

Saying Sorry: Shifting Obligation After Conciliatory Acts Satisfies Perpetrator Group Members

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Abstract

How are intergroup conciliatory acts (apologies and reparations) evaluated by members of the perpetrator group offering them? This research tests whether these outcomes can be predicted by *obligation shifting*: the perception that a conciliatory act has shifted the onus away from the perpetrators and onto the victim group. Four experiments in different contexts examined three possible outcomes for members of the perpetrator group: satisfaction with the act, negative feelings towards the victims, and support for future assistance. Across all four experiments, perceptions of obligation shifting predicted satisfaction with conciliatory acts, as did the perception that the ingroup's image had improved. Furthermore, obligation shifting alone related to more negative feelings about the victims and predicted reduced support for further acts of assistance. Image improvement perceptions did not show these effects, and sometimes were related to less negative feelings about the victims. Directly manipulating impressions of obligation shifting and image improvement (Experiment 3) showed these relationships were causal. When there were differences between types of acts on the three outcome variables, obligation shifting and image perceptions mediated these relationships. The negative implications of obligation shifting, as well as the more encouraging role of image improvement perceptions, are discussed.

Keywords: obligation shifting, apologies, reparations, image improvement, satisfaction

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In conflict, dwelling on past wrongs can be a psychological barrier to reconciliation (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006; Scheff, 1994). This is clear from the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, which are fed by memories of past wrongdoings by both sides (Chrighton & Iver, 1991; Lundy & McGovern, 2010). But it can also be difficult to develop positive relations between groups just by ignoring the past. Increasingly often, leaders recognize their nations' bygone wrongdoings through intergroup conciliatory acts – such as official verbal apologies or offers of reparation (Brooks, 1999; Oliner, 2008). This makes it urgent to understand the potential outcomes of such acts for intergroup relations.

Most existing research on the effectiveness of intergroup conciliatory acts has focused on the reactions of the victim group — with mixed results. Apologies from an official source appear to have no effect on victim group members' forgiveness (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008), which is troubling given that forgiveness is an important predictor of reconciliation after conflict (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008). However, other research has also suggested that offers of help from transgressor group members can increase willingness to reconcile, so long as there is a high level of trust toward the transgressing group (cf. Nadler & Liviatan, 2006).

Other factors can also influence a victim group's satisfaction with a verbal apology: which emotions are expressed, (Giner-Sorolla, Castano, Espinosa, & Brown, 2008; Giner-Sorolla, Kamau, & Castano, 2010) and how many elements the apology includes, including offers of reparation (see Blatz, Schumann, & Ross, 2009; Scher & Darley, 1997). Other scholars argue that the most effective conciliatory acts are those that are costly for the perpetrators (Ohtsubo & Watanabe, 2009). For victims, apologies that restore their power (Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-nisim & Ullrich, 2008; Thompson, 2008), or that affirm the perpetrators' commitment to justice (Lazare, 2004) might be most

acceptable. According to Tavuchis (1991), apologies work because they establish a shared political narrative between groups in which the perpetrators take responsibility for the harm done.

In contrast with the wealth of research on victim group members, there has been little if any research on what makes a conciliatory act more or less acceptable to members of the perpetrator group apologizing. Despite the widely held belief that such acts help intergroup relations (Andrieu, 2009; Marrus, 2007; Oliner, 2008), representatives of a perpetrator group may apologize or offer reparations with other intentions than just improving relations (Marrus, 2007; see Wohl, Hornsey, & Philpot, 2011). Research on the perpetrator group has mainly tested the role of group-based self-conscious emotions, suggesting that feelings of shame or collective guilt may increase support for image-improving behaviors such as apology or reparations (Allpress, Barlow, Brown, & Louis, 2010; Brown, Gonzalez, Zagefka, Manzi & Cehajic, 2008; Gausel & Leach, 2011; McGarty, Pedersen, Leach, Mansell, Waller, & Bliuc, 2005). Separately, there is also reason to believe that transgressors have different needs than victims after conflict, including a greater need to restore their moral image (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel et al., 2009); that they may support conciliatory acts more after they are given (see Blatz & Philpot, 2010); and that the response of a target group to an offered conciliatory act can evoke various reactions (Harth, Hornsey, & Barlow, 2011).

But while there is evidence that perpetrator group members tend to be more satisfied after a conciliatory act than victim group members (see Blatz, Schumann, & Ross, 2009), there is relatively little research on what explains their satisfaction. If the aim of conciliatory acts is to promote reconciliation between the two groups as a whole, this makes it important to understand when and why people on both sides of the group divide will be satisfied with the act (Blatz & Philpot, 2010). Although forgiveness may be a less meaningful outcome among perpetrators than among victims, perpetrator group members' satisfaction with any given conciliatory act can be measured; and so can their support for further steps toward reconciliation.

Furthermore, research that has studied the perpetrator's side of reconciliation has not considered an important factor. Some scholars outside of psychology suggest that perpetrator group members could interpret a conciliatory act as obliging the victim group to accept it, and to cease their demands (Benoit, 1995; Kampf, 2009; Nobles, 2008). This *obligation shifting* motive, as we call it, may be a reason why perpetrator group members would be satisfied with conciliatory acts from their own government. In this research, we set out to establish, across four experiments in different contexts, the power of obligation shifting to explain perpetrator group members' satisfaction with their leaders' conciliatory acts, independently of other theoretically relevant reasons for satisfaction. We also wanted to show that, distinct from these other reasons, obligation shifting relates to outcomes that are problematic for the victim group and the process of reconciliation.

Obligation shifting

After a conciliatory act, the usual social script implies a required acceptance of the act and forgiveness by the victims, regardless of the statement's content (see Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Risen & Gilovich, 2007). Thus, one possible goal of a conciliatory act for perpetrators in an intergroup context could be to send the message, "we have done our part, and now it is your turn to forgive us." In this sense, a conciliatory act may carry an implied obligation for the victim group to accept the act, forgive, and end their moral claim upon the perpetrator group. So, paradoxically, offering an apology or compensation can be seen as a long-term pragmatic move that benefits the perpetrator group, motivated by the desire to be distanced from the victim group (see Abeler, Calaki, Andree, & Bask, 2010). In the language of the needs-based model (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008), this motive may not immediately improve the image of the ingroup, but in the long term it may work to improve the collective image by ending the victims' ability to legitimately question the ingroup's moral image.

We propose that the desire to shift obligation from the perpetrator group and impose it on the victim group will predict perpetrator group members' satisfaction with a conciliatory act, independently from other concerns. We also suggest that this motive will be especially connected with

a negative view of the outgroup and with a desire to “close the door”; that is, to view the issue as closed, denying further help or cooperation to the victim group (Nobles, 2008).

Why should obligation shifting relate to negative feelings toward the recipient of conciliation? Insisting on reciprocal acceptance when an apology is given carries the implication that scores are being kept, and that the ingroup’s conciliatory gesture must be balanced by an equally conciliatory gesture from the outgroup. Intergroup and interpersonal relations that are seen in terms of zero-sum games, or as “exchanges” in which a tally of costs and benefits must be kept, tend to be less warm, friendly, and positive (e.g. Clark & Mills, 1979; Esses, Jackson & Armstrong, 1998). Moreover, framing an apology as creating an obligation focuses attention on the negative consequences if the outgroup refuses, rather than the positive consequences if it accepts, similar to the “ought” nature of prevention motivation (Higgins, 1998). Being vigilant for an outgroup’s refusal may very well encourage anger and kindred feelings toward them.

Our predictions of negative feelings are also consistent with recently published work (Greenaway, Louis & Wohl, 2012; Morton & Postmes, 2011) which manipulated a variable (shared humanity) unrelated to our current interests, but measured expectations of forgiveness (e.g. “Indigenous Australians should not hold negative feelings toward White Australians today because of their group’s actions in the past.”). In one study (Greenaway et al., 2012, Experiment 3), White Australians’ higher expectations of forgiveness was correlated with lower empathy toward Indigenous Australians. The authors concluded that “[u]nfortunately, expecting forgiveness in this context is not driven by a positive orientation toward victims, but rather reflects a lack of regret for harming victims, and unconcern for their suffering” (p. 452). In Morton and Postmes’ studies (2011), ingroup expectations of forgiveness were also correlated with lower feelings of guilt toward the outgroup. Although these studies did not propose obligation shifting as a key construct, or measure hostile attitudes toward the outgroup, the reduction of reconciliatory feelings such as guilt and empathy would

suggest that, when forgiveness is seen as an obligation on the outgroup, the way is left open for more openly antagonistic feelings toward them.

Likewise, seeing the group's own conciliatory act as imposing an obligation on the victim group should work against support for further aid or cooperation. Someone who views apologies and reparations this way will feel justified in withholding further aid, because the obligation to act has moved from his or her own group to the victim group. Supporting this possibility, one study showed that members of a group that had harmed another group tended to reduce further help after learning about collective reparations, compared to a condition where no reparations were described (Maitner, Mackie & Smith, 2006). We expect obligation-shifting reactions to an official conciliatory statement, then, to have paradoxical effects within the perpetrator group. They should encourage more hostile and dismissive attitudes toward the victim group, and also undermine support for further help toward that group, at the same time that they underlie increased support for the conciliatory act.

Obligation shifting, or the prescriptive belief that the outgroup should forgive the ingroup after an apologetic act, should also be distinguished from the descriptive belief that the outgroup will forgive the ingroup. For example, if ingroup members see one apologetic act as being of objectively higher quality than another, such that it will actually lead to greater forgiveness, then they may approve of it for reasons that have nothing to do with negative attitudes or intentions toward the victim group. For this reason, although all the explanations we are offering have to do with the "quality" of a conciliatory act from different points of view, it is important to distinguish the goal of actually satisfying the victim group members from the goal of passing responsibility for reconciliation to them.

Image improvement

In order to establish obligation shifting as a novel and independent predictor of perpetrator group satisfaction, we contrasted it with a number of other motives already covered in existing theory and literature. The first of these is *image improvement*. The public image of a transgressing group can be damaged in the eyes of other groups who value morality (van Leeuwen, van den Bosch, Castano, &

Hopman, 2010; Tavuchis, 1991). Concerns about condemnation from other groups can lead to increased feelings of collective guilt; and feeling that the ingroup has a moral defect can lead to feelings of group-based shame, which has been shown to be closely linked to a desire to engage in pro-social behaviours (Gausel, Leach, Vignoles, & Brown, 2012; Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007). Providing an apology or reparations may be one way that transgressors can try to restore their damaged moral image (van Leeuwen et al., 2010; Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-Nisim, & Ullrich, 2008; Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, & Hagengimana, 2005). This proposed motivation forms an important part of the Needs-Based Model (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel, et al., 2008), which posits that in any reconciliation process, victims and perpetrators must both have distinct needs met in order for reconciliation to occur. On an intergroup level, the primary need for transgressor group members after intergroup conflict is to restore their moral image, while the victim group's primary need is to regain power (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, & Carmi, 2009).

Indeed, apologies and reparations are often interpreted as restoring the public moral image of groups (Benoit, 1995). Thus, members of the transgressing group may be motivated to support reconciliation more generally when they have the opportunity to improve their image and regain acceptance in the "moral community" (Shnabel et al., 2009; Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). This parallels interpersonal research showing that the need to look better to others can motivate conciliatory acts among perpetrators (Risen & Gilovich, 2007; Nelissen, 2011). Afterwards, if members of the perpetrator group feel their image has improved, this might predict their satisfaction with the act. However, image concerns *per se* have not yet been shown to predict perpetrator group satisfaction with already-given conciliatory gestures in an intergroup context. Obligation shifting concerns, as a feature specific to the offering of apologies or reparations, could compete with image concerns in explaining support for reconciliation.

Given the importance of being seen as a moral group, conciliatory acts can be seen as a good investment in the area of public relations. However, image improvement is also compatible with

desires to cooperate with the victim group and to regard them well, because expressing these desires would also create continued benefits to the perpetrators' image. Unlike the obligation shifting motive, which is satisfied once, further acts of remembrance or reparation can continue to maintain and improve the group's good image. Also, image improvement does not impose a burden upon the victim group, as obligation shifting does. Therefore, we expect image improvement perceptions to have distinct effects from obligation shifting perceptions. Image improvement, unlike obligation shifting, should not be related to negative feelings toward the victim group, and should not reduce the desire to offer further help.

Power

In political argument, the reaction of perpetrator groups to conciliatory acts often involves the balance of power between the two groups. As Wohl et al. (2011) point out, collective apologies can be opposed because they might oblige the perpetrator group to give material reparation (i.e., taking power away from the perpetrator group), but paradoxically also because they might distract the victim group from collective empowerment (i.e., letting the perpetrator group keep too much power). From these concerns we derive another potential pair of explanations focusing, not on image improvement, but on the balance of power between the apologizing group and the recipients.

It is possible that perpetrator group members are motivated to support a conciliatory act when they perceive it as giving victims the power they seek (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel et al., 2009). An opposing possibility is that perpetrator group members are motivated by their own group power concerns, standing against a conciliatory act because they see it as giving away influence and power (Mills, 2001). Conservative commentators, for example, have often criticized US President Barack Obama's perceived tendency to apologize to foreign governments (e.g., Krauthammer, January 30, 2009). More generally, as one legal commentator on the role of apology in mediation puts it, under some circumstances, "apologizing is difficult precisely because it entails transfer of power to the injured party" (Levi, 1997, p. 1183).

While these concerns about power may seem reasonable, they need to be tested. The Needs-Based Model suggests that victims, not transgressors, are most concerned with receiving power both in an interpersonal (Shnabel et al., 2008) and intergroup context (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel et al., 2009). Their research has shown that perpetrator group members prefer to hear statements from their own leaders which suggest image improvement, when directly compared to statements which suggest receiving power. However, that research looked at intragroup communication rather than at conciliatory acts aimed at members of the wronged group, which might have stronger implications for the balance of power between the two groups. Also, even though that research found that image improvement was preferred in a forced choice over gaining power, this leaves the possibility that power concerns could still contribute to satisfaction with a conciliatory act, if only to a lesser extent. In any case, concerns about changes in power are potential explanations of perpetrator group satisfaction with conciliatory acts, and deserve to be tested.

