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Intergroup Apologies From Both Sides: Perceptions of Goals and Satisfaction In Two European

Contents

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Abstract

Direct comparisons of reactions on both sides of a collective political apology, within the same study, are rare in published research. We report two studies conducted contemporaneously with past apologies, that focused on satisfaction and group-relevant outcomes of the apology. Study 1 surveyed English (apologising group) and Irish Nationalist (recipient group) respondents (N = 99) about the British apology in 2010 for the Bloody Sunday massacre. Study 2 surveyed Bosniaks (recipient group), Serbians in Belgrade and Bosnian Serbs (apologising groups; total N = 184) about a Serbian apology in 2013 for the Srebenica massacre. In Study 1, apologisers showed greater satisfaction than recipients, in line with their higher evaluations of the apology's goal fulfilment. But in Study 2, apologisers were less satisfied than recipients, even as they perceived higher empowerment of recipients and more shifting of obligation to them. In both settings, satisfaction was predicted across samples by perceptions of how well the apology met image improvement, obligation shifting, and recipient empowerment goals, with no significant moderation by group. These findings, as with other recent research, challenge the group differences implicit in the Needs-Based Model and suggest that the bases for satisfaction with conciliatory acts may not be as different as assumed between sides of a recent conflict.

Keywords: collective apologies; intergroup conflict; intergroup reconciliation; group image

Public Significance Statement: People on each side of two recent conflicts, in Northern Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina, read actual post-conflict public apologies, and rated their satisfaction. The Northern Ireland apology was preferred by the apologizing (English) side but the Bosnia apology was preferred by the recipient (Bosniaks). However, the same perceptions related to satisfaction in each conflict: the improvement of the apologizers' image, victim group empowerment, and the recipients' obligation to respond constructively.

Intergroup Apologies From Both Sides: Perceptions of Goals and Satisfaction In Two European Contexts

Apologies between nations or other social groups, responding to recent or historic wrongs, have become a feature of politics over the past thirty years. From the head of the EU commission apologising to Italy for a tardy response to the Coronavirus crisis (BBC News, April 16, 2020), to White religious leaders at a 2020 Black Lives Matter protest in the US state of North Carolina washing the feet of Black clerics in contrition for racial inequalities (Reimann, 2020, June 14), official and personal acts of apology remain a relevant topic today. Expressing collective apology is recognized as a critical step in the process of reconciliation between peoples at opposite ends of a past injustice (e.g., Weyeneth, 2001; Nytagodien & Neal, 2004; Páez, 2010).

Still, apologies can be controversial. On one hand, nationalistic members of the apologising group can oppose them, feeling they give away too much (Karunaratne & Laham, 2019; Mifune et al., 2019). On the other hand, members and allies of the group receiving the apologies can object that these symbolic gestures do too little and distract from real compensation and change (Smith, 2013), or that they foreground the moral drama of the transgressor while keeping victims in a mute and inactive role (Bentley, 2018). Whether members of both parties in a conflict support or oppose apologies, and why, has great importance in evaluating their likely effects.

Social psychological research on collective apology reception has mostly focused on the reactions of the group receiving the apology (henceforth, "recipients"). By now, a substantial literature has shown many elements in the apology and the situation which determine recipients'

responses (for reviews see Blatz & Ross, 2011; Wohl, Hornsey & Philpot, 2011). Apologies are generally more effective in achieving satisfaction than in achieving forgiveness (Hornsey & Wohl, 2013; Hornsey et al., 2019; Čehajić-Clancy & Brown, 2019).

We chose satisfaction rather than forgiveness as the main focus of this study for a number of reasons. Most importantly, in research such as ours that compares reactions of both the receiving and the apologizing group, forgiveness is only appropriate to measure as an outcome for recipients, not apologizers. We also chose satisfaction because it expresses the appropriateness of an apology's content regardless of the apology's goal. In the first place, several authors have questioned the necessity of forgiveness in reconciliation, arguing for the acceptability of steps that lead to cessation of conflict, without demanding that those harmed actively forgive (e.g., Chapman, 2007; Eisikovitz, 2012; Hamber, 2007). But also, going beyond the goal of reconciliation, apologies are sometimes given to prepare the way for justice, confront a collective amnesia, indicate a desire for a reset of relations, or to close off the issue (e.g., Amstutz, 2015; Auerbach, 2004; Nobles, 2008). None of these motives for apology necessarily entail forgiveness.

These alternative goals may also have special relevance for members of the group issuing the apology (henceforth, "apologisers"), about whom there is comparatively little research compared to recipients. Zaiser and Giner-Sorolla (2013) found that acceptance of actual and hypothetical own-nation apologies depended, both correlationally and experimentally, on whether they saw the apology as improving their group's image, but not on whether they saw either side as being empowered by it. Additionally, a third goal emerged: the perception of whether the apology would oblige the recipient group to accept it. Like image improvement, this *obligation shifting* goal predicted acceptance of the apology by the apologising group, but was

related to negative views of the recipient group, and to support for breaking off rather than continuing relations with them ("closing" rather than "opening the door"; Nobles, 1988).

Some research, moreover, has looked at intergroup apologies simultaneously among members of both groups involved. Wohl et al. (2013) found that Chinese-Canadians and European Canadians differed in their evaluations of a proposed government apology for past discrimination. While both sides agreed that collective guilt was appropriate, Chinese-Canadians (the recipient group) saw the apology as more appropriate and sincere than European-Canadians (the apologising group) did. By contrast, Shnabel et al. (2015) found similar effects of stability of intergroup relations on perceived sincerity, both among members of the apologising group (Jewish Israelis) and the recipient group (Israeli Arabs). In another research program, Hornsey, Okimoto and Wenzel (2017) found that members of the victimized group showed greater support for a collective apology relative to transgressor-group members.

