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# What Happens When Groups Say Sorry: The Effect of Intergroup Apologies on Their Recipients

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*Despite the increased incidence of intergroup apology in public life, very little empirical attention has been paid to the questions of whether intergroup apologies work and if so, why. In a series of experiments, Australians read scenarios in which Australian interests had been harmed by an outgroup. Participants were then told that the outgroup had either apologized or had not apologized for the offense. Although the presence of an apology helped promote perceptions that the outgroup was remorseful, and although participants were more satisfied with an apology than with no apology, the presence of the apology failed to promote forgiveness for the offending group. This was the case regardless of whether the effectiveness of apology was measured cross-sectionally (Experiment 1) or longitudinally (Experiment 2). It was also the case when the apology was accompanied by victims advocating forgiveness (Experiment 3) and was independent of the emotionality of the apology (Experiment 4). In contrast, individuals who apologized for intergroup atrocities were personally forgiven more than those who did not apologize (Experiment 4). Theoretical and applied implications are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *forgiveness; apologies; intergroup relations*

I am not the least bit interested in your bloody apologies. Apologies are words and words are like dust in the wind. They mean nothing. You don't hurt somebody for ten years and then say, 'Geez sorry about that', do a group 'warm and fuzzy' and wander off into the sunset hand in hand. Doesn't work that way.

Gilbert Oskaboose, a native Canadian, former residential school student, and recipient of the Canadian government's apology to former residential school students (as cited in Lane, 2000).

Many commentators have observed an increase in the number of formal apologies being delivered in response to current and historical group offenses (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Lazare, 2004; McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000), leading some to argue that we are experiencing an "age of apology" (Brooks, 1999). In recent years, for example, the United States has made official apologies for events such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, a collision between a U.S. and a Chinese aircraft, the occupation and absorption of Hawaii, failure to intervene early enough during the massacre in Rwanda, and the death of allied soldiers in "friendly fire" incidents.

Despite the rise of intergroup apology in political and community life, this topic has received very little attention in experimental social psychology. Although it is widely supposed that intergroup apologies are a key platform from which reconciliation is possible (e.g., Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Lazare, 2004; Tavuchis, 1991), there is anecdotal evidence that apologies may be of limited use (see quote above, but also Brooks, 1999). In short, there has been no experimental explanation of whether, how, and why intergroup apologies are effective. There is also limited provision in apology theory for predictions regarding the effectiveness of intergroup apology. The current article aims to help fill this gap in the literature.

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## THEORY AND RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF APOLOGIES

As a result of the dearth of empirical work on apology in the intergroup context, a review of the literature must pay close attention to the interpersonal field. It has generally been found that apologies increase conciliatory responses toward offenders (e.g., Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Gonzales, 1992; McCullough et al., 1998; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Forster, & Montada, 2004), so long as the apology is considered to be sincere (Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Risen & Gilovich, 2007; Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004). Various theories have arisen to explain the effectiveness of apologies: that they change attributions regarding the offender and the offense (Gold & Weiner, 2000; Takaku, 2001), that they promote empathy for the offender (McCullough et al., 1998), that they restore the victim's "face" (Gonzales, 1992; Hodgins & Liebeskind, 2003) and that by communicating that the offender is suffering intrapsychic pain, they restore equity to the victim-offender relationship (O'Malley & Greenberg, 1983; Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973).

Intergroup apologies differ from interpersonal apologies in that they are offered from many to many rather than from one to one. This shift in the number of actors leads to a number of difficult questions (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002): Who should represent the collective offender in the act of apology? How do victims determine whether the apology expressed the concerns of the group or merely the representative? Who are the offenders and offended, particularly when intergroup boundaries are fluid and when offenses occurred in the distant past? These difficulties add complexity to expressions of remorse, especially when one considers that frequently group representatives must apologize for actions not personally committed (Lazare, 2004). Intergroup apologies also invite the attention of a much wider audience. Because group apologies represent a collective, they are more likely to be a result of public pressure both from within the group and from third-party observers. Furthermore, the public nature of group apologies transforms what would otherwise be a dyadic interaction into a performance, thereby intensifying face concerns. In sum, recipients of group apologies have a lot to weigh when determining the motives underlying a group apology. This increased attributional ambiguity means that the link between intergroup apologies and forgiveness is unlikely to be straightforward.

Despite this, very little empirical attention has been paid to the questions of whether intergroup apologies work and if so, why. The study most relevant to this one considered the effect of quasi-apologetic statements of

empathy and responsibility on reconciliation indices. Nadler and Liviatan (2006) examined Jewish Israeli evaluations of Palestinians. The authors manipulated the existence of statements of empathy and responsibility and also measured individual differences in trust for Palestinians. Participants who were already trusting of the outgroup had increased scores on reconciliation indices after reading statements that expressed empathy for Jews. In contrast, participants who were already distrustful of Palestinians were unaffected by the empathy statement.

This research is important in demonstrating that intergroup rhetoric can be effective in promoting peace, albeit with some caveats in place regarding preexisting levels of trust between groups. However, it is not clear that this study tests the effectiveness of apologies. The statements that participants read were given by a Palestinian leader but directed at Palestinians rather than Israeli Jews. The statements urged Palestinians to empathize with the Jewish experience rather than expressing empathy to Jews directly, as one would expect in an apology. More important, it is not clear that empathy and remorse are the same construct. It is possible that a full apologetic statement directed at the victim group—one that expresses remorse and responsibility along with other apologetic strategies such as offers of repair—may demonstrate a different pattern of effects from that reported by Nadler and Liviatan (2006).

This article represents the first experimental program of research investigating the effectiveness of intergroup apologies. The effectiveness of intergroup apologies was tested cross-sectionally (Experiment 1) and longitudinally (Experiment 2). Experiment 3 tested the power of advocate statements to enhance forgiveness in response to apologies, and Experiment 4 compared individual and collective apologies for a historical intergroup atrocity.

### EXPERIMENT 1

Australians read scenarios in which Australian interests had been harmed by an outgroup. Participants were then told that the outgroup had either apologized or not apologized for the offense. Previous research has shown that people are typically very uncertain about apology histories; for example, fewer than 1 in 10 Australians are aware that Japan has apologized for World War II (Philpot & Hornsey, 2006). Given this high level of uncertainty regarding apology history, we were confident that we could manipulate apology history without arousing suspicion. After reading the apology manipulation, participants completed two measures of intergroup forgiveness.

In addition, we measured a number of psychological variables that could be presumed to underpin the effects of an apology. First, participants' attributions of the cause of the apology were assessed to see if these facilitate or impede forgiveness. Attributions regarding the motives for an apology have been predicted to be important in the development of forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). The perception of true remorse is one such attribution that was assessed in this study. However, there are other possible attributions regarding the cause of apologies, including social manipulation (i.e., apologizing out of concern for public image) and apologizing in an attempt to avoid punishment. Hewstone and colleagues (2004) suggest that people may be more cynical of intergroup apologies in comparison with interpersonal apologies. It seemed possible, therefore, that both ulterior motives and perceptions of remorse could predict forgiveness.

Second, we explored the role of empathy. McCullough et al. (1997, 1998) have suggested a model of forgiveness in which empathy mediates the relationship between apology and forgiveness. This model has been demonstrated to have validity in the interpersonal context (McCullough et al., 1997, 1998; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Van der Laan, 2001) and is a dominant model of forgiveness development. However, in situations where no prior or ongoing relationship between offender and offended exists, the utility of empathy explanations has been called into question (Kaminer, Stein, Mbang, & Zungu-Dirwayi, 2000). Intergroup relationships are often characterized by a distant independence, so it seems possible that empathy may have little explanatory power in this context.

Third, cognitive change theories of apology effectiveness have at their foundation the belief that apologies reduce perceptions of reoffense likelihood (Gold & Weiner, 2000). Correspondent inference theories suggest that apologies alter attributions made about the character of the offender so that the offense is viewed as an isolated act. Other theories suggest that causal attributions regarding the offense are altered by apologies such that offenses are caused by more external, uncontrollable, and unstable factors (Takaku, 2001). In both cases, the shift in attributions is away from perceived causes that are likely to be repeated, to perceived causes that are likely to be isolated in time. To test this, we included a measure of reoffense likelihood.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were 60 Australian psychology students, comprising 24 males and 36 females with an average

age of 20.48 years ( $SD = 7.36$ ). In this study—and in all the studies reported in this article—participants were asked to indicate their “primary national identity” at the commencement of the survey. Participants who did not identify as Australian were excused or given an alternative survey.

### *Procedure and Measures*

Participants were presented with one of five articles summarizing actual intergroup offenses against Australians (presentation of article was randomized). A scenario based on the mistreatment of Australian prisoners of war (POWs) in World War II (Japan scenario) detailed the high death rate of Allied soldiers in Japanese POW camps (nearly a third of prisoners in Japanese POW camps died), the contravention of basic standards set by the Geneva Convention regarding food and medical care, and the massacre of Australian soldiers in the Sandakan death march. Another scenario recounted details of an investigation of Australian company Pan Pharmaceuticals (Pan scenario). A recall of Pan's products was issued in 2003 because of a number of instances of malpractice, including ingredient substitution, falsification of test results, and falsely passing goods through quarantine. These violations of procedure led to the hospitalization of 19 Australians. An East German scenario recounted evidence of systematic, state-sponsored drug use in sport from 1974 to 1989 and its effects on the success of Australian athletes in that period. A Saudi scenario was constructed on the basis of evidence that Saudi banks, charities, businesses, and individuals contributed to Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah in the months leading up to the 2002 Bali terrorist bombings in which 88 Australians died. The offense that formed the crux of the scenario was widely known, although rumors of Saudi involvement in the bombings were relatively unknown. Finally, a French scenario recounted France's history of nuclear testing in the South Pacific in the 1990s, events which caused much public outrage in Australia at the time. To increase the sense of national grievance in this scenario, participants were misinformed that damage had been done to Australia's Great Barrier Reef as a result of the testing. This is the only fabrication that appeared in any scenario information, and participants were informed of this during debriefing.

*Apology manipulation.* These scenarios formed a backdrop to the presentation of the key experimental manipulation: the apology statement. In the no-apology condition, participants were told that the offending group had never commented on the offense. In the apology condition, participants read an apology that used

the full range of apology components identified by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989); that is, acknowledgment of fault, expression of remorse, expression of responsibility, a promise of forbearance, and an offer of repair. Participants were told that an official from the offending outgroup “has stated that they are sorry that their involvement in the (*offense*) caused (*consequences of offense*). They have expressed their dedication to (*promise of forbearance*) and have also advocated that (*offer of repair*) be made.” For example, the apology condition in the Japan topic read as follows:

In the years following the war’s end, Japanese government officials have stated that they are sorry that the actions of their government and military personnel caused a high mortality rate among Australian POWs in World War II. Promises have been made to ensure that the horrors of war are conveyed to the coming generations, in order that Japan’s history of aggression is never repeated. Offers of compensation to former POWs and families of victims have also been made.

To check the effectiveness of the manipulation, and to encourage greater processing of the written material, two qualitative questions were asked of participants: “What offenses, if any, were committed?” and “What apology, if any, was offered?” All participants correctly identified the nature of the offenses and whether an apology had occurred.

*Empathy.* A four-item measure of empathy was adapted from work by Batson and colleagues (e.g., Batson et al., 1997). Participants rated the extent to which they felt softhearted, empathic, concerned, and moved toward the outgroup while reading the scenario and response information (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*;  $\alpha = .76$ ).

*Response satisfaction.* Three items asked participants to describe the outgroup response with regard to the following descriptors: adequate, unsatisfactory, and sufficient (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*;  $\alpha = .81$ ).

*Perceived remorse and ulterior motives.* The question stem “To what extent do you believe the outgroup response was due to” was paired with a number of possible motivations, such as “pressure from outside sources,” “need to avoid punishment,” “sorrow over the past,” and “concern for public image.” In addition, participants described the outgroup’s postoffense behavior on two items: remorseful and unrepentant (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was performed on these items with two factors extracted. The first factor (eigenvalue = 2.57, 43% variance explained) reflected perceptions of

ulterior motives ( $\alpha = .81$ ). Items loading on this factor included “pressure from outside sources,” “need to avoid punishment,” and “to improve public image.” The second factor (eigenvalue = 1.57, 26% variance explained) reflected perceptions of remorse ( $\alpha = .62$ ). It included the “unrepentant” (reversed), “sorrow,” and “remorseful” items.

*Reoffense likelihood.* Participants indicated how likely they thought it was that the offending group would one day repeat its offenses (1 = *extremely unlikely*, 7 = *extremely likely*).

*Forgiveness.* A 30-item Intergroup Forgiveness Scale (IFS) was developed. Twenty items were adapted from the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (Enright, Rique, & Coyle, 2000), a prominent measure of interpersonal forgiveness. Another 10 original items were added by us. Although differences exist in how forgiveness should best be operationalized and defined, one core belief can be found in almost any definition of forgiveness: the belief that forgiveness involves a change in emotions, behaviors, and attitude away from negative states regarding the offender toward more positive states (McCullough et al., 2000). In this spirit, our scale comprised 10 items measuring affective, cognitive, and behavioral forgiveness, respectively, with equal numbers of positively and negatively worded items. The affect measures asked participants to rate items included in the question stem “I feel \_\_\_\_ toward the (offending group inserted here).” Response items included the terms *negative*, *happy*, *angry*, and *good*. The cognition measures asked participants to complete the question stem “I think the (offending group) are/is \_\_\_\_.” Response items included the terms *moral*, *decent*, *bad*, and *dreadful*. The behavior measures asked participants to complete the question stem “Regarding the (offending group), I would, or would want others to \_\_\_\_.” Responses included *act negatively*, *be harsh*, and *establish good relations*. Each item was rated on a 6-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *slightly agree*, 5 = *agree*, and 6 = *strongly agree*). The 30-item IFS had strong internal reliability ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

Consistent with the practice of many forgiveness researchers (e.g., Enright et al., 2000; Reed & Aquino, 2003), a single-item forgiveness measure (“To what extent have you forgiven the offender?”) was also used in this study. Responses to this question were invited on a 5-point scale in which 1 = *not at all*, 3 = *in progress*, and 5 = *complete forgiveness*.

*Transparency.* Participants were asked at the end of the study to indicate what they thought the hypotheses

**TABLE 1:** Correlations Among Measures in the Apology (Above Diagonal) and No-Apology Conditions (Below Diagonal)

	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>IFS</i>	<i>Perceived Remorse</i>	<i>Reoffense Likelihood</i>	<i>Response Satisfaction</i>	<i>Single-Item Forgiveness</i>	<i>Ultior Motives</i>
Empathy	—	-.16	.20	.23	.03	-.05	.18
IFS	-.08	—	.60***	-.30	.56***	.51**	-.38*
Perceived remorse	.16	.39*	—	-.19	.72***	.40*	-.54**
Reoffense likelihood	-.11	-.25	-.06	—	-.37*	-.30	.20
Response satisfaction	.14	.51**	.55**	-.48**	—	.33	-.62***
Single-item forgiveness	-.09	.41*	.57**	-.02	.47*	—	.03
Ultior motives	-.36	.44*	.22	-.37*	.30	.04	—

NOTE: IFS = Intergroup Forgiveness Scale.

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

of the current research were. Only 1 participant identified response information as being important to the study's aims, and only 2 participants identified forgiveness as being a dependent variable of interest.

## Results and Discussion

A series of 2 (apology vs. no apology)  $\times$  5 (scenarios) ANOVAs revealed no interaction effects (all  $ps > .17$ ). Because the experimental condition had equivalent effects across the scenarios, and because the scenarios were randomized across apology conditions, it was deemed appropriate to collapse data across scenario. Intercorrelations among measures are reported in Table 1.

A series of between-groups ANOVAs was conducted (see Table 2 for a summary of results). Satisfaction with the outgroup response,  $F(1, 58) = 9.91, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .15$ , and perceptions of outgroup remorsefulness,  $F(1, 58) = 15.10, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$ , were both higher when participants received an apology than when they did not. Significant effects of apology were also found for ulterior motives,  $F(1, 58) = 28.90, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .34$ , such that perceptions of ulterior motive were higher in the apology condition than in the control condition. However, apology condition had no effect on empathy, reoffense likelihood, IFS, or the single-item measure of forgiveness (all  $ps > .53$ , all  $\eta_p^2 < .01$ ).

In sum, participants were more satisfied with an apology than with no apology and were more likely to think that the outgroup was remorseful if it apologized than if it did not. However, suspicion about motive was high, and levels of forgiveness, perceptions of remorse, and satisfaction with the response were all significantly below the midpoint of the scale ( $p < .001$ ). It is important to note that with the exception of remorse perceptions, the presence or absence of an apology had no effect on forgiveness or any of the potential mediators drawn from theory on interpersonal apology.

**TABLE 2:** Effects of Apology: Experiment 1

	<i>Apology Condition</i>	<i>No-Apology Condition</i>
Empathy	3.02 (1.47)	3.11 (1.65)
IFS	2.61 (0.86)	2.92 (0.80)
Single-item forgiveness	2.45 (1.11)	2.55 (1.18)
Perceived remorse	3.60 <sub>a</sub> (1.16)	2.50 <sub>b</sub> (1.03)
Reoffense likelihood	4.50 (1.90)	4.17 (1.71)
Response satisfaction	2.88 <sub>a</sub> (1.43)	1.87 <sub>b</sub> (0.89)
Ultior motives	6.01 <sub>a</sub> (0.90)	4.11 <sub>b</sub> (1.77)

NOTE: Numbers in cells are  $M (SD)$ . IFS = Intergroup Forgiveness Scale. Means with different subscripts are significantly different at  $p < .05$ .

At this point, it is sensible to reflect on whether there are any methodological issues that might have resulted in a null effect of apology on forgiveness and many of its proposed mediators. The null result is unlikely to be a function of an ineffective manipulation, given that (a) all participants passed the manipulation check and (b) the manipulation did have an effect on some measures. Neither is it likely to be because of an overly narrow operationalization (five scenarios were used to enhance generalizability) or poor measures (two measures of forgiveness were used, the first with strong theoretical grounding and internal reliability; the second with undeniable face validity). Finally, it cannot be explained as a function of demand characteristics or reactance, given that participants largely failed to detect the variables of interest in the study.

One possibility is that there simply was not enough time between the manipulation of the apology and the measurement of the dependent variables for forgiveness to occur. Given the temporal proximity of offense information to the measurement of forgiveness, it is possible that participant responding was overwhelmed by the offense information. It is also possible that individual differences in preexisting levels of forgiveness were so

great that they overwhelmed the apology manipulation in terms of variance explained. Finally, it is possible that effects of apology that are absent initially may become apparent over time, as further emotional and cognitive processing of apology information occurs. All these obstacles are minimized or eliminated by the use of a within-subject design, an approach that was pursued in Experiment 2.

## EXPERIMENT 2

Experiment 2 used a design similar to that used in Experiment 1, except forgiveness was recorded three times: immediately after reading offense-related information; again after reading an apology (or lack thereof, depending on condition); and finally, 1 week after the original session. It was hoped that this design would provide a more powerful and sensitive test of apology effectiveness.

### Method

#### *Design and Participants*

The sample comprised 73 Australian university students (38 female, 35 male;  $M = 20.73$  years,  $SD = 5.82$  years). The study used a 2 (apology: apology vs. no apology)  $\times$  3 (time: time 1 vs. 2 vs. 3) mixed design. All participants who completed the questionnaire at Time 1 completed it also at Time 2. However, 21 participants failed to attend the Time 3 session, leaving 22 males and 29 females with an average age of 21.14 years ( $SD = 5.86$ ).

#### *Procedure and Measures*

*Time 1.* Participants read one of the five scenarios used in Experiment 1. They then completed the 30-item IFS ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and the single-item forgiveness measure.

*Time 2.* Immediately following this questionnaire, participants read either an apology or a no-apology statement identical to those used in Experiment 1. All participants then completed the measures of response satisfaction ( $\alpha = .93$ ), perceived remorse ( $\alpha = .77$ ), ulterior motives ( $\alpha = .61$ ), IFS ( $\alpha = .94$ ), and the single-item forgiveness measure.

*Time 3.* One week later, participants returned for the final session, when they reread the scenario and apology information. Participants in the apology condition were asked to recall who delivered the apology. They then completed measures of response satisfaction ( $\alpha = .84$ ), perceived remorse ( $\alpha = .77$ ), ulterior motives ( $\alpha = .89$ ), the IFS ( $\alpha = .95$ ), and the single-item measure of forgiveness. Seven participants in the apology condition

**TABLE 3:** Effects of Apology: Experiment 2

Measure	Time	Apology	No Apology
IFS	Time 1	2.99 (0.75)	2.88 (0.81)
	Time 2	3.56 (1.03)	3.28 (0.89)
	Time 3	3.61 (0.87)	3.31 (0.93)
Single-item forgiveness	Time 1	3.15 (1.26)	2.91 (1.19)
	Time 2	3.41 (1.07)	3.02 (1.18)
	Time 3	3.52 (0.99)	3.18 (1.05)
Perceived remorse	Time 2	4.54 (1.39)	3.22 (1.00)
	Time 3	3.72 (1.39)	2.68 (0.90)
Response satisfaction	Time 2	4.26 (1.42)	2.24 (1.26)
	Time 3	3.58 (1.28)	2.30 (1.09)
Ulterior motives	Time 2	5.65 (0.70)	4.74 (1.45)
	Time 3	5.68 (1.25)	4.77 (1.66)

NOTE: Numbers in cells are  $M$  ( $SD$ ). IFS = Intergroup Forgiveness Scale.

failed to identify the outgroup as the source of the apology and were removed from further analysis. Measures of empathy and reoffense likelihood were not included in this study.

### Results and Discussion

A series of Time  $\times$  Apology  $\times$  Scenario ANOVAs was conducted. Scenario did not interact with Time (all  $ps > .10$ ) or Apology (all  $ps > .17$ ), indicating that it was appropriate to collapse data across scenario. Means and standard deviations for all conditions are summarized in Table 3.

#### *Effects of Apology*

We conducted mixed-design ANOVAs, with time and apology condition serving as independent variables. There were no main effects of apology on the IFS,  $F(1, 43) = 0.90$ ,  $p = .35$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .02$ , or the single-item forgiveness scale,  $F(1, 43) = 1.04$ ,  $p = .31$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .02$ . However, apology did result in increased response satisfaction,  $F(1, 44) = 22.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .34$ , perceptions of remorse,  $F(1, 44) = 13.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .24$ , and ulterior motives,  $F(1, 43) = 6.40$ ,  $p = .015$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .13$ , in comparison with the control condition. The effects of apology were significant also when between-groups ANOVAs were conducted separately at both Time 2 and Time 3 (all  $ps < .05$ ). It should be noted that although perceptions of ulterior motives were relatively high in the apology condition, these perceptions were not significantly correlated with forgiveness in the apology condition at any time point (Time 2:  $r = -.04$ ,  $p = .83$ ; Time 3:  $r = .37$ ,  $p = .08$ ).

#### *Effects of Time*

IFS scores improved over time,  $F(2, 86) = 27.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .39$ . Planned contrasts confirmed that

this was because of a significant increase in forgiveness from Time 1 to Time 2,  $F(1, 43) = 39.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .48$ , although scores did not increase between Times 2 and 3,  $F(1, 43) = 0.31$ ,  $p = .58$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .01$ . The increase in the single-item measure of forgiveness over time was also significant,  $F(2, 86) = 5.86$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .12$ , although planned contrasts did not identify significant differences between any individual time points ( $ps > .07$ ). Perceived remorse,  $F(1, 44) = 20.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .32$ , and response satisfaction,  $F(1, 44) = 4.67$ ,  $p = .036$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .10$ , decreased significantly between Times 2 and 3. Only perceptions of ulterior motives were unaffected by the passage of time,  $F(1, 43) = 0.04$ ,  $p = .84$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .00$ .

### *Interaction of Time and Apology*

No interaction between apology and time emerged on perceived remorse, ulterior motives, or the forgiveness measures ( $ps > .36$ ,  $\eta^2_p < .02$ ). However, time did interact with apology on the response satisfaction measure,  $F(1, 44) = 7.02$ ,  $p = .011$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .14$ . This was because response satisfaction decreased significantly among apology recipients ( $p = .002$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .35$ ), whereas those who did not receive an apology did not change in their levels of response satisfaction over time ( $p = .74$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .01$ ).

### Summary

Consistent with earlier studies, apologies did result in improved satisfaction with the response and greater perceptions of remorse. However, even when greater temporal distance was provided between the provision of offense information and the measurement of forgiveness, no effects of apology on intergroup forgiveness emerged. Forgiveness did seem to improve with the passing of time, but the improvement was no more pronounced in the apology condition than in the no-apology condition. Where effects of time did emerge over the week, they were in a negative direction: Apology recipients were less satisfied with the response and saw the outgroup to be less remorseful over time. Thus, rather than time's allowing the apology to "take hold," the positive effects of the apology reduced somewhat over time.

## EXPERIMENT 3

Experiment 2 indicates that lack of time is not likely to be a barrier to intergroup apology effectiveness. Experiment 3 examines another potential barrier to the effectiveness of intergroup apologies. Qualitative research in Northern Ireland has suggested that refusing to forgive can be a form of "keeping faith" with the dead and

injured (McLernon, Cairns, & Hewstone, 2002). Likewise, it has been suggested that when a loved one is injured, letting go of anger can feel disloyal and disrespectful (Exline, Worthington, Hill, & McCullough, 2003). Thus, it is possible that despite satisfaction with an outgroup's apology and despite perceiving the outgroup to be remorseful, victim group members may still choose not to forgive as a way of "keeping faith" with victims.

This study aimed to investigate the "loyalty hypothesis" that participants may have felt unable to forgive in response to an apology because of a sense that they were being disloyal or unfair to ingroup victims. With this in mind, a measure of participants' belief in their "right to forgive" was included. If people do hold back from forgiving after apologies because of fear of betrayal, then we would expect to see this reflected in low ratings on this right to forgive measure.

If it is the case that people do not forgive because of an unwillingness to be disrespectful to victims, it is possible that advocate statements from ingroup victims urging forgiveness could potentially remove the need to hold on to anger regarding the past. A real-world example of an advocate statement urging forgiveness was given by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in commenting on an apology given by former apartheid President F. W. de Klerk. Tutu stated, "We [black South Africans] should be magnanimous and accept it [the apology] as a magnanimous act on the part of President de Klerk. With our acceptance comes forgiveness" (Tutu, 1993, p. 1). Advocate statements such as this might act as necessary permission givers, thereby encouraging forgiveness after apologies and increasing participants' belief in their right to forgive. For exploratory reasons, we also included advocate statements from nonvictim ingroup members and from outgroup members.

### Method

#### *Participants and Design*

Participants were 214 undergraduate Australian students (146 females, 68 males) with an average age of 19.86 years ( $SD = 4.11$ ). Participants were randomly allocated to the conditions of a 2 (response: apology, no apology)  $\times$  4 (advocate: victim advocate, ingroup advocate, outgroup advocate, no advocate) between-subjects design.

#### *Procedure and Measures*

Participants read one of the five scenarios described earlier. They then were exposed to the apology manipulation before reading an advocate statement. The advocate statement required the development of three "public comments," which were supposedly selected from media reports of the event. For example, in the

**TABLE 4:** Effects of Apology and Advocacy: Experiment 3

	Apology Condition				No-Apology Condition			
	Victim Advocate	Ingroup Advocate	Outgroup Advocate	No Advocate	Victim Advocate	Ingroup Advocate	Outgroup Advocate	No Advocate
IFS	3.64 (0.64)	3.46 (1.04)	3.38 (0.85)	3.51 (0.84)	3.27 (0.78)	3.63 (0.91)	3.46 (1.02)	3.09 (0.89)
Single-item forgiveness	3.46 (0.89)	3.27 (1.33)	2.92 (1.02)	3.18 (1.10)	3.20 (0.80)	3.27 (1.07)	3.16 (1.12)	2.67 (1.07)
Perceived remorse	3.26 (1.41)	3.31 (1.15)	3.42 (1.18)	3.38 (1.03)	2.41 (1.36)	3.00 (1.29)	3.38 (1.16)	2.54 (1.52)
Response satisfaction	3.57 (1.30)	4.10 (1.51)	3.56 (1.17)	3.64 (1.25)	1.86 (1.05)	2.32 (1.08)	2.41 (1.41)	1.95 (1.05)
Right to forgive	3.70 (1.61)	3.90 (1.55)	3.50 (1.57)	3.82 (1.67)	4.14 (1.37)	4.73 (1.74)	3.90 (1.58)	3.93 (1.39)
Ultior motives	5.88 (0.82)	5.63 (0.96)	5.71 (0.98)	5.75 (1.06)	4.44 (1.47)	4.71 (1.55)	5.38 (0.98)	4.91 (1.23)

NOTE: Numbers in cells are  $M$  ( $SD$ ). IFS = Intergroup Forgiveness Scale.

Japan scenario, the ingroup victim was described as an Australian POW held by the Japanese. The advocate statement read as follows:

Although I'm sad about what the Japanese did and I want to see that justice is done, I also think that it's time that Australia forgave and moved on. The Japanese were brutal and it meant that a lot of my mates died. It was horrific and I was torn apart at the time. But there comes a time when you just need to forgive people for what they have done. We need to deal with the past and get on with the future.

The nonvictim ingroup advocate was described simply as an Australian, and the outgroup advocate was described as a Japanese citizen. Variations of the text were made for the nonvictim ingroup advocate and the outgroup advocate. For example, where the victim advocate said, "The Japanese were brutal and it meant that a lot of my mates died," the nonvictim ingroup advocate said, "The Japanese were brutal and it meant that a lot of Australians died," and the outgroup advocate said, "Our soldiers were brutal and it meant that a lot of Australians died." We also included a control condition in which no advocacy statement was given. Follow-up questions to check the effectiveness of the manipulation found that 4 participants incorrectly identified the source of the apology and 5 participants incorrectly identified the source of the advocacy statement. These participants were removed from further analysis.

Following the advocate manipulation, participants completed measures of perceived remorse ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ), response satisfaction ( $\alpha = .84$ ), ulterior motives ( $\alpha = .58$ ), the IFS ( $\alpha = .94$ ), and the single-item measure of forgiveness. Two further items asked to what extent the participant felt that it was "appropriate" for someone in his or her place to forgive [the outgroup];

and felt he or she had a "right to forgive" [the outgroup],  $r = .51, p < .001$ .

## Results and Discussion

Because scenario did not interact significantly with either response or advocate statement for any dependent variable (all  $ps > .09$ ), and because scenario was randomized across levels of the other conditions, it was considered appropriate to collapse data across the five scenarios. A series of 2 (apology)  $\times$  4 (advocate) ANOVAs revealed results consistent with Experiments 1 and 2 (see Table 4 for a summary). On their own, intergroup apologies were again found to be ineffective in increasing outgroup forgiveness: IFS,  $F(1, 187) = 1.14, p = .29, \eta^2_p = .01$ ; single-item measure,  $F(1, 187) = 0.74, p = .39, \eta^2_p = .00$ . However, main effects of apology emerged on response satisfaction,  $F(1, 193) = 78.24, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .29$ , and perceived remorse,  $F(1, 187) = 84.76, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .31$ . As expected, response satisfaction and perceptions of remorse were higher in the apology condition ( $M = 3.72$  and  $4.20$ , respectively) than in the control condition ( $M = 2.14$  and  $2.84$ , respectively). Ulterior motives were also higher in the apology condition ( $M = 5.74$ ) than in the no-apology condition ( $M = 4.88$ ),  $F(1, 187) = 28.34, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .13$ ; however, it should be noted that the relationship between ulterior motives and forgiveness in the apology condition was nonsignificant ( $r = -.12, p = .25$ ).

No effects of advocate condition emerged on any measure, either as a main effect (all  $ps > .15$ ) or as part of an interaction with apology (all  $ps > .14$ ). Such findings cast doubt on the suggestion that advocate statements can allow forgiveness after an apology, where ingroup loyalty might otherwise prevent it. The hypothesis that

loyalty prevents forgiveness was largely built on discussions of intergroup conflict and forgiveness (McLernon et al., 2002), in which it was argued that not forgiving is a way of keeping faith with the dead and injured. Rather than being a genuine representation of the factors preventing ingroup members from forgiving, it could be that this twin appeal to ingroup relationships and the grievances suffered may offer a secure, socially acceptable explanation for a deeper lack of forgiveness. At a basic level, the explanation is a reminder of group victimhood and uses this as a “political alibi” to justify lack of forgiveness. This explanation also offers some security, for it places the responsibility for unforgiveness in the hands of the “dead and injured,” who in their absence cannot be argued with or persuaded.

A main effect of apology was also observed on the right to forgive measure,  $F(1, 187) = 3.94, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$ , such that participants perceived they had less right to forgive when an apology had been given ( $M = 3.73$ ) than when it had not ( $M = 4.16$ ). It is not immediately clear what could have caused this counterintuitive result, although this effect does reinforce the generally pessimistic conclusions of the other studies regarding the potential for apologies to promote forgiveness.

#### EXPERIMENT 4

The goal of Experiment 4 was to directly compare apologies stemming from an individual (a one-to-many apology) with apologies stemming from a collective (a many-to-many apology). As discussed earlier, the increase in the number of actors associated with an intergroup apology means that it is ambiguous whether, and to what extent, the apology expresses the concerns of the group or merely the representative. Adding to the complexity, the group representative must often apologize for actions not committed by himself or herself or even by members of his or her generation. Furthermore, the formalized and public nature of intergroup apologies may arouse suspicion about genuineness of motive that might not be present in the case of more private interpersonal apologies. For all these reasons, the notion of forgiving an outgroup in the aftermath of an official apology might seem less concrete and less plausible than it would if an equivalent apology were provided by an individual for the individual’s own offenses. Experiment 4 is the first attempt to compare the effectiveness of individual and group apologies in the same design.

In doing so, we were mindful of the different norms associated with the language and tone of group and individual apologies. Tavuchis (1991) argues that apologies between collectives are more likely to use the formal language of official discourse and are more restricted in

their emotional expression through the cultural constraints of etiquette. He maintains that although interpersonal apologies rely on emotional expressions of sorrow and consequent perceptions of remorse to validate the expression of apology, intergroup apologies cannot. Instead, group apologies are authenticated through their public expression “for the record.” Once on the record, group apologies provide an open and historic testament to which future actions can be held accountable. Thus, according to Tavuchis, perceptions of remorse are likely to be more limited in many-to-many apologies, because of their limited emotional expression, than in one-to-one apologies. By manipulating the emotionality of the apology script, we were in a position to provide the first empirical examination of whether the emotional register of an apology has an effect on how the apology is received.

#### Hypotheses and Research Questions

Given that the “standard” intergroup apology used here is identical to that used in Experiments 1-3, relatively firm predictions can be made with respect to this condition. Specifically, it was expected that ratings of response satisfaction, perceived remorse, and ulterior motives would be higher in the standard group apology condition than in the no-apology control condition. No difference was expected between the standard group apology condition and the no-apology control on forgiveness, at least for the offending group.

When the apology was delivered on behalf of an individual, it was also expected that ratings of response satisfaction and perceived remorsefulness would be greater than in the no-apology control. In contrast to the group context, it was expected on the basis of the literature on interpersonal apologies that individual apologies would result in higher ratings of forgiveness for the individual than would no apology. This effect was expected to be mediated by perceptions of remorse.

Given a lack of previous research on this question, it is less clear what will happen in the “emotional” apology condition. On the basis of Tavuchis (1991), we predicted that an emotional apology delivered on behalf of an individual would be more effective than a standard apology delivered on behalf of an individual. However, we expected that the emotional apology would be no more effective—and possibly less effective—than the standard apology when delivered on behalf of a group. In line with Tavuchis, emotional group apologies might be seen as nonnormative, which in turn might arouse suspicion of social manipulation and disingenuousness. However, it is also conceivable that an emotional group apology would help promote perceptions of remorse, which would in turn help promote forgiveness. Given

the failure of group apologies to promote forgiveness in the previous studies, this possibility deserves consideration.

## Method

### *Design and Participants*

The sample comprised 161 Australian undergraduate students (125 females, 36 males) who participated in exchange for course credit ( $M = 21.19$  years,  $SD = 6.37$ ). A 2 (group or individual apologizer)  $\times$  2 (standard or emotive apology) between-groups design was used, with an additional no-apology control condition included as a hanging cell.

### *Procedure and Materials*

The Japan scenario was used in this study. In addition to the standard summary of the intergroup offense, a separate "personal introduction" regarding an individual outgroup member (Yoshinori Nishikawa) was supplied so that forgiveness for an individual offender could be assessed. This personal introduction contained information indicating that Yoshinori Nishikawa was a soldier at the notorious Sandakan POW camp in World War II and participated in the abuse of Australian POWs.

*Apology manipulation.* Participants then read either a standard apology, an emotive apology, or no apology. In the apology conditions, half the participants were told that the statement came from Yoshinori Nishikawa (individual apology condition). The remaining participants were informed the statement was given by a spokesperson for Japanese officials and military personnel (group apology condition). The standard apology and no-apology scripts were the same as those used in previous studies (see Experiment 1).

An emotive apology statement with the same content as the standard apology was also presented (variations on the text to make it appropriate for an individual speaker are presented in parentheses):

We (I) wish to express our (my) feelings of deep remorse and regret about the past, in the hope that our voices (my voice) can help ensure that such mistakes are never made again. We (I) know what happened, how terrible it was, and so we (I) need to say how sorry we are (I am), and how much our hearts grieve (my heart grieves) for the sins that were committed. We also wish (I want my government) to provide compensation for former POWs and their families but can only hope that this will help heal the past.

In a pilot study, a separate sample of 43 Australian undergraduate students were asked to rate the emotionality of the language in each of the apologies

(1 = *unemotional*, 7 = *emotional*). As expected, the standard apology ( $M = 4.47$ ) was rated as less emotional than the emotive apology ( $M = 6.16$ ),  $F(1, 41) = 39.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .49$ .

To ensure that participants processed the experimental information, they were asked to name the person who delivered the apology statement. Seven participants incorrectly identified the source of the apology, and these participants were removed from further analysis. Response satisfaction ( $\alpha = .84$ ), perceived remorse ( $\alpha = .74$ ), and ulterior motivation scales ( $\alpha = .57$ ) were then administered prior to the IFS. In all conditions, participants completed the IFS for the individual (Yoshinori Nishikawa;  $\alpha = .96$ ), for the offending group (Japanese military and officials involved in events described;  $\alpha = .93$ ), and for the wider outgroup (the Japanese population;  $\alpha = .98$ ). The single-item forgiveness scale was not used in this study.

## Results

### *Effects of Emotionality*

To examine the effect of the standard and emotive apologies, 2 (emotionality: standard vs. emotive)  $\times$  2 (speaker: individual vs. group) between-groups ANOVAs were performed (because the focus of these analyses was the difference between the two apology conditions, the no-apology control condition was not included, but see Table 5 for a summary of means and standard deviations within all cells). No significant main effects of emotionality emerged on response satisfaction, perceived remorse, or ulterior motives (all  $ps > .74$ , all  $\eta^2_p = .00$ ). No main effects emerged on forgiveness for either the individual offender ( $p = .69$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .00$ ) or the offending group ( $p = .16$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .02$ ). There was a marginal main effect on forgiveness for the wider outgroup such that forgiveness was greater in the standard apology condition ( $M = 6.00$ ) than in the emotional apology condition ( $M = 5.67$ ),  $F(1, 88) = 3.31$ ,  $p = .07$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .04$ .

No significant interaction effects emerged except on the perceived remorse measure,  $F(1, 88) = 5.49$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .06$ . Analysis of simple main effects showed that, for the emotive apology, there were significantly greater perceptions of remorse if the apology was spoken by an individual speaker rather than by a group,  $F(1, 88) = 7.74$ ,  $p = .01$ . In contrast, the standard apology resulted in similar perceptions of remorse whether given by an individual or by a group,  $F(1, 88) = 0.43$ ,  $p = .51$ . Examined another way, the use of emotion marginally increased perceptions of remorse for the individual speaker,  $F(1, 88) = 3.39$ ,  $p = .07$ . However, when delivered on behalf of the group, there

**TABLE 5:** Effects of Individual and Group Apologies: Experiment 4

	No Apology	Individual Speaker		Group Speaker	
		Standard	Emotive	Standard	Emotive
IFS: Individual	3.59 (0.78)	4.09 (1.05)	4.07 (0.91)	3.85 (1.00)	3.62 (0.90)
IFS: Offending group	3.40 (0.79)	3.44 (0.85)	3.31 (0.81)	3.57 (1.21)	3.10 (0.88)
IFS: Wider outgroup	5.55 (1.00)	6.06 (0.68)	5.55 (0.98)	6.13 (0.72)	5.71 (0.98)
Perceived remorse	3.24 (1.19)	5.13 (1.12)	5.52 (0.92)	5.22 (0.78)	4.77 (1.15)
Response satisfaction	2.76 (1.32)	3.85 (1.51)	4.42 (1.03)	4.27 (1.36)	3.91 (1.61)
Ulterior motives	4.68 (1.38)	5.10 (1.03)	4.87 (1.04)	5.55 (0.86)	5.65 (0.90)

NOTE: Numbers in cells are  $M$  ( $SD$ ). IFS = Intergroup Forgiveness Scale.

was a nonsignificant trend for emotive apologies to result in lower perceptions of remorse than did standard apologies,  $F(1, 88) = 2.29, p = .13$ .

### Effects of Apology

Subsequent analyses were performed with data collapsed across levels of emotionality. This allowed a 3 (speaker: individual vs. group vs. no apology)  $\times$  3 (forgiveness target: individual vs. offending group vs. wider group) mixed ANOVA to be performed on the IFS. A main effect of forgiveness target was demonstrated,  $F(2, 288) = 455.92, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .76$ . Neuman-Keuls post hoc tests showed significantly higher forgiveness for the wider group ( $M = 5.72$ ) than for the individual ( $M = 3.79$ ), who was significantly more forgiven than the offending group ( $M = 3.35$ ).

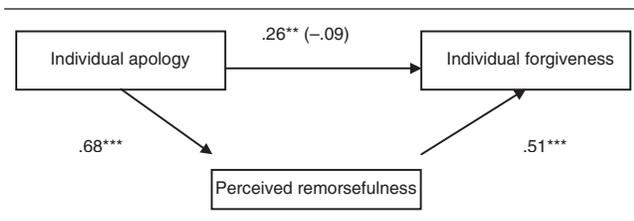
A main effect of speaker was not found in this analysis,  $F(2, 144) = 1.32, p = .27, \eta^2_p = .02$ ; however, there was a significant interaction between forgiveness target and speaker,  $F(4, 288) = 2.76, p = .03, \eta^2_p = .04$ . This interaction was followed up by conducting between-groups univariate ANOVAs (individual vs. group vs. no apology) within each level of target forgiveness. Although apology condition did not affect forgiveness for the offending group,  $F(2, 144) = 0.18, p = .84, \eta^2_p = .00$ , or the wider outgroup,  $F(2, 144) = 1.60, p = .21, \eta^2_p = .02$ , there was a significant effect of apology condition on forgiveness for the individual,  $F(2, 144) = 3.89, p = .02, \eta^2_p = .05$ . Newman-Keuls post hoc tests showed significantly greater forgiveness of the individual after an individual apology ( $M = 4.06$ ) in comparison to no apology ( $M = 3.59$ ). Forgiveness for the individual after a group apology ( $M = 3.71$ ) was not significantly different from either condition.

Main effects of apology condition were also observed on response satisfaction,  $F(2, 143) = 16.18, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .19$ ; perceived remorse,  $F(2, 144) = 54.32, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .43$ ; and ulterior motives,  $F(2, 144) = 7.35, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .09$ .

Newman-Keuls post hoc tests showed greater response satisfaction in both the individual ( $M = 4.11$ ) and group ( $M = 4.08$ ) apology conditions than in the no-apology control ( $M = 2.76$ ). Similarly, perceptions of remorse were greater after individual ( $M = 5.32$ ) and group apologies ( $M = 4.97$ ) relative to the control ( $M = 3.24$ ). In neither case did post hoc tests reveal a significant difference between the individual and group apology. However, perceptions of ulterior motives were stronger after a group apology ( $M = 5.60$ ) than after an individual apology ( $M = 5.00$ ) or no apology ( $M = 4.68$ ). Perceptions of ulterior motives did not differ between the individual and no-apology conditions.

### Tests of Mediation

Perceived remorse was significantly correlated with forgiveness of the individual ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ) and of the group ( $r = .45, p = .004$ ). However, as there was no effect of group apology on forgiveness, the mediating role of perceived remorse was pursued only with regard to the effects of individual apology on individual forgiveness. To test for mediation, the emotive and standard individual apology conditions were each coded as 1, and the no-apology condition was coded as  $-2$  (consistent with recommendations by Aiken & West, 1991, the critical contrast was entered in the regression equation along with a second, noncritical orthogonal contrast). Apology condition was first entered as a predictor of individual forgiveness and, mirroring the ANOVA, was found to be significant (see Figure 1). In a separate regression, apology condition was also found to be a significant predictor of perceived remorse. When apology and perceived remorse were entered simultaneously, apology was no longer predictive of individual forgiveness, whereas perceived remorse was predictive. The significant Sobel test ( $z = 3.61, p < .001$ ) confirmed that perceived remorse mediates the relationship between individual apology and forgiveness for the individual.



**Figure 1** The role of perceived remorsefulness in mediating the effects of an individual apology on forgiveness for the individual.  
 $**p < .01$ .  $***p < .001$ .

## Discussion

As in Experiments 1-3, apologies given on behalf of an offending group increased perceptions of remorse, ulterior motives, and satisfaction with the response relative to a no-apology control. Once again, group apologies did not help increase forgiveness for the offending group, but this study also showed they were ineffective in increasing forgiveness for the broader group or the individual within the group. This was the case regardless of whether groups used emotionally expressive or emotionally reserved apologies.

Individual apologies also resulted in increased response satisfaction and perceptions of remorse relative to no apology. It is interesting to note that in contrast to group apologies, individual apologies were successful in promoting forgiveness for the offending individual relative to the no-apology control. This is consistent with previous research linking interpersonal apologies with increased positive attributions about the offender (such as perceived remorse) and increased forgiveness (e.g., Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Gonzales, 1992; McCullough et al., 1998; Schmitt et al., 2004). However, apologies given by an individual speaker did not translate into forgiveness for the offending group or the wider group.

In support of suggestions made by Tavuchis (1991), this research also suggests that the expression of emotion is less important to the action of group apologies than to the action of individual apologies. The use of emotive language in a group apology did not increase perceptions of remorse in comparison with a standard apology; in fact, the means trended in the opposite direction. In contrast, for the individual apology, the use of emotive language in apologizing increased perceptions of remorse, although it had no effect on forgiveness for that individual.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Despite the increased incidence of group apologies in everyday life, very little empirical attention has been

paid to the question of whether intergroup apologies work, and if so, why. We conducted four studies to attempt to fill this research vacuum. Across these studies, a number of consistent results emerged. Most notably, although the presence of an apology helped promote perceptions that the outgroup was remorseful, and although participants were more satisfied with an apology than with no apology, the presence of the apology failed to promote forgiveness. This was the case regardless of whether the effectiveness of apology was measured cross-sectionally (Experiment 1) or longitudinally (Experiment 2). It was also the case when the apology was accompanied by victims advocating forgiveness (Experiment 3) and was independent of the emotionality of the apology (Experiment 4). This is unlikely to be caused by invariant scales: The IFS, for example, was sensitive to variations in forgiveness as a result of time (Experiment 2), relative to different outgroup targets (Experiment 4), and as a result of the individual apology (Experiment 4). Neither is it likely to be a function of poor statistical power, given that the average  $\eta^2_p$  for both measures of forgiveness across these studies was only .01, and in one case (Experiment 1), the means trended such that forgiveness was lower in the apology condition.

Our results suggest that for intergroup apologies to work, strategies need to be put into place that are sensitive to the intergroup context rather than being transplanted from the interpersonal context. Qualitative research in Northern Ireland (Hewstone et al., 2004; McLernon, Cairns, Hewstone, & Smith, 2004) offers some clues about why interpersonal and intergroup apologies might have different psychological implications. This research suggests that people have difficulty trusting that the rhetoric of group apologies will be reflected in group members' ongoing behavior. This is because groups comprise numerous autonomous agents capable of acting in a variety of ways. Indeed, in Experiment 1, an apology had no effect on perceptions that the outgroup would reoffend in the future. Furthermore, because intergroup apologies represent a collective, they are more likely to be a result of public pressure from within and outside the group. One striking finding in the current data was the high levels of cynicism surrounding the group apology. Perceptions of ulterior motive were higher than the midpoint in all studies, whereas perceptions of remorse were typically on or below the midpoint in the apology condition.

Given the heightened cynicism toward group apologies, it may be that additional steps need to be taken for group apologies to produce forgiveness. For example, it may be that groups need to provide apologetic statements that are costly in order to inspire forgiveness. It may also be that efforts need to be made to ensure that

the official representatives who deliver the apology are seen to have a clear mandate from the broader population for doing so. For example, qualitative research in the Democratic Republic of Congo suggests that asking for intergroup forgiveness should be a democratic process in which public discussion and voting must precede concrete actions by politicians (Kadiangandu & Mullet, 2006). This research has implications for the official intergroup apologies used in our experiments, in which representatives gave apologies with little information provided as to the offending group's actual support for that apology.

It is also possible that groups are simply not motivated to forgive intergroup offenses. Indeed, it is possible that for some apology recipients, there is a motivation to retain victimhood status. There can be power in refusing to accept apologies, in refusing to admit that the attempts at restitution made by offenders have reached the moral benchmark by which they are considered worthy to atone for past wrongs (Lazare, 2004). Indeed, unforgiveness can reflect a sense of narcissistic entitlement: a belief in one's moral superiority, right to special privileges, and claim to large reparations for moral debts (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004). On the flip side, unforgiveness can also reflect fear of being taken advantage of or of letting the offending group off too easily (Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lazare, 2004).

It can also be argued that the motivation to hold on to victim status reflects a need for ingroup identity. Speaking openly about, and embracing the suffering of, other group members might be a way of establishing one's identity credentials. With this in mind, one wonders if the centrality of Australian war heroes to a sense of Australian national identity may have impeded forgiveness for the Japanese. This embracing of victimhood might be particularly attractive for members of dominant, high-power groups, who can use it to rationalize their own history of perpetrating intergroup aggression.

The predominantly cross-sectional nature of the research is another potential reason forgiveness did not develop after an intergroup apology. Such an explanation would be advanced by process models of forgiveness that emphasize the temporal evolution of forgiveness (e.g., McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003). Although we did test the development of forgiveness over time, in the context of intergroup injustice, the week used in Experiment 2 was a relatively brief interval. According to process theories of forgiveness, forgiveness is not the work of a moment but of necessity takes time, even up to months and years, to evolve. It is possible, then, that an apology plants a seed of forgiveness that may develop over time.

Finally, it should be noted that our sample did not include "primary" victims of the intergroup offenses; for example, none of the participants were POWs in World War II or injured in the Bali bombing. Understanding the reactions of "secondary" victims—people who share a common identity with primary victims but did not suffer directly—is crucially important. If apologies are to promote reconciliation and peace, they need to be effective in promoting forgiveness among the broader community and among subsequent generations. Having said that, it needs to be made clear that the present research does not tell us whether intergroup apologies promote forgiveness among primary victims and that this remains an important question to be answered.

In sum, it seems appropriate to return to this truth: Intergroup apologies are frequently given and requested for all manner of intergroup offenses. Furthermore, the decision as to whether to apologize is a moral decision and should not be tied to utilitarian concerns about whether the apology is "effective." Having said that, the time is ripe for a systematic exploration of what effects intergroup apologies have. The current research has shown that intergroup apologies are effective in promoting perceptions of remorse and in increasing satisfaction with the offending group's response to their offenses. However, these benefits do not necessarily translate into greater forgiveness. In short, an apology is not a magic wand that can be waved to heal wounds from the past but should be considered instead as one step in a long process of reconciliation.

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