Overview of the Present Research

Our research tests the explanatory power of obligation shifting against its rivals in situations where perpetrator group members judge a conciliatory statement attributed to their group's leaders. As mentioned earlier, image improvement and power for victims have been considered important for reconciliation in past research (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel et al., 2009) but have never been measured as perceived changes after conciliatory acts. We specifically examined situations where ingroup responsibility for a wrong is made fairly clear, rather than remaining controversial; further implications of this approach will be considered in the Discussion.

In our first two experiments, we took the general approach of varying the presence of different conciliatory acts given by a perpetrator group to a victim group. We created statements containing elements of conciliation such as a verbal apology and/or promise of reparations, and contrasted them against statements without such elements. Then we tested our variables of interest - image

improvement, obligation shifting and power change - as predictors of the outcomes of satisfaction and negative feelings towards the victim group, and as mediators between the contrasts and the outcomes.

Experiments 1 and 2 included separate manipulations of apology and reparations in order to explore possible differences between these two forms of conciliation, given the lack of previous research comparing their effectiveness. However, our main focus was not on whether apology or reparations were the strongest manipulation, but rather on which variables would mediate their effects, seen more generally as examples of conciliatory statements. As things turned out, differences between apology and reparation conditions were minimal.

In Experiment 2 we also added in a third outcome variable: support for future aid. Like satisfaction and negative feelings, support for future aid is an outcome variable that has implications for intergroup reconciliation and is conceptually related to both of the other outcome variables; dissatisfaction with an official statement is likely to accompany calls that more be done, and hostile feelings toward the recipients are likely to suppress helping motives.

In Experiment 3, we followed an approach recommended by Spencer, Zanna & Fong (2005) to more firmly establish the causal role of mediators. Holding constant the presence of a conciliatory statement – in this case, an apology – we instead manipulated descriptions of whether the apology affected two of the key mediators, image improvement and obligation shifting, comparing each of these to a control in which no mediator effect was described.

We returned to the previous experimental design approach in Experiment 4, which tested an alternate explanation of the results in Experiments 1 and 2; to give a strong test of the effect of a conciliatory statement on outcomes, we contrasted a statement including both apology and reparation against a statement that, while meaningful, contained neither. Overall, these experiments were designed to test whether our key variables could explain how a statement of conciliation led to more satisfaction.

Experiment 1

In this first experiment, we confronted American participants with different statements attributed to US officials as responses to a historical issue: that in the 20th century, the US conducted medical tests on Guatemalans without consent, deliberately injecting them with sexually transmitted diseases. As mediators, we measured: perceptions that the act would improve America's image; perceptions that the act would shift obligation away from the perpetrators and onto the victim group; and perceptions of the shift of material power and influence as a result of the act, both in terms of losses for the US and gains for Guatemala.

As outcomes, we measured two possible kinds of reaction to these statements. Most centrally, we looked at *satisfaction* with the statement, with the expectation that both image improvement and obligation shifting would relate to increased satisfaction. We also measured *negative feelings* of insult and anger towards the victim group as an outcome variable. As explained earlier, we expected negative feelings toward the victims (Guatemalans) to be predicted primarily by obligation shifting perceptions.

Finally, we tested whether image, obligation, and power concerns would form mediating paths between differences between the types of conciliatory act presented and the outcome of satisfaction. To the extent that people preferred a statement of apology to a statement with no apology, or a statement of reparations to a statement of no reparations, this preference should be explained by those mediators already shown to predict satisfaction: according to our predictions, image improvement and obligation shifting. Similarly, we expected that if a more complete conciliatory act created more negative feelings toward the target group, this would be explained principally by obligation shifting.

Method

Participants. In this study, 167 US citizens completed an online questionnaire, recruited through Amazon's MTurk crowdsourcing service (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Mason & Suri, 2011). Six participants were removed for self-identifying as members of the victim group (Guatemalan) and a further four participants were removed for invariant responses throughout the data

set. A further 21 participants responded incorrectly to the manipulation check question at the end of the study asking what response the US government gave in the news article and were removed. This left remaining 136 participants for analysis (92 female; age $M = 36.24$, $SD = 12.96$, range = 18-78).

Design. Participants were randomly assigned to read either an apology statement, a reparations statement, or a control statement by the US government about its past support for medical testing performed on Guatemalan citizens without their consent.

Procedure. The experiment was conducted online. All participants read a short historical summary telling how the US government in the 1940's supported a project in which American scientists purposefully injected Guatemalan orphans, prisoners, and military transcripts with sexually transmitted diseases in order to test the effect of penicillin. Many subjects never consented to the tests and never received adequate treatment afterwards. The information provided to the participants about the event was truthful and based on real news sources (e.g., Bazell, 2010).

At the end of the news story, participants read that the US government was made aware of the studies in 2010 and that a response was made after the studies came to light. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions which each presented a different response to the issue: a verbal apology, financial reparations, or a control statement ruling out both responses. In the apology condition the US government gave a verbal apology and expressed deep regret over the American government's involvement in the incident. The apology statement also explicitly stated that there were no clear plans to provide reparations. In the reparations condition, the US government made a statement indicating plans to provide 1.5 million USD to the families and victims of those infected. The statement indicated that there were no clear plans for a verbal apology. The control condition included a statement in which the US government said that due to other pressing circumstances, there were no current plans to provide an apology or reparations to the victims of the studies.

After reading the article, participants completed the following measures on seven point Likert scales.

Negative feelings about the victims. Two items assessed negative emotions about the victim group (Guatemalans) following the statement (“*I feel angry with the Guatemalans*” and “*I feel insulted by the Guatemalans*”) on a scale of *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Together these two items formed a measure of negative feelings ($r = .45, p < .001; M = 1.44; SD = .76$).

Satisfaction. Two items (“*The US government has done a good job in responding to the situation in Guatemala*”) on a scale of *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7); and “*How satisfied are you with the response of the US government?*” on a scale of *very dissatisfied* (1) to *very satisfied* (7) assessed satisfaction with the statement. The items were correlated, $r = .82, p < .001 (M = 2.71; SD = 1.66)$.

Participants then completed the four measures of our mediating variables.

Image improvement. Three items measured perceived image change due to the response of the government on a scale of 1 (*it will become much worse*) to 7 (*it will become much better*) (e.g. “*How will the statement affect America’s reputation in other countries?*”) The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .85; M = 2.99; SD = 1.26$).

Obligation shifting. Four items were intended to measure shifting obligation to the victim group: the idea that the US is no longer responsible for the issue and the victims now are obligated to forgive (i.e., “*The Guatemalans should be grateful to the US for their response*”; “*The Guatemalans should forgive the US following the response*”; “*The Guatemalans should want to be closer allies with the US following the response*”; “*The US does not need to do more to repair its relationship with Guatemala.*”) and the scale was reliable ($\alpha = .84; M = 2.78; SD = 1.35$).

Outgroup power. Three items were used to measure potential power change for the victim group (Guatemalans) after the statement on scales of 1 (greatly decrease) to 7 (greatly increase) (e.g., “*How much will the statement increase or decrease the political power of Guatemala?*”). The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .84; M = 4.01; SD = 0.84$).

Ingroup power. The same items used to measure outgroup power were used to measure the power changes of the perpetrator group but were changed to reflect power changes for the US (e.g., “*How much will the statement increase or decrease the political power of the US?*”). The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .82$; $M = 3.58$; $SD = 0.84$).

Finally, as a manipulation check question, participants were asked to confirm what they read in the news article presenting the US response to the STD studies. Participants selected whether they had read about the US giving an apology, reparations, both an apology and reparations, or neither an apology or reparations. After providing demographic information, participants were debriefed. Debriefing included information about the actual response from the US government, which included an apology from President Obama and other US officials but no clear plans for reparations.

Results

Our analyses focused on the two potential outcomes of conciliatory acts for perpetrator group members: *negative feelings* about the victims and *satisfaction* with the statement. For each outcome DV, we first examined its relationship to the four predictors - *image improvement*, *obligation shifting*, *ingroup power*, and *outgroup power* - across the whole sample using linear regression. Then we tested for omnibus differences in each DV between conditions using ANOVA with post-hoc tests. Finally, we created a contrast based on comparisons within the ANOVA, and used multiple mediation bootstrapping analyses (PROCESS syntax; Hayes, in press) to test simultaneously those variables that predicted the DV as mediators between the contrast and the outcome DV itself. Correlations, means and SD for all variables can be seen in Table 1.

ANOVA tests on mediators. Condition significantly affected image improvement, $F(2,133) = 9.87$, $MSE = 1.41$, $p < .001$ ¹. Tukey HSD tests showed that the reparations and apology conditions both were higher than the control condition, and did not differ from each other. The same pattern of post-hoc differences characterized condition's effect on obligation shifting, $F(2, 133) = 8.44$, $MSE = 1.63$, $p < .001$; thus, each conciliatory act increased perceptions of both image improvement and

obligation shifting to a similar degree. There was no effect of condition on power, either for ingroup, $F(2,133) = 1.68$, $MSE = 0.69$, $p = .190$, or outgroup, $F(2, 133) = 1.87$, $MSE = 0.70$, $p = .158$.

Satisfaction.

Overall regression analysis. We first conducted a simultaneous multiple regression with satisfaction as the DV and the four predictors (image improvement, obligation shifting, ingroup power, and outgroup power) as IVs. Image improvement ($\beta = .28$, $sr = .21$, $p = .001$) and obligation shifting ($\beta = .53$, $sr = .40$, $p < .001$) significantly, positively and independently predicted participants' satisfaction with the statement. Neither ingroup nor outgroup power were significant ($ps > .196$) in this model. The overall regression model was significant, $F(4, 135) = 31.63$, $Adj R^2 = .48$, $MSE = 1.45$, $p < .001$.

ANOVA post-hoc tests. The three conditions differed from each other, $F(2, 135) = 6.92$, $MSE = 2.54$, $p = .001$. Tukey HSD post-hoc tests revealed that the apology statement ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.66$, $p = .003$) and the reparations statement ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.66$, $p = .007$) were both significantly more satisfying than the control statement ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 1.44$), but found no significant difference between the apology and the reparations statement ($p = .956$).

Control vs. either conciliatory act. Because the control statement was less satisfying than either conciliatory act, we created a contrast based on this difference with the control coded -2 and each conciliatory act condition (apology and reparations) coded 1. We used a multiple mediator bootstrap test using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012) to test all proposed mediators (both kinds of power, image and obligation) of the relationship between the contrast and satisfaction.

Obligation shifting and image improvement perceptions were significant independent mediators of the relationship of the contrast with satisfaction (confidence intervals of each indirect path did not include 0). There was a significant total effect of mediators and contrast on satisfaction, but the direct effect of the contrast was non-significant, showing full mediation (Figure 1). Thus,

obligation shifting and image improvement completely and independently accounted for the greater satisfaction with either conciliatory act compared to the control statement.²

Negative Feelings.

Overall regression analysis. A second regression analysis tested the four predictors but with negative feelings as the DV. In this regression, only obligation shifting ($\beta = .24$, $sr = .18$, $p = .032$) significantly predicted participants' negative feelings about the Guatemalans. The more participants felt obligation had shifted, the more negative they felt towards the Guatemalans. Image and the two types of power were non-significant (all $ps > .35$). The overall regression model was significant, $F(4, 135) = 2.60$, $Adj R^2 = .05$, $MSE = .57$, $p = .039$.

ANOVA. To test differences between the three conditions, we conducted an ANOVA on the outcome of negative feelings. The ANOVA test was not significant, $F(2, 133) = 1.87$, $MSE = 0.57$, $p = .158$; because a Levene test for heterogeneity of variance was significant, $F(2, 133) = 4.66$, $p = .01$, we based post-hoc analyses on the Games-Howell procedure (as supported by Keselman & Rogan, 1978), but these revealed no significant comparisons, all $p > .10$.

Mediation analysis. In spite of the lack of an overall ANOVA effect, we conducted a multiple mediation analysis using negative feelings instead of satisfaction as the DV, to investigate potential suppression effects. The means of the three conditions did not show the pattern of increased negative feelings in the two experimental conditions versus the control that characterized analyses of satisfaction. Therefore, we tested a two-variable dummy coding scheme with an apology contrast (apology condition = 1, other conditions = 0) and a reparations contrast (reparations condition = 1, other conditions = 0) in which the focal dummy variable was entered as the independent variable and the other one was a covariate. This revealed patterns consistent with suppression (see Figure 2).

The apology dummy variable showed a significant positive indirect mediating path through obligation but not through image, while the reparation dummy variable also showed a significant positive mediating path through obligation but not image. For both variables, these positive indirect

paths were suppressed by a negative direct effect trend, which was significant for the apology dummy variable but not the reparations dummy variable.

Discussion

In this experiment, obligation shifting perceptions emerged as a major predictor of group members' satisfaction with an official conciliatory act. Supporting our view that obligation shifting is compatible with a negative attitude toward the victim group, it was related to negative feelings and mediated between contrasts and negative feelings, while image improvement concerns were unrelated to negative feelings.

This experiment also showed that perceiving a statement as improving the perpetrator group's image predicted satisfaction for members of the perpetrator group, while perceiving it as losing or gaining power for the perpetrator group had little to do with satisfaction. We also showed that the perception that a conciliatory act provides more power for the victim group had no relationship with satisfaction for perpetrator group members, independently of our other factors. Together with the lack of concern with gaining power for the ingroup, this finding reinforces the Needs-Based Model's view that power is not a concern to the more powerful perpetrator group that already possesses it (Shnabel et al., 2009).