These studies do not consistently find that either members of the apologising group or the recipient group tend to be more satisfied with the apology. Some research shows that apologising-group members are unusually eager to accept their own apology (Barlow et al., 2015) or that recipient group members reject apologies as insincere (Shnabel et al., 2015). This suggests that apologiser-group members will be more positively disposed, while recipient-group members will be wary of the apology. On the other hand, the studies by Wohl et al (2013) and Hornsey et al. (2015) that put both group members side by side found that recipient-group members were more favourably inclined towards a (collective) apology, suggesting that apologising-group members are more wary of apologising. Whichever way the comparison goes, it is clear that these attitudes toward apologies depend on complex factors and specific contexts that may vary with the particular groups involved.

We here present two studies on reactions to official apologies among people with group allegiances on either side of state-sponsored group-based violence that occurred within living memory. Unlike Hornsey et al. (2017) or Wohl et al. (2013), we had participants read actual, recent apologies offered by heads of government, rather than potential or hypothetical apologies. The main purpose of the studies was to compare the two groups, apologiser and recipient, in their satisfaction with the apology and in the evaluations of the apology's effects toward various goals that have been shown to predict satisfaction.

Satisfaction with the apology: Group-specific apology goal effects

Following the initial research question comparing satisfaction levels between apologising and recipient groups, for which the existing literature gives no clear indication toward a hypothesis, existing theories are more relevant to hypotheses about *why* satisfaction may vary. Specifically, in line with Zaiser & Giner-Sorolla (2013), we measured apology's perceived effect on the empowerment of both groups, its effect to improve the apologising group's image, and its effect to shift the weight of obligation to the recipient group.

Based on the findings of Zaiser and Giner-Sorolla (2013) and the needs-based model of Shnabel and Nadler (2008), apologies are judged according to how likely they are to affect group-specific goals in different ways: namely, improve the image of the apologising group, empower either group, or shift responsibility for improving intergroup relations from the apologising to recipient group. Although recipient-centred research has studied many factors affecting satisfaction *after* an apology, few studies have predicted satisfaction from people's expectations about the effects of the apology on the intergroup situation. Our interest in this set of variables is based on the possibility that apologiser and recipient groups can have critically different goals.

Specifically, in the Needs-Based Model of intergroup reconciliation and studies supporting it (Shnabel & Nadler, 2015), transgressor and victim groups have different goals . Transgressors look to rehabilitate their moral image, while victims are more interested in regaining power and control over the situation (see also Shnabel & Nadler, 2008, and Shnabel et al., 2009). This view suggests that apologiser group members would be more satisfied the more they see the apology improving their image, while recipient group members would be more satisfied the more they see power shifting their way from the apology.

However, individuals as well as groups can sometimes adopt a dual identity (SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2014), feeling like both a transgressor and a victim at the same time (see also Noor et al., 2017, for a review of literature including situations when transgressors adopt a victim role). Under these "dual identity" conditions, both agency-needs as well as the moral-related needs can occur simultaneously (SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2014). Complicating matters, further recent research supports the primacy of agency-related needs, that is, power and control, to both sides in a conflict (SimanTov-Nachlieli et al., 2016), modifying the original Needs-Based model findings. Thus, the finding that satisfaction in the opposing groups depends on different goals is not a foregone conclusion.

One further potential determinant of apology satisfaction has been identified in research, although exclusively from the transgressors' perspective. Zaiser and Giner-Sorolla (2013) found that apologising group members' satisfaction depended on image improvement, but also on the apology's perceived effect of "obligation shifting" onto the recipient group, that is, obliging them to accept the apology and cease making demands. In those studies, however, the satisfaction of apologisers was not at all affected by perceiving shifts in power from one group to the other. While obligation shifting pleases the apologiser, language emphasizing the need to

accept the apology and move on has been shown to backfire and cause less acceptance of an apology in the recipient group (Kachanoff et al., 2017).

It might be expected that mean levels of all these goals involving power redistribution, image improvement, and obligation shifting would differ between groups in a way similar to satisfaction. That is, assuming that all respondents share these goals of the apology, the more they like the apology, the more effective they should think it is from both groups' point of view. However, it is also possible that group members would disagree with some of the goals of the apology, such as to redistribute power to the recipient group or to restore the public image of the apologising group. If this were the case, then they (more than the other group) might see the disagreeable goals as better fulfilled, but be less satisfied with the apology overall compared to the other group.

The possibility of group differences in satisfaction and its predictors can briefly be summed up in the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: The direction of the difference between apologiser and recipient group in satisfaction can add further evidence to existing findings about which group tends to approve of apologies more.

RQ2: If the apologizing group shows less satisfaction with the apology than the recipients, but is more convinced than recipients of its effectiveness in meeting goals such as power redistribution, image improvement, and obligation shifting, it would follow that the apologizing group also rejects those goals of the apology.

H1: In line with the initial formulation of the Needs-Based Model, perceptions that the apology would lead to image improvement for the apologizing group, and obligation shifting to the recipient group, should more strongly predict satisfaction among apologisers than recipients.

H2: Also in line with this formulation, perceptions that the apology would empower the recipient group should more strongly predict satisfaction among recipients, than apologizers.

H3: Finally, perceptions that the apology empowers the apologizing group are not part of the motivational assumptions of the Needs-Based Model, and they should play little role in satisfaction.

