J.M. LEUNISSEN

All Apologies

On the Willingness
of Perpetrators to Apologize

All Apologies
On the willingness of perpetrators to apologize

All Apologies

On the willingness of perpetrators to apologize

Vele verontschuldigingen
Over de bereidheid van daders om zich te verontschuldigen

Thesis

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Josephus Matheus Leunissen
born in Haarlem, The Netherlands

ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM

Doctoral Committee

Promotor:	Prof.dr. D. De Cremer
Other members:	Dr. S. Giessner
	Prof.dr. L.C.P.M. Meijs
	Prof.dr. S.P. Kaptein
Copromotor:	Dr. M. van Dijke

"I understand procedure, I understand war, I understand rules and regulations. I don't understand sorry. I don't really know what sorry means."

Charles Manson
Backporch Tapes Collections, 1969

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CHAPTER 1

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

An natural consequence of humans living and working together in groups is that conflicts are bound to happen (De Waal, 1996). When a conflict occurs, the parties involved in the conflict have basically two options: discontinue the relationship or reconcile (De Waal, 1996). Because discontinuing the relationship is often impractical or undesirable, it is important for the parties involved in the conflict to reconcile.

Although scholars have given substantial attention to the causes and consequences of conflict, relatively little research has been conducted on the aftermath of conflict: the reconciliation phase (Kim, Dirks, & Cooper, 2009; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). This is unfortunate because as conflicts are such a ubiquitous part of social life, it is important to understand how they can be reconciled. One important tool that people have at their disposal to initiate the reconciliation process is to apologize. Indeed, apologies form an important part of everyday social interactions and are proven to be effective in achieving forgiveness and reconciliation (e.g. McCullough et al. 1997; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989). Although people have a number of strategies that they can pursue to initiate reconciliation (e.g. apologies, financial compensations, justifications, etc.), apologies provide some unique characteristics that make them highly valuable. This is best exemplified by the notion that some transgressions can only be repaired by offering an apology (Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986; Tavuchis, 1991). These are the transgressions in which social norms have been broken, expectations of others have not been met and trust has been damaged. These transgressions are characterized by feelings of injustice but also by a lack of clear monetary/material damage, and often it is impossible to somehow (materially) correct the past (Tavuchis, 1991). Once an insult has been issued, it cannot be undone. After such transgressions, an apology is basically the only instrument that a perpetrator has to take responsibility for their past behavior and to repair the damage to the relationship with the victim (although this does not mean that apologies are unimportant when monetary damage has been done; De Cremer, 2010; Haesevoets, Reinders Folmer, De Cremer, & Van Hiel, 2013). Indeed, other relational repair strategies used after these types of transgressions may be highly inappropriate, even insulting, as for instance offering your spouse a financial compensation after cheating on him/her.

Given that apologies are such an important tool to establish reconciliation, it is important to understand when apologies elicit positive and negative effects on the relationship between victim and perpetrator, but also when apologies are actually delivered. Most research today has examined the psychological effectiveness of apologies on the victim. Specifically, this research has investigated whether apologies are effective in helping to reconcile a broken relationship and under what circumstances apologies are effective.

In contrast to the body of literature on the effects of apologies on victims, little research has focused on the person offering the apology, namely the perpetrator. This is surprising given the fact that apologies can only elicit their positive effects when they are actually delivered. As such, it is important to examine more closely when are perpetrators willing to apologize and when not. Given the lack of research on the person who apologizes, anything is known about this. In this thesis, I report four lines of research aimed at getting a better understanding on when perpetrators are willing to apologize.

1.1 Apologies: A definition

An apology is a type of social account. A social account is defined as 'a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior - whether that behavior is his own or that of others, and whether the proximate cause for the statement arises from the actor himself or from someone else' (Scott & Lyman, 1968). An apology is a social account that both entails taking responsibility for a past offense and fully admitting that that behavior was wrong (unjustifiable and inexcusable). More formally, an apology is generally defined as a combined statement of remorse about a past course of action and an admission of responsibility for that transgression (Lazare 2004; Smith 2008; Tavuchis 1991). Empirical research has also shown that these two components are the indeed most important predictors of an effective apology (Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Förster, & Montada, 2004). Moreover, what follows from these two components is that an apology is an implicit promise that the transgression will not be repeated in the future (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004). This follows from the fact that when a perpetrator expresses true remorse about a past course of action, the perpetrator acknowledges that the behavior should not have occurred and should not occur in the future.

Indeed, it is this combination of account components that sets an apology apart from other social accounts of past wrongdoing, such as denials, justifications and excuses (Scott, 1968). For instance, a denial is an account in which one denies that one has displayed certain behavior. An excuse is a social in account in which responsibility for certain behavior is attributed to an external factor (being late due to a traffic jam; one thus does not take full responsibility for past behavior such as in an apology). A justification is a social account in which certain inappropriate behavior is justified due to circumstances (killing someone due to self-defense; thus no true remorse is communicated as in an apology). An apology is the only social account in which both responsibility and the wrongness of the behavior is acknowledged.

1.2 The effects of apologies on victims

Most research to date on apologies has taken a victim perspective. This research has investigated whether apologies are effective, and under what circumstances they are effective, in fostering forgiveness, addressing feelings of injustice, and helping to reconcile a broken relationship. As such, this research has focused on the effects that apologies have on their recipients, namely the victim of a transgression. Early research on apologies has investigated whether they are indeed effective in managing conflict. A wealth of research supports the notion that apologies indeed are effective in this role. For instance, apologies help reduce anger in victims (Ohbuchi, et al., 1989) and promote forgiveness and constructive behavior (e.g. cooperative behavior in mixed motive settings) of the victim towards the perpetrator (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Bottom et al., 2002; McCullough, 1997).

Although generally it has been found that apologies are effective, researchers have begun to investigate under what circumstances they are most likely to be effective. Investigations have zoomed in on the characteristics of the apologizer showing that apologies are, for example, particularly effective when they are communicated by a respectful authority (De Cremer & Schouten, 2008, see also Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004). These effects were driven by the perception that an apology was more sincere and meaningful when they are communicated by a respectful authority. The positive role of sincerity in an apology's effectiveness is also demonstrated by means of research on ex ante apologies (i.e. apologizing for a transgression that is about to happen; Skarlicki, Folger, & Gee, 2004). These types of apologies are perceived as manipulative, rather than sincere, thereby actually decreasing constructive behavior towards the perpetrator.