Our participants were more satisfied with their own government's response when it was a statement including either a verbal apology or financial reparations, compared to a control statement which indicated no plans to offer redress. Moreover, this preference for any conciliatory act over a control statement was fully explained by image improvement and obligation shifting as mediators. It seems that either conciliatory act (financial or verbal) allowed perpetrator group members to feel they had shifted obligation to the victim group and improved their own image, more so than the control statement.

Interestingly, there were no differences between the conciliatory acts and the control statement on the outcome of negative feelings, despite the relationship observed between obligation shifting and

increased negative feelings. There may be other reasons why the control statement's explicit refusal to apologize or give reparations might have led to negative feelings, despite the lesser ability to shift obligation. Perpetrator group members might feel hostile toward the victim group if a refusal statement is given, taking it perhaps as evidence that there was no need to apologize or give reparations in the first place, and that the victims' claims are unfair. This might have equaled the hostility they felt if either conciliatory act was seen as shifting obligation (Viles, 2002). Nonetheless, the role of obligation shifting in the mediating path to negative feelings was consistent with our expectations.

The next experiment sought to generalize these tests of the role of image improvement and obligation to a different population, and issue.

Experiment 2

During the years 1845-1849, the Irish potato blight caused widespread starvation for nearly half of Ireland's population which depended on potatoes for subsistence. The British government failed to respond to the disaster and their systematic discrimination against Irish Catholics led to as many as 1.5 million Irish deaths due to starvation; from these deaths, in conjunction with the mass emigration of Irish, Ireland lost nearly one-third of its population. This experiment took these events as its topic, and looked again at both types of conciliatory acts (apologies or reparations given alone) compared to a non-apology statement.

We expected that in addition to replicating the previously found effects upon satisfaction and negative feelings, obligation shifting should predict our new outcome variable of reduced support, which represents the concept of "closing the door" presented by Nobles (2008). We also expected that either conciliatory act would lead to less support for future giving. However, because this design was similar to Experiment 1 in contrasting conciliatory acts to a refusal control condition, we did not expect to see differences between conditions upon the outcome of negative feelings, although obligation shifting should once more predict negative feelings. Most importantly, we expected that any

differences between conditions would be explained by image and obligation shifting as mediators, rather than by their alternatives.

Method

Participants. This experiment had 165 British participants complete an online questionnaire. Participants were recruited through a university research participation scheme and received course credit in exchange for participation. Two participants were removed for invariant responses throughout the entire questionnaire. The remaining 163 participants were used for analysis (135 female; M age = 19.83, SD = 3.41, range = 18-47).

Design. Participants were randomly assigned to read an apology, reparations, or no-apology statement in response to the British involvement in the Irish potato famine.

Procedure. The experiment was conducted online. All participants read a short summary of the history of the Irish potato famine. The news summary discussed the responsibility of the British for failing to respond to the famine and the inability of the Irish to ever completely recover the population loss suffered because of the famine. All the information about the history of the famine was factual. The news summary discussed how Britain's former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, went to Ireland for an event commemorating the famine and made a statement during the event.

Participants were randomly assigned to read one of three statements made by Blair on behalf of Britain: a verbal apology, financial reparations, or a control statement. In the verbal apology condition Blair gave a full apology saying he was "sorry about the deep scars left by the famine" and expressed feeling guilty and in deep pain over the British government's failure to act. The summary also explicitly stated that there were no clear plans to provide reparations. In the financial reparations condition, Blair made a statement offering "nearly £1 million in financial reparations to the descendants of the potato farmers affected by the famine." This summary explicitly stated that there were no clear plans to provide an apology. In the control condition, Blair attended the same event and gave a statement, but in this version, his statement said he was "honored to be invited" but that there

are not currently any plans to provide an official apology or provide financial reparations (in reality, Blair did apologize for the famine during his visit, but did not offer reparations.)

After reading the article, participants completed the following measures on seven point Likert scales.

Satisfaction. The same two items as in Experiment 1 were used for assessing satisfaction with the statement and were correlated at $r = .58, p < .001$ ($M = 3.23; SD = 1.17$).

Negative feelings about the Irish. The same two items used in Experiment 1 were used to assess negative feelings about the victim group but were changed for the Irish context. The two items were correlated at $r = .68, p < .001$ ($M = 2.25; SD = 1.15$).

Image improvement. The same three items used in Experiment 1 measured perceived image changes for Britain and the scale was reliable ($\alpha = .86; M = 3.99; SD = 0.97$).

Obligation shifting. The same four items used in Experiment 1 were used to measure obligation shifting but changed for the Irish context. Two items, one measuring the obligation to forgive and the other the obligation to become a closer ally, were changed slightly to use the word “ought” (e.g. “The Irish ought to forgive the British for what happened”) in order to more clearly reflect a sense of obligation and not just an expectation ($\alpha = .71; M = 3.59; SD = 0.98$).

Ingroup power. Four items were used to measure potential power change for Britain, including the three items used in Experiment 1, plus one item which tapped into a more general sense of power by measuring perceived life improvement for the British people (“How will the statement improve or worsen people’s lives in Britain?”). The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .66; M = 4.00; SD = 0.52$).

Outgroup power. The same four items measuring ingroup power were changed to be directed towards the victim outgroup (the Irish) (“How will the statement improve or worsen people’s lives in Ireland?”) and was reliable ($\alpha = .60; M = 4.02; SD = 0.48$).

After completing these items, participants were given another article to read about British-Irish relations, describing the contemporary (November 2010) banking crisis in Ireland. Participants were

told that, due to a banking crisis, the budget in Ireland was facing a deficit of 32% gross domestic product and that in response Britain would be providing nearly 7 billion pounds (GBP) in order to support Ireland because “failing to reach out to the Republic could result in very bad consequences for Northern Ireland.” Participants were then asked the following question:

Support for aid. In order to measure support for future aid to the victim group, participants read the following item: “The UK has offered 7bl GBP to Ireland. Is this amount adequate?” Participants indicated if they: (1) *did not support assistance*; (2) *supported assistance but would have given less*; (3) *supported assistance but would not give more*; (4) *supported assistance and would give more*. Thus high numbers indicate increased support for the aid and even a desire to give more, while low numbers indicated reduced willingness to support aid ($M = 2.93$, $SD = .86$).

After providing some demographic information, participants were debriefed, including the true facts about the response from the UK government to the Potato Famine.

Results

As with the previous experiments, our analyses focused on satisfaction, negative feelings, and on the new outcome of support for present-day aid. Correlations, means and SD for all variables can be seen in Table 2.

ANOVA tests on mediators. The condition had significant overall effects on obligation, $F(2, 160) = 7.06$, $MSE = 0.89$, $p < .001$; and image improvement, $F(2, 160) = 4.77$, $MSE = 0.90$, $p = .01$; but not on power for ingroup, $F(2, 160) = 0.33$, $MSE = 0.27$, $p = .719$, or outgroup, $F(2, 160) = 1.04$, $MSE = 0.23$, $p = .356$. In Tukey HSD post-hoc tests, image improvement, apology ($p = .013$) and reparation ($p = .041$) conditions were each higher than the control and not different from each other ($p = .896$). Obligation shifting from apology ($p = .003$) and reparations ($p = .005$) were also each higher than the control, and not different from each other ($p = .977$).

Satisfaction.

Overall regression analysis. In a regression with image, obligation and the power variables as predictors and satisfaction as the outcome, image improvement ($\beta = .22$, $sr = .17$, $p = .008$) and obligation shifting ($\beta = .52$, $sr = .46$, $p < .001$) significantly, positively and independently predicted participants' satisfaction with the statement. Neither power measure was significant ($ps > .30$) in this model, $F(4, 158) = 26.30$, $Adj R^2 = .39$, $MSE = 0.85$, $p < .001$.

ANOVA post-hoc tests. The three-condition ANOVA on satisfaction was significant, $F(2, 162) = 6.01$, $MSE = 1.29$, $p = .003$. Tukey HSD post-hoc tests revealed that, similar to Experiment 1, the apology condition ($p = .006$) and the reparations condition ($p = .011$) were both more satisfying than the control statement (control: $M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.12$; apology: $M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.19$; reparations: $M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.10$). There was no significant difference between the apology act and the reparations act ($p = .98$).

Control statement vs. conciliatory acts. As with the previous experiment, we used multiple mediation bootstrapping models to test whether differences between the acts could be explained by the significant predictors from the regression. We first created a contrast between the control condition and the two types of conciliatory acts, with the more satisfying conditions coded positively (apology and reparations conditions, 1, vs. control, -2).

In a multiple mediation bootstrapping model using the PROCESS method (as used in Experiment 1), image improvement and obligation shifting were significant independent mediators of the contrast on satisfaction (Figure 3). Image improvement and obligation shifting fully mediated the preference for either an apology or reparations over the control statement.

Negative Feelings.

Overall regression analysis. In a similar regression, with negative feelings as the DV, only obligation shifting ($\beta = .41$, $sr = .36$, $p < .001$) significantly, positively and independently predicted participants' negative feelings about the Irish. Image and the two power variables were all non-

significant, all $ps > .11$. The overall regression model was significant, $F(4, 162) = 6.77$, $Adj R^2 = .13$, $MSE = 1.16$, $p < .001$.

ANOVA post-hoc tests. In this experiment, there were no overall differences in negative feelings between conditions (control: $M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.13$; apology: $M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.24$; reparations: $M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.09$; $p = .648$). Tukey post-hoc tests found no significant comparisons, all $ps > .50$.

However, as in Study 1, a bootstrapped mediation test using dummy coding of apology and reparations conditions, and including both image and obligation mediators, found evidence of suppression (Figure 4). Both dummy-coded variables showed a significant indirect mediating path through obligation and an opposing-valence mediating path through image improvement that was also significant. Thus, the apparent non-effect of the manipulation on negative feelings masked two opposing processes. These were mediated respectively by obligation shifting, which predicted more negative feelings, and image improvement, which tended to predict less negative feelings.

Future Support for Aid.

Overall regression analysis. In a similar regression on the DV of support for aid to the Republic of Ireland, obligation shifting was the only predictor, and was negative in direction ($\beta = -.29$, $sr = -.26$, $p < .001$). Across all statements, the more a perpetrator group member perceived obligation shifting, the less they supported giving present-day aid to Ireland. Image and the two types of power were all non-significant in this model (all $ps > .15$). The overall regression model was significant, $F(4, 162) = 3.94$, $Adj R^2 = .07$, $MSE = 0.69$, $p < .001$.

ANOVA post-hoc tests. A three-condition ANOVA on support for aid was significant, $F(2, 162) = 3.59$, $MSE = .72$, $p = .030$. Tukey HSD post-hoc tests revealed that the apology condition led to significantly less support for aid than the control statement, while the reparations condition also led to marginally less support for aid ($p = .063$) compared to the control. There was no significant difference between the apology act and the reparations act (control: $M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.86$; apology: $M = 2.80$, $SD = 0.85$; reparations: $M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.83$).

Control statement vs. conciliatory acts. In a multiple mediation bootstrapping model testing the same contrast as the other models, obligation shifting was a significant independent mediator between the contrast and support for aid (CI did not include 0). Obligation shifting (CI not including zero) fully mediated the decrease in support for aid to the Irish after either an apology or reparations, when compared to the control (Figure 5). Image improvement was not a significant mediator (CI including zero).³

Discussion

In this experiment, as with Experiment 1, obligation shifting and image improvement independently predicted satisfaction with the conciliatory act, while obligation shifting alone predicted increased negative feelings about the victim group. Again, both variables were mediators explaining increased satisfaction from either conciliatory act, compared to the statement which ruled out providing an apology or reparations.

Additionally, this experiment expanded on the previous ones by establishing an additional negative outcome of obligation shifting: reduced support for victim groups. The more participants felt that obligation had shifted due to the statement made by the government, the less they supported the present-day bailout of Irish banks, an issue unrelated to the famine. Furthermore, the difference between the control statement and either conciliatory act on support for aid was mediated by obligation shifting only. In other words, evidence that the British government had provided either an apology or reparations to Ireland for the past satisfied the perceived obligation to the Irish for the famine, and undermined the motivation to provide support for Ireland in the present day.

There were no differences between the conciliatory acts and the control statement in terms of negative feelings. This is a similar finding to Experiment 1; suggesting that refusing to provide either an apology or reparations may, for other reasons, arouse negative feelings of its own. However, in mediational analyses, obligation shifting mediated increased negative feelings about the victim group,

while image improvement mediated a countervailing decrease in negative feelings, further showing the association of obligation with a negative view of the outgroup.

One limitation of our experiments so far is that the mediational effects shown do not establish the causal role of image and obligation. Although we have shown links between these two mediators and satisfaction, these could be explained by a reverse causal account: being satisfied with the apology could have increased the impression that the perpetrator ingroup looks good and is no longer obliged to the victim group. Likewise, our presumed outcome of negative feelings towards the victim group could be a pre-existing variable that caused the perception of obligation shifting, rather than obligation shifting causing the change in feelings. To more conclusively establish our key mediating variables as causal factors, our next experiment directly manipulated obligation shifting and image improvement (cf. Spencer et al., 2005).

Experiment 3

Unlike the previous experiments, which measured the role of obligation shifting and image improvement as mediators of satisfaction after a conciliatory act, Experiment 3 directly manipulated obligation shifting and image improvement perceptions. This would test whether these variables have a causal impact upon our outcome variables, unlike the previous two studies which established this relationship through correlational tests such as mediation analysis. In order to manipulate obligation shifting and image improvement, this experiment asked participants to evaluate a single, constant conciliatory act: a verbal apology. The apology was kept constant but was presented in one of three versions: alone (as a control group) or together with one of two different assessments of its impact. These two assessments manipulated information about image improvement or obligation shifting, by stating either that the ingroup had improved their image or that the ingroup had effectively shifted obligation to the victim group. Experiment 3 used an elaborated form of yet another issue relevant to British citizens: the history of African slavery and relations with the people of the island of Bunce, in Sierra Leone.

