups (Appendix B-12). In all groups, except the retired, the PWE was significantly correlated with the individualistic component. A significant correlation occurred between the PWE and the fatalistic component in the employed group only ($-.46^{**}$).

A significant correlation occurred between conservatism and both the individualistic and societal components in the employed group only ($-.59^{**}$ $-.41^*$ respectively).

In all groups, except the retired, the BJW was significantly correlated with the individualistic component. A significant correlation occurred between the BJW and both the individualistic and fatalistic components in the employed group only ($-.59^{**}$ $-.54^{**}$ respectively).

Correlations were then computed between personality factors and the component scores for the sample overall (see Table 5).

Table 5: Correlations between personality factors and the components.

Components	Personality factors		
	PWE	CON	BJW
Individual	-.43**	-.33**	-.29**
Societal	.01	.09	.27**
Fatalistic	-.32**	-.29**	.08

(*p < .01)

(**p < .001)

Table 5. shows that for the sample overall a significant correlation occurred between the Protestant work ethic and both the individualistic and fatalistic components (-.43** -.32**). The correlations indicate a higher work ethic was associated with a tendency to rate individualistic and fatalistic factors important. A significant correlation occurred between conservatism and both the individualistic and fatalistic components (-.33** -.29**). The correlations indicate higher conservatism was associated with a tendency to rate individualistic and fatalistic factors important. Finally, a significant correlation occurred between the belief in a 'just world' and both the individualistic and societal components (-.29** .27**). The correlations indicate a higher 'just world' belief was associated with a tendency to rate individualistic factors important, and societal factors less important.

DISCUSSION

A limitation of this study pertained to the reliability of the dimensions derived for the explanations for unemployment. While the individualistic dimension had moderate reliability at .87, the reliabilities for the societal and fatalistic dimensions were low at .61 & .59 respectively. This limits the extent to which these dimensions can be correlated with other factors. It is with this in mind that the results of the present study should be considered.

A) LAY EXPLANATIONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

Based on the findings of previous research this study investigated the underlying structure of lay explanations for unemployment. A principal components analysis derived 3 components. Of these components the first was the most interpretable since it referred to individualistic factors such as motivation, effort, and competence. The second component was societal since it referred to the strategies of past and present governments, automation, the closure of industry, and trade unions. The third component was the least interpretable in that it referred to both societal and fatalistic factors such as immigration, sickness/physical handicap, and weak trade unions.

Since only the individualistic component was clearly interpretable the results of this study only partially support Furnham's a priori categorisation of lay explanations for unemployment. Such a result is not surprising however, given that previous research has also been unable to closely replicate Furnham's a priori categorisation (Heaven, 1989; Payne & Furnham, 1990).

Subsequently investigated were the means for the components to determine the relative importance attributed to individualistic, societal, and fatalistic factors as causes of unemployment. The direction of the means indicated that most importance was attributed to societal factors, followed by individualistic, then fatalistic factors.

This finding compares to that of Furnham and Hesketh (1988) who compared lay explanations for unemployment in New Zealand and the U.K. The study found that in both countries societal explanations were rated more important than individualistic explanations. It is likely that the increase in the level of unemployment in New Zealand since this time underlies the emphasis on societal explanations in this study.

Such an emphasis on societal explanations may support a prediction about a shift in attitudes towards work and unemployment in times of increased structural unemployment (Kelvin, 1980; Warr, 1984). This prediction is based on the assumption that as the level of unemployment increases, so does the range of individuals who make up the unemployed, making it more difficult for this sector of the population to be viewed a deviant minority, or to be attributed as responsible for their plight. Furthermore, an increase in the level of unemployment increases the probability that individuals will adapt to the possibility of unemployment among "ordinary persons" like themselves, and as a result the term "unemployed" will become more salient to their own self definition.