Although sincerity is an important prerequisite of an effective apology, the acceptance of an apology is also shaped by intrapsychological biases and normative expectations. In a series of studies conducted by Risen and Gilovich (2007; later replicated by Jehle, 2012) sincere and insincere apologies, operationalized as voluntary and forced apologies, were investigated. These researchers found that forced apologies were in fact effective but only on a victim; a third-person bystander did make a difference between a forced and voluntary apology interpreting a forced apology as insincere. The reason that forced apologies did have a positive effect on victims (but not on a bystander) was that victims, compared to bystanders, had a strong motivation to be seen positively by others. Furthermore, normative constraints concerning the acceptance of apologies also had a stronger influence on victims to accept a forced apology, compared to a bystander (see also Bennett & Earwaker, 1994). As such, although sincerity of an apology is an important component, intrapsychological biases and normative expectations regarding apologies interact with this.

An important stream of research on the effectiveness of apologies has investigated after which types of transgressions an apology has a positive (i.e. trust restoring) effect.

Research by Kim and colleagues, comparing apologies with denials, has made a distinction between integrity and competence based transgressions (Ferrin, Kim, Cooper, & Dirks, 2007; Kim et al., 2004). The differing effects of apologies and denials after competence and integrity based transgressions are explained by how we make dispositional inferences about a perpetrator's level of competence and integrity (Reeder & Brewer, 1979). In the domain of competence, negative information has little influence on dispositional inferences while positive information does have influence. However, in the domain of integrity, negative information has a strong effect on disposition inferences on integrity while positive information has relatively little.

As such admitting to a competence based wrongdoing has relatively little influence on how we judge a perpetrators competence. And admittance in the form of an apology, in combination with an implicit promise of forbearance on future transgressions, leads to trust repair (compared to a denial which does not have this implicit promise of forbearance). Because admitting to an integrity based wrongdoing has a strong effect on inferences on a perpetrator's level of integrity, apologies do not work to repair trust after integrity based transgression, while denials do because then no inference about a perpetrators level of integrity is made.

Violations of competence and integrity are one way to categorize transgressions. A different stream of research has investigated the effectiveness of apologies in relation to the intentionality of the transgression, comparing intentional to unintentional transgressions. Research by Struthers and colleagues (2008) replicate this effect: apologies elicit less forgiveness and create less positive impressions of the perpetrator after intentional compared to unintentional transgressions (see also Leunissen, De Cremer, Reinders Folmer, & Van Dijke, 2013). The process that underlies this effect is that an apology for an intentional transgression lowers a victim's impression of a perpetrator (in term of benevolence and whether they could count on the transgressor). This is in line with the findings by Kim and colleagues that taking responsibility for intentional/integrity transgressions leads to strong dispositional inferences about the perpetrator. A closer look at the manipulations regarding competence and integrity based transgressions reveal that competence based transgression are mainly unintentional (breaking rules due to a lack of knowledge) while integrity based transgressions are generally intentional (i.e. knowingly breaking rules). Moreover, the relationship between intentionality and apology effectiveness can also be explained be the role that the sincerity of the apology plays in this. As previously explained, insincere apologies are perceived as manipulative and as such less effective (e.g. Skarlicki, et al., 2004). Immediately apologizing after an intentional transgression can be perceived as insincere. The reason that in these circumstances an apology might be perceived as insincere is that by apologizing one acknowledges that a transgression should not have taken place. Indeed, this statement can contrast sharply with the intentionality of the transgression.

As can be seen, there is a number of reasons that make apologies more or less effective in eliciting forgiveness and restoring cooperative behavior towards the

perpetrator. The intentionality of the transgression plays an important role in this. Apologies are generally more effective after unintentional than after intentional transgressions. The effectiveness is also driven by how the victim perceives the apologizer. Is his/her apology sincere or insincere? Apologies are more effective when they are perceived as sincere.

1.3 The willingness of perpetrators to apologize

Given the fairly large literature on the effects of apologies on victims, it is rather surprising to see how little attention has been given to the perpetrator perspective. Off course, victims play an important role in the reconciliation process because they ultimately decide to forgive or not and to continue in a relationship. However, it is often the perpetrator who (is at least expected to) initiate the reconciliation process. It is therefore not enough to know under what circumstances victims are willing to forgive, we also need to know under what circumstances perpetrators are willing to initiate reconciliation. As said before, apologies provide an important means for perpetrators to initiate reconciliation, as such knowing when perpetrators are willing to apologize provides us with important knowledge on the reconciliation process.

Only a handful of papers has devoted attention to this perspective before my PhD project started in 2009. One of the first was a paper by Schlenker and Darby (1981). Using a scenario methodology, they manipulated both the responsibility for a transgression (bumping into someone due to not paying attention or due to being pushed by someone else) and the amount of harm done as a result of the transgression. They showed that as both the magnitude of the negative consequences and responsibility for a transgression increased, so did the elaborateness of a perpetrator's apology.

In 2007, Exline and colleagues (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007) published a paper in which they investigated both situational factors predicting apologies and feelings of regret over apologies and non-apologies issued by a perpetrator. They investigated a number of personal and situational characteristics that are associated with apologies. They find that perpetrators in general felt more regret over times when they did not apologize than over apologies that they had given. Moreover, regret about apologizing was associated with different causes than regret over non-apologies. Regret over apologies were associated with negative relational outcomes (i.e. the apology did not lead to reconciliation), anger and an incorrect image of innocence of the perpetrator (the perpetrator did not truly believe that he/she was the perpetrator in this conflict while apologizing does suggest this). Regret over non-apologies were associated with remorse and continued feelings of guilt.

In 2008, Shnabel and Nadler published a paper on the need-based model of reconciliation. Although not on apologizing per se, this model states that transgressions deprive both victims and perpetrators of certain psychological needs that should be

addressed in order for reconciliation to take place. They claim and show that a transgression threatens a perpetrator's standing in the (moral) community. Perpetrators may fear social exclusion, threatening their need to belong (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Apologizing is a way for a perpetrator to restore their standing in the relationship with the victim. Although the needs-based model was originally tested in an interpersonal conflict context, it has been mainly applied to the intergroup context since it was published (e.g. Shnabel et al., 2009).

In 2011, a paper on the 'disposition to apologize' was published (Howell, Dopko, Turowski, & Buro, 2011). This paper presents a measure for the disposition to apologize: an individual difference variable that describes how easily people apologize.

As can be seen from the rather short review on the perpetrator perspective of apologizing, this perspective has received much less attention than the victim perspective. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that insights into the perpetrator's willingness to apologize are important because it provides knowledge on when conflicts are likely to be reconciled and when it is unlikely that they will be reconciled.