Participants. One hundred and ten British citizen participants were recruited on a university campus. All participants were offered 2 GBP (about 3 USD) for participating. Thirteen participants were removed for self-identifying as non-white British. Only white British participants were included for analysis because the issue was about Britain's role in the slave trade; non-white British participants may identify less with the perpetrator group and more with the victim group receiving the apology. All participants were asked to read an article outlining a British apology to Bunce Island for the slave trade. A further twenty-five participants were excluded because they incorrectly stated that the article they read did not discuss Britain apologising; this indicated that they were not paying attention to the crucial apology context of the experiment. The remaining 72 participants were included for analysis (41 female; age $M = 22.63$, $SD = 5.53$, range = 18-50).

Design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: a control (apology only); image improvement (the same apology but with an evaluation that it improved the reputation of Britain); or obligation shifting (the same apology but with an evaluation that it shifted obligation to the victim group).

Procedure. The experiment was conducted online. Participants read a short summary of the history of Bunce Island. The summary discussed the history of Bunce Island's use by Britain as a major hub during the slave trade and emphasized Britain's responsibility for Bunce Island's current social problems and low economic development. Although Bunce Island was historically used as a hub for slave trade, the summary was embellished to describe the continued suffering of its present-day inhabitants due to historical British actions. In reality Bunce Island is mostly uninhabited.

After reading the historical summary, all participants read a fictitious back-dated news article from the Guardian Online newspaper describing a visit by former Prime Minister Tony Blair to Bunce Island. The article used parts of one of Blair's actual apologies made during the 20th anniversary of laws abolishing the slave trade, but presented it as part of a speech he had ostensibly made on the island.

Experimental manipulation. Participants in the control condition only read the information about the apology. Within the news article, participants in the image improvement condition also read the following assessment:

Historian and expert on West Africa, Michael Price, suggests that by giving this apology, Britain is “greatly improving its reputation in Africa and abroad.” According to a Guardian online poll 78% of readers believe the apology has improved Britain’s image around the world.

Within the news article, participants in the obligation shifting condition also read the following assessment:

Historian and expert on West Africa, Michael Price, suggests that by giving this apology, Britain has “put the ball in the court of the islanders.” According to a Guardian online poll 78% of readers believe that the islanders ought to accept the apology and begin to work towards their future.

After reading the article, participants completed the following measures on seven point scales embedded among filler items.

Negative feelings toward Bunce Islanders. The same two items as in the previous three experiments assessed negative feelings towards the victim group (Bunce Islanders) ($r = .72, p < .001; M = 1.82; SD = .99$).

Satisfaction. The same two items as in the previous experiments measured satisfaction, plus one more item which clearly targeted satisfaction with the act (e.g. *"How pleased are you with the response of the British government?"*). The three item scale was reliable ($\alpha = .92, M = 4.00; SD = 1.30$).

Image improvement. The same three items measured perceived image change for Britain following the response but were altered to fit the Bunce Island context. The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .83; M = 4.53; SD = .88$).

Obligation shifting. The same items as in previous experiments were used, except for one item which previously measured the obligation for the victim group to consider itself an ally; it could be argued that this item implies improving the relationship, which is not a component of obligation shifting. This was replaced with another item (“*The ‘ball is in the court of the Islanders’ to move forward from their history of slavery.*”) that did not use the phrasing “should” or “ought,” in order to more accurately capture the concept of obligation shifting in a way that cannot be interpreted as a mere expectation. The four-item scale was reliable ($\alpha = .67$; $M = 3.66$; $SD = 1.05$).

Support for reparations. Participants were asked if they supported the British government providing reparations, “yes” or “no”. The next question then asked how much they would want to provide with choices including: (1) *less than £500,000*; (2) *£500,000 to £1m*; (3) *£1m - £5m*; (4) *£5m - £10m*; (5) *£10m - £15m*; or (6) *more than £15 million*. People who answered “no” to the question of whether or not they supported reparations were coded as 1; anyone who said yes was given a score based on the amount of money to be provided (coded as 2-7 for each increasing amount). Thus, low numbers indicated less support for reparations and high numbers indicated more support ($M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.83$).

After providing demographic information, participants were asked whether or not they had read about an apology being given by Britain to Bunce Island. Because all participants read about an apology, those who answered “no” were excluded for not understanding or thoroughly reading the information given to them. In a written debriefing, all participants were given true information about the current, uninhabited state of Bunce Island and the fact that Blair’s apology had not been delivered there.

Results

Correlations between all variables, as well as their means and SD by condition, can be seen in Table 3.

Manipulation checks. The obligation shifting apology successfully led to the perception that more obligation had shifted than in the control condition, but unexpectedly the image manipulation also affected this variable, overall $F(2, 69) = 6.92$, $MSE = 0.94$, $p = .002$. Tukey HSD tests yielded these comparisons: the obligation condition led to more obligation shifting than the control, $p = .001$, as did the image condition compared to the control, $p = .03$. There was no significant difference between the image and obligation conditions, $p = .41$. Because of this, we followed up all significant outcome effects of the image vs. control comparison with a contrast, entering the obligation shifting measure as a covariate to ensure that it was not responsible for the image manipulation's effect.

The manipulation affected image improvement as expected, $F(2, 69) = 5.62$, $MSE = 0.76$, $p = .005$, but heterogeneity of variance was observed, Levene $F(2,69) = 4.00$, $p = .02$; in Games-Howell post-hoc comparisons, the image condition led to perceptions of more image improvement vs the control condition, $p = .02$, and marginally more than the obligation shifting condition, $p = .06$. There was no significant difference between the obligation and control conditions, $p = .65$.

Outcomes. The manipulation affected satisfaction overall, $F(2, 69) = 6.93$, $MSE = 1.55$, $p = .002$. In Tukey HSD post hoc tests, the image ($p = .001$) and obligation conditions ($p = .02$) increased satisfaction relative to the control, and were not different from each other ($p = .69$).

The manipulation also affected negative feelings, $F(2,69) = 3.54$, $MSE = 0.81$, $p = .03$; variance was heterogeneous, Levene's $F(2, 69) = 3.80$, $p = .03$, so Games-Howell contrasts were used. The obligation condition ($p = .03$) but not the image condition ($p = .33$) increased negative feelings relative to the control. The obligation-image contrast was not significant at $p = .28$.

Finally, the manipulation affected support for reparation, $F(2,69) = 4.62$, $MSE = 3.04$, $p = .013$. In Tukey HSD tests, the obligation condition ($p = .009$) but not the image condition ($p = .19$) decreased support for reparation relative to the control. The obligation-image contrast was not significant at $p = .27$.

To control for the co-activation of lesser amounts of obligation shifting by the image manipulation, we included the obligation shifting manipulation check as a covariate in the following analyses of the contrast between the image and control groups only. With the covariate, the image improving apology was still more satisfying than the control apology, $F(1,46) = 8.96$, $MSE = 1.82$, $p = .004$. Likewise, as in the analyses without the covariate, the image improving apology did not differ significantly from the control apology on negative feelings, $F(1,46) = 0.90$, $MSE = 0.57$, $p = .349$; or willingness to support financial reparations, $F(1,46) = 0.55$, $MSE = 2.84$, $p = .464$.

Regression Analyses. Next, collapsing across conditions, we tested whether, as in previous experiments, the manipulation checks of obligation shifting and image improvement perceptions were distinct predictors of each DV.

Satisfaction. Image improvement ($\beta = .32$, $sr = .32$, $p = .004$) and obligation shifting ($\beta = .30$, $sr = .30$, $p = .007$) were both significant predictors of satisfaction with the apology, $F(2,71) = 8.82$, $Adj R^2 = .18$, $MSE = 1.47$, $p < .001$.

Negative Feelings. Obligation shifting was a significant and positive predictor of negative feelings toward the Bunce islanders ($\beta = .24$, $sr = .24$, $p = .037$). Image improvement was a significant predictor of the outcome variable negative feelings ($\beta = -.27$, $sr = -.27$, $p = .020$), but in a negative direction. The more people judged the apology as improving image, the less negative they felt about the victim group, $F(2, 71) = 4.90$, $Adj R^2 = .10$, $MSE = 0.78$, $p = .010$.

Support for Reparations. Obligation shifting was a significant, negative predictor of support for reparations ($\beta = -.46$, $sr = -.46$, $p < .001$). Image improvement was not significant ($p > .251$). The overall model was significant, $F(2, 71) = 9.89$, $Adj R^2 = .20$, $MSE = 2.68$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

Manipulating, instead of just measuring, our key mediators of obligation shifting and image improvement, we found that both perceptions had a causal, positive impact on satisfaction with an official apology, supporting the correlational findings of Experiments 1, 2 and 3. Our manipulation of

obligation shifting, but not image improvement, also experimentally increased negative views of the other group and decreased willingness to give reparations. This experimental result confirms the causal importance of obligation shifting in determining these specific effects, which were shown correlationally in the previous studies.

These findings expose obligation shifting as a negative side-effect of apologies and reparations. Obligation shifting is not just embraced by people who started out with a negative view of the victim group; when it is proposed, as in our manipulation, it actually leads to a more negative view of them. Another ultimate effect of shifting responsibility to the other group, as demonstrated, is to undermine support for further expressions of aid. Moreover, the results of this experiment support the findings on image improvement from the previous experiments. The manipulation of image improvement did improve perpetrator satisfaction with an apology without bringing the more negative outcomes of worsened feelings about the victims and reduced support. This suggests that it may be possible for perpetrators to be satisfied with an apology without necessarily leading to worsened relations between the groups.

The concept of obligation shifting rests on the idea that perpetrators are satisfied to remove the responsibility of repairing relations from their shoulders and onto the victim groups. But there may be alternative explanations for its relationship to satisfaction. The items used thus far have tapped into perpetrators' beliefs that the victim group owes forgiveness, gratitude, etc. The term "ought" was used specifically because it intended to capture perpetrators' beliefs that they are owed forgiveness and gratitude. Experiment 3 improved on the measure by including an item referring to the "ball in the victim group's court", which was thought to better capture the concept of obligation shifting. Even so, participants may have used the "ought" items to express their belief that victims will in actuality be more forgiving, grateful, and move on, due to the higher quality of the more complete statements.

That alternative explanation, however, fails to explain why obligation shifting would be related to negative feelings, because there is no reason for perpetrators to feel more negative about victims due

to the expectation they will be satisfied. More critically, it fails to explain why perpetrators reduce their willingness to provide support to victims for an unrelated issue to the original transgression (see Experiment 2). If perpetrators are motivated by a desire to satisfy victims, if anything, they should be more motivated to satisfy the victims by providing additional restorative acts.

Nonetheless, to further distinguish between obligation shifting and victim satisfaction, we conducted a simple experiment varying the completeness of an apologetic act by contrasting a dual act (apology plus reparations) against a statement in which neither was offered. The main innovation in this study was to include an item measuring perceived victim satisfaction in order to see whether it could account for our obligation shifting effects.

Experiment 4

For this experiment, we used the context of 1984 Bhopal disaster in India, which is often considered one of the world's worst industrial catastrophes. The disaster, chemicals from a US company owned plant spilled in Bhopal, India, resulted in the exposure of hundreds of thousands of people and an estimated death of over 15,000 people ("Seven convicted over 1984 Bhopal Disaster," 2010). Despite convictions in India for negligence, the CEOs of the company have not been forced by American authorities to return to India to face charges. Additionally, the US government has provided little assistance with either bringing justice to those responsible or assisting the region in cleaning up.

We expected that obligation shifting should remain a predictor of satisfaction even when controlling for outgroup satisfaction. Furthermore, we expected obligation shifting to remain a predictor of negative feelings and a negative predictor of further acts of support, even when controlling for outgroup satisfaction. However, it is plausible that outgroup satisfaction would also predict ingroup satisfaction as well, either because people would express being more satisfied with an act the more they assume victims are likely to be satisfied with it, or because they might project their own judgment that the apology is of good quality onto the victimized outgroup. We hypothesized that, regardless of

any effect of perceived victim satisfaction, obligation shifting would remain a predictor of perpetrators' satisfaction with the statement and would mediate the preference for the full apology over the non-apology statement.

Method

Participants. For this experiment, 66 US citizens completed the online experiment, recruited through Amazon's MTurk crowd-sourcing service in America (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Mason & Suri, 2011). Participants were paid 0.50 cents (USD) for their participation in the experiment. Two participants who identified with the victim group (Indians); two participants with invariant responses, and a further six participants who incorrectly answered a check question were removed. After reading the news summary crucial to the experiment, participants were asked to summarize the news in their own words. One participant who did not write about anything related to the topic was assumed to be non-serious and removed from the experiment. This left 55 participants for analysis (33 female; age $M = 35.09$, $SD = 12.13$, $range = 19-64$).

Design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: a non-apology statement ($N = 26$) or a dual act which included both a full verbal apology and financial reparations ($N = 29$).

Procedure. Study participants were recruited through Amazon's MTurk and completed the experiment online through the online survey management software Qualtrics. All participants first gave consent and were asked to confirm that they were US citizens. Participants read a news summary which outlined the history of the Bhopal disaster in India. The article took care to discuss America's involvement in dealing with the aftermath of the disaster and emphasized America's lack of assistance and refusal to extradite the CEOs from the company Union Carbide to India. After reading this, all participants were asked some questions about the news article to confirm they read it. Next participants were told they were going to read a response from the US government taken from multiple news sources in 2012. Participants were randomly assigned to read either a non-apology statement (control):

We recognize the importance and sensitivity of the Bhopal issue in India. We are committed to building a strong and deep strategic partnership between India and the United States.

or a statement including both a verbal apology and offers of financial reparations (dual act):

It is clear that the US made mistakes after the Bhopal tragedy, and that it was poorly handled. We failed at responding swiftly. We should have provided aid to the region and sought justice for the victims. For our inaction, we are truly sorry. We recognize the importance and sensitivity of the Bhopal issue in India. We are committed to building a strong and deep strategic partnership between India and the United States.” Furthermore the US government has agreed to provide 20 million USD to the Indian government for cleaning up the region.