Such conditions in turn influence the way in which individuals attribute the cause of unemployment where the more the term "unemployed" has personal relevance for individuals the less likely they will be to endorse attributions which refer to personal

individualistic factors. This could also reflect a self serving tendency for individuals to avoid blame for negative events belonging to their experience.

This study subsequently investigated the mean ratings for each explanation to determine the relative importance attributed to each as a cause of unemployment. Results showed the three explanations which were rated most importance referred to world wide recession, and to the policies of past and present governments.

This finding compares to previous research (Furnham, 1982c; Furnham & Hesketh, 1988) and is likely to stem from recent media attention linking the cause of unemployment to government strategies, such as reduced spending and funding in industry, which has resulted in the loss of many jobs throughout the country.

Also noted in this study was the importance attributed to the individualistic item which suggested "poor qualifications among the unemployed". Furnham & Hesketh (1988) noted that while this might be considered a kinder view of the unemployed to the extent they are not just considered lazy, such a view is somewhat naive given that among the unemployed of today are individuals who are well qualified. Furnham & Hesketh (1988) further noted that in times of full employment individuals were able to get jobs with relatively fewer qualifications.

One factor which may underlie the emphasis on "lack qualifications" as a cause of unemployment is the media publicity given to government strategies designed to reduce unemployment. Among these strategies is the creation of work schemes which in turn

implies that the unemployed lack the skills or qualifications necessary to obtain work. This not only maintains the stigma that the unemployed have nothing to offer but does less than justice to the many highly skilled and highly motivated unemployed people who are seeking work (Campion,1992).

Another individualistic explanation which was rated important suggested that "unemployed people can earn more money on the dole". While such a view contradicts the financial hardship expressed by many who are unemployed it is perhaps not surprising. The media attention given to the problem of benefit fraud for example, implies that individuals are not only receiving income excess to their needs or entitlement but that such individuals would rather collect a benefit than work for a living.

Golding & Middleton (1982) similarly found that lack of incentive to work because of high unemployment benefits was a commonly cited cause of unemployment. Consistent with the findings of this study they found that recession and government policies were also commonly cited causes of unemployment.

B) GROUP FACTORS

This study investigated the importance attributed to individualistic, societal, and fatalistic explanations for unemployment in four socio-economic groups, namely student, retired, employed, and unemployed.

Results showed that the unemployed rated individualistic factors as less important than the other groups. Such a finding is consistent with the actor versus observer effect where

given the unemployed have first hand information of their situation, they are less likely to attribute the cause of unemployment to individual factors. It may also reflect a self serving tendency for individuals to avoid blame for a negative event, such as unemployment.

Results showed that the retired and student groups rated societal factors as less important than the employed and unemployed. It is likely that because paid employment is less significant to first year university students and the retired, that factors which may threaten existing jobs such as automation and the closure of industry are perceived as less salient causes of unemployment.

Results showed that the employed rated fatalistic factors as less important than the student, retired, and unemployed groups. This finding may suggest that because the employed are in the workforce they are less likely to be aware of or accept that fatalistic factors such as luck, immigration, or physical handicap can become significant barriers to obtaining employment.

C) DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

This study investigated the extent to which demographic variables were associated with lay explanations for unemployment. A non significant result was found for age which may suggest that the effect of age is mediated by other factors such as the personal significance of unemployment. A non significant result was also found for gender which may reflect a general perception that unemployment rates for males and females in New Zealand are not highly differentiated. However, it is likely that females may have been more sensitive to issues of discrimination, and would have rated these factors as important had they been

presented (Shipley, 1982).

A significant result was found for education where fatalistic factors were rated less important as length of education increased. While such a finding is not easy to interpret given that previous research findings have been inconsistent, it compares to that of Feather (1974) who found that fatalistic explanations for poverty were rated more important by those with higher levels of education. Consistent with the findings of previous research a significant effect was found for political vote where individualistic factors were rated more important by those who voted National as opposed to Labour or 'other'. This finding is consistent with National being described as a more conservative or right wing political orientation than Labour or other political orientations (Furnham & Hesketh, 1988).

Also investigated in this study was the extent to which the type of explanations endorsed differed as a function of length of unemployment. This association is of interest given that the long term unemployed have constituted an increasing proportion of the unemployed in New Zealand (Shipley, 1982).

As expected societal explanations were rated less important by those who had been employed for the shortest length of time. Such a finding supports the assumption that the longer a person is unemployed the more external they will be in their attributions for unemployment (Hayes & Nutman, 1981; Obrien & Kabanoff, 1979).

D) PERSONALITY FACTORS

A predictable pattern of findings emerged when examining the relationship between

personality factors and lay explanations for unemployment. Results showed a significant association between a high Protestant work ethic (PWE) and a tendency to rate individualistic factors as important. The tendency to attribute the cause of unemployment to individualistic factors such as lack of effort or competence is consistent with the emphasis on individual achievement and personal responsibility which underlies the PWE.

Results also showed a significant association between conservatism and a tendency to rate individualistic factors as important causes of unemployment. This finding, supports previous research, and the hypothesis of this study, that given the tendency for conservative individuals to value simplicity in life, they would be less tolerant of events or groups (such as the unemployed) who deviate from the "norm" or the majority in society.

An unexpected result was obtained where both the PWE and conservatism were associated with the fatalistic component; this contained three items which referred to immigrants, sickness, and weak trade unions. Though inconsistent with the emphasis on personal responsibility which underlies both the PWE and conservatism, this finding compares to that of Furnham (1982a) where a high PWE was associated with a tendency to rate chance or fatalistic factors as important causes of unemployment.

A significant correlation was also found between the belief in a 'just world' (BJW) and a tendency to rate individualistic factors as important, and societal factors as less important causes of unemployment. The tendency to blame the victims of misfortune such as the unemployed for their plight is consistent with the assumption underlying the BJW that individuals are motivated to believe that people generally get what they deserve in order to confront their own environment as though it were stable, orderly and predictable.

SOCIETAL FACTORS

The findings of this study are appropriately discussed with reference to the role of the media, and the increase in the national level of unemployment. In New Zealand the media has been instrumental in conveying a range of messages about unemployment, for example that jobs are available providing individuals are motivated and resourceful enough to seek the work. Furthermore, as was noted earlier, the media attention given to the creation of training schemes as a strategy to reduce unemployment implies that the unemployed lack the skills necessary to gain employment.

Alternatively, the media is instrumental in informing the public about a range of causes of unemployment particularly in times of increased unemployment where economic causes become more salient. Such causes include world wide recession, widespread automation, and government policy; factors which are beyond the control of individuals. Such sources of information have powerful effects and may account for the overall external bias found in this and previous studies where any self serving or 'just world' biases become reduced.

SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study may be discussed with reference to developing social and economic policy in relation to the unemployed. For example, the nature of such policy may depend partly on how the cause of unemployment is perceived. Policies which perceive the cause of unemployment as being voluntary for example, are likely to focus on instilling a greater work ethic in the unemployed, while the perception of a structural cause of unemployment might focus on changing the relationship between capital and labour.

It is further noted that the successful implementation of social and economic policy might depend partly on public support, implying that such policy might be usefully compared with lay beliefs about why unemployment exists. Thus, the relationship between lay explanations and economic policy is a two-way one where economic policy shapes lay explanations and is in turn moulded by them. It is further noted that this relationship is a complicated one where the media plays an important part.

The findings of this study may be further discussed with reference to programmes designed to assist the unemployed where the success of such programmes may be linked to the beliefs that individuals hold about their unemployment and the extent to which they believe causal factors are controllable and modifiable (Dancy, 1978). Attribution therapy might be considered an appropriate strategy where the goal is to alter the way individuals perceive their unemployment in ways which are beneficial to them Cook (1979, cited in Furnham, 1982c).

The emphasis on societal factors in this study may suggest a growing need to educate the public, particularly school leavers, about the realities of unemployment at a time when the job market is markedly reduced. Such education might usefully focus on helping people to cope with being unemployed, or on promoting a new definition of work which includes not just paid employment but a variety of other activities. Careers education would thus be geared toward developing skills, interests, and personal growth in alternative spheres of life rather than toward training people for (non-existent) jobs.

SUMMARY

In reference to the underlying structure of lay explanations for unemployment the findings of this study supported those of previous research where only the individualistic component was clearly interpretable.

Of the three dimensions derived, societal factors were rated most important, followed by the individualistic, then fatalistic factor. Overall, three societal factors were rated most important; these referred to world wide recession and the policies of past and present governments.

In examining the influence of group, individualistic factors were rated less important by the unemployed, societal factors as less important by students and the retired, and fatalistic factors as less important by the employed.

For demographic factors significant results were obtained for length of education, religious activity, vote, and length of unemployment.

Predictably and consistent with the findings of previous research higher Protestant work ethic, conservatism, and the belief in a 'just world' were associated with a tendency to rate individualistic factors as important causes of unemployment.

CONCLUSION

While this study investigated the extent to which the type of explanations endorsed differed as a function of group, demographic, and personality factors it is likely that lay explanations for unemployment are influenced by the targets of these explanations. Indeed, the stereotypes or assumptions held about members of a given social category as defined by gender, class or ethnicity are shown to influence the way such individuals are perceived or judged by others (Howard, 1984; Forgas & Morris, 1982).

Consistent with this view previous research has distinguished between, what society perceives as, the deserving and undeserving victims of misfortune (Golding & Middleton, 1982). In reference to the unemployed more sympathetic attitudes are likely to be held towards those who are unemployed as a result of redundancy, or of sickness or physical handicap. In contrast, less sympathetic attitudes are likely to be held toward those who appear to be able bodied, yet are unemployed.

While some groups in society may be blamed more than others for their unemployment, the findings of this study pointed to an overall external bias. This finding may have implications for social change, where societal interpretations lend themselves to challenge existing ideologies, and to facilitate structural reform in society. In contrast, to blame individuals for being out of work suggests little need for society to intervene or for the economy to be restructured to alleviate the problem of unemployment (Hesketh, 1982).

The emphasis on societal explanations in this study may be attributed to the increased level of unemployment throughout the country. However, there is evidence that many

unemployed people still feel a sense of shame and stigma even when the number of unemployed has increased, and when greater emphasis has been placed on the economic causes and personal consequences of unemployment (Shirley, 1990). Hence, the removal of the stigma associated with unemployment may ultimately depend on societal reform such as promoting a new definition of work or providing an environment where it is easier for individuals to create their own employment. Strategies such as working shorter hours, and job sharing may also be appropriate (Hesketh, 1982; Shouksmith & Hesketh, 1984).

It is likely that the emphasis on societal explanations in this study reflects a changing public opinion where unemployment is perceived as a structural rather than an individual problem. Ultimately however, societal reactions to unemployment may depend upon an interaction between social and political attitudes, a perception of what is economically possible, the locus of political power in society, and the extent to which those in power perceive unemployment as a structural rather than an individual problem.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.....Questionnaire

Appendix B..... Supplement to the results section.

Appendix A-1

Dear Participant,

Attitudes Towards Unemployment Survey

This survey is concerned with attitudes towards unemployment in New Zealand. Of interest is whether these attitudes have changed over the last 10 years with the increased level of unemployment in this country. The questions in this survey are largely concerned with social beliefs and attitudes towards work and unemployment. Respondents are also asked to provide some personal data. Overall, the questions take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

I would be grateful for your willingness to participate in this survey by completing the attached questionnaires. Your voluntary involvement in this survey will help achieve a balanced and representative view.

Research such as this is governed by ethical standards as laid down by the New Zealand Psychological Association. This means the questionnaire is **ENTIRELY ANONYMOUS**. All questionnaires have a code number and no names are required. The personal data will be used for statistical purposes only, which means all findings will be reported on the group of subjects as a whole. If you have any further questions concerning our procedures for maintaining confidentiality then please feel free to ask.

Please remember that you are under **NO OBLIGATION** to answer any of the questions that follow and you may skip any question that you wish to.

Feedback of the results of this survey may be obtained by filling out the 'request for feedback' section of the consent form that follows this introduction. Please remove this form from the questionnaire and hand it in separately in order to maintain confidentiality.

Should you have any further questions concerning this research then please feel free to contact me by leaving a message at the Psychology Department at Massey University.

Thank you for your time and cooperation. It is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Hodson
Graduate student.

Appendix A-2.CONSENT FORM

I _____ (full name) agree to take part in the study described in the introduction to this questionnaire.

The nature and purpose of this study have been explained to my satisfaction.

- I understand that the questions are largely concerned with social beliefs and attitudes towards work and unemployment.
- I understand that my responses are anonymous and confidential.
- I understand that I can skip any question that I wish to.
- I understand that I can get feedback of the results of this study by filling in my name and address below.
- I understand that the researchers conducting this study unequivocally guarantee that this sheet with my name on it will be kept in a secure place and that my name will not be linked with my questionnaire answers by any person.

_____ (signature) _____ date

"I would like some feedback about the results of this study"

_____ yes

_____ no

if 'yes' then please fill in your name and address below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

(PLEASE HAND THIS SHEET IN SEPARATELY FROM YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY)

Appendix A-3.Background Information (CONFIDENTIAL).

1. Your sex? male female (please tick one)
 2. Your age? _____ years
 3. Years of educational training:
 - a) Primary education? _____ years
 - b) Secondary education? _____ years
 - c) Tertiary education? _____ years
 4. Your current employment status? (if appropriate tick more than one)
 - employed full-time
 - employed part-time
 - student (full-time)
 - student (part-time)
 - houseperson
 - retired
 - registered as unemployed
 - other (please specify _____)
 5. What is your main or current occupation? _____ (Write NA if not applicable)
 6. How long have you been in your current job? (Write NA if not applicable)
 - _____ months
 - _____ years
 7. Do you personally know anyone who is currently unemployed?
 - yes
 - no
 8. Have you ever been unemployed yourself?
 - yes
 - no
- If 'yes', for how long were you most recently unemployed?
- _____ months
 - _____ years

9. Have you ever received a benefit?

yes

no

If 'yes', please specify which type of benefit you received.

10. Religious activity:

a. How often do you attend some kind of formal church service?

often

occasionally

rarely or not at all

b. How often do you practice some form of prayer or meditation?

often

occasionally

rarely or not at all

c. How often do you participate in some church-related group or activity?

often

occasionally

rarely or not at all

11. Do you identify with any religious denomination?

yes

no

If 'yes', would you describe yourself as:

Catholic

Protestant

other (please specify _____)

12. At the last election did you:

vote National

vote Labour

other (please specify _____)

Appendix A-4.**Work values and beliefs survey****Directions:**

Below is a series of items relating to work values and beliefs. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each item by circling the appropriate number.

Each number has this meaning:

- 1 = Disagree strongly
- 2 = Disagree moderately
- 3 = Disagree slightly
- 4 = Agree slightly
- 5 = Agree moderately
- 6 = Agree strongly

		Disagree strongly					Agree strongly
1	Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusements	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	Our society would have fewer problems if people had less leisure time	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	Money acquired easily is usually spent unwisely	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	There are few satisfactions equal to the realization that one has done his or her best at a job	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	The most difficult tasks usually turn out to be the most rewarding	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Most people who don't succeed in life are just lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	A self-made person is likely to be more ethical than a person born to wealth	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I often feel I would be more successful if I sacrificed certain pleasures	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation	1	2	3	4	5	6

Each number has this meaning:

- 1 = Disagree strongly
- 2 = Disagree moderately
- 3 = Disagree slightly
- 4 = Agree slightly
- 5 = Agree moderately
- 6 = Agree strongly

		Disagree strongly					Agree strongly
10	Any person who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	People who fail at a job have usually not tried hard enough	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	Life would have very little meaning if we never had to suffer	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	Hard work offers little guarantee of success	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	The credit card is a ticket to careless spending	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	A person who can approach an unpleasant task with enthusiasm is the person who gets ahead	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	People who work hard enough are likely to make a good life for themselves	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	I feel uneasy when there is little work for me to do	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	A distaste for hard work usually reflects a weakness of character	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix A-5.

Social Attitudes Survey

Directions: The items below represent various social concepts. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each by circling "yes" or "no". If absolutely uncertain circle "?". There are no right or wrong answers. Please just give your first reaction to each item.

- | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1. The Death Penalty | Yes ? No | 26. Computer music | Yes ? No |
| 2. Evolution Theory | Yes ? No | 27. Chastity | Yes ? No |
| 3. School uniforms | Yes ? No | 28. Fluoridation | Yes ? No |
| 4. Striptease shows | Yes ? No | 29. Royalty | Yes ? No |
| 5. Sabbath observance | Yes ? No | 30. Women judges | Yes ? No |
| 6. Beatniks | Yes ? No | 31. Conventional clothes | Yes ? No |
| 7. Patriotism | Yes ? No | 32. Teenage drivers | Yes ? No |
| 8. Modern art | Yes ? No | 33. Apartheid | Yes ? No |
| 9. Self-denial | Yes ? No | 34. Nudist camps | Yes ? No |
| 10. Working mothers | Yes ? No | 35. Church authority | Yes ? No |
| 11. Horoscopes | Yes ? No | 36. Disarmament | Yes ? No |
| 12. Birth control | Yes ? No | 37. Censorship | Yes ? No |
| 13. Military drill | Yes ? No | 38. White lies | Yes ? No |
| 14. Co-education | Yes ? No | 39. Birching | Yes ? No |
| 15. Divine law | Yes ? No | 40. Mixed marriages | Yes ? No |
| 16. Socialism | Yes ? No | 41. Strict rules | Yes ? No |
| 17. White superiority | Yes ? No | 42. Jazz | Yes ? No |
| 18. Cousin marriage | Yes ? No | 43. Straitjackets | Yes ? No |
| 19. Moral training | Yes ? No | 44. Casual living | Yes ? No |
| 20. Suicide | Yes ? No | 45. Learning Latin | Yes ? No |
| 21. Chaperons | Yes ? No | 46. Divorce | Yes ? No |
| 22. Legalised abortion | Yes ? No | 47. Inborn conscience | Yes ? No |
| 23. Empire building | Yes ? No | 48. Coloured immigration | Yes ? No |
| 24. Student pranks | Yes ? No | 49. Bible truth | Yes ? No |
| 25. Licensing laws | Yes ? No | 50. Pyjama parties. | Yes ? No |

Appendix A-6.

Social Beliefs Survey

Directions: Below is a series of items which represent a range of social beliefs. Please indicate your level of agreement with each item by writing your choice in the box to the right.

Each number has this meaning:

- 1 = disagree very much
- 2 = disagree somewhat
- 3 = disagree slightly
- 4 = agree slightly
- 5 = agree somewhat
- 6 = agree very much

Your Choice
1 - 6

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Good deeds often go unnoticed and unrewarded. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | When parents punish their children it is always for a good reason | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | It is rare for an innocent person to be wrongly sent to prison | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | People who get "lucky breaks" have usually earned their good fortune. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | Students almost always deserve the grade they receive in school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | It is often impossible for a person to get a fair trial in this country | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Careful drivers are just as likely to get hurt in traffic accidents as careless ones | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | People who keep in shape have little chance of suffering a heart attack | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | Crime doesn't pay | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | In professional sports, many fouls never get called by the referee. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Each number has this meaning:

- 1 = disagree very much
- 2 = disagree somewhat
- 3 = disagree slightly
- 4 = agree slightly
- 5 = agree somewhat
- 6 = agree very much

- 11. Those who are evil may hold political power for a while, but in the end good wins out
- 12. People who meet with misfortune have often brought it on themselves
- 13. Basically, the world is a just place
- 14. I've found that a person rarely deserves the reputation he or she has
- 15. The political candidate who sticks up for his or her principles rarely gets elected
- 16. By and large, people deserve what they get
- 17. Parents tend to overlook the things most to be admired in their children
- 18. In any business or profession, people who do their job well will get to the top
- 19. Many people suffer through absolutely no fault of their own
- 20. It is a common occurrence for a guilty person to get off free in New Zealand courts

Appendix A-7.

Explanations for Unemployment Scale

Directions: The items below represent a range of explanations given for unemployment. Using the scale below, please indicate how important you rate each of these as an explanation for unemployment.

Important explanation Unimportant explanation
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- | | | Your Choice
1 - 7 |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | World wide recession and inflation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Incompetent industrial management with poor planning | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | The introduction of widespread automation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Inefficient and less competitive industries go bankrupt | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Poor education and qualifications among unemployed people | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | The policies and strategies of previous governments in this country | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | The policies and strategies of the present government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | Unemployed people are too fussy and proud to accept some jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Too many jobs are given to immigrant or expatriate workers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Lack of effort and laziness among unemployed people | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Unemployed people don't try hard enough to get jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Lack of intelligence or ability among the unemployed | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Important explanation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Unimportant explanation
		Your choice 1 - 7
13	Weak trade unions that do not fight to keep jobs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Overmanning in industry which has occurred for too long.	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Trade unions have priced members out of jobs by demanding wages that are too high	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	The inability of unemployed people to adapt to new conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	The unwillingness of unemployed people to move or travel far to places of work	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Sickness and physical handicap among unemployed people	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Unemployed people can earn more money on social security or welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Just bad luck	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank You

APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENT TO THE RESULTS

Table B-1: Age and sex of subjects within groups.

Group	Age		Sex	
	Mean	S.D.	Male	Female
Student	18yrs	1.12	n=26	n=24
Retired	67yrs	5.81	n=32	n=16
Employed	34yrs	9.21	n=13	n=35
Unemployed	30yrs	9.0	n=32	n=24

Table B-2: Means and standard deviations for the explanations for unemployment.

Item	Explanation	M	S.D.
1	World wide recession and inflation	2.72	1.73
7	Policies of past government	2.89	1.77
6	Policies of previous government	3.08	1.63
3	Widespread automation	3.24	1.94
5	Poor education & qualifications	3.52	2.08
2	Incompetent industrial management	3.59	1.67
4	Industries go bankrupt	3.71	1.83
14	Overmanning in industry	4.21	1.73
19	Can earn more money on dole	4.23	2.21
15	Trade unions price members out of jobs	4.24	1.75
9	Expatriate workers	4.38	2.11
16	Unemployed can't adapt to new conditions	4.52	1.73
17	Unemployed don't want to move	4.58	1.86
10	Lack of effort, laziness	4.60	1.97
8	Unemployed too fussy	4.68	1.87
11	Unemployed don't try hard enough	4.69	1.93
18	Sickness & physical handicap	4.82	1.98
13	Weak trade unions	4.91	1.79
20	Just bad luck	4.91	2.17
12	Lack of intelligence or ability	4.95	1.80

note: items are in descending order of perceived importance.

Table B-3: Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha for components within groups.

Component		Student	Retired	Employed	Unemployed
Individual	M	4.41	4.26	4.66	5.05
	S.D.	1.10	1.26	1.63	1.66
	Alpha	.80	.77	.91	.92
Societal	M	3.44	3.63	2.98	2.89
	S.D.	.77	1.62	1.04	1.23
	Alpha	-.01	.75	.60	.68
Fatalistic	M	4.69	4.48	5.45	4.30
	S.D.	1.16	1.36	1.35	1.64
	Alpha	.52	.43	.65	.61

Table B-4: Correlations between components and demographic factors.

Component	Age	Education
Individualistic	.09	.03
Societal	.24	-.03
Fatalistic	.25	.28**

(* p <.01)

(** P <.001)

Table B-5: ANOVA (oneway) for components as a function of gender.

Component	Male (n=99)		Female (n=103)		F
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Individualistic	4.45	1.45	4.78	1.42	2.54
Societal	3.15	1.31	3.31	1.14	.77
Fatalistic	4.58	1.58	4.83	1.33	1.37

(* p <.05)

Table B-6: ANOVA (oneway) for components as a function of belonging to a religious denomination.

Component	Yes		No		F
	n=115		n=80		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Individual	4.36	1.37	4.98	1.48	9.19*
Societal	3.20	1.25	3.27	1.20	.16
Fatalistic	4.51	1.45	5.00	1.41	5.36*

(*p < .05).

Table B-7: ANOVA (oneway) for components as a function of denomination type.

Component	Catholic		Protestant		Other		F
	n=29		n=49		n=40		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Individual	4.28	1.34	4.31	1.41	4.56	1.29	.48
Societal	3.46	1.21	2.99	1.27	3.28	1.29	1.41
Fatalistic	4.52	1.40	4.86	1.38	4.14	1.50	2.70

(* p <.05)

Table B-8: ANOVA (oneway) for components as a function of vote.

Component	Labour		National		Other		F
	n=46		n=53		n=96		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Individual	4.25	1.14	5.07	1.56	4.54	1.45	4.39*
Societal	3.37	1.32	3.32	1.36	3.11	1.04	.89
Fatalistic	4.72	1.46	5.02	1.53	4.54	1.39	1.88

(*p < .05).

Table B-9: Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha for personality factors.

	Mean	S.D.	Alpha
PWE	3.63	.54	.66
BJW	3.32	.57	.70
CON	.90	.27	.67

Table B-10: Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha for personality factors by group.

		Student	Retired	Employed	Unemployed
PWE	M	3.76	4.05	3.51	3.68
	S.D.	.45	.76	.76	.74
	Alpha	.68	.83	.74	.82
CON	M	.87	1.12	.81	3.68
	S.D.	.21	.25	.25	.74
	Alpha	.53	.65	.63	.69
BJW	M	3.65	3.98	3.46	3.66
	S.D.	.47	.65	.51	.52
	Alpha	.56	.76	.61	.55

Table B-11: ANOVA (oneway) for personality factors by group.

	Student	Retired	Employed	Unemployed	F
PWE	3.76	4.05	3.51	3.68	5.64*
CON	.57	1.12	.81	.81	17.70*
BJW	3.65	3.98	3.46	3.66	7.13*

(*p <.05)

Table B-12: Correlations between personality factors and components within groups.

Group	Component	PWE	CON	BJW
Student	Individual	-.54**	-.22	-.41*
	Societal	.26	.14	.06
	Fatalistic	-.09	-.17	-.05
Retired	Individual	-.28	-.22	-.14
	Societal	-.00	.15	.14
	Fatalistic	-.24	-.13	-.16
Employed	Individual	-.54**	-.59**	-.59**
	Societal	-.33	-.10	-.03
	Fatalistic	-.46**	-.41*	-.54**
Unemployed	Individual	-.42**	-.11	-.31
	Societal	-.17	-.05	.06
	Fatalistic	-.32	-.41	-.10

(*p <.01)

(**p <.001)