Hypotheses such as H1 and H2 are appropriately tested by a moderation regression model involving the interaction between participant's group status and goal predictors of satisfaction. That is, the two different groups would show different influence of goal perceptions on satisfaction if statistically the predictors of satisfaction had different weights in each of the different groups. Such a difference between effects is best tested by an interaction term involving group x predictor.

Study 1 was conducted in Great Britain, Ireland, and Northern Ireland subsequent to an official apology in Parliament from the British Prime Minister for an incident, decades before, in which the British Army killed Catholic Northern Irish civilians. Study 2 was conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, subsequent to an apology given on television by the President of the Serbian Republic for a massacre of Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) civilians by Serbian and Bosnian Serb paramilitaries some eighteen years prior.

In both studies, we disclose all measures, manipulations, and exclusions. The study also contained a number of measures not relevant to the main hypotheses presented above, concerning additional perceived traits and outcomes of the apology, which are described and analysed in the Supplementary Material.

Study 1

Methods

Participants

In total 167 adult participants who self-reported to be a citizen of the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland responded to the survey invitation and completed it online. Because Scottish and Welsh participants might not identify with the central UK Government in this issue involving a fellow devolved nation, we included only self-identified English participants as members of the apologising group. Out of the different ways to define recipient-group identities, we chose participants who nationally identified as Irish or Northern Irish, and also as Nationalist (a combination of terms generally understood as identification with the "Catholic" rather than "Protestant" side of the conflict, implying support for inclusion of Northern Ireland in a united Catholic Ireland but without implying religious adherence). After further excluding two participants who said they did not take the survey seriously (less than 4 on the 7-point seriousness scale) we were left with 50 English participants in the apologising group and 49 Nationalist participants in the recipient group. Only 10 respondents indicated they were Northern Irish Protestants, so we decided not to further examine that group, who would have a complex intergroup relation to the apology.

The final sample had 62 women, 36 men, and 1 other, with mean age of 32.30 (SD = 14.75). However, the gender composition of the two groups (considering only men and women) was significantly different, phi = .23, p = .024; there were fewer men in the English group (26%) than in the Irish Nationalist group (48%). There was also a significant age difference between the English group (M = 36.6, SD = 15.3) and the Irish Nationalist group (M = 28.0, SD = 12.9), t (97) = 3.02, p = .003. Because of this potential confound, we use gender and age as covariates in the key analyses below, when they show a relationship to the outcome variable in question.

Design

The study compared two samples (English apologisers, and Irish Nationalist apology recipients) on a number of outcome measures.

Procedure

This was a one-time online survey. Participants read a short news summary and then were invited to respond to questions on a number of outcome measures. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. It was carried out in late 2010 and early 2011.

The survey was introduced as aiming "...to understand feelings about a recent political statement by the British Prime Minister." Following an online consent process, participants were asked to provide their self-identification and brief demographic information, using a number of categories including: citizenship (Irish, British, or both), residence, ethnic identification (British-English, British-Irish, British-Welsh, Irish, Northern Irish, Ulster, or other), they were asked about religious identification (Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, or Other) as well as political ideology (Unionist, Nationalist, or other).

Following this, all participants read a short news summary describing the Bloody Sunday incident in 1972, in which twenty-six unarmed Catholic civil rights protesters and bystanders were shot by the British military. The summary went on to describe the results of the 12 year Saville Inquiry launched in 1988, which formally acknowledged that the British fired the first shot and killed unarmed civilians. The summary described how the Saville report was made public in 2010 and that, following the report, then Prime Minister David Cameron offered a formal apology on behalf of the British government. This statement also included a short quote from Cameron's apology. All the information provided in the summary was truthful and based on the real events and outcomes related to Bloody Sunday and the apology.

Participants were asked to complete a number of questions following the news summary, listed below. These items all appeared on seven-point Likert-style scales. They comprised an outcome scale of satisfaction questions and four predictor scales including the group-relevant goals of image improvement for the apologizer, obligation shifting away from the apologizer, and empowerment of the recipient, as well as of the apologizer.

Main Outcome: Satisfaction. Satisfaction with the apology was measured using six items (i.e. "How satisfied are you with the response of the British government to the Bloody Sunday incident?"; "The British government has done a good job in responding to the Bloody Sunday incident."; "How pleased are you with the response of the British government to the Bloody Sunday incident?"; "The British government has taken responsibility for their role in the Bloody Sunday incident"; "I think it would have been better if the British government had done more in response to the Bloody Sunday incident." (reverse coded); and "The British government has done the best it can in responding to the Bloody Sunday incident"). The Satisfaction scale demonstrated good internal reliability overall ($\alpha = .83$, $N = 81$).

British Image Improvement. The image improvement of the perpetrator group (Britain) following the apology was measured using six items. Three of the items (i.e. "How will the statement affect Britain's reputation in other countries?"; How will the statement affect Britain's reputation among Catholics in Northern Ireland?"; "How will the apology for Bloody Sunday affect the moral standing of the British?") were anchored: 1= much worse reputation, 4= no change, and 7= much better. The other three items ("I think the British look worse as a nation now that they have taken responsibility for what happened on Bloody Sunday." (reverse coded); "I think that the apology has demonstrated to the world that the British value morality."; "I think that the apology is an example of the highly moral nature of the British people.") were anchored 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated good internal reliability (α = .82, N = 76).

Perpetrator Group (British) Power. Six items measured perceived effects on the power of the apologising group. Of these, five were on scales of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (i.e. "British people feel empowered by the apology."; "Because of the apology, the British have gained political leverage."; "The apology by the British government weakens the power of the British military" (reverse coded); "The apology will lead to many British citizens questioning their own government's military actions." (reverse coded); "By apologising, Great Britain has lost some political influence over Catholics in Northern Ireland."(reverse coded); "By apologising, Great Britain has given up some control over the conflict in Northern Ireland." (reverse coded)). One item ("How will Britain's influence with Catholics in Northern Ireland change because of the apology?") was on a scale from 1= "much less influence", 4= "no change", and 7= "much more influence".