The non-apology statement which was included in both conditions was based on an actual statement made by a representative of the US government in response to questions about the Bhopal disaster. It was worded in order to be a true control statement rather than a possibly negative refusal. The complete act condition added to that statement using information from other historic government apologies. In reality the US government has never apologized, offered reparations, or agreed to extradite the American CEOs.

After reading the article, participants completed the following measures on seven point, Likert type scales:

Satisfaction. The same two items as in the previous experiments measured satisfaction, plus one more item which clearly targeted satisfaction with the act (e.g. *"How pleased are you with the response of the US government?"*). The three items together formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 3.25$; $SD = 1.44$).

Outgroup satisfaction. Perceptions of how satisfied the victimized group would be with the statement were measured with the item, “*How satisfied do you think Indian citizens felt about the statement made?*” ($M = 2.18$; $SD = 1.43$).

Negative feelings. The same two items used in previous studies to assess negative feelings towards the victim group were used but changed to specify the government of India as the target group. Additionally, this experiment included another item to tap into (reversed) positive attitudes (“*I feel pleased with the Indian government*” [reversed]). The three items formed a reliable scale of negative feelings towards the victim group ($\alpha = .96$; $M = 2.64$; $SD = 0.98$).

Image improvement. Four items measured perceived changes in the image of America due to the response of the US government. These items were similar to those used in the previous studies and included one additional item measuring moral image of the perpetrator group (i.e. “*Please assess the current moral image of the US around the world.*”). Together these items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .93$; $M = 3.71$; $SD = 1.17$).

Obligation shifting. The same four items used in the previous study were intended to measure shifting obligation to the victim group, with the addition of one new item (“*The Indians ought to get over what happened in the past*”). Together the five items formed a reliable measure of obligation shifting ($\alpha = .85$; $M = 2.69$; $SD = 1.21$).

Further support. For this experiment, two types of future action were measured. One, like with previous experiments, tapped into a willingness to provide additional financial support to the victim group. This was measured with one item, “*Should the US government use taxpayer money to provide assistance to the victims of the disaster?*” ($M = 3.09$; $SD = 1.78$). The second item addressed a second type of further support, willingness to support extraditing the American CEOs to India to face charges (i.e. “*Should the US government return the American executives to India to face prison?*”) ($M = 5.20$; $SD = 2.02$). Participants were asked if they considered themselves Indian and several demographic

questions. After the experiment participants were thanked and fully debriefed on the reality of the situation and the reason for deception.

Results

Correlations, and means and SD by condition, for all variables can be seen in Table 4.

ANOVA tests on mediators.

The apologetic act condition, versus control, increased all three mediators: image improvement, $F(1, 53) = 7.66$, $MSE = 1.22$, $p = .008$; obligation, $F(1,53) = 7.55$, $MSE = 1.31$, $p = .008$; and outgroup satisfaction, $F(1,53) = 36.50$, $MSE = 1.24$, $p < .001$.

Satisfaction.

Overall regression analysis. In a regression with image improvement, obligation shifting, and outgroup satisfaction, on the DV satisfaction with the statement, as predicted, obligation shifting ($\beta = .27$, $sr = .23$, $p = .026$) was a significant independent predictor of satisfaction even controlling for outgroup satisfaction. Image improvement was also a significant predictor ($\beta = .25$, $sr = .20$, $p = .045$). However, the new variable of outgroup satisfaction itself also predicted participants' satisfaction with the statement ($\beta = .35$, $sr = .29$, $p = .006$). The overall regression model was significant, $F(3, 54) = 17.07$, $Adj.R^2 = .47$, $MSE = 1.10$, $p < .001$.

Differences between conditions. An ANOVA showed that the effect of condition on satisfaction was significant, $F(1, 53) = 8.97$, $MSE = 1.82$, $p = .004$. The dual act was significantly more satisfying than the no-apology statement. In a multiple mediation bootstrapping model, obligation shifting ($B = .14$) and victim satisfaction ($B = .34$) were each significant mediators (indirect effect CI not including 0) of the contrast on the DV satisfaction (see Figure 6). Image improvement was not a significant mediator ($B = .13$, CI included 0) although both of its paths were significant. The total effect was significant and the mediators collectively reduced the direct effect to non-significance.

Negative feelings.

Overall regression analysis. In a regression with image improvement, obligation shifting, and victim satisfaction predicting negative feelings about the victims, as expected, obligation shifting ($\beta = .32$, $sr = .27$, $p = .048$) was a significant independent predictor of the outcome negative feelings. Image improvement ($p = .940$) and victim satisfaction ($p = .480$) were not significant predictors of negative feelings about the victims. The overall regression model was not significant, $F(3, 54) = 1.63$, $Adj.R^2 = .03$, $MSE = 0.93$, $p = .195$. In a regression including only the significant predictor of obligation shifting, the overall model was significant, $F(1, 54) = 4.45$, $Adj.R^2 = .06$, $MSE = 0.91$, $p = .040$.

ANOVA. In an ANOVA with negative feelings as the DV, the difference between the conditions was not significant, $F(1, 53) = 0.31$, $MSE = 0.98$, $p = .58$. The dual act was not significantly different than the no-apology control statement on the outcome of negative feelings (control: $M = 2.56$; dual act: $M = 2.71$). A bootstrapping model (Figure 7), including the same three mediators as in the previous analysis, revealed no significant indirect effects between the manipulation and the negative feelings outcome. The path from obligation shifting was the only near significant path to negative feelings, $p = .054$. While this result was not in line with previous findings that obligation shifting mediated between manipulations of apology completeness and negative victim group attitudes, it is not likely that the inclusion of victim satisfaction accounted for this. Victim satisfaction's own effect on negative attitudes was nonsignificant and in the opposite direction. Indeed, when the analysis was repeated excluding victim satisfaction, the indirect path including obligation was also not significant.

Further support - extradition.

Overall regression analysis. In a regression with image improvement, obligation shifting, and victim satisfaction, on the DV of extradition of Union Carbide employees, as predicted, obligation shifting ($\beta = -.39$, $sr = -.33$, $p = .012$) was a significant independent negative predictor of support for extraditing the UC employees to India. In other words, the more participants felt that the statement had

shifted obligation, the less support they felt for America returning the Union Carbide employees to India to face their prison sentence. Image improvement ($p = .554$) and victim satisfaction ($p = .929$) were not significant predictors of support for extradition. The overall regression model was significant, $F(3, 53) = 4.02$, $Adj.R^2 = .14$, $MSE = 3.50$, $p = .012$.

In an ANOVA on support for extradition of UC employees, the difference between the conditions was not significant, $F(1, 53) = 0.60$, $MSE = 4.12$, $p = .444$ (control: $M = 5.42$; dual act: $M = 5.00$). However, a mediation model similar to the preceding ones (Figure 8) showed a significant negative indirect effect of obligation shifting as a mediator, which was suppressed by the direct effect's nonsignificant trend in the positive direction. As in the previous studies, obligation shifting was a factor increased by the more complete apology but which led to more opposition to action in the form of extradition. No other mediators showed a significant indirect effect.

Further support - reparations to victims.

Overall regression analysis. In a regression with image improvement, obligation shifting, and victim satisfaction, on the DV of reparations to victims, as predicted, obligation shifting ($\beta = -.35$, $sr = -.29$, $p = .027$) was a significant independent negative predictor of support for reparations to victims. In other words, the more participants felt that the statement had shifted obligation, the less support they felt for the plan to use taxpayer money to provide reparations directly to victims. Image improvement ($p = .536$) and victim satisfaction ($p = .969$) were not significant predictors of support for reparations to victims. The overall regression model was significant, $F(3, 53) = 3.33$, $Adj.R^2 = .11$, $MSE = 2.80$, $p = .027$.

In an ANOVA on support for reparations the difference between the conditions was not significant, $F(1, 53) = 0.00$, $MSE = 3.22$, $p = .957$ (control: $M = 3.08$; dual act: $M = 3.10$). But again, a mediation model (Figure 8) showed a significant negative indirect effect of obligation shifting, which was suppressed by the direct effect's nonsignificant trend in the positive direction. As with extradition

support, obligation shifting was a factor increased by the more complete apology, but which led to more opposition to reparations. No other indirect effects were significant.⁴

Discussion

This experiment set to rule out perceptions of victim satisfaction as a possible alternate explanation for the effects of obligation shifting on satisfaction, negative feelings, and lack of support for assisting the victim group. After controlling for perceived outgroup satisfaction, the results suggest that obligation shifting remains a predictor of satisfaction. In other words, the extent to which people feel they are no longer responsible and that the victims now owe forgiveness remained a predictor of satisfaction, even when taking into account the related measure of belief that the apology satisfied the victims.

Outgroup satisfaction, however, also emerged as a positive predictor of perpetrator satisfaction. The results suggest a link between victim satisfaction and perpetrator satisfaction. Obligation shifting and outgroup satisfaction both mediated the preference for the dual act over no apology on this outcome. Image improvement also remained a unique predictor of satisfaction, although it failed to mediate the preference for the dual act over no apology, perhaps indicating that part of image improvement depended on how good the ingroup's apology looks in the eyes of the outgroup. Furthermore, perceptions that victims were satisfied with the response were not linked to negative feelings about the victim group or reduced willingness to support plans to extradite those responsible or provide reparations to the victims. Obligation shifting, however, still predicted negative feelings and reduced willingness to support both types of restorative actions, supporting the theory that obligation shifting is a unique predictor of outcomes for perpetrators after apologetic acts.

General Discussion

Across four experiments, we showed obligation shifting to be a consistent predictor of satisfaction with a conciliatory act for perpetrator group members, even when controlling for image

improvement and other concerns. Group members seem to be motivated to support apologies and reparations not just by looking better to others, but also by the prospect of putting an obligation onto the victim group. In spite of the ultimately ingroup-centered nature of both motivations, image and obligation had very different outcomes relevant to continued good relations between the groups. Image improvement, in all four experiments, never corresponded to increased negative feelings about the victim group; and in Experiment 2, image improvement perceptions actually corresponded to less negative feelings. By contrast, obligation shifting was consistently related to negative feelings about the victim group, playing a mediational role between our manipulations of conciliatory acts and increased negative feelings even when other factors, which varied from study to study (unspecified direct effect in Experiment 1, indirect effect of image in Experiment 2), suppressed this effect as a zero-order relationship.

Showing that the negative implications of obligation shifting were not just a product of negative feelings but could increase them, in Experiment 3, our obligation shifting manipulation increased negative feelings. The negative impact of obligation shifting was not just emotional; unlike image improvement, obligation shifting perceptions were associated with reduced support for further aid to the victim group in Experiments 2 and 4, while our obligation shifting manipulation in Experiment 3 also caused less willingness to support additional conciliatory acts. Finally, Experiment 4 showed that the relationships between obligation shifting and its outcomes of satisfaction, negative feelings, and future support for the victim group were not completely explained by any confusion between obligations placed on the outgroup to accept the apology, and descriptive expectations that they will accept it.

Our experiments also showed that differences in satisfaction resulting from the completeness of different conciliatory acts were explained by the mediators of image and obligation shifting. The two mediators explained why a control statement which did not provide an apology or reparations was in turn less satisfactory to the perpetrator group than either of the single-act statements (Experiments 1,

and 2) or a dual-act statement (Experiment 4). Furthermore, Experiments 2 and 4 showed that obligation shifting perceptions uniquely accounted for a reduction in willingness to support reparations after conciliatory acts.

Another important finding was that power had very little importance to the perpetrator group members, either in terms of keeping power for themselves, or redistributing power to the victim group. If anything, a small negative relationship was found between ingroup power and satisfaction in Experiment 2. It is worth noting that the reliability of our power measures was somewhat low in Experiment 2, which may make it more difficult to draw conclusions about power for that context; however, both types of power measured in Experiment 1 demonstrated the same lack of relationship to the outcome measures and were reliable constructs. Although perceptions of power change consistently had small and non-significant effects across our experiments, including a non-student sample (Experiment 1), anecdotal evidence of opposition to apology on power grounds still exists. It may be that power concerns would be more important for group members who are relatively insecure about the group's power, but that our participants did not generally feel this way. This, in a way, would confirm Shnabel and Nadler's (2009) premise that groups who feel that they are without power, seek to gain it; extending this to the situation of a group member who subjectively thinks his or her group is losing power. Thus, future work could look at the role of varying power discrepancies upon satisfaction with conciliatory acts.

While outgroup satisfaction, introduced in Experiment 4, did not completely eliminate the predictive effects of image improvement and obligation shifting on satisfaction, it did emerge as a strong predictor and mediator of satisfaction in its own right. However, it is hard to know what in turn leads to expectations that a victim group will be satisfied. Such expectations could merely be inferred from the completeness of the apology; the more elements it contains, the stronger a concession it implies and the happier the outgroup would be. Conversely, participants may have assumed that what satisfied them would satisfy the outgroup. In any case, a direct desire to satisfy the other group does

not seem to have figured into the existing theories of reconciliation that inspired our image- and obligation-based constructs, which call attention to social goods on the larger global scale such as collective image, power, and acknowledgement of moral responsibility. Future research should certainly take this new factor into account.

Other common features of the conflicts we focused on deserve further study. For example, the background materials presented in all our studies made clear that the claims of the victim group were justified. However, sometimes apologies are more controversial because ingroup members disagree on the morality of the past act being apologized for, not just because opinions vary on whether it should be commemorated or compensated. For example, if a Westerner does not agree that certain books or films should be forbidden because they offend Islam, his or her own government's apologetic statements to Muslim countries on that issue will seem unjustified. In this context, perhaps the effect of the apology's completeness on image improvement would reverse, such that the country's image is seen as suffering by giving in on the issue; or perhaps concerns about losing ingroup power would rise to the fore. An apology seen as unjustified might also strengthen the effects of obligation; if the apology was given undeservedly, it falls even more on the outgroup to reconcile their differences.

Also, because the apologies we studied were all official and collective-level, while participants were all ordinary citizens of their countries, they could only express impact on policy through support for such steps as additional aid, debt forgiveness or expatriation. Because they were not individually responsible for taking such steps, as leaders and officials might be, it is possible that the consequences for the country's power did not loom as large for them. Although the prospect of handing out questionnaires to policymakers is a daunting one, it may be that archival studies of the rhetoric surrounding legislative debates about apology could shed more light onto the motivations to support or denounce apology at higher levels of government.

Despite evidence that apologetic acts lead to more obligation shifting and image improvement than non-apologetic statements, it is less clear how apologetic acts compare to completely not addressing the issue in the first place (i.e. providing no statement or mention in the public discourse). Our approach, focused as it was on the evaluation of a definite statement, could not address these questions. There is evidence that perpetrator group members generally do not support apologies before they are given (see Blatz & Philpot, 2010) and that may be, in part, due to concerns that an apology could be leading to a re-opening of an old issue that perpetrators feel is already closed. In that case, apologies may actually be less obligation shifting than truly doing nothing. However, this is difficult to measure experimentally, because simply providing participants with information about the issue could be suggesting that the issue is not “closed”, which could lead to an apology being better supported because the issue was reopened. This means that paradoxically, apologies may open and close the door on the issue simultaneously.

As a final cautionary note, we should mention that although our hypotheses were framed in positive terms (“obligation shifting leads to increased negative attitudes and satisfaction”), means of our variables were at or below their scale midpoint in most studies and conditions. Indeed, most of our conditions either presented no act of conciliation or a partial one (apology without reparation, or reparation without apology), rather than a complete act (as in Experiment 4). This opens the possibility that a reversed interpretation might be more accurate; for example, that *inadequate* responses to atrocities lead to *disbelief* that obligation has passed on, with corresponding *increases* in support for further action and in *dissatisfaction* with the response. Under this interpretation, a refusal to believe in obligation shifting would also reduce negative attitudes toward the outgroup, because hateful attitudes would not be compatible with the more sympathetic mindset created by the failure of one’s own leaders to address the concerns of the wronged. We think that this interpretation in terms of failed rather than successful apologies, although plausible, rests on similar conceptual ground as our initial statements of theory. For now, the low to middling scale values of ingroup evaluations of official

statements should be taken as further evidence that official apologies are often difficult to sell – not just to outgroups (Philpot & Hornsey, 2010) but sometimes to ingroups as well.

Implications for Reconciliation

Having established the importance of obligation shifting across varying contexts in these experiments, we also think that obligation shifting could have important long-term effects on the reconciliation process for both those giving and receiving conciliatory acts. Particularly, obligation shifting could cause problems when perpetrator group members feel that victims refuse to take on the obligation that has been shifted to them. When victims are asked to imagine receiving an apology, they tend to overestimate the extent to which they will be satisfied with an apology compared to when they actually receive one (De Cremer, Pillutla, & Folmer, 2011). Perpetrator group members may expect forgiveness as a response from victims, but victims may not see this as a necessary outcome of receiving an apology.

Conciliatory acts do not seem to always necessarily induce forgiveness (Phillpot & Hornsey, 2008) and that there is some reason to believe that forgiveness may only be possible long after the apology (McCullough, Fincham, & Tang, 2003). So, if perpetrator groups expect immediate forgiveness and gratitude for their conciliatory acts, they may be disappointed by the outcome. In recent research, Harth, Hornsey, and Barlow (2011) manipulated whether victims rejected or accepted an intergroup apology and found that for perpetrator group members, a perception that the apology was rejected led to more negative attitudes towards victims and reduced support for compensating victims financially. A similar process may be at work in our findings of a connection between obligation shifting perceptions and hostile attitudes toward the victim group. If perpetrator group members see their group's apology as settling matters between the two groups, then there is no need to keep up good relations with that group, and any further demands from them will be seen as unjustified. By contrast, if the apology is seen in the light of image improvement, the task of keeping up a positive moral image

is one that never really ends; maintaining good relations in this view would be necessary to the goal of perpetrator group image maintenance.

If victims perceive the perpetrator group's motives as manipulative, they may see the act as fostering indebtedness and not gratitude (Ames, Flynn, & Weber, 2004). This sense of indebtedness may have negative outcomes for the victim group itself. Indebtedness has been shown to differ from gratitude (Tsang, 2006) and has been linked to negative emotions like discomfort (Greenberg, 1980). Due to its unpleasant nature, it might be expected that victim group members resist feelings of indebtedness, and this may explain why help from perpetrator groups is so often rejected (e.g., Nadler & Halabi, 2006).

We acknowledge that recognizing the impact of obligation shifting might contribute to pessimism about the prospects of improving intergroup relations. After all, we found that a major motive for satisfaction with conciliatory acts is linked to hostility toward the victim group, and tends to close off relations with that group rather than "opening the door" to further help. Despite this, we should emphasize that our findings do not argue against providing public apologies or giving reparations. There are a number of reasons why collective acts of reconciliation should be made, unrelated to the motivations of the perpetrator group. Wohl et al. (2011) argue that apologies should be considered a moral imperative, can help determine shared historical narratives, and can bring attention to issues that may not be widely remembered or accepted. Furthermore, our research suggests that image improvement is a relatively benign motivation. It does not imply the potential negative outcomes of reduced support or negative feelings, and in some of our experiments actually worked against them. Thus, encouraging people to interpret conciliatory acts in terms of image rather than obligation would have clear benefits: it would make sure that these acts do not lead the members of the group making them away from the goals of reconciliation.

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Footnotes

¹ Unless stated otherwise, Levene's test was consistent with homogeneity of variance for each variable in each study.

² Although we do not claim that the outcome variables are theoretically or empirically orthogonal to each other, it might be of interest to test what happened when the other outcome variable (i.e. negative feelings or satisfaction, which were not significantly correlated) was statistically controlled for. In Experiment 1, all significance levels remained the same when the other outcome was included as a covariate, except that when the reparations dummy code was used as the IV and negative feelings as the DV, the indirect path through obligation was no longer significant (bootstrapped $B = .06$, 95% CI = $-.0002$ to $.23$).

³ Conducting similar mediation analyses as in Footnote 2 for the three outcome variables of Experiment 2, but including the other two outcomes as covariates, the following effects were observed: both image (indirect path $B = .06$, 95% CI = $.01$ to $.14$) and obligation (indirect $B = .13$, 95% CI = $.06$ to $.25$) remained significant mediators between the contrast and satisfaction; for the apology dummy variable on negative feelings, image was a significant mediator with a negative path (indirect $B = -.08$, 95% CI = $-.24$ to $-.001$) but obligation's path, though positive, was not significant (indirect $B = .07$, 95% CI = $-.02$ to $.22$); for the reparations dummy variable on negative feelings, neither path was significant (image indirect $B = -.06$, 95% CI = $-.24$ to $.03$; obligation indirect $B = .06$, 95% CI = $-.02$ to $.21$); for the effect of the contrast on support for further reparations, obligation was a significant mediator, indirect $B = -.03$, 95% CI = $-.09$ to $-.003$, but image was not, indirect $B = -.002$, 95% CI = $-.03$ to $.01$. Thus, the mediation effects observed on negative feelings were mostly accounted for by shared variance with other outcome variables, while the mediation effects on the other variables were not.

When controlling for the other outcome variables as covariates, all indirect paths in all mediation analyses for Experiment 4 became nonsignificant except for the mediation of effects on satisfaction by victim satisfaction, $B = .33$. In particular, the significant shared variance between satisfaction and the "further support" variables seems to have been vital to the effects reported - that is, the less satisfied with the statement, the more further support was seen as necessary.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics by condition and correlations, Experiment 1.*

	Control	Apology	Reparation		Negative	Ingroup	Outgroup	Obligation
	mean	mean	mean	Satisfaction	Feelings	Power	Power	Shifting
	(SD)	(SD)	(SD)					
Satisfaction	1.98 (1.44)	3.11 (1.66)	3.01 (1.66)					
Negative Feelings	1.55 (0.87)	1.27 (0.56)	1.51 (0.82)	.15				
Ingroup Power	3.49 (0.91)	3.77 (0.71)	3.49 (0.88)	.29**	.18*			
Outgroup Power	3.81 (1.05)	4.13 (0.61)	4.06 (0.81)	.14	.06	.31**		
Obligation Shifting	2.13 (1.22)	3.17 (1.41)	3.01 (1.66)	.67***	-.26**	.45***	.19*	
Image Improvement	2.34 (1.06)	3.36 (1.02)	3.24 (1.45)	.56***	.16	.47***	-.01	.61***

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics by condition and correlations, Experiment 2.

	Control mean (SD)	Apology mean (SD)	Reparation mean (SD)	Satisfacti on	Negative Feelings	Further Support	Ingroup Power	Outgroup Power	Obligation Shifting
Satisfaction	2.78 (1.12)	3.46 (1.19)	3.42 (1.10)						
Negative Feelings	2.29 (1.14)	2.33 (1.24)	2.13 (1.09)	.33***					
Support for Aid	1.81 (0.86)	2.20 (0.85)	2.18 (0.83)	-.14	-.17*				
Ingroup Power	3.96 (0.52)	4.03 (0.47)	4.02 (0.55)	.26**	-.02	-.09			
Outgroup Power	3.95 (0.57)	4.02 (0.38)	4.08 (0.47)	-.03	-.12	-.11	.15		
Obligation Shifting	3.19 (1.02)	3.80 (0.93)	3.76 (0.87)	.73***	.32***	-.28***	.32***	.02	
Image Improvement	3.65 (1.06)	4.18 (0.75)	4.10 (1.01)	.42***	-.02	.13	.56***	.20***	.67***

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics by condition and correlations, Experiment 3.*

	Control	Image	Obligation				
	Apology	apology	apology		Negative	Further	Obligation
	mean (SD)	mean (SD)	mean	Satisfaction	Feelings	Support	Shifting
			(SD)				
Satisfaction	3.04 (1.29)	4.39 (1.36)	4.11 (1.03)	-			
Negative Feelings	1.33 (0.61)	1.62 (0.82)	2.06 (1.13)	.14	-		
Further Support	4.44 (1.82)	3.53 (1.78)	2.79 (1.64)	-.15	-.19	-	
Obligation Shifting	2.97 (0.87)	3.74 (1.05)	4.08 (0.93)	.32**	.23 m	-.45***	
Image Improvement	4.13 (1.06)	4.96 (0.61)	4.41 (0.98)	.34**	-.26*	.11	.04

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; $m=p < .10$.

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics by condition and correlations, Experiment 4.*

	Control	Apology + Reparation	Satisfaction	Negative feelings	Further support (reparation)	Further support (extradition)	Obligation shifting	Image improvement
Satisfaction	2.68 (1.49)	3.77 (1.20)						
Negative feelings	2.56 (0.74)	2.71 (1.17)	.19					
Further support (reparations)	3.08 (1.96)	3.10 (1.63)	-.30*	.10				
Further support (extradition)	5.42 (1.88)	5.00 (2.16)	-.49***	-.04	.24			
Obligation shifting	2.25 (1.08)	3.10 (1.20)	.55***	.28*	-.40**	-.43**		
Image improvement	3.28 (1.21)	4.10 (1.00)	.60***	.12	-.27*	-.28*	.59***	
Victim satisfaction	1.23 (0.51)	3.03 (1.45)	.59***	.04	-.20	-.21	.45***	.52***

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Mediation analyses testing a contrast of both conciliatory acts vs. the control act on satisfaction in Experiment 1.

Figure 2. Mediation analyses for Experiment 1, testing (upper panel) contrast of the “apology act vs. control act” dummy code on negative feelings, with “reparations vs. control” dummy code as covariate, and (lower panel) contrast of the “reparation act vs. the control act” dummy code on negative feelings, controlling for the “apology vs. control act” dummy code.

Figure 3. Mediation analysis testing a contrast of both conciliatory acts vs. the control act on satisfaction in Experiment 2.

Figure 4. Mediation analyses testing a contrast of the apology act vs. the control act on negative feelings controlling for the reparations vs. control dummy code (upper panel) contrast of the reparation act vs. the control act on negative feelings controlling for the apology vs. control dummy code (lower panel) in Experiment 2.

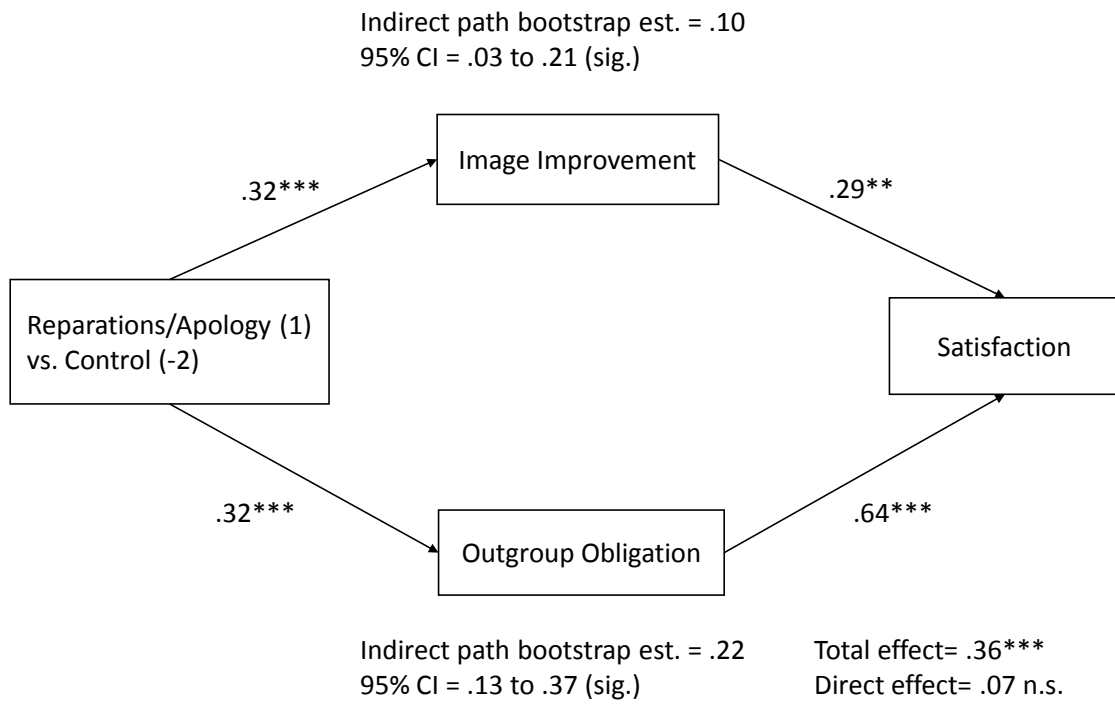
Figure 5. Mediation analysis testing a contrast of both conciliatory acts vs. the control act on support for aid in Experiment 2.

Figure 6. Mediation analysis testing mediators between the condition and satisfaction in Experiment 4.

Figure 7. Mediation analysis testing mediators between the condition and negative feelings in Experiment 4.

Figure 8. Mediation analysis testing mediators between the condition and support for extradition (upper panel) and reparations (lower panel) in Experiment 4.

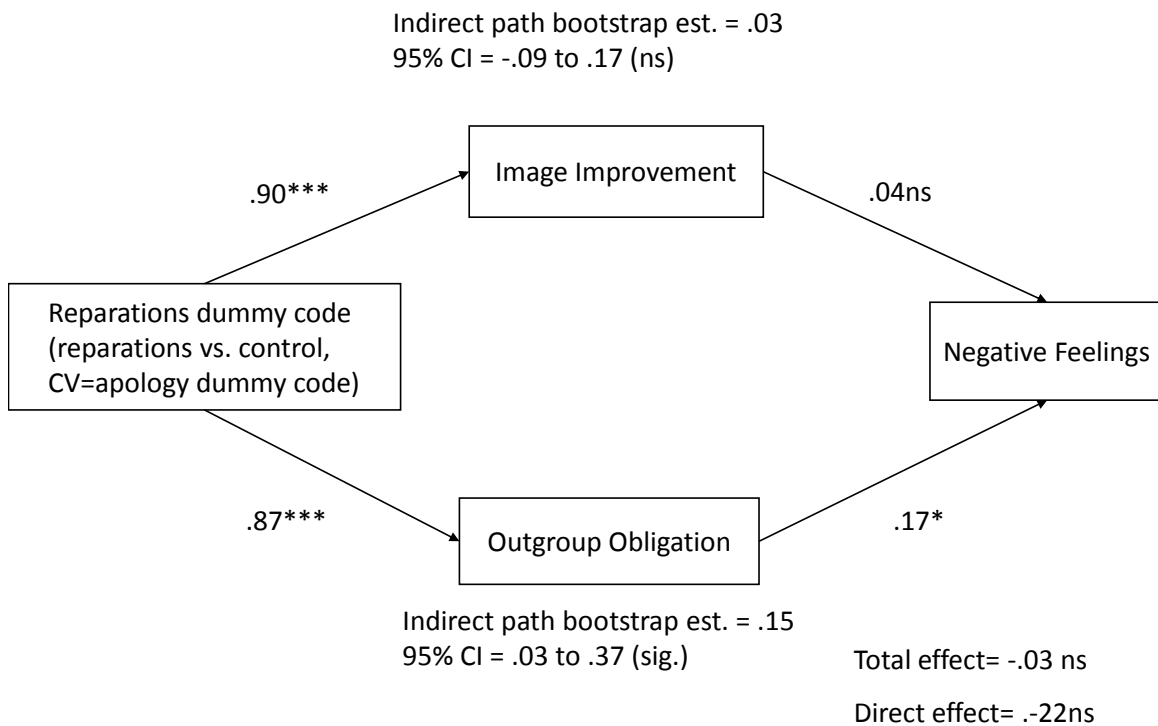
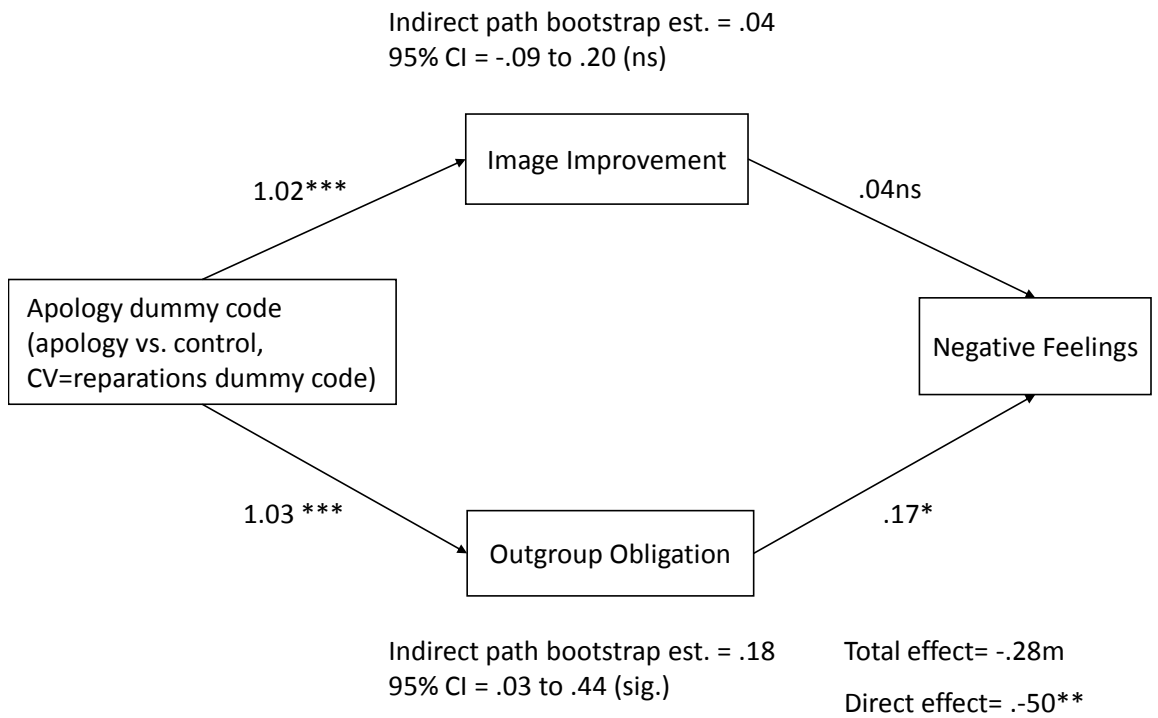
Figure 1



Note. Unstandardized regression weights are shown.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

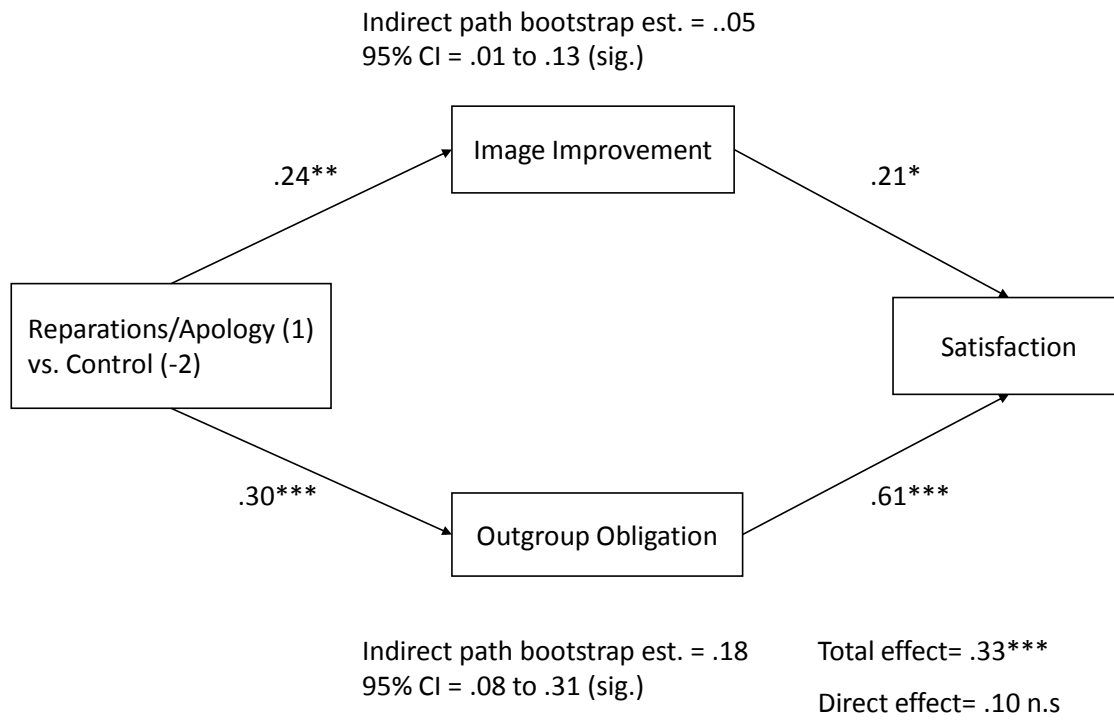
Figure 2



Note. Unstandardized regression weights are shown.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Figure 3



Note. Unstandardized regression weights are shown.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

Figure 4

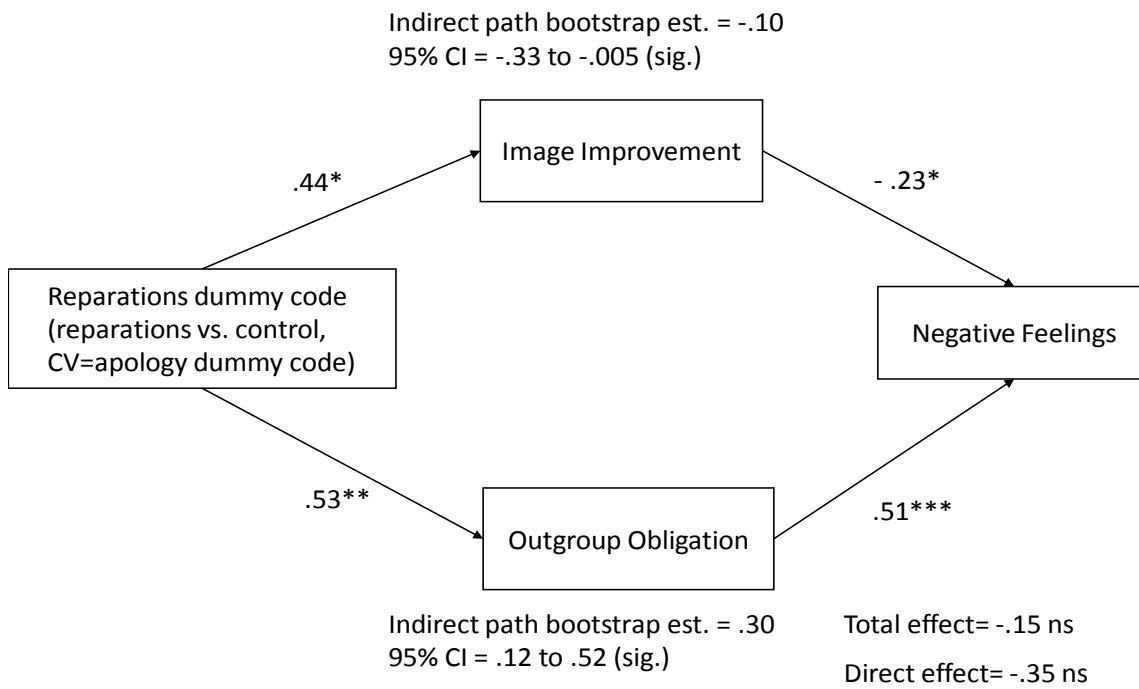
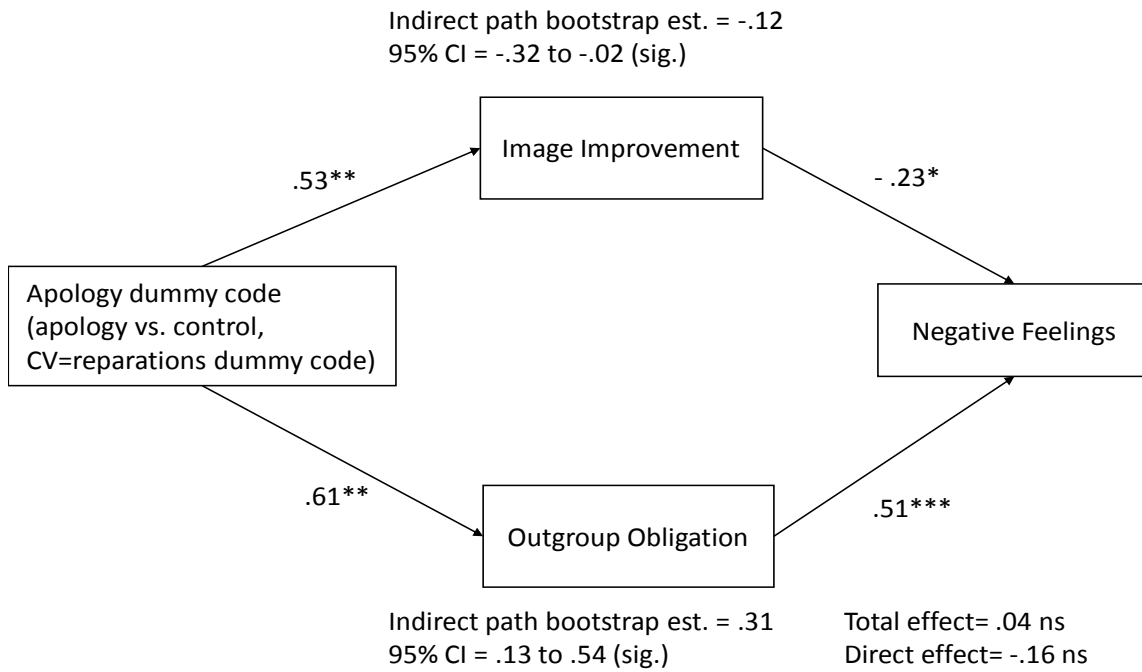
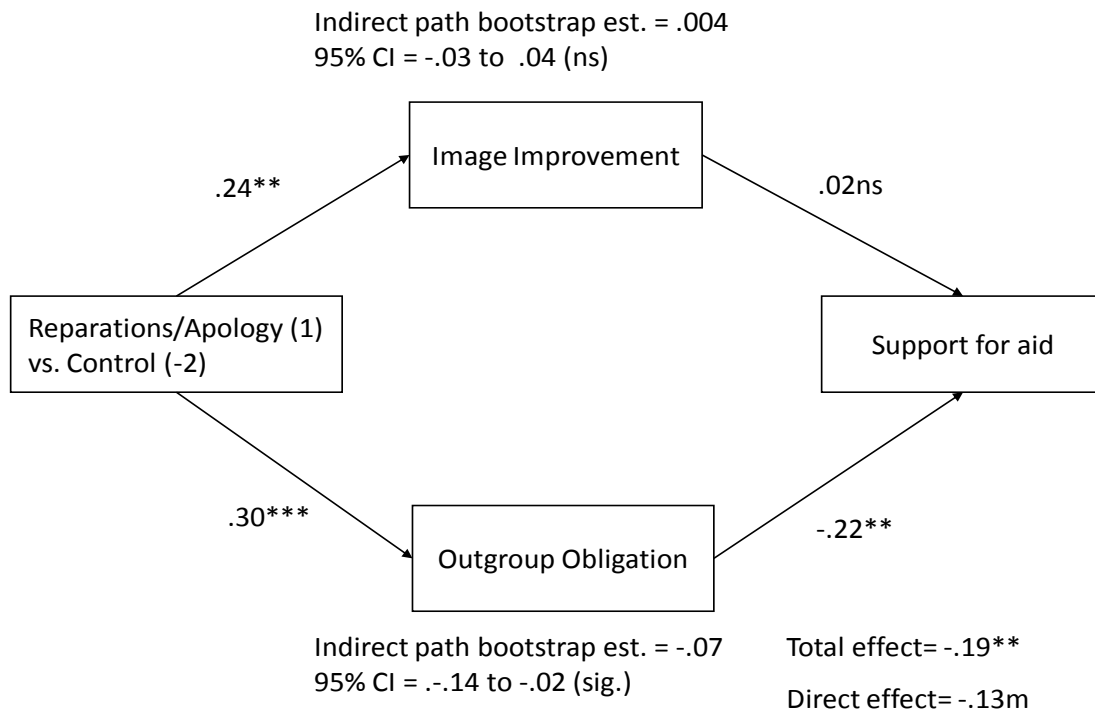


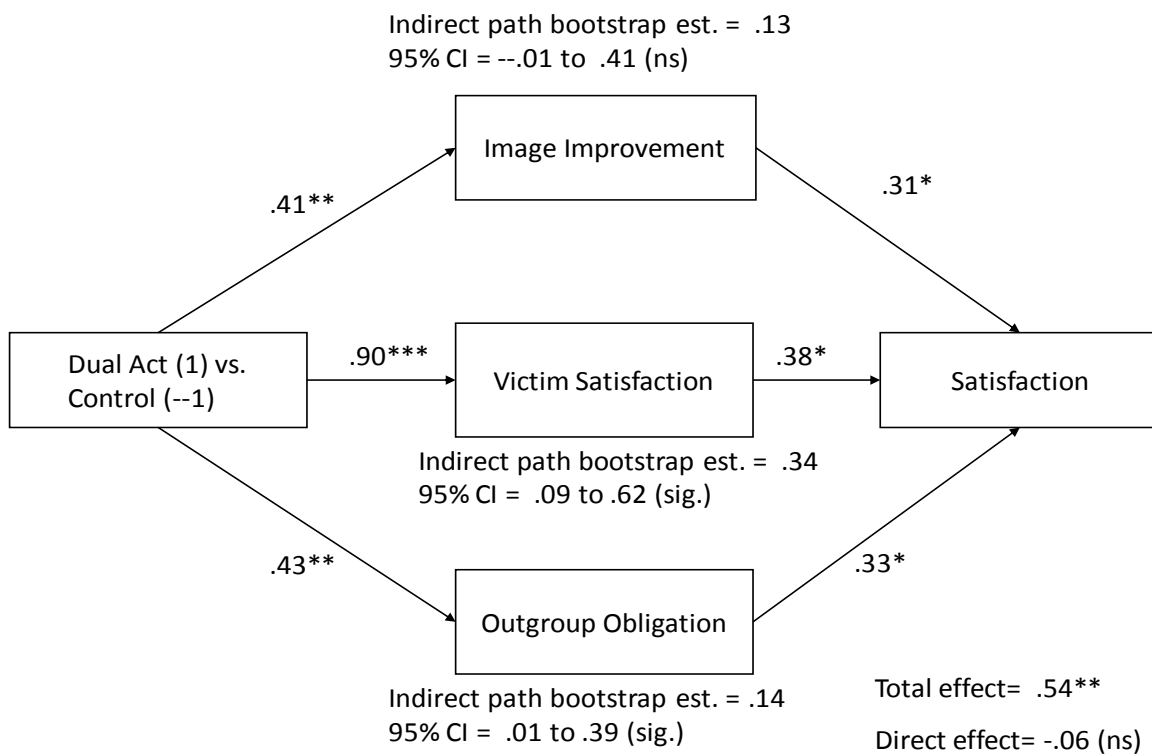
Figure 5



Note. Unstandardized regression weights are shown.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; m = $p < .10$.

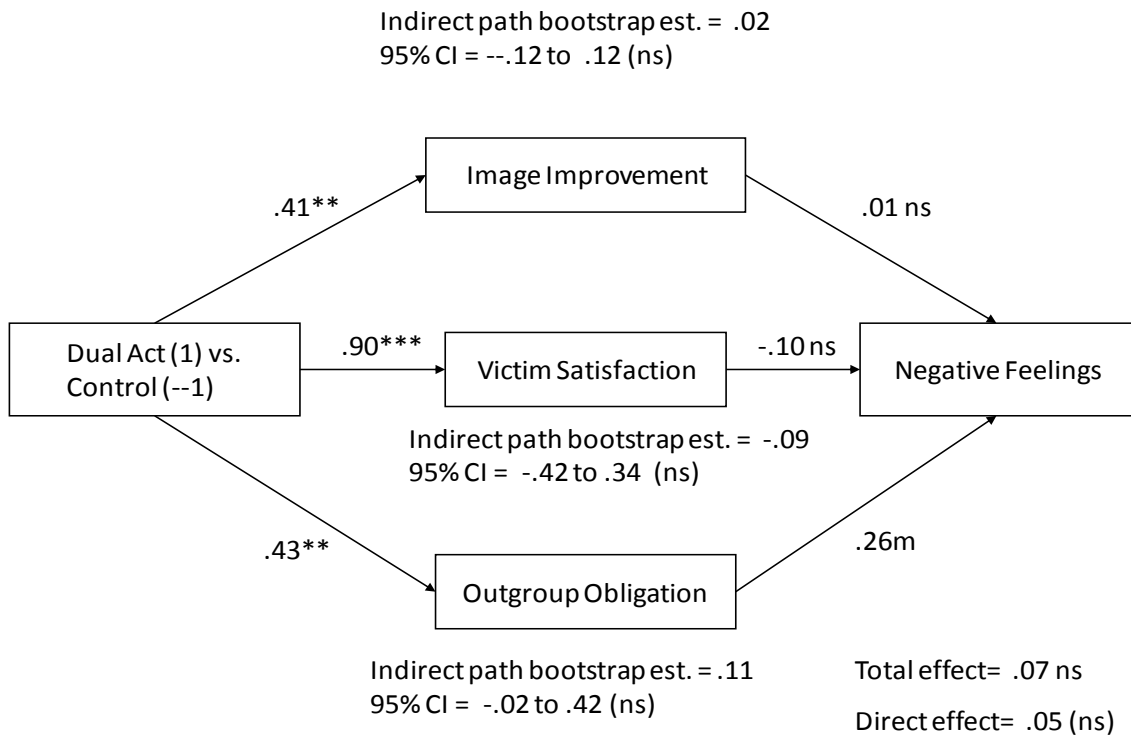
Figure 6



Note. Unstandardized regression weights are shown.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; $m = p < .10$.

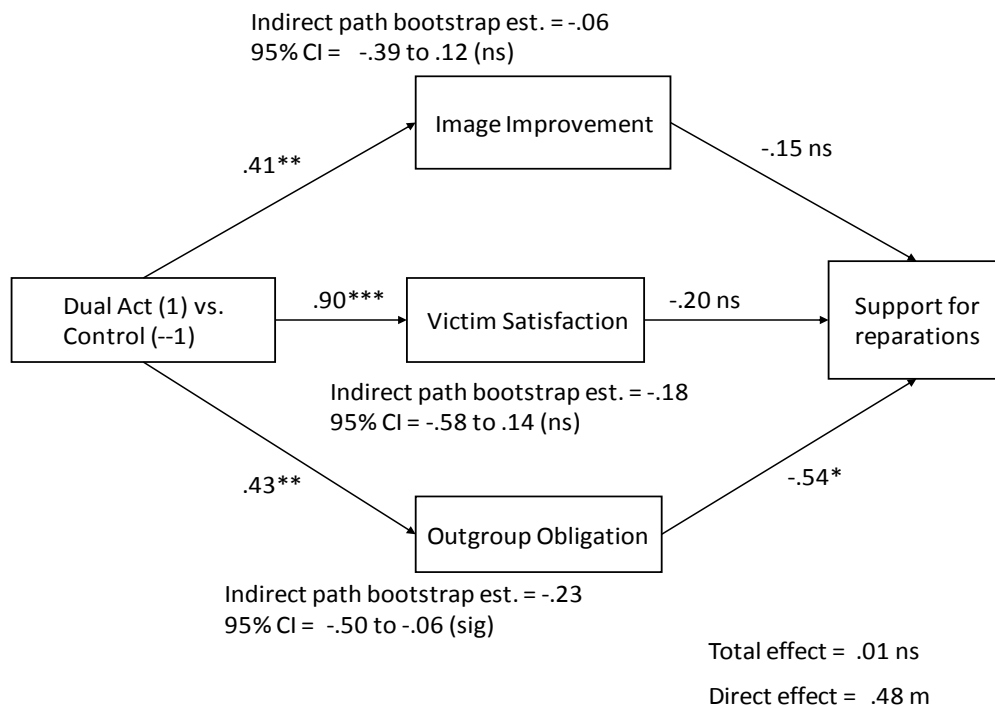
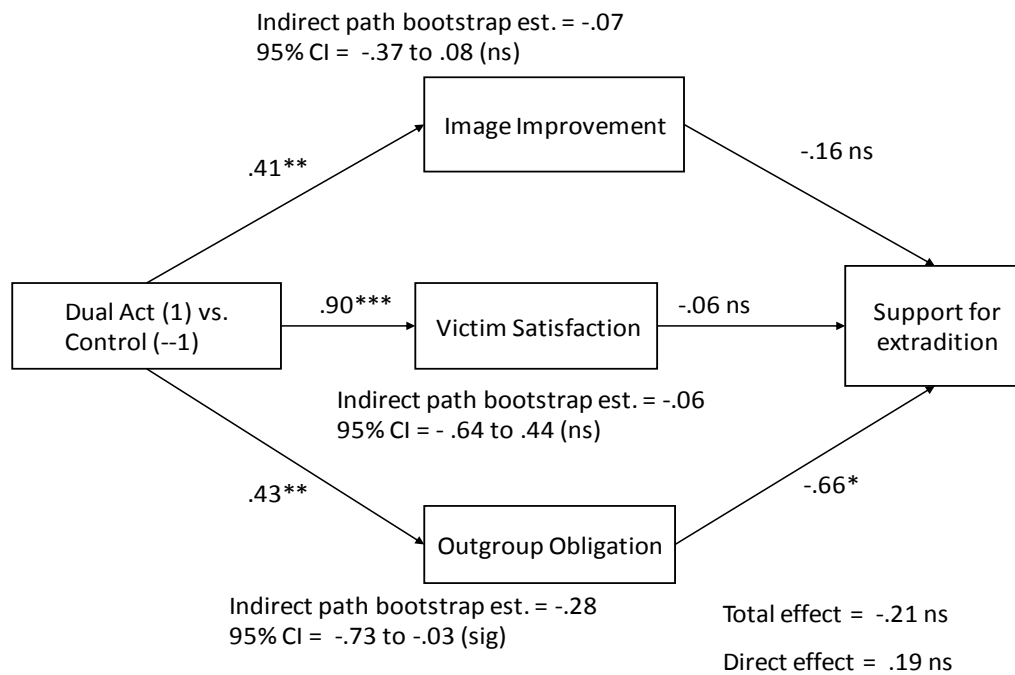
Figure 7



Note. Unstandardized regression weights are shown.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; m = $p < .10$.

Figure 8



Note. Unstandardized regression weights are shown.

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; m = $p < .10$.