Chapter 4

Remember Your Crimes: How an Appeal to Ingroup Wrongdoings Fosters Reconciliation in Separatist Conflict

4 Remember Your Crimes: How an Appeal to Ingroup Wrongdoings Fosters Reconciliation in Separatist Conflict

Abstract
The aim of the current study was to compare the effectiveness of appeals to ingroup wrongdoings, as opposed to ingroup rightdoings, on reconciliation between groups in a real-world conflict. We conducted an experiment in Indonesia, where separatist conflict in the province West Papua is currently unresolved. Participants were a sample of Javanese residents (N = 502), representing the majority group in Indonesia. Compared to ingroup rightdoings, being reminded of ingroup wrongdoings significantly increased participants’ sense of perpetratorhood. These feelings of being perpetrator fostered reconciliation, but, as predicted, only among participants who viewed their majority group's actions as illegitimate and the separatist movement as legitimate. These findings reveal that an appeal to ingroup wrongdoings can be effective in promoting intergroup reconciliation. In addition to theoretical implications, we discuss practical implications in terms of highlighting the importance of acknowledging ingroup wrongdoings as part of an intervention program.

Keywords: separatist conflict, perpetratorhood, reconciliation, wrongdoings, rightdoings

Separatist conflict is characterised by mutual transgressions in which members of the parent nation and those of the separatist group alternate in their roles as perpetrator and victim (Webb, 2016). Yet despite their dual characters, both parties typically claim the victim role, casting the other party in the role of perpetrator. These claims propel the disputing parties towards legitimisation of their transgressions, which further fuels separatist conflict (Kingsbury & Laoutides, 2015). The issue of legitimacy is a defining characteristic of separatist conflicts (Schlichte & Schneckener, 2015). To illustrate, people in Catalonia voted for independence in a 2017 referendum because they see themselves as Catalan, not Spanish (Robertson, Couzens, & Malm, & Campbell, 2017). The Spanish government, however, forcefully tried to prohibit the referendum because they consider it, and the Catalanian separation, illegitimate (Fotheringham, 2017). The goal of the current research was to investigate whether an intervention among members of the majority group, aimed at acknowledging one’s role as perpetrator, fosters reconciliation in separatist conflict, and the extent to which this is contingent upon the perceived legitimacy of the separatist movement. To this end, we examined how reminding people of how their own group has harmed the separatist group during the conflict, as compared to reminding them of how their group has helped the separatist group, affects their feelings as perpetrator. We demonstrate that this sense of perpetratorhood in turn fosters people’s willingness to reconcile with the separatist group—and people do so more strongly when they see separatist movement as legitimate.

We conducted our research among members of the non-separatist parent nation (from hereon referred to as ‘the majority’) in the Republic of Indonesia, where separatist tension in West Papua is rife. West Papua was integrated into Indonesia in 1969, but the legitimacy of this act is challenged by many West Papuans. The exploitation of natural resources and military suppression further strengthened West Papuan’s secessionist claim (MacLeod, 2015). The majority, on the other hand, perceives the integration as legitimate and opposes West-Papua's separation. Their opposition is fuelled by the risk of losing access to West-Papua's rich natural resources and fears that the province's secession may form a precedent for other regions in Indonesia. We focused on the
majority because this group tends to exercise stronger military and political powers than the separatist group (in this case, West Papua), which affords it a dominant status (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2007). Dominant status groups are commonly expected to take the moral high ground in conflict situations (Vandello, Michniewicz, & Goldschmied, 2011), such that the majority is typically assigned a role as initiator of reconciliation (Satha-Anand, 2016). Intergroup reconciliation in the current research involves constructive cognitive orientations such as intergroup trust and positive intergroup attitudes of the dominant group towards the non-dominant group. Reconciliatory attitudes are an important prerequisite for the establishment of durable peace (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004). We therefore focused on reconciliatory attitudes as the main outcome variable in the current research, arguing that an appeal to ingroup wrongdoings as opposed to an appeal to ingroup rightdoings could ultimately contribute to the resolution of separatist conflict.

In separatist conflict, the majority often believes that it has either not harmed the separatist group, or that any harmful actions were a justified response to aggressive actions from the separatist group (Bookman, 1993). Moreover, the majority may believe that it has taken many positive actions directed at the separatist group. Such positive actions, or rightdoings, involve any actions ingroup members consider beneficial to the other group (Kriesberg, 2004). For example, the majority may firmly hold on to the belief that it has treated the separatist group right by granting it a special autonomy status or by instilling various affirmative action policies (Cornell, 2002), even if the separatist group itself opposes these programs (Jenne, Saideman, & Lowe, 2007; Siroky & Cuffe, 2015). If people believe that the goals and actions of their group are right, and those of the other party are wrong, they are prone to feel as the more moral party and cast the other group in the role of violent aggressor (Schori-Eyal, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2014). Indeed, Leach, Bilali, and Pagliaro (2015; see also Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012) argued that disputing parties claim a victim status because victimhood implies moral superiority. This tendency to view the own group as more victimized than the opponent group is commonly referred to as ‘competitive victimhood’ (Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008). As a focus on past rightdoings towards the outgroup is associated with feelings of moral superiority, it may heighten the majority’s sense of competitive victimhood in separatist conflict.

In this paper, we argue that a focus on rightdoings, which is so common in intergroup conflict, elicits a sense of competitive victimhood which hinders reconciliation of separatist conflict. We propose that an intervention that can shift the majority's focus from its own rightdoings to its wrongdoings vis-à-vis the separatist group has clear potential in reducing conflict attitudes and promoting reconciliation.

**Perpetratorhood**

Wrongdoings in an intergroup context connote harmful actions that violate standard social norms and which physically (e.g., casualties, injuries, damages) or mentally (e.g., trauma) harm another group (Čehajić, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011; Glick & Paluck, 2013). Research has shown that a reminder of ingroup wrongdoings prompts people towards actions intended to reform rather than defend their group (Iyer, Schmader, & Lickel, 2007). However, prior research has demonstrated that a reminder of ingroup wrongdoings elicits various defensive reactions such as dehumanisation of the victims, denial of ingroup responsibility, and moralising and legitimising historical misconducts (Castano, 2008; Rotella & Richeson, 2013). Čehajić and Brown (2010) argued that an appeal to ingroup wrongdoings can still promote reconciliation, but only when these collective misdeeds elicit a sense of perpetratorhood. A sense of perpetratorhood can be viewed as the extent to which ingroup members acknowledge their acts of violence in intergroup conflict and the harm these acts inflicted upon the victim group (Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006). Mazziotta,
Feuchte, Gausel, and Nadler (2014) found that inducing people to think of their group as perpetrator enhanced conciliatory orientations towards the victim group.

An appeal to ingroup wrongdoings can promote conflict reconciliation by instilling a sense of perpetratorhood, provided that defensive responses can be overcome. For example, literature shows that defensive responses to ingroup wrongdoings can be tackled when the collective misdeeds are hard to deny (Brander & Hornsey, 2006; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2006; Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Zebel, Doosje, & Spears, 2009). Indeed, according to the needs-based model of reconciliation (NBMR; Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, & Carmi, 2009), an appeal to wrongdoings can increase acknowledgment of outgroup harm when deflecting responsibility is difficult. We reasoned that group members would find it more difficult to deny ingroup wrongdoings when they are confronted with these wrongdoings by fellow ingroup members (as opposed to outgroup members or third parties). In support of this argument, previous research (Doosje et al., 2006; Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 2002) observed that groups are more open to criticism when it is communicated by other ingroup members, as opposed to the outgroup. An appeal to ingroup wrongdoings could therefore increase a sense of perpetratorhood when it is made by the ingroup itself, as this increases the likelihood that these ingroup actions are viewed as unjust, as well as harmful to the victim group.

The discussion in the previous suggests that an appeal to rightdoings and an appeal to wrongdoings might have a different impact on competitive victimhood and perpetratorhood as viewed by members of the majority in separatist conflict. We examined this notion in an experiment, in which we manipulated appeals to ingroup rightdoings, and ingroup wrongdoings.

We expected that participants who focused on ingroup wrongdoings, compared to those focused on ingroup rightdoings, would report lower levels of competitive victimhood (Hypothesis 1a). Secondly, we expected that participants who focused on ingroup wrongdoings, compared to those focused on ingroup rightdoings, would report higher levels of perpetratorhood (Hypothesis 1b).

In the following sections, we propose other variables which include morality threat, moral licensing, and compensatory needs, and further explain their dynamics in affecting the majority’s reconciliatory attitudes towards the separatist group.

**Morality threat and moral licensing**

People have an on-going concern over whether their ingroup is seen as moral by others (Ellemers & van den Bos, 2012), and these concerns are particularly pronounced among members of perpetrating groups (Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-Nisim, & Ullrich, 2008). The NBMR proposes that perpetrating groups experience a threat to their moral identity, denoting a concern over the ingroup’s tainted moral reputation resulting from prior wrongdoings committed against the victim group (a phenomenon labelled "morality threat"; Shnabel et al., 2009). Building on this rationale, Mashuri, van Leeuwen, and Hanurawan (2016) recently framed morality threat in terms of negative meta-stereotypes, referring to the extent to which the majority is concerned about the negative moral image of their group in the eyes of the separatist group. This conceptualisation of morality threat echoes the concept of moral shame, which reflects perpetrators’ genuine moral concern over their own group’s immorality (Allpress, Brown, Sorolla, Deonna, & Teroni, 2014). Mashuri et al. (2016) found, across two studies, that the majority reported high levels of morality threat, which is indicative of a strong concern about the immorality of the ingroup’s actions.

The NBMR (Shnabel et al., 2009) suggests that morality threat originates from a sense of perpetratorhood. This implies that an appeal to prior wrongdoings can indirectly increase morality threat through increasing a sense of perpetratorhood. Perpetratorhood was therefore expected to
mediate the effect of ingroup action (i.e., rightdoings versus wrongdoings) on morality threat (Hypothesis 2a).

When faced with their misconducts, perpetrating groups sometimes defend themselves by legitimizing the rightness of their actions (Staub & Pearlman, 2006) - a strategy called "moral licensing" (Leach et al., 2015). Moral licensing reflects the use of past moral behaviours as a license to act immorally in the future (Monin & Jordan, 2009). Schori-Eyal, Klar, Roccas, and McNeill (2017) found that the more Jewish-Israeli participants felt victimised compared to Palestinians in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the more they supported immoral actions to defend the existence of their group. Applying this insight to the context of separatist conflict, we argue that the more the majority claims that it has been victimized, relative to the separatist group, the more it will engage in moral licensing. We therefore predicted that competitive victimhood would mediate the effect of ingroup action (i.e., rightdoings versus wrongdoings) on moral licensing (Hypothesis 2b).

Compenatory needs and reconciliation

The NMBR (Shnabel et al., 2009) posits that in dealing with morality threat the perpetrating group is motivated to satisfy two compensatory needs: the need for social acceptance and the need for restoration of moral image. The need for social acceptance refers to the desire for the victim outgroup to accept the perpetrating ingroup as a moral social actor, to sympathize and understand the situation that compelled the ingroup towards its actions, and to be willing to cooperate with the ingroup. The need for restoration of moral image denotes the perpetrating group’s feelings regarding the importance of carrying out actions that can benefit the victim group, to restore the ingroup’s moral reputation in the eyes of the victim group (Shnabel et al., 2009). In support of the NMBR’s proposition, Mashuri et al. (2016) found that the more the majority experienced morality threat in the context of separatism conflict, the more they reported a need for social acceptance and for restoration of moral image.

In contrast to morality threat, we argue that moral licensing can decrease the needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image. Since moral licensing involves the belief that the ingroup is more moral than the outgroup, it attenuates moral behaviours because good actions in the past could validate people’s moral qualities in the present (Conway & Peetz, 2012). Moral licensing thus poses a hurdle for positive intergroup relations (Effron & Conway, 2015). Characterised as such, moral licensing is likely to attenuate compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image, which signal the desire of the perpetrating group to build rapport or positive relations with the victim group (Shnabel et al., 2009; SimanTov-Nachlieli, Shnabel, & Nadler, 2013).

Reconciliatory attitudes

Reconciliation is a complex process that requires a basis of mutual positive attitudes (Kim, Kollontai, & Hoyland, 2008). The willingness to reconcile is reflected in reconciliatory attitudes: Reconciliatory actions are meaningless if reconciliatory attitudes are absent. It is the public’s attitude towards reconciliation that ultimately drives reconciliatory actions, the latter of which are typically taken at the institutional or governmental level. In line with Kelman (2006), and Nadler (2002), we defined reconciliatory attitudes as the desire to cease intergroup conflict by changing antagonistic relations into positive relations. To enable this transformation, disputing parties should replace mistrust with trust and negative with positive intergroup perceptions.

According to the NMBR, compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image heighten the perpetrating group’s support for reconciliation with the victim group (Shnabel et al., 2009). In support, Bilewicz and Jaworska (2013) found that Polish participants’ need for social acceptance was a positive predictor of their reconciliatory attitudes towards the historically
wronged Jewish people in Poland. Moreover, recent research conducted in Australia (Barlow et al., 2015) revealed how restoration of moral image, which stemmed from the victim group’s (i.e., Aboriginal Australians) acceptance of the perpetrator group’s (i.e., non-Aboriginal Australians) apology, resulted in increased support for reconciliation with the victim group. Mashuri et al. (2016) also observed that the needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image among members of the Javanese majority in Indonesia were positively linked to their reconciliatory attitudes towards separatist groups in Aceh and West-Papua.

The NMBR posits that morality threat contributes to the promotion of reconciliatory attitudes because of its effect on compensatory needs. Indeed, prior research on separatist conflict found that the relationship between morality threat and reconciliatory attitudes was mediated by compensatory needs (Mashuri et al., 2016). In contrast, moral licensing may obstruct positive intergroup relations by decreasing the compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image. We therefore predicted that morality threat would be positively associated with the majority’s compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image (*Hypothesis 3a*), that moral licensing would be negatively associated with these compensatory needs (*Hypothesis 3b*), and that the majority’s compensatory needs would mediate the role of morality threat and moral licensing in predicting reconciliatory attitudes (*Hypothesis 3c*).

Wohl et al. (2006) argued that self-categorising as part of a perpetrator group bears within it an acknowledgement of ingroup wrongdoings, which reduces negative perceptions of the victim group. Prior research showed that ingroup members who are willing to acknowledge their wrongful actions against another group (e.g., Čehajić et al., 2011) are more supportive of reparative actions. As such, perpetratorhood has been hailed as one of the pivotal pillars of intergroup reconciliation (Gilbert, 2011). Mazziotta et al. (2014) found that the need for social acceptance mediated the effect of perpetratorhood on reconciliatory stances (i.e., empathy and willingness to engage in intergroup contact). Extending this finding, we posit that the effect of perpetratorhood on reconciliatory attitudes passes via morality threat and compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image. We base our argument on the NBMR (Shnabel et al., 2009), which suggests that morality threat originates from past wrongdoings, and that it is associated with greater reconciliatory stances by fostering the compensatory needs. We thus predicted that perpetratorhood would be a positive predictor of reconciliatory attitudes (*Hypothesis 4a*), but this direct relationship would be mediated by morality threat and compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image (*Hypothesis 4b*).

**The Moderating role of perceived legitimacy: The case of West-Papua**

We collected data among Javanese participants, representing the most prototypical non-separatist group in Indonesia (Suryadinata, Arifin, & Ananta, 2003). Opposition to separatist demands evolves in part from the belief that the separatist group’s inclusion as part of the parent nation is legitimate and, put another way, that their demands for separation are illegitimate (Martinovic, Verkuyten, & Weesie, 2011). Reconciliation in separatist conflict thus requires the majority’s willingness to question the legitimacy of this integration, and/or to acknowledge the legitimacy of the separatist group’s desire for secession.

Wohl et al. (2006) argued that self-categorising as a member of a perpetrator group can foster support for reconciliation with the victim group, and this relationship is more pronounced when the perpetrator group judges its actions as more illegitimate. In support of this notion, Subašić and Reynolds (2009) found that non-Indigenous Australians demonstrated more positive attitudes towards political engagement in the reconciliation process with indigenous Australians, the more they perceived their advantaged status vis-à-vis indigenous Australians as illegitimate.
Applying these insights to the context of our research, we proposed that the effect of perpetratorhood on reconciliatory attitudes would be moderated by the perceived legitimacy of the initial integration of the separatist group, as well as by the perceived legitimacy of the separatist group’s demands for secession. That is, we predicted that the positive association between perpetratorhood and reconciliatory attitudes would be weaker to the extent that the original integration of the separatist group was seen as more legitimate (Hypothesis 5a). We also predicted that the positive association between perpetratorhood and reconciliatory attitudes would be stronger to the extent that the separatist group’s claims of secession were seen as more legitimate (Hypothesis 5b).

**Method**

**Participants and Design.** Participants were 502 Javanese undergraduate students from universities in Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java, Indonesia (343 women, 157 men, 2 participants did not self-report their gender; $M_{age} = 20.06$, $SD_{age} = 1.58$). Taking part in the study in return for a small fee, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: wrongdoings ($n = 256$) or rightdoings ($n = 246$).¹

**Procedure and Measures.** A questionnaire comprising the study’s materials and questions was handed to participants in a classroom. On each of these questions, unless otherwise indicated, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with a statement on a five-point answering scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*).

Following informed consent, the questionnaire began with a table that listed the operational definition of important terminologies. This table was included to ensure that participants comprehended the meaning of the terminologies used in the questionnaire, such as ‘Indonesia’, ‘separatist conflict or separatism’. The next part was a series of questions that commenced with six items assessing *separation legitimacy* (e.g., “Indigenous West Papuans could legitimately claim to be independent from Indonesia”; $\alpha = .84$), and six items assessing *integration legitimacy* (e.g., “The Indonesian government could legitimately claim West Papua as part of the United Nation of Indonesia”; $\alpha = .89$). These two measures of perceived legitimacy were adapted from Weber, Mummendey, and Waldzus (2002).

To manipulate *ingroup action*, participants were presented with a list of five wrongful actions (wrongdoings condition) or five rightful actions (rightdoings condition) committed by their majority group in the treatment of the separatist group, and were informed that these actions were generated by Javanese students in an earlier survey. Existing literature (Doosje et al., 2006; Hornsey & Imani, 2004; Hornsey, Oppes, & Svensson, 2002) suggests that negative ingroup information is more readily accepted when it is believed to originate from an ingroup source. We selected these five wrongful and rightful actions on the basis of the results from a pilot study.² Participants were asked to indicate which two of these five actions were the most harmful (wrongdoings condition) or the most beneficial (rightdoings condition) for indigenous West Papuans. To assess the effectiveness of the manipulation, we presented participants with a single item of perceived harmfulness of the government’s treatment of indigenous West Papuans (i.e., “The actions listed in the previous section are harmful to indigenous Papuans”), and two items of perceived harmfulness of the government’s actions to the reputation of the majority group (for ease of interpretation referred to here as ‘non-Papuans’; i.e., “The actions listed in the previous section harm the image of the Indonesian government”; “The actions listed in the previous section taint the positive image of non-Papuans”; $r = .84$).

The next part of the questionnaire contained six items to assess *competitive victimhood* (e.g., “The separatist conflict makes other Indonesians more than West Papuans in West Papua suffer...
from physical violence”; α = .88) adapted from Andrighetto, Mari, Volpato, and Behluli (2012), as well as Shnabel, Halabi, and Noor (2013). Moral licensing was assessed with five items (e.g., “The Indonesian government has done enough to improve the indigenous West Papuans’ social and economic conditions, and does not need to continue helping the West Papuans in the future”; α = .83) developed by the authors.

Participants were then presented with five items assessing perceived distributive justice (e.g., “The wages of indigenous West Papuans are as valuable as the wages of other Indonesians in other parts of Indonesia”; α = .90), and five items assessing perceived procedural justice (e.g., “The Indonesian government treats West Papua the same as other regions in Indonesia”; α = .84), both adapted from Mashuri and van Leeuwen (2018). These two subscales of perceived justice of ingroup actions serve as the secondary check of the effectiveness of the manipulation.

Perpetratorhood was assessed with four items (e.g., “In the course of history, the Indonesian government has been the main perpetrator in harming indigenous Papuans”; α = .84), based on Zimmerman, Abrams, Doosje, and Manstead (2011). Morality threat was assessed with four items (e.g., “I fear that harmdoings by the Indonesian military against the indigenous West Papuans in West Papua impair the public image of other Indonesians as cordial, friendly, and helpful people”; α = .86) adopted from Mashuri et al. (2016). Need for social acceptance (e.g., “It is important for me that the indigenous West Papuans are willing to open their door for other Indonesians to befriend them”; α = .85) and need for restoration of moral image (e.g., “I would like to show indigenous West Papuans that other Indonesians are caring and considerate people”; α = .86) were each assessed with four items adopted from Mashuri et al. (2016). We combined both scales into a latent construct of compensatory needs. Intergroup trust was assessed with seven items (e.g., “Indigenous West Papuans generally have good intentions”; α = .86). Positive attitudes towards the separatist group were assessed with four items (e.g., “I enjoy interacting with indigenous West Papuans”; α = .83), as were positive stereotypes about this group (e.g., “Indigenous West Papuans are generous”; α = .90). Adapted from Mashuri and van Leeuwen (2018), these three measures were combined into a latent construct of reconciliatory attitudes. After assessing participants’ age, gender, and current domicile, they were paid, debriefed, and thanked.3

Results

Manipulation checks

Confirming the effectiveness of the manipulation, the perception that ingroup actions were harmful to indigenous West Papuans was significantly higher among participants in the wrongdoings condition (M = 3.95, SD = 1.04) than among those in the rightdoings condition (M = 1.94, SD = 1.01), t(500) = 21.943, p < .001, power = 1.00. In a similar vein, participants in the wrongdoings condition perceived that the ingroup actions were harmful to the image of the majority (M = 3.76, SD = 1.03) more than those in the rightdoings condition (M = 1.97, SD = .92), t(500) = 20.448, p < .001, power = 1.00. Moreover, participants in the wrongdoings condition reported significantly lower levels of both perceived distributive justice (M = 2.81, SD = 1.10) and procedural justice (M = 3.35, SD = .90) than those in the rightdoings condition (perceived distributive justice: M = 3.12, SD = 1.03, t(500) = -3.30, p = .001, power = .95; perceived procedural justice: M = 3.55, SD = .81, t(500) = -2.63, p = .009, power = .83). These findings indicate that participants in the wrongdoings condition, more than those in the rightdoings condition, viewed their ingroup’s actions as harmful and unjust.4

Hypotheses testing

The effect of the experimental manipulation ‘ingroup action’ on the dependent variables was examined through a series of independent samples t-tests, presented in Table 4.1. The results demonstrate that ingroup action significantly affected perpetratorhood and morality threat, but did
not significantly affect competitive victimhood, moral licensing, compensatory needs, and reconciliatory attitudes. Contrary to Hypothesis 1a, reported competitive victimhood in the wrongdoings condition was not significantly higher than in the rightdoings condition. However, in line with Hypothesis 1b, reported perpetratorhood in the wrongdoings condition was significantly higher than in the rightdoings condition.

Table 4.1
The Effect of Ingroup Action (Wrongdoings vs. Rightdoings) on the Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wrongdoings</th>
<th>Rightdoings</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Competitive victimhood</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perpetratorhood</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Moral licensing</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Morality threat</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Compensatory needs</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reconciliatory attitudes</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M = Mean. SD = Standard deviation. Compensatory needs and reconciliatory attitudes were calculated by averaging the items of their composite measures.

To test the remainder of the hypotheses (i.e., Hypothesis 2 to 6b), we analysed the data by means of structural equation modelling (SEM) using Mplus version 7.4. The goodness of fit of the hypothesised structural model and its relevant hypotheses was assessed with MLM, which is suitable to complete data that violate the assumption of multivariate normality (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015). We derived the structural model from item parcelling, given that we were more interested in the relations among the latent constructs within the model than in the relations among the items within the constructs (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). Following Little et al. (2002), item parcelling was to generate indicators of the latent constructs in the structural model. We created the item parcelling based on the dimensionality of the factor structure of each latent construct, which was produced from exploratory factor analysis using oblique rotation (Little et al., 2002). The item-to-construct balance was used for creating parcels of unidimensional constructs where the item with the highest factor-loading was joined with the item with the lowest factor-loading, the item with the second highest factor-loading was joined with the item with the second lowest factor loading, and so forth (Little et al., 2002). The domain-representative technique was used for creating parcels of multidimensional constructs where the first parcel consisted of the first item of all subscales, the second parcel consisted of the second item of all subscales, and so forth (Kishton & Widaman, 1994). As shown in Figure 4.1, the hypothesised structural model resulted in good fits to the data, RMSEA = .037, 90% CI [.026, .046], CFI = .98, TLI = .98 (for the criteria of the goodness of fit, see Hu & Bentler, 1999). Ingroup action did not significantly affect competitive victimhood, $\beta = -.01$, $SE = .04$, $p$
= .794, 95% CI [-.093, .071], but it did significantly increase a sense of perpetratorhood, β = .20, SE = .04, \( p < .001 \), 95% CI [.116, .284], power = .99. These findings are consistent with the \( t \)-test analyses presented in the previous.

![Figure 4.1](image)

**Figure 4.1.** The results of the hypothesised structural model. Numbers in the model are standardised path coefficients.

*Note.* **\( p < .01 \).*** **\( p < .001 \).**” = not significant.

Confirming Hypothesis 2a, perpetratorhood was a significant mediator of the relationship between ingroup action and morality threat, indirect effect: \( \beta = .08, SE = .02, p < .001, 95\% CI [.041, .119], power = .99 \). However, contradictory to Hypothesis 2b, competitive victimhood did not significantly mediate the effect of ingroup action on moral licensing, indirect effect: \( \beta = -.004, SE = .01, p = .794, 95\% CI [-.030, .023] \). Morality threat positively predicted compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image, \( \beta = .39, SE = .05, p < .001, 95\% CI [.287, .491], power = 1.00 \), in line with Hypothesis 3a, whereas moral licencing was negatively related to the compensatory needs, \( \beta = -.25, SE = .05, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.348, -.159], power = 1.00 \), corroborating Hypothesis 3b. Confirming Hypothesis 3c, the relationship between morality threat and reconciliatory attitudes was significantly mediated by compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image, indirect effect: \( \beta = .18, SE = .03, p < .001, 95\% CI [.125, .241], power = 1.00 \), as was the relationship between moral licensing and reconciliatory attitudes, indirect effect: \( \beta = -.12, SE = .03, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.169, -.070], power = 1.00 \).

Corroborating Hypothesis 4a, perpetratorhood was a positive predictor of reconciliatory attitudes, \( \beta = .16, SE = .05, p = .001, 95\% CI [.067, .246], power = .95 \). However, in support of Hypothesis 4b, this direct effect passed through morality threat and compensatory needs for social acceptance and restoration of moral image; indirect effect \( \beta = .07, SE = .02, p < .001, 95\% CI [.044, .102], power = .94 \). Moreover, we found that the role of perpetratorhood in predicting reconciliatory attitudes was also moderated by perceived integration legitimacy. As shown in Figure 4.2a, among participants who perceived the integration of West-Papua within the Republic of Indonesia as less legitimate, perpetratorhood had a clear positive relationship with reconciliatory attitudes, \( \beta = .27, SE = .07, p < .001, 95\% CI [.130, .401], power = .99 \). However, this effect disappeared among
participants who perceived the integration as legitimate, $\beta = .03, SE = .06, p = .566$, 95% CI [-.082, .149], Wald Test[1] = 7.195, $p = .007$. These findings therefore supported Hypothesis 5a.

Figure 4.2a. The moderating role of perceived integration legitimacy in the relationship between perpetratorhood and reconciliatory attitudes.

The relationship between perpetratorhood and reconciliatory attitudes was also moderated by perceived separation legitimacy. As shown in Figure 4.2b, the positive relationship between perpetratorhood and reconciliatory attitudes was significant among participants who perceived the separatist movement as legitimate, $\beta = .30, SE = .06, p < .001$, 95% CI [.175, .418], power = .99, but not significant among those who perceived the movement as less legitimate, $\beta = .02, SE = .07, p = .734$, 95% CI [-.110, .156], Wald Test[1] = 9.194, $p = .002$. These findings are in line with Hypothesis 5b.

---

6
Within the context of separatist conflict, this study is the first to make a distinction between the effects of an appeal to ingroup wrongdoings versus ingroup rightdoings in the investigation of conflict reconciliation. In separatist conflict, both parties tend to view themselves as victim rather than as perpetrator (Bookman, 1993). The problem with a mind-set that is focused on the own group’s rightdoings rather than wrongdoings in intergroup conflict is that one tends to view the own group as the more moral party and the other group as violent aggressor, which obstructs any attempts at conflict resolution (Schori-Eyal et al., 2014). Tapping into an active separatist conflict in Indonesia, we conducted a large study among members of the non-separatist majority group and found that a focus on ingroup wrongdoings, rather than rightdoings, ultimately generated more favourable attitudes towards reconciliation with the separatist region of West Papua through the promotion of a sense of perpetratorhood. Moreover, the more the original integration of West Papua into Indonesia was seen as illegitimate, and the more West Papuans’ call for separation was seen as legitimate, the stronger perceived perpetratorhood contributed to the promotion of reconciliation.

We found that participants in the wrongdoings condition reported more perpetratorhood, but not less competitive victimhood, than those in the rightdoings condition. We expected our manipulation to affect competitive victimhood because we implicitly assumed that perpetratorhood and victimhood are constructs that are negatively related. However, this may not be the case. Despite its dominance over the separatist group in terms of economic, political, and military powers (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2007), the majority may still feel more victimised than the separatist group (Staub, 2006). As a result, the majority can simultaneously feel perpetrator and victim, as was evidenced by our data where the two constructs were positively and significantly correlated (see Tables 2 and 3 in the supporting information).
Theoretical implications

Perpetratorhood in the current research directly predicted reconciliatory attitudes towards the separatist group. This finding resonates with literature on moral cleansing (Zhong & Liljenquist, 2006). The concept of moral cleansing describes how good deeds could be a medium through which people regain their morality (Monin & Miller, 2001). Harkrider et al. (2013) found that prior transgressions, particularly those that had caused serious harm to the victims, motivated participants to act prosocially in order to repair negative feelings of moral self-worth. Our own observation that the positive association between perpetratorhood and reconciliatory attitudes was more pronounced when the majority perceived integration of the separatist group within the parent nation as illegitimate (and the separatist movement as more legitimate) is in perfect accordance with this rationale. Integration illegitimacy and separation legitimacy arguably enhance the perceived severity of the separatist group's sufferings, which could motivate the majority to engage in moral cleansing by occupying a more reconciliatory stance in its conflict with the separatist group.

Whereas an appeal to ingroup wrongdoings could result in a general motivation to repair inflicted harm and restore intergroup relations (Iyer et al., 2007), people are exceedingly defensive when confronted with wrongful actions committed by their group (Rotella & Richeson, 2013). The challenge in such complicated situations of long-lasting intergroup conflict therefore is to overcome defensive barriers and ensure a genuine acknowledgement of ingroup wrongdoings. To this end, in the current research participants were reminded of ingroup wrongdoings by members of their own ingroup, as opposed to members of the outgroup (see Doosje et al., 2006; Zebel et al., 2009). As evidenced by the observation that participants in the wrongdoings condition judged their ingroup's actions as more harmful and less justified than participants in the rightdoings condition, participants in the current research indeed acknowledge these wrongdoings rather than deny or refute them. The acknowledgement of ingroup wrongdoings is an important precondition for the road to conflict reconciliation (Čehajić & Brown, 2010).

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The current study is not without limitations. First, the design did not include a neutral control condition. As a consequence, we do not know to what extent the effect of our experimental manipulation was driven by a focus on wrongdoings, or a focus on rightdoings. The correlational findings as presented in the path model do inform us of the separate roles that perpetratorhood and competitive victimhood, as well as morality threat, moral licensing, and compensatory needs play in predicting reconciliatory attitudes. However, to empirically ascertain whether these processes were triggered by a focus on ingroup wrongdoings, a focus on ingroup rightdoings, or both, future research should include a neutral control condition.

A control condition is also important to uncover possible distinct mechanisms by which a reminder of ingroup wrongdoings or a reminder of ingroup rightdoings affects competitive victimhood. A reminder of ingroup wrongdoings can motivate people to defend their group’s moral identity, which should increase their claims on competitive victimhood (Sullivan et al., 2012). A reminder of ingroup rightdoings, on the other hand, can instill a sense of power loss because it reminds group members of the compromises their ingroup was willing to make for the sake of the outgroup (Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006). Both mechanisms may operate simultaneously, increasing participants’ competitive victimhood through distinct processes. This could also explain why we did not observe a difference in competitive victimhood between the two experimental conditions. In addition to a control condition, future research could include a measure of participants’ need for power in order to shed more light on the possible mechanisms affecting competitive victimhood.
In the present work, we conceptualised competitive victimhood as a construct that stems from a focus on ingroup rightdoings. At first glance, this seems incongruent with previous work, which described competitive victimhood as something that is associated with innocent suffering (Gray & Wegner, 2009; Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe, & Rothschild, 2012). However, a reminder of ingroup rightdoings can make the majority feel that it has helped, and not harmed the separatist group. As a result, when reminded of its rightdoings, the majority is likely to feel innocent of the separatist group’s sufferings. A sense of innocence is strongly associated with claimed competitive victimhood (Gray & Wegner, 2009; Shnabel et al., 2009). The impact of ingroup rightdoings on competitive victimhood may thus pass through feelings of innocence—a notion that can be examined in future studies.

Reconiliatory attitudes, as assessed in the present research, are a pivotal antecedent of durable and stable peace (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004), but they are not the sole basis for intergroup reconciliation. Conflict reconciliation also involves specific emotions such as collective guilt or shame that reflect the disputing parties’ acceptance of responsibility for their wrongdoings (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008). Reconciliation further requires action through the removal of structural barriers that maintain unequal treatment of the victim group (Rouhana, 2014), e.g. through affirmative action policies (Pratkanis & Turner, 1996), or an official apology (Kelman, 2004). However, these reparative actions are commonly executed by the government and other formal institutions, rather than by separate individuals. It is therefore important for future studies to assess the extent to which the government is committed to implement programs aimed to promote equality and empowerment for the separatist group.

Perpetratorhood connotes an acknowledgement that ingroup actions have harmed another group (Wohl et al., 2006). In that sense, perpetratorhood bears resemblance to collective guilt, which have also been described as signifying acceptance of ingroup wrongdoings (for a review, see Ferguson & Branscombe, 2014). However, we argue that perpetratorhood as assessed in the current research is conceptually distinct from collective guilt. A sense of perpetratorhood can exist without feelings of guilt, shame, or regret. Indeed, existing literature (Hartmann, Toz, & Brandon, 2010; Wohl et al., 2006) suggests that perpetratorhood is distinct from collective guilt to the extent that perpetrators view their wrongdoings as justifiable. This implies that, particularly when the ingroup views its actions as legitimate, perpetratorhood is unrelated to collective guilt. Future studies could examine the relationship between perpetratorhood and collective guilt in the context of separatist conflict in more detail.

The current research focused on the perspective of the majority group in separatist conflict. We did so because the majority, as the more powerful party, is commonly expected to initiate reconciliation (Satha-Anand, 2016). However, to fully understand conciliation in separatist conflict, we need to have a thorough understanding not only of the perspective of the majority but also of that of the separatist group. Attempts at reconciliation can backfire and exacerbate the conflict, unless specific needs of the perpetrating group and the victim group are properly addressed (Shnabel et al., 2009). As specified within the NMBR (Shnabel et al., 2009), the perpetrating group expects that its wrongdoings are forgiven by the victim group (Wohl, Hornsey, & Bennett, 2012). The victim group expects that the perpetrating group acknowledges its wrongdoings (e.g., Nadler & Liviatan, 2006). The NBMR posits that an acknowledgment of wrongdoings by the perpetrating group is instrumental in helping the victim group regain a sense of empowerment. Once its need for empowerment is satisfied, the victim group is more willing to reconcile with the perpetrating group (Shnabel et al., 2009; Shnabel, Nadler, & Dovidio, 2014). Future research among the separatist group
could investigate to what extent empowerment of its needs fosters this group’s support for reconciliation.

**Practical implications**

Considering the effect of being reminded of ingroup wrongdoings on reconciliatory attitudes, we focus our discussion of the practical implications on how to devise an intervention program that can effectively increase the majority’s awareness and acknowledgement of their harmful actions against the separatist group, without raising defensive barriers. This acknowledgment, in line with a key preposition of the NBMR (Shnabel et al., 2009), could meet the victim group’s need to restore its threatened sense of empowerment. We propose that intervention programs zoom in on how to persuade the majority to acknowledge its past transgressions against the separatist group. This acceptance of ingroup harm may increase the extent to which the majority feels morally inferior to the separatist group. This perceived threat to ingroup morality was previously found to significantly contribute to the majority’s support for reconciling with the separatist group (Mashuri et al., 2016). In doing so, we suggest that intervention programs adopt a combination of a top-down and bottom-up approach (Staub, 2006; 2008), also known as a ‘hybrid approach’ (Mac Ginty, 2010). The goal of this approach is to promote reconciliation within society at large - not just among specific parties involved in politics or the negotiation process. In the lens of such an approach, people should be made aware of, and ultimately acknowledge their group's wrongdoings through multifarious channels, which could include mass media such as radio, television, or film. These channels may also take the form of training programs, and of academic disseminations such as lectures, seminars, and conferences. Importantly, these messages should be communicated by the ingroup rather than the outgroup or third party, in order to enhance acceptance of the message and, ultimately, increase the effectiveness of the intervention program.
Footnotes
1. We eliminated four participants from the analyses for not complying with instructions to list wrongful actions or rightful actions.
2. Javanese students were randomly assigned to either a wrongdoings condition \((n = 32)\) or a rightdoings condition \((n = 34)\), and were asked to list at least five actions by the Indonesian government they considered harmful (wrongdoings condition) or beneficial (rightdoings condition) to indigenous West Papuans. Based on the results from this pilot, we selected five harmful actions (economic underdevelopment, socio-cultural and political injustice, militaristic approach, exploitation of natural resources, and human resource underdevelopment) and five beneficial actions (modernization, special autonomy, socio-political stability, affirmative programs, and tourism) for our study materials.
3. We also assessed national attachment (eight items; \(\alpha = .89\)), national glorification (eight items; \(\alpha = .73\)), ethnic attachment (eight items; \(\alpha = .93\)), and ethnic glorification (eight items; \(\alpha = .84\)). The data are available upon request.
4. In these \(t\)-test analyses, we used G*Power 3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) to calculate power. In the structural model, power was derived from Monte Carlo simulation using Mplus version 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2015), with 10,000 replications.
5. Following Sterba and MacCallum (2010), we compared our parcelling models with eight alternative parcelling models. Our parcelling models (see the label ‘Model 1’ under Table 4.4 in the supporting information) were consistent with the other eight parcelling models and, more importantly, with the average models assessing either the structural parameters (see Table 4.4 in the supporting information) or the moderation effects (see Table 4.5 in the supporting information).
6. Following Iacobucci et al. (2015), integration legitimacy and separation legitimacy were dichotomised into high (above the Median) and low (below the Median) for the moderation analysis. To inspect the assumption of measurement invariance for each of the moderators, two models were compared, with the first freeing all parameters across the two categories and the second equalling factor loadings across the two categories. Measurement invariance holds true when the \(\Delta\text{CFI}\) between the first model and the second model is less than .01 (Wang & Wang, 2012). For integration legitimacy, the CFI of the first model was .974, whereas the CFI of the second model was .975 (\(\Delta\text{CFI} = .001\)). For separation legitimacy, the CFI of the first model was .979, whereas the CFI of the second model was .973 (\(\Delta\text{CFI} = .006\)).