The six items had less than adequate reliability ($\alpha = .68$) Upon factor analysis, items 3, 5 and 6 loaded above .5 on a single factor, and only item 1 loaded on a second factor; the other two did not load strongly at all. Because of this, items 3, 5 and 6 ($\alpha = .73$; N = 77) were subsequently used to represent perceptions of change in British power.

Victim Group (Catholic) Power. Five items evaluated perceived power improvement of the recipient group. Four of the items were on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (i.e. "Catholics in Northern Ireland feel empowered by the apology."; "The apology will lead Catholics in Northern Ireland to develop a stronger sense of unity"; "Because of the apology, Catholics in Northern Ireland have gained political leverage.; "Because of the apology, Catholics in Northern Ireland have gained some control over the conflict in Northern Ireland."). One item ("How will Northern Irish Catholics' influence within Northern Ireland change because of the apology?") was on a seven-point scale where 1= 'much less influence', 4= 'no change,' and 7= 'much more influence'. The five-item Catholic Power scale demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .76$, N = 77).

Obligation shifting. Obligation shifting from the apologiser to the recipient group was measured using five items. This scale intended to measure the extent to which the British were seen as no longer responsible for the issue while responsibility for reconciliation had shifted to the Catholics (i.e. "Catholics in Northern Ireland should be grateful to Britain for the apology"; "Catholics in Northern Ireland ought to work to forgive following the apology by the British "; "Catholics in Northern Ireland should be willing to move on following the apology of the British government."; "Catholics in Northern Ireland ought to see the British as more compassionate following the response of the British government."; "Catholics in Northern Ireland should

apologise for their role in the conflict in Northern Ireland"). The scale demonstrated good internal reliability (α = .87, N = 73).

Results and Discussion

General Analysis Strategy

For each study, we first present t-tests between groups on satisfaction, to test the first research question; then, similar t-tests on the apology goals, relevant to the second research question. Finally, as a test of the predictors of satisfaction and their differences between groups, we enter simultaneously in a regression model: group, British image improvement, power change toward the British, power change toward the Catholics, obligation shifting, and the interaction terms between each of these latter four variables and group.

Mean Differences Between Groups (Research Questions 1-2)

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations and t-test results comparing apologiser (English) and recipient (Irish Nationalist) groups. These tests showed a divergence of views between English apologiser and Nationalist recipient group members, some quite strong (in the conventionally large effect size range of d = .8 and up). Satisfaction was marginally correlated with age, r = .20, p = .07, and not significantly correlated with gender, t(79) = 1.63, p = .11. With age as a covariate in ANCOVA, the relationship between group and satisfaction remained just barely significant, F (1, 79) = 3.97, p = .0497, η^2_p = .02, with English more satisfied (adjusted marginal mean = 4.02) than Irish Nationalists (3.43).

Table 1: Mean group differences, Study 1.

Variable	Mean (SD): English	Mean (SD): Irish nationalist	t value (df)	p	Effect size d
Satisfaction	4.07 (1.33)	3.39 (1.25)	2.40 (80)	.022	0.54
British image improvement	4.50 (1.00)	3.91 (1.16)	2.35 (75)	.020	0.54
British power change	4.56 (1.39)	5.17 (1.24)	-2.04 (75)	.045	0.47
Catholic power change	3.88 (1.15)	4.09 (1.34)	-0.73 (75)	.467	0.17
Obligation shifting	4.35 (1.36)	2.82 (1.31)	4.88 (71)	<.001	1.16

Note: Scales are 1 to 7.

There were also significant gender effects upon obligation shifting t (70) = 2.25, p = .028, and a marginal effect on Catholic power, t(74) = -1.99, p = .05; and significant age correlations with British image improvement (r = .03 p = .009) and obligation shifting (r = .32, p = .006). With the appropriate covariates entered in ANCOVA, the effect of group on obligation shifting (covarying age and gender) was still significant, F (1, 68) = 16.06, p < .001, η^2_p = .19; the effect of group on Catholic power (covarying gender) was still nonsignificant, F (1,73) < 1; and the effect of group on British image improvement (covarying age) was marginally significant, F (1, 74) = 3.20, p = .078, η^2_p = .04.

While apologisers had stronger expectations that the apology would improve the image of Britain, recipients had stronger expectations that it would empower Britain, although there was agreement that it would not mean much more power for Catholics in Northern Ireland (this falling around the midpoint for both groups). Recipients also refused to infer obligation shifting

from the apology, more so than apologisers. Both groups had middling and similar expectations for future action being taken. In terms of satisfaction, the apologising group was moderately satisfied, and the recipients less so.

In general, apologising group members were more pleased and positive about the apology than recipient group members, both overall (i. e., in satisfaction), and in evaluating its likely effect on those goals especially desirable to transgressing groups: image improvement and obligation shifting. By contrast, recipient group members saw the apology more as empowering its givers (although not as disempowering its recipients).

Model Predicting Apology Satisfaction (Hypotheses 1-3)

First, to test whether apologiser and recipient groups showed different apology effect predictors of satisfaction, we conducted a general linear model (GLM) analysis with satisfaction as dependent variable, and as independent variables: group (1 = English, 2 = Irish Nationalist), the four specific apology effects (British image improvement, British power change, Catholic power change, and obligation shifting) , and the interaction terms of the last four variables with Group, all in one simultaneous model. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2: General linear model predicting Study 1 satisfaction from group, four group-relevant goals, and group's interaction with each goal.

Predictor	F (1, 63)	p	Effect size η^2_p
Group	0.30	.587	.01
British image improvement	14.19	< .001	.18
Increased British power	0.00	.977	.00
Increased Catholic power	4.91	.030	.09
Obligation shifting to Catholics	6.06	.017	.09
Image x Group	1.21	.276	.02
British power x Group	0.04	.851	.00
Catholic power x Group	0.25	.618	.00
Obligation shifting x Group	0.64	.428	.01

Among main effects, the strongest predictor was British image improvement, followed by obligation shifting and Catholic power. These three effects remained significant with the same p-values (to 2 decimal places) when age was included as a covariate. British empowerment was not a significant predictor of satisfaction. The effect of Group on satisfaction, representing differences between apologising and recipient groups in their positive attitude toward the apology, was no longer significant when the apology effects were included. However, none of

the interaction effects were significant, indicating that the two groups did not show different patterns of the goal-related items predicting satisfaction. Parameter estimates showed that all goal variables predicted satisfaction in a positive direction.

Discussion

Addressing our first research question, Study 1 found that the apologizing group (English) was more satisfied with the presentation of an actual recent intergroup apology than was the recipient group (Irish Nationalist). This difference survived covariation of group differences in gender and age. The goal-related items, relevant to Research Question 2, also showed patterns of preference akin to satisfaction; the apology was credited with greater image improvement and obligation shifting by the apologizing group, supporting their overall greater satisfaction. However, the recipient group was likely to see the apology as increasing the power of the apologizers, not themselves. All these results are consistent with the apologizing group accepting the image and obligation-shifting goals of the apology along with its greater satisfaction.

Our results, however, present a challenge for the hypotheses about prediction of satisfaction (H1, H2) because they do not show that the satisfaction of people on different sides of the apology was predicted by different apology goal effects. It could be argued that the study had low statistical power to detect such an interaction effect, but this argument depends on the standard of effect size sought (with only 51% power to detect a standardized interaction effect of $\eta^2_p = .04$, corresponding to a conventionally small-to medium effect, but 86% power to detect a $\eta^2_p = .09$, corresponding to a medium effect).

Our findings, then, contrast with the Needs-Based Model which would predict that the satisfaction of transgressor group members would depend more on moral image, and perhaps also the moral cleansing represented by shifting obligation for peace-making to the other group, while the satisfaction of victim group members would depend primarily on perceived favourable shift in power. Instead, satisfaction across the whole sample was predicted by British image improvement and obligation shifting. Thus, the lower satisfaction among Irish Nationalists corresponded with their lower agreement that the apology actually improved the image and shifted obligation away from the British. Only H3 was confirmed, because change in British power did not predict satisfaction across the sample.

Study 2

The second study focused on similar predictor and outcome measures, but was carried out in the context of conflict among the former Yugoslav nations. The topic was a statement made in a 2013 Bosnian television interview by the then-President of the Serbian Republic, Tomislav Nikolić, as a collective apology for the genocide of Bosniak civilians carried out by Serbian and Bosnian-Serb armed forces in 1995 at Srebenica. The apology was seen as significant because it expressed contrition through the verbal metaphor of kneeling, took on a form of collective responsibility, and came from a politician with a prior history of Serbian nationalism and denial of the war crimes, although it was met with scepticism by some Bosniak activists (Denti, 2016).

This study used similar focal measures as study 1, and the text of Nikolić's apologetic statement. Data were collected from three national sites, one corresponding to the Bosniak apology recipient group in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, and two corresponding to the apologiser group: the predominantly Serb city of Banja Luka in the semi-autonomous Serb

region of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the capital of the Serbian Republic, Belgrade. On consideration, we identified both Bosnian Serbs and Serbians as members of the apologising group even though they are separate polities. Members of both groups joined in the original crime; Nikolić , although from Serbia and without jurisdiction over Bosnian Serbs, offered his apology in the name of "Serbs" and not just Serbian nationals; and Bosnian Serbs have shared a common official narrative and alignment with Serbia in post-Yugoslav history (Fraser, 2013).

Methods

Participants

University students taking social psychology classes (N = 217 to start with, determined by recruitment over a limited time window) completed the questionnaire, in exchange for partial class credit. We recruited from universities in Belgrade (N = 76), Sarajevo, (N = 73) and the primarily Bosnian Serb city of Banja Luka (N =68), in early 2014. We excluded four students who indicated they took part in this study "not so seriously," leaving N = 213.

As in Northern Ireland, there were many possible ways to divide the groups (e.g., by religion, residence, ethnic identification). In the end, we decided that the answer to our categorical question about ethnic identification as "Bosniak" (N = 55) or "Serb" (N = 129) best represented the division between recipients and apologisers, as informed by local knowledge (29 participants gave another answer or did not respond). The final N was 184, with a mean age of 21.72 (SD = 2.52), comprising 127 women, 55 men, and 2 who gave other answers. As in Study 1, attrition shown in the lower N of individual variables was largely due to respondents ceasing to respond. We used all questions completed, regardless of the completeness of the individual's responses overall.

Because of the different demographics among university psychology students in the two groups, they once again differed significantly by gender, phi = .34, p < .001, but this time there were more men among the recipient group (Bosniak, 54.7%) than the apologiser group (Serb, 20. 2%). The two groups were also slightly different in age, Bosniak mean = 22.51, SD = 3.07, Serb mean = 21.40, SD = 2.21, t (180) = 2.75, *p* =.007.

There were no significant gender differences in any of the main variables, all |t| < 1, all *p* > .35, so gender was not examined as a possible confound with group. Age, however, did correlate with satisfaction (r = .24, p = .001), Serb empowerment (r = .27, p < .001), and negative Serb image (r = -.19, p = .012), so it was entered in additional analyses as a covariate, similar to Study 1.

Design

As in Study 1, the design compared the two groups on mean responses and on predictors of satisfaction, and then ran a single-block regression model entering group, Serb empowerment, Bosniak empowerment, negative image, positive image, obligation shifting, and the interactions of the latter five variables with group, all predicting the satisfaction measure as outcome.

Procedure

This was a one-time paper and pencil survey. Participants read a transcript of Nikolić's apology on the Bosnian TV program, in the original language which was understood in all participating regions, and then responded to questions on a number of outcome measures. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Questionnaire items were translated into

the local language and back-translated, with the first author resolving apparent discrepancies through discussion with the third and fourth.

Participants completed informed consent agreements and then read that the purpose of the study was "... to understand feelings about a recent political statement by the Serbian President." After questions regarding the apology, participants were asked to provide brief demographic information on a number of categories including: age in years, sex, residence, ethnic identification, religious identification, and political ideology (liberal-conservative dimension). For background purposes they were also asked if they had heard of the war crimes before taking part in this study (96% "yes") and whether they had already heard of the Serbian president's apology (only 50.5% "yes"). This retroactively justified our decision to not go into an explanation of the background of the apology, which might have proved controversial in its assumptions, but instead to inform readers of the apology and to present its exact words in written form.

The questions, detailed below, followed the general pattern of Study 1. Like Study 1, the questionnaire also included a number of questions that were not part of the current article's theoretical focus. These dealt with: intergroup emotions and respect, specific attributes of the apology, group identification, political attitudes, hopes for the future of intergroup relations in the region, and representativeness of the apology.

Measures

Unlike Study 1, all scaled materials were presented on a five-point scale. Items were adapted to the context of the study.

Main Outcome: Satisfaction. Satisfaction with the apology was measured adapting two focal items from Study 1 (i.e. "How satisfied are you with the apology of the Serbian President for the war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina?"; "How pleased are you with the apology of the Serbian President for the war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina?") together with seven novel evaluative semantic differential items ("inadequate/adequate," "unfair/fair," "unjust/just," "insufficient/sufficient," "bad/good," "harmful/helpful," "negative/positive").

However, in factor analysis (maximum likelihood, Varimax rotation), none of the novel evaluative items loaded higher than .5 on the same factor as the two focal items, without also loading higher than .5 on a second factor, which the focal items did not load on higher than .26. Therefore, we calculated "satisfaction" from only the two original-type items, which were most comparable to Study 1's (r = .60, N = 183). Group means for evaluation are presented as a matter of peripheral interest, based on the seven other items (α = .86, N = 175).

Serb Image Improvement. All six image improvement items were retained and adapted. The scale demonstrated poor internal reliability (α = .57, N = 182). A factor analysis showed that the single item "look worse as a nation" accounted for 39% of variance, and a second factor accounting for 18% had three items loading above .50: "affect reputation among Bosniaks", "affect reputation in other countries" and "affect the moral standing of the Serbs." We thus analyzed the "look worse" item separately as "negative image", as well as the three "positive image" items forming a scale with α = 73. The other two items did not load on either factor well and were excluded.

Apologiser Group (Serbian/Bosnian Serb) Power. Of Study 1's six items about change in British power, five items were kept that assessed perceived power impact upon the

apologising, perpetrator groups, variously defined as Serbs (i.e. "Serbs would feel empowered by the apology"; "Because of the apology, the Serbs have gained political leverage"), Serbians ("The apology will lead to many Serbian citizens questioning their own government's military actions in the past", reverse coded); and Bosnian Serbs ("By apologising, Bosnian Serbs from RS have lost some political influence over Bosniaks in BH", (reverse coded; "By apologising, Bosnian Serbs from RS have given up some control over the political situation in BH", reverse coded). In these items "RS" would be understood to mean the semi-autonomous Serbian Republic within the Bosnian state (BH) rather than the larger Serbian state. The relative influence item was omitted.

Upon analysis, these items had poor cohesion ($\alpha = .24$) and a subsequent factor analysis by the same method used for the image items showed the two items mentioning Bosnian Serbs' loss of power forming one coherent factor ($r = .60$). The three other items about Serbs/Serbians did not load strongly on the second factor and the best two-item factor that could be formed had an item correlation of only .27. Therefore, and for comparability with the similar items that ended up being used in Study 1, we took only the two items of Bosnian Serb loss of power (reversed) to form this scale.

Recipient Group (Bosniak) Power. Four out of five of Study 1's victim (Catholic) empowerment items were adapted towards Bosniaks, omitting the relative influence item. The four-item scale demonstrated poor internal reliability ($\alpha = .56$, N = 178), but after eliminating "Bosniaks feel empowered" reliability improved to .74, so the three-item scale was used.

Obligation Shifting. The same five items as in Study 1 were adapted, with good internal reliability ($\alpha = .82$, N = 182).

Results and Discussion

Mean Differences Among Groups

Table 3 shows means, standard deviations and t-test results comparing apologiser (Serb) and recipient (Bosniak) groups. None of these effects changed significance level when introducing participant age as a covariate in ANCOVA, so these differences cannot be attributed to the slight (1 year) difference in age between the samples.

Table 3: Mean differences, Study 2

Variable	Mean (SD): Serb	Mean (SD): Bosniak	*t* value (df)	*p*	Effect size d
Satisfaction	2.13 (1.08)	2.72 (1.10)	t(182) = -3.38	< .001	d = .54
(Evaluation)	2.68 (1.01)	3.05 (0.80)	Z = -2.48	.013	r = .23
Serb image (negative)	2.49 (1.47)	2.11 (1.07)	Z = -1.14	.256	r = .11
Serb image (positive)	2.97 (0.93)	2.96 (0.41)	Z = -0.67	.502	r = .06
Serb power change	3.34 (1.17)	3.67 (1.11)	-1.81 (182)	.073	0.27
Bosniak power change	2.93 (1.08)	2.13 (0.85)	4.90 (182)	< .001	0.73
Obligation shifting	3.08 (0.93)	1.99 (0.79)	7.60 (182)	< .001	1.13

Note: Scales are 1 to 5. Due to unequal N between groups, if Levene's test showed heterogeneity of variance at *p* <.05, z-values from Mann-Whitney nonparametric statistics are reported instead of t-tests, with rank-biserial r for effect size.

As in Study 1, we conducted a GLM with satisfaction as dependent variable, and as predictors, group, five goal variables and their interactions with group. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4: General linear model predicting Study 2 satisfaction from group, five group-relevant goals, and group's interaction with each goal.

Predictor	$F(1, 171)$	p	Effect size η^2_p
Group	0.04	.842	.00
Serb image (negative)	2.95	.088	.02
Serb image (positive)	5.47	.020	.03
Serb power change	1.55	.215	.01
Bosniak power change	4.24	.041	.02
Obligation shifting	12.23	.001	.07
Serb image (negative) x Group	0.82	.366	.01
Serb image (positive) x Group	0.05	.829	.00
Serb power x Group	0.24	.627	.00
Bosniak power x Group	0.40	.528	.00
Obligation shifting x Group	1.31	.254	.01

Across the whole sample, satisfaction was predicted most strongly by obligation shifting and positive image consequences for Serbs, and marginally by negative image consequences for Serbs. Power shift toward Serbs did not predict satisfaction, but power shift toward Bosniaks did. As before, the model completely accounted for group differences in satisfaction, which were not significant controlling for all other effects. Here as well we found no significant interaction effects with group. Parameter estimates showed that all goal variables predicted satisfaction in a positive direction, except for negative image, which was negatively related to satisfaction.

When age was entered as a covariate, obligation shifting remained a significant predictor, $F(1, 168) = 10.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .06$, and so did positive image, $F(1,171) = 6.30$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2_p = .04$. However, negative image was no longer significant, $F(1,171) = 1.27$, $p = .262$, $\eta^2_p = .01$, and power for Bosniaks was no longer significant, $F(1,171) = 2.67$, $p = .106$, $\eta^2_p = .02$. All nonsignificant predictors remained that way.

Discussion

On the first research question, the Balkan apology showed the opposite direction of preferences than Study 1: the Bosniak group, recipients of the apology, was more satisfied with it than the apologizing Serb group was. The groups did not differ in their expectations for change in Serb image or power, but Serbs saw relatively more power gain for Bosniaks than Bosniaks themselves did. These findings differed from Study 1 where apologiser group members saw more image improvement and power decrease for their own group, while views of recipient power change were the same. As in Study 1, however, recipients also refused to endorse obligation shifting based on the apology, more so than apologisers. This was the strongest group difference, with a conventionally large effect size.

Thus, addressing the second research question, the goals were differently evaluated by the groups in a way partially at variance with their relative overall evaluation of the apology. Specifically, apologizers' higher evaluation of the apology's empowerment of the recipients did not match their overall lower evaluations of the apology, suggesting that they disagreed with the goal of empowerment. As we further explain in the General Discussion, these differences might partially be explained by different political responses to historic wrongdoings marked by either public acknowledgment of historic wrongdoings (Great Britain) vs. denial (Serbia). As in Study 1, however, H1 and H2 were not confirmed due to a lack of interactions with group. This sample size was somewhat higher than the other study – we had 79% power to detect a standardized interaction effect of $\eta^2_p = .04$, corresponding to a conventionally small-to medium effect, and 99% power to detect a $\eta^2_p = .09$, corresponding to a medium effect. Overall, satisfaction had similar apology effects predictors as Study 1 -- apologiser image improvement, obligation shifting, and empowerment of the victim group. As far as our study could establish, the two groups were using similar criteria for satisfaction.

General Discussion

As in the mixed results of previous literature comparing the responses of apologiser and recipient group to proposed apologies, these two studies focusing on reactions to actual apologies found different patterns of relative satisfaction. In Northern Ireland, Cameron's apology was seen more positively by the English than by the Nationalist Irish, parallel to studies such as Shnabel et al. (2015) which found greater apologiser than recipient support for the apology. However, in Serbia and Bosnia, Nikolić's apology was seen more positively by Bosniak than by Serb participants, parallel to studies such as Wohl et al. (2013) and Hornsey et al. (2017) which found more support for a proposed collective apology among recipient group members.

This pattern is particularly interesting because on some other dimensions, Serbs and Bosniaks showed reversed evaluations of the apology. For example, compared to Bosniaks, Serbs thought the apology would do more to empower Bosniaks and to shift obligation to them. These reversals of the general evaluative trend of ingroup favouritism made it particularly important to look at the dimensions of apology evaluation as predictors of satisfaction.

With the group-specific apology goals as predictors -- image improvement, group empowerment, and obligation shifting -- there were consistent effects found across the two apologiser groups, which also supported the findings of Zaiser and Giner-Sorolla (2013) about apologiser satisfaction, and the general perspective of the Needs-Based Model on transgressor groups. In both studies, the main predictors of satisfaction with the apology were how much it improved the apologizer group's image, and how much it was seen to effectively shift obligation to the recipient group. However, the Needs-Based Model's original predictions that apologiser group satisfaction would be more related to morally relevant image and obligation factors, and recipient group more related to perceived empowerment, were not supported.

Limitations in the method of these studies should also be acknowledged. Study 1 ended up with fewer participants than we would have liked, considering the restrictions on group identification, as well as a substantial rate of non-response to questions. While most of our measures showed differences between groups, some quite large, we cannot be sure that the nonsignificant differences would have stayed different in a larger sample. The method of recruitment, while capturing a larger part of the general population than Study 2's, also proceeded by voluntary participation and transmission and so might have captured more politically engaged people than otherwise. While larger and more systematic, this student sample was also generally liberal, young, and mostly without political memories of the time period

covered in the apology. Small sample sizes may also have influenced the lack of significant interactions by group found in both studies. Any future effort to confirm and extend these findings should strive for large, representative samples as much as feasible.

Also, a number of the scales, especially in the Balkan samples, had low reliability and so had to be adjusted by casting out unreliable items. In the main analyses (as opposed to auxiliary) the most problematic items had to do with power. We acknowledge that further scale development would be useful in studying these concepts. Many of the concepts measured (for example, power) may also differ dramatically in their interpretation based on the cultural, historical, and political context of the event and groups involved. For example, in Study 1, transgressor (British) power items demonstrated poor reliability. However, concepts of "power" covered were comprehensive and included empowerment as well as gain and loss of control and influence. Ultimately, only those items which focussed on loss of control and influence were included in the scale. The concept of power itself that is of most concern may be highly dependent on the existing power dynamic and relationship between the two groups. Additionally, in Study 2, cultural and translation of items developed for a British/Irish context may not have always migrated successfully. Future research should consider developing and validating scales that can be used cross-contextually.

Our results together with the previous literature show the limits of the social psychology literature in striving for nomothetic solutions, general rules that apply to all situations. The extreme complexities of intergroup injustices, ongoing conflicts, and the apologetic statements that address them, present a bewildering array of variables in which differences in dynamics should be anticipated as much as similarity. Here, we offer some speculative thoughts about the

reasons for the inconsistency between settings, and where we might instead look to explain the responses of recipient groups theoretically.

A striking difference between the two situations studied is in the position of the apologising group. Whereas in 2010 Great Britain was a secure world power, whose public had for a long time supported withdrawal of forces from Northern Ireland and a peaceful solution there (Hayes & McAllister, 1996), both Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs were more likely to feel insecure about their role relative to Bosniaks and the past history of war crimes in Bosnia. In contrast to general British support for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, public opinion in Serbia has been sceptical toward the reconciliation process regarding Bosnia, in particular toward international criminal prosecutions (Orentlicher, 2018). A common belief has been that Serbs are unjustly viewed abroad as the sole villains, while victimization of Serbs in Bosnia is not acknowledged (Klarin, 2009).

The ground conditions thus may not have been as favourable among Serbs, as among English, for the acceptance of an ingroup apology as appropriate to a past national role as wrongdoer. Indeed, beliefs about ingroup collective victimhood often preclude acknowledgement of ingroup wrongdoing and inhibit support for steps to redress it (e.g., Hirschberger et al., 2016; Noor et al., 2017; Schori-Eyal et al., 2017). Thus, beliefs about the appropriateness of the apology in the first place might have overshadowed beliefs about its content or effects in explaining differences between the two groups studied.

Our items measuring the needs associated with victimized groups in the Needs-Based Model might also have been too focused on literal shifts of political power and influence. The Needs-Based Model, in most of its formulations, also recognizes the importance of recognition

as a form of symbolic power for victimized groups. Acknowledgement -- above all, of the victimized group's narrative of events -- has been shown to be critical in gaining acceptance of reconciliation efforts, in a number of research studies published after these data were collected (e. g., Vollhardt et al., 2014; Hameiri & Nadler, 2017). Future research in this line should certainly measure both perceived acknowledgment of the recipients' point of view as a content characteristic, and increased public acknowledgement as a potential effect of the apology. These questions would have been especially helpful in dealing with the specifics of the Nikolić apology. While it promised little for the future, the statement did mark a striking reversal in his use of the previously denied term "war crimes" (without, however, using the stronger term "genocide"), partially acknowledging the Bosniak and international points of view.

Indeed, the factors that emerged in the present studies as general predictors of satisfaction – image improvement and obligation shifting – can also fit in to a revised view of needs in apologies, one based on a common currency of power. Image as a moral country is a form of diplomatic power that enables good will and in its absence courts international opprobrium. Rejecting an apology's effectiveness is to say that it will not benefit the country by improving its image. Rather, it will create the image of a weakling rather than of a moral actor if it goes too far, or alternatively the image of a weakly moral actor who values words, not deeds, if it does not go far enough. And likewise, rejecting the possibility that the apology will shift responsibility of acceptance to the injured group is to reject that the apology can be an effective rebalancing of power by satisfying the grudges of its recipients. In asking questions about apologies, then, "power" may have to be understood in these terms, rather than in naked questions about influence and clout.

To conclude, these two studies, despite their limitations, show that concerns about improving the apologizing group's moral image and ability to shift obligation, as well as empowerment, underlie satisfaction with political apologies. These predictors are not strikingly different for apologizer and recipient group members, and were found both in a situation where apologizer group members were more positive toward the apology than recipients, and in one where recipients were more positive. And finally, they hint at the complexity of situations in which groups receive apologies, under which the recipient group may approve of the apology more or less than the apologising group, and may do so on the grounds of similar or different criteria.

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