1.4 Overview of the present dissertation

The psychology behind a perpetrator's willingness to apologize remains largely unexplored. With this dissertation I aim at furthering our understanding of this. Concerning the empirical investigations itself, I have investigated different domains of a transgression that are likely to have an influence on the subsequent willingness of perpetrators to apologize. These domains entail the victim's reaction to the transgression, the cause of the transgression, the relationship between the perpetrator and victim, and finally, the construal of the act of apologizing itself.

In Chapter 2, I investigate how the reaction of a victim to a transgression shapes the perpetrator's willingness to apologize. Here, I propose that apologizing is a risky strategy for a perpetrator. Risky in the sense that an apology may or may not be accepted by the victim. If the apology is accepted, it can lead to forgiveness. But when the apology is not accepted, apologizing may have aversive consequences for the perpetrator. That is, the perpetrator may be worse off by apologizing because by doing so, he/she has accepted blame for the event, which may evoke a host of aversive social consequences (e.g. humiliation and/or punishment) that would not have occurred if they had not accepted blame by apologizing. Therefore, the willingness to apologize may be contingent on whether a perpetrator believes that an apology may elicit its intended effects, namely forgiveness. Moreover, because a perpetrator has to trust the victim that an apology will be reciprocated with forgiveness, I also hypothesized that a perpetrator's dispositional trust moderates the effect of a victim's reaction on a transgression on a perpetrator's willingness to apologize. In order to test these hypotheses, I designed a novel experimental paradigm that elicits a transgression in a lab setting.

In Chapter 3, I investigate different types of transgressions. To supplement the body of research on intentionality and apology effectiveness on a victim, I investigated how intentionality affects the willingness of a perpetrator to apologize. I hypothesized that the intentionality of a transgression influences emotions both within a victim and a perpetrator that are important predictors for whether a perpetrator wants to offer an apology, and a victim desires to receive an apology. I predicted that unintentional transgressions, compared to intentional transgressions, cause more feelings of guilt in a perpetrator, and guilt in turn positively influences the willingness of a perpetrator to apologize. For victims, I expected that intentional, rather than unintentional, transgressions cause more feelings of anger about the transgression, and that anger in turn positively influences the victim's desire for an apology. Because intentionality influences the emotions of guilt and anger in victims and perpetrators in opposite ways, I expected a mismatch between a perpetrator's willingness to apologize and a victim's desire to receive an apology. Perpetrators are mainly willing to offer an apology after unintentional transgressions, while victims do not desire an apology much after unintentional transgressions. In contrast, when victims particularly want an apology, after intentional transgressions, I expected that perpetrators are actually unwilling to apologize. Apart from studying intentionality as an important predictor for emotions and subsequent willingness to provide or receive an apology, this design thus allowed me to compare the willingness of a perpetrator to give an apology and the desire of a victim to receive one after the same types of transgressions.

In Chapter 4, I zoomed in on how the relationship between perpetrator and victim influences the willingness of a perpetrator to apologize. Here, I advance the argument that an important reason for perpetrators to apologize is to maintain relationships that are valuable to them. As such, perpetrators should be more motivated to apologize when they transgress in a valuable relationship. Relational closeness is an important indicator of such valuable relationships. As such, I expected that perpetrators would be more willing to apologize when they transgress against a close other compared to a more distant other. I also continue to build on chapter 3 by investigating the role that guilt plays in this willingness to apologize. Because guilt is an emotion that motivates relationship restoring action, I expected that feelings of guilt mediate the effect of relational closeness on apology behavior.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I took a closer look at an important intrapersonal process associated with apologizing. The first 3 empirical chapters all focus on interpersonal processes that lead to more or less apologies. In this chapter I aimed at investigating another reason that perpetrators do not want to apologize. Specifically, in this chapter we investigated how the construal of an apology affects a perpetrators willingness to apologize. Based on the affective forecasting literature, I predicted that perpetrators might overestimate the experienced aversiveness of an apology when delivering one. As such, I predicted that the predicted aversiveness of apologizing is higher than the actually experienced avesiveness when actually apologizing. Because people's decision to engage

in certain behavior is often influenced by how people construe that behavior, I expected that this forecasting error regarding the aversiveness of an apology influencing the willingness of perpetrators to apologize.

In Chapter 6, I integrate all these findings. I also discuss implications and conclusion for research on apologies and reconciliation. Moreover, I provide an integrative theoretical framework and suggestions for future research. It is worth noting that chapters 2 to 5 are based on papers that have been published or submitted for publication. As such, these chapters can be read separately but at the same time will also show some overlap between the different chapters.

CHAPTER 2

2. AN INSTRUMENTAL PERSPECTIVE ON APOLOGIZING IN BARGAINING: THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS TO APOLOGIZE[1]

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Bargaining is a breeding ground for unfair allocations. Due to the highly interdependent nature of bargaining situations, there is a conflict between self-interest and the bargaining partner's interest (Komorita & Parks, 1996). One important guide that people use to balance the conflicting interests in these types of bargaining situations is the equality norm. This norm beholds that all bargaining parties receive an equal share of the commodity that is to be divided (Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006). This fairness rule implies that people do not only care about their own outcomes in bargaining, but also value the outcomes of others (Blount, 1995; Loewenstein, Thompson, & Bazerman, 1989). Breaking the equality norm is not only considered to be unfair and undesirable when one receives less than the other party; receiving more is generally considered to be undesirable too (Blount, 1995; Dana, Cain, & Dawes, 2006; Loewenstein et al., 1989).

People use the equality norm as a guide in bargaining settings. A guide, not only for their own behavior, but also to base their expectations on of what others will do. In other words, people expect their bargaining partner to adhere to the equality norm as well (Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006). For this reason, violating the equality norm does not only lead to perceptions of unfairness but also to a decrease in trust (Desmet, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2011). Trust is defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, p. 395). Based on this definition, it follows that trust can be violated after deviation from the equality norm because this deviation violates the positive expectations of the victim that the other party will act in line with the equality rule. Research indeed suggest that people are aversive towards such an equality violation as people have been shown to make costly choices in order not to violate fairness norms (Dana, Cain, & Dawes, 2006).

After a trust violation, perpetrators can feel motivated to reconcile with the victim. Reconciliation can be valuable to the perpetrator because successful reconciliation leads to a continuation of a cooperative relationship with the victim. Despite the importance of this reconciliation process, research on bargaining has devoted almost no attention to examining the aftermath of unfair offers (De Cremer, 2010). Rather, most studies have examined how trust develops or how it plays a role in maintaining cooperation. As such, hardly any studies – at least to our knowledge - have looked at how

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[1] This chapter is based on Leunissen, De Cremer, & Reinders Folmer (2012).

violated trust can be repaired. In fact ever since Elangovan and Shapiro (1998, p. 548) noted at the end of the nineties that, "research on the violation of trust has significantly lagged behind interest in the phenomenon of trust", more recent articles have articulated that despite the need to focus on this topic "surprisingly few studies have directly examined how trust may be repaired" (Kim, Dirks, Cooper, & Ferrin, 2006, p. 50). Because trust is considered to be one of the most essential lubricants of our social and economic exchanges (Fukuyama, 1995; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Kramer, 1999), it is important for research to address the kind of actions that are required for reconciliation efforts to succeed.

One important reconciliation tool, available to the perpetrator, is an apology. Apologies address the experienced injustice of the victim (Bottom, Daniels, Gibson, & Murnighan, 2002; Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989). An apology is a combined statement of both and admission of wrongdoing and regret for the violation (Lazare, 2004; Kim, et al., 2009). Apologies directly address the violated positive expectations (i.e. trust) of the victim by implicitly promising that the transgression will not be repeated and thus suggesting that the perpetrator is worthy of being trusted again (Kim et al., 2009).

Research outside the bargaining literature has revealed evidence that relationships can be reconciled more effectively if an apology is given and thereby responsibility for the trust violation is acknowledged (De Cremer & Schouten, 2008; Kim et al., 2004; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004). To date, only a few published studies have addressed whether the specific use of apologies has an effect within more economically-based exchanges such as social dilemmas and ultimatum bargaining games (see Bottom, Daniels, Gibson, & Murnighan, 2002; De Cremer, 2010; De Cremer, van Dijk, & Pillutla, 2010; for an interesting field study, see Cohen, 1999). These studies did indeed reveal that apologizing for unfair allocations led to increased cooperation and higher future trust behavior.

What all these studies have in common is that they adopted the perspective of the victim. That is, these studies examined whether and when apologies delivered by the perpetrator have a positive effect on the party suffering from the trust violation. This approach is a first good step towards identifying the important value of apologies in the reconciliation process (De Cremer, Pillutla, & Reinders Folmer, 2011). The most important step, however, is to examine whether or not perpetrators are *willing* to apologize, and when they are most likely to do so. This perpetrator perspective is virtually lacking in the literature and particularly so in the bargaining literature. Consequently, we know very little about whether perpetrators are actually willing to make use of an apology when resources are allocated in unfair ways. Because reconciliation of relationships is a bi-directional issue, only knowing whether victims desire an apology is of limited value. Therefore, we need to promote our insights into the motives that make perpetrators apologize.

In the present paper, we adopt the perspective of the perpetrator. We study under which conditions perpetrators choose to apologize to the victim. We examine apologizing as a behavior in the context of a modified trust game in which the second party (the one receiving the tripled money send by party 1) violates the fairness norm of equality and thus hampers the trust of the first party. In predicting whether perpetrators would apologize or not, we adopt an *instrumental* perspective, meaning that the choice to apologize by the perpetrator will be motivated by the likelihood that an apology will elicit its intended effect. The effect that we assume that perpetrators strive for when apologizing is to be forgiven by the victim. We consider this approach to be instrumental because the decision to apologize or not becomes conditional on the likelihood of whether the victim will forgive or not.

2.1.1 Apologies: An instrumental perspective

We propose that an important reason to apologize is to restore the relationship with the victim, which usually implies that the perpetrator will be *forgiven*. The desire for forgiveness has been identified as an important motive to initiate the reconciliation process (Schnabel & Nadler, 2008). After a transgression, a perpetrator may feel moral inferiority, guilt, or shame. These feelings can lead to an intrinsic motivation to be forgiven by the victim (Schnabel & Nadler, 2008). Indeed, the motive to be forgiven becomes even more important if the perpetrator wants to continue a cooperative relationship with the victim (Bottom et al., 2002).

It is important to note, however, that while achieving reconciliation may be desirable, perpetrators also take a substantial social risk by apologizing. By apologizing, perpetrators accept blame for their actions (Kim et al., 2009). Hence, perpetrators risk a host of aversive social consequences - like rejection, humiliation and punishment - that would not be the case if they had not accepted blame by apologizing (Exline et al., 2007). An instrumental motivation perspective therefore suggests that perpetrators will be careful to apologize and become strategic when it comes down to apologizing. That is, the decision to apologize by the perpetrator will be conditional on the likelihood that victims are willing to forgive that perpetrator.

Based on this instrumental perspective, it thus stands to reason that perpetrators will be less willing to apologize when the victim seems unforgiving than when the victim seems forgiving. In this case, the decision to apologize should be driven by perceptions of the perpetrator that the victim is indeed willing to restore the relationship. This line of reasoning therefore suggests that when the victim seems forgiving, perpetrators should reason that an apology on their behalf will be instrumental in restoring trust in the relationship. When the victim does not seem forgiving, perpetrators should perceive the delivery of an apology to be less instrumental in achieving reconciliation. As such, expectations that an apology will restore the relationship with the victim should underlie

the relationship between perceived forgiveness of the victim and apologizing behavior of the perpetrator.

2.1.2 Perpetrator's trust moderating the instrumental approach

Will perpetrators, however, always employ such an instrumental kind of thinking towards apologizing? We argue that whether perpetrators will let their decision to apologize be influenced by the likelihood of whether the victim is motivated to forgive or not, be depend on their level of dispositional trust. The extent to which people differ in dispositional trust is directly related to how people approach interpersonal behaviors in more versus less instrumental ways. We believe there is good reason to expect that particularly low trusters will adjust their apologetic behavior as a function of the perceived likelihood to be forgiven.

One important reason for this hypothesis is that low trusters, in contrast to high trusters, tend to harbor less positive impressions of others, require more reassurance before cooperating, and are less inclined to believe that cooperation will be reciprocated (Tazelaar, Van Lange, & Ouwerkerk, 2004). High trusters are open towards others and more willing to take initial risks. High trusters tend to harbor benign impressions of others, tend to display more immediate cooperation, and are more likely to believe that cooperation will be reciprocated (De Cremer, Snyder, & Dewitte, 2001 ; Tazelaar et al., 2004). As such, high trusters' will initially be more willing to give the benefit of the doubt towards their interaction partner and show more socially risky behavior (Stouten, De Cremer, & van Dijk, 2006). Therefore, high trusters will be more willing to take the risks associated with apologizing while low trusters are less inclined to do this. As such, low trusters can be considered as more strategic in assessing whether an apology will be responded to favorably and will thus apologize more easily if forgiveness is likely to be given (De Cremer et al., 2001; Tazelaar et al., 2004).

To summarize, we predict that low trusters will be particularly influenced in their apologizing behavior by perceptions of the victims' inclination to forgive, while high trusters will be less influenced by the perceived forgiving intentions of the victim (Hypothesis 1). Furthermore, we predict that expectations that an apology will restore the relationship with the victim will mediate the interactive relationship between perceived forgiveness of the victim and perpetrators' dispositional level of trust on apologizing behavior (Hypothesis 2).

2.1.3 The Present Research

To test our hypotheses in a controlled manner, we conducted an experimental lab study to investigate actual apologetic behavior. To date, the small number of studies examining the delivery of apologies relied primarily on recall tasks or imagined scenario settings (Meijer, 1998). At least to our knowledge, research has not tested *actual* apologetic behavior. The use of scenarios and free recall tasks is an important first step in understanding apologetic behavior of perpetrator. However, because behavioral intentions and *actual* behavior do not always correspond, it is necessary to test our predictions with respect to actual apologetic behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977).

Therefore, in our study, we designed a novel paradigm in which participants were induced to commit a transgression against another participant, upon which they were given the opportunity to apologize to the victim. Specifically, to make participants commit a transgression, we modified a standard trust game (Berg, Dickhaut, & McCabe, 1995). The trust game is a coordination game in which players can increase their earnings by trusting each other, at the risk of being exploited. In this game, Player 1 starts with an initial endowment and can decide to transfer any part of his/her endowment to Player 2. Whatever Player 1 transfers to Player 2 is tripled. Subsequently, Player 2 has to decide how much of the tripled sum he/she wants to return to Player 1. Thus, the more Player 1 trusts Player 2 to return a fair amount, the more likely Player 1 will be to transfer his/her endowments. We modified this game to induce unfair behavior by the participant, who was allocated to the Player 2 position. We did this by creating uncertainty about the original endowment of player 1; thereby licensing the participant to keep a larger share of the endowment that player 2 could divide (for the full experimental procedure, see the Procedure section).

2.2 EXPERIMENT 2.1

2.2.1 Method

Participants and design. A total of 153 participants (55 women, 98 men; *M*(age) = 19.82, *SD*(age) = 1.59) were randomly assigned to either the forgiving or unforgiving condition.

Procedure. Participants were placed in individual cubicles in front of a computer. Participants' dispositional trust was measured beforehand, using the 8 item interpersonal trust scale by Yamagishi (1988; α = .78)[1]. Participants were then asked to engage in a series of tasks together with another person present in the lab. They would play the previously mentioned modified version of the trust game. The game was presented as a task on social decision-making, and all participants were told that they would be Player 2 in the study. Participants were told that they would be playing an investment game with

another person who was in the lab: Player 1 (all the behavior by Player 1 was preprogrammed). It was explained that Player 1 had to decide how much of his/her endowment to transfer to the participant. Participants were clearly told that the amount that Player 1 would send would be tripled, and that they had to decide which amount to return to Player 1. Subsequently, the task started, and participants learned that Player 1 had transferred 10 chips of significant monetary value, which were tripled to 30 chips. They then had to decide how many of these 30 chips to return to Player 1.

We modified the game in such a way that participants were likely to make an unfair decision towards Player 1 (i.e., more likely to keep more chips for themselves than to give back to Player 1). We did so by raising uncertainty over Player 1's initial endowment. It was explained that the initial endowment of Player 1 could be anything from 10 to 30 chips; however, the exact endowment was unknown to the participant. Because 10 chips was the lowest endowment possible, we expected that most participants would infer that the original endowment of Player 1 would be larger than 10 chips. To check this assumption, we asked participants to estimate the initial endowment of Player 1 at this point: overall, participants thought the original endowment of Player 1 was 20.41 chips ($SD = 5.57$) large. Because participants estimated the original endowment of player 1 to by larger than 10 chips it meant that Player 1 had chosen not to transfer all his/her chips. From this point of view, we expected that participants would feel justified to keep a larger share of the 30 chips.

After participants had made their decision how to divide the 30 chips, we revealed that the initial endowment of Player 1 was in fact only 10 chips. Player 1 had thus transferred his/her entire endowment. Participants who had divided the 30 chips unequally (74%) had violated the equality rule and acted unfairly towards Player 1. Participants who had divided the chips equally or returned more than 15 chips (26%) had not committed a transgression. After this feedback concerning the final division of the chips, we asked participants two questions regarding their perceptions of the fairness of the final division and whether participants thought they violated Player 1's trust. For the group who had not committed a transgression the experiment ended at this point. The majority of the participants, who did commit a transgression, proceeded to the forgiveness manipulation.

Forgiveness manipulation. Participants who committed a transgression received a message from Player 1. In the not forgiving condition this message was: "*I have fewer chips than you! I simply do not accept this! I know that I am not the kind of person who forgives this kind of behavior so I will not forgive you this time*". In the forgiving condition, this message was: "*I have fewer chips than you! That is too bad. But I will give you the benefit of the doubt for now. I will forgive you for now but please be cooperative in the future*".
Apology behavior was assessed after this message. Participants were given the choice between two messages to send back to Player 1: "*I want to apologize*" or "*I do not want to apologize*".

Participants' instrumentality perceptions were assessed using three questions (all on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 7 = very much so): (1) To what extent do you think an apology is important for Player 1?, (2) How effective do you think an apology will be to restore your relationship with Player 1?, (3) To what extent do you think an apology will repair the damaged trust between you and Player 1? These items were combined into an average instrumentality perceptions score (α = .85).

We used three items to check our forgiveness manipulation (7-point scale, ranging from 1 = not at all, 7 = very much so): (1) Do you think that Player 1 is somebody who easily forgives?, (2). Do you think Player 1 is somebody who does not easily forgive? (*Recoded*), and (3). Do you think Player 1 is forgiving? These items were combined into an average forgiveness score (α = .95).

2.2.2 RESULTS

Perceptions of initial endowment size and endowments returned. To check whether participants indeed overestimated Player 1's initial endowment, we asked participants how many chips they thought Player 1 had originally been endowed with. Overall, participants thought the original endowment of player 1 was 20.41 chips large (*SD* = 5.57). Participants who committed the transgression thought the original endowment was significantly larger (*M* = 21.63, *SD* = 5.00) than participants who did not committed the transgression (*M* = 16.95, *SD* = 5.73; $t(151)$ = 4.89, $p < .001$). In line with these perceptions, participants who transgressed returned less chips (*M* = 7.88, *SD* = 3.62) than participants who did not transgress (*M* = 16.55, *SD* = 3.31; $t(151)$ = 13.31, $p < .001$).

Perceptions of fairness and violated trust. We modified our trust game in such a way that our participants would commit a transgression. To check whether participants indeed perceived the final division as unfair and as violating trust they were required to respond to three questions. First we asked them "*To what extent do you think the final division is fair?*" (1 = not at all, 7 = completely). A t-test showed that participants who committed the transgression considered the final division to be less fair (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = 1.40) than participants who did not committed a transgression (*M* = 6.00, *SD* = 1.80, $t(151)$ = 11.749, $p < .001$). Moreover, a 95% confidence interval of the mean fairness perceptions of the participants who committed a transgression showed the mean was significantly lower than the scale mean (95% C.I.: 2.47 – 2.99), providing further support that participants who committed the transgression considered the final division to be unfair.

In order to check whether participants regarded the unfair offer as a trust violation we asked them: "*To what extent do you think you violated Player 1's trust?*" (1 = not at all, 7 = completely). Again, participants who committed the transgression thought they violated Player 1's trust significantly more (*M* = 5.41, *SD* = 1.22) than participants who did not committed a transgression (*M* = 2.10, *SD* = 1.69, $t(151)$ = 13.27, $p < .001$). A 95% C.I. showed that the mean perception of the trust violation was significantly higher than the

scale mean (95% C.I. 5.18 – 5.64), providing evidence that the participants who committed the transgression indeed perceived the unfair division to be a trust violation.

Finally, we checked the extent to which participants thought that player 1 still trusted them *"To what extent do you think Player 1 still trusts you?"* (1 = not at all, 7 = completely). Again, participants who committed the transgression thought Player 1 trusted them less (*M* = 3.08, *SD* = 1.50) than participants who did not commit the transgression (*M* = 6.15, *SD* = 1.17, *t*(151) = 11.77, *p* < .001). A 95% Confidence Interval of the mean trust perception of the participants who committed the transgression again showed that these participants thought that Player 1 was distrustful towards them (95% C.I.: 2.80 – 3.36).

Forgiveness manipulation check. A linear regression analysis on our manipulation check scale with the forgiveness manipulation and trust as independent variables revealed a main effect of forgiveness (*β* = .85, *t* = 16.72, *p* < .001). No other effects reached significance. Participants indeed perceived Player 1 to be more forgiving in the forgiving condition (*M* = 5.57, *SD* = .79) than in the unforgiving condition (*M* = 2.40, *SD* = 1.20).

Apology behavior. Because our main dependent variable was categorical in nature (either apologize or not apologize) we used logistic regression to test our hypotheses. Logistic regression uses odds to test whether a specific response is significantly more likely than chance to be picked by participants. If an odd is significantly higher than 1, this means (within the context of this experiment) that it is significantly more likely that an apology is given instead of no apology. If an odd is significantly smaller than 1, it means that no apology is significantly more likely to be given than an apology. When an odd does not differ significantly from 1, it means that it is equally likely that either an apology or no apology is given (i.e. there is no pattern). Because proportions have more intuitive appeal than odds, we present, together with the odds, the proportions of apologies given in each condition. Although these proportions give the same information as the odds, we believe it helps in interpreting the results.

For our simple effects tests, we followed procedures as outlined by Jaccard (2001). Simple effects are tested by means of odds ratios. An odds ratio is the ratio between two odds from two different cells (i.e. conditions). If the odds ratio is significantly larger or smaller than 1, this means that the odds from those two cells differ significantly from each other. We conducted a stepwise logistical regression with the forgiveness manipulation as a categorical independent variable and trust as a continuous independent variable. The analysis with the main effects of the forgiveness manipulation and trust in step 1 revealed, first of all, a significant main effect of the forgiveness manipulation (*B* = -1.74, Wald = 12.79, *p* < .001) but no main effect of trust (*B* = .17, Wald = .53, *p* = .23). In step 2 the main effect of forgiveness remained significant (*B* = -2.08, Wald = 12.34, *p* < .001), as was the main effect of trust (*B* = -1.43, Wald = 3.43, *p* = .03), but more importantly and in line with Hypothesis 1, the interaction between forgiveness and trust was significant (*B* = 1.19, Wald = 4.46, *p* = .04; see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

Odds and odds ratios of an apology per condition in Study 2.1

Forgiveness manipulation	Trust		Odds ratio for trust within each forgiveness condition
	Low trust (-1 SD)	High trust (+1 SD)	
Forgiving	Odds: 25.918** (Prob: 96%)	Odds: 3.797** (Prob: 79%)	6.826*
Not Forgiving	Odds: .982 (Prob: 50%)	Odds: 1.566 (Prob: 61%)	0.627
Odds ratios for forgiveness within low and high trust	26.393**	2.425	

Note. Proportions that an apology will be given. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$.

We compared the forgiveness conditions between high trusters (+1 SD) and low trusters (-1 SD). Low trusters were more sensitive to the forgiving communication as they were significantly more likely to apologize when the victim seemed forgiving (proportion of .96) rather than unforgiving (proportion of .5; $B = 3.27$, Wald = 11.16, $p = .001$; odds ratio = 26.393). High trusters did not differ in their apologetic behavior when the victim seemed forgiving (proportion of .79) or unforgiving (proportion of .61; $B = .87$, Wald = 2.06, $p = .15$; odds ratio = 2.425). The results further showed that when the victim did not seem forgiving, trust had no significant impact on apologetic behavior ($B = .23$, Wald = .59, $p = .44$; odds ratio = 0.627). When the victim seemed forgiving, low trusters were significantly more likely than high trusters to apologize ($B = -.96$, Wald = 4.04, $p = .04$; odds ratio = 6.826).

Instrumentality of an apology. A regression analysis revealed significant main effects of the forgiveness manipulation ($\beta = .40$, $t = 4.72$ $p < .001$) and of trust ($\beta = -.17$, $t = -1.96$ $p = .03$ (one-sided)) on the perceived instrumentality of an apology. Importantly, we also found the predicted interaction between perceived forgiveness and trust on perceived instrumentality of the apology ($\beta = .15$, $t = -1.77$, $p = .03$ (one-sided)). A simple slopes analysis showed that trust was a significant predictor when the victim seemed forgiving ($\beta = -.32$, $t = -2.88$, $p = .005$) but not significant when the victim did not seem forgiving ($\beta = -.02$, $t = -.12$, $p = .90$).

Mediation analysis. To test our second hypothesis, we examined whether perceived instrumentality of an apology mediated the interactive relationship between trust and perceived forgiveness on apologies. Specifically, we expected that perceived instrumentality would mediate the effect of forgiveness information on apologies, but only

for those low in trust and not for those high in trust. A bootstrap procedure (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) which tested the simple indirect effect of perceived forgiveness on apologies through perceived instrumentality showed a significant indirect effect for low (-1 SD) trusters (b = .93, $S.E.$ = .30, 95% C.I. -1.44 − -.50) while no significant indirect effect was present for high (+1 SD) trusters (b = -.41, $S.E.$ = .27, 95% C.I. -.87 − .02). This result shows that instrumentality perceptions explained the decision of low trusters to apologize as a function of the likelihood that the victim will forgive, whereas this was not the case for high trusters.

2.3 DISCUSSION

Dividing valuable resources in an unfair manner can lead to violated trust between the parties involved, which makes future interactions less productive and pleasant. Because unfair allocations easily arise, it is important to understand the mechanisms by which we can repair violated trust in such interdependent settings. Prior research has identified an apology as an effective trust repair strategy (e.g. Bottom et al. 2002; Ohbuchi et al., 1989). However, research to date has neglected to study whether perpetrators are also willing to actually apologize and if so, when they are most likely to do this. Our present findings show that perpetrators use apologies in a strategic way. That is, they apologize significantly more when the likelihood that the victim will forgive is high. If the likelihood is low, perpetrators are less willing to apologize.   How   can   these   findings   be understood? One important reason may be that apologizing entails a considerable social risk. Apologies are often regarded as an acceptance of blame for the transgression, which can give rise to a host of aversive social consequences - like rejection, humiliation and punishment (Kim et al., 2009). This would suggest that it is important for perpetrators to deliver apologies only when they are likely to be met with favorable consequences. One important and favorable consequence in interdependent settings is whether the other party (the victim) will forgive. Forgiveness holds the idea that subsequent interactions will be cooperative and will not include blame of one's prior unfair behavior (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003). Thus, apologizing behavior is much more likely to occur if it pays off in terms of being forgiven.

This relationship between anticipated forgiveness and apologetic behavior is further substantiated by the finding that dispositional trust influenced perpetrators' sensitivity to the victim's forgivingness. Trust entails a willingness to be vulnerable to others, and therefore is strongly related to the extent to which people are willing to take social risks (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Indeed, we find that low trusters (who do not generally tend to believe people will reciprocate cooperative behavior) are especially sensitive to the perceived forgiveness of the victim, while perceived forgiveness has less impact on decisions to apologize among high trusters, who generally already harbor impressions of benign intent of others. These findings therefore further suggest that

perpetrators' tendency to base decisions to apologize or not on instrumental motives may be rooted in the desire to prevent the social risks associated with apologizing.

It is important to stress that the present findings were obtained by inducing actual transgressions and examining actual apology behavior. This approach – to our knowledge – is the first effort to examine actual apology behavior and transgressions in a controlled bargaining setting. Looking at the actual deliverance of apologies by a perpetrator is important because intentions to apologize may not necessarily correspond with actual apologetic behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). We thus urge future research on apologies to examine actual deliveries of apologies as a response to actual transgressions. Our study provides a useful tool to achieve this aim.

Our paradigm succeeded in inducing transgressions with the majority of the participants. By inducing transgressions we needed to rely on deception. Although we are sensitive to the controversies regarding deception in experimental research (for a discussion on the topic, consult Hertwig & Ortmann, 2001), we believe with this type of research it is inevitable to use deception. As participants are motivated to behave in socially appropriate ways, especially when they believe they are being watched, transgressing against another participant in a lab is something that rarely occurs naturally. To create a situation, equal to all participants, under which participants were most likely to transgress, we relied on deception. Because none of the participants expressed any objection to our experimental procedure during the debriefing, we believe our paradigm enables researchers to create real transgressions without being too psychological distressing.

It is important to note that our instrumental hypothesis regarding apologizing includes the notion of reciprocity. As we have mentioned earlier and as our results show, a perpetrator is more willing to apologize when it is likely that this gesture will be reciprocated with forgiveness. A stronger form of this instrumental hypothesis could, however, also be formulated. That is, if it is likely that you are going to be forgiven anyway, perpetrators could also think that there is no reason to apologize anymore. From an economic point of view (i.e. maximizing one's own pay-off) it would indeed make little sense to admit culpability by apologizing if you have already acquired the insurance of your valued good, that is, forgiveness. This 'strong' instrumentality hypothesis can also be considered to be in line with research on moral credentials (Monin & Miller, 2001). Research on moral credentials has shown that once people establish themselves as a moral person, they are more likely to behave in ways that could be interpreted as immoral. If the victim is likely to forgive the perpetrator, the perpetrator can interpret this as an affirmation of his/her morality (Schnabel & Nadler, 2008). Our results contradict this framework, as perpetrators decided to increase their display of moral behavior by apologizing, rather than feeling freed not to apologize (a prediction that would be in line with the moral credentials framework). In line with our findings, research by Wallace and colleagues (Wallace, Exline & Baumeister, 2008) also shows that expressions of forgiveness deter future offences against the victim. Future research should investigate the

relationship between moral credentials and expressions of forgiveness in order to further our understanding of both the consequences of showing forgiveness and the regulation of moral behavior.

Future research might zoom in on this interesting question on when our instrumentality hypothesis would be valid and when the strong version of the instrumentality hypothesis would apply more. One possible way of testing this may be to include personality variables that could help us tease apart in what way these instrumentality perspectives influence people's apologetic behavior. Social value orientation predicts whether people approach interpersonal situations as more instrumental versus more social. It could very well be that proselfs deem an apology unnecessary when they interact with a forgiving victim (i.e. they behave accordingly the strong instrumental perspective), while prosocials are more inclined to reciprocate.

Importantly, by focusing on the perspective of perpetrators, our findings also provide a much needed extension to the apology literature, calling previous findings into question. As noted, previous research on apologies has mainly focused on how victims respond to apologies and thus has largely overlooked the perspective of perpetrators. As a result, hardly any research exists examining whether perpetrators actually are willing to deliver apologies, and when they may be likely to do so. Our findings are among the first – at least to our knowledge – to reveal some insights into this question and thus demonstrate the need to also consider the perspective of the perpetrator to arrive at a better understanding of the reconciliation process through the use of apologies.

The present findings contain a hopeful message. Our findings suggest that expressions of forgiveness have the potential to limit a possible downward spiral of unconstructive behaviors that can take place after a transgression. That is, when victims take the initiative to communicate forgiveness, perpetrators are likely to reciprocate by actually apologizing and taking responsibility for their misdeeds. Thus, an initial positive signal by the victim may elicit the kind of behavior by the perpetrator that is needed to start the reconciliation process. However, there is also a downside to this effect: perpetrators may actually be less willing to apologize when it seems unlikely that apologies will be reciprocated with forgiveness. In other words, if no positive feedback with respect to forgiveness is communicated by the victim, apologies will most likely not be given. This finding challenges the true value of apologies as a trust repair tool. Take, for example, the situation of serious transgressions where victims are likely to be angry, and not very motivated to forgive. Under such circumstances, victims have the strongest need and request for apologies (Exline et al., 2007). However, given the negative reactions on behalf of the victim, our results suggest that perpetrators will be unwilling to apologize.

In conclusion, our findings show that apology behavior by perpetrators is driven by the forgiveness tendencies of victims, thus pointing out the somewhat paradoxical message that the desired response of an apology by the victim actually depends on the positive reaction (i.e. showing forgiveness) of that same victim towards the perpetrator.

CHAPTER 3

3. THE APOLOGY MISMATCH: ASYMMETRIES BETWEEN VICTIM'S NEED FOR APOLOGIES AND PERPETRATOR'S WILLINGNESS TO APOLOGIZE[2]

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Apologizing is an effective and widely supported response to transgressions (Cohen, 1999; Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Kellerman, 2006; Meijer, 1998; Tavuchis, 1991; Van Dijke & De Cremer, 2011). From an early age, people learn to apologize when they are responsible for a transgression (Schlenker & Darby, 1981). Victims of transgressions are, in turn, socialized into graciously accepting such apologies (Bennet & Dewberry, 1994; Risen & Gilovich, 2007). The process where apologies lead to reconciliation is known as the "apology-forgiveness cycle" (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008; Tavuchis, 1991).

The apology-forgiveness cycle is collectively rational because normative prescriptions for perpetrators to apologize and for victims to respond with forgiveness help to preserve social relationships after conflict. Whether these normative prescriptions actually describe an empirical reality is a question that prior research has largely failed to address. The apology-forgiveness cycle seems to assume (at least implicitly) that victim and perpetrator are both motivated to reconcile. However, empirical studies show that victims and perpetrators often differ in their interpretations of critical aspects of transgressions, such as who is responsible for the transgression, its significance and its long-term effects (e.g., Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990; Feeny & Hill, 2006; Mikula, Athenstaedt, Heschgl, & Heimgartner, 1998). If interpretations of conflict differ so much between victim and perpetrator, then are their views on the need for apologies congruent?

In this paper, we suggest that different emotions underlie the victims' and perpetrators' need for apologies: anger for the victims and guilt for the perpetrators. Since these emotions serve different functions and are activated by different types of situations, victims' and perpetrators' need for apologies may often be mismatched. This mismatch, we argue, can have important consequences for subsequent forgiveness and reconciliation between victim and perpetrator.

3.1.1 Need for apologies among victims and perpetrators

An apology is generally defined as a combined statement of an acknowledgement of wrongdoing and an expression of guilt (Lazare, 2004; Smith, 2008; Tavuchis, 1991).

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[2] This Chapter is based on Leunissen, De Cremer, Reinders Folmer, & Van Dijke (2013)

Since communicating such sentiments implies that the perpetrator believes that the transgression should not have happened and should not happen again, apologies also represent an implicit promise that the transgression will not be repeated (Kim, Dirks, & Cooper, 2009; Smith, 2008). Apologies, therefore, imply that perpetrators distance themselves from their prior actions and admit being wrong. The effectiveness of apologies in promoting trust and forgiveness among victims has been supported by a wealth of research (see e.g., Bottom, Gibson, Daniels, & Murnighan, 2002; De Cremer & Schouten, 2008; Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989; van Dijke & De Cremer, 2011).

It is important to note that apologies have rather different meanings for victims and perpetrators, and they fulfill different psychological needs. According to the needs-based model of reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), transgressions deprive victims and perpetrators of different psychological needs. Victims may experience feelings of inferiority and anger in response to transgressions (Miller, 2001; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Perpetrators may suffer from fear of exclusion (Exline & Baumeister, 2000), and may therefore experience guilt (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). Apologies provide a means for addressing these impaired needs (De Cremer, Pillutla, & Reinders Folmer, 2010; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). However, as victims and perpetrators require different needs to be restored, apologies serve a different function for either party.

For victims, apologies represent a compensation for having been victimized; a symbolic compensation for the injury suffered due to the offense (Tachuvis, 1991), and thus apologies address the state of inequity that arises when people are transgressed against (Exline et al., 2007). Anger is an emotion that is closely linked to a need for compensation and retribution (Darley and Pittman, 2003). We therefore expect that anger, which is central to the experience of injustice and victimization (Miller, 2001), drives victims' need for apologies. To our knowledge, no research has directly tested whether anger predicts a victim's need for apologies. However, there is some indirect evidence that supports this link. Anger has been linked to reconciliation attempts (Fischer & Roseman, 2007): a negative emotional reaction towards the perpetrator still leaves the possibility for reconciliation open. Since an apology is a reconciliation tool, one would expect that victims' need for apologies is positively related to anger.

For perpetrators, apologies are means for distancing themselves from their misdeeds (Goffman, 1971), and for restoring the relationship with the victim (e.g., Bottom, et al., 2002; Leunissen, De Cremer, & Reinders Folmer, 2012). We believe that guilt may play a central role in the process that makes perpetrators apologize. Perpetrators may experience guilt in response to having committed an interpersonal transgression because such a transgression poses a threat to the relationship between the victim and perpetrator (Cryder, Springer, & Morewedge, 2012). The emotion of guilt, which is strongly related to the motivation to reconcile and improve the relationship with the victim (Baumeister, et al., 1994), is likely to be central to the perpetrators' perception of the need for apologies.

One would therefore expect that the guiltier the perpetrators feel, the more likely they will apologize.

In sum, apologies provide a means to fulfill the different needs of victims and perpetrators in the aftermath of transgressions. However, are the victim's and perpetrator's respective needs for apologies necessarily aligned with each other, as suggested by the apology-forgiveness cycle? Or in other words, are apologies provided by perpetrators when they are required by victims? We suggest that this may not be the case. Since the necessity of apologies for victims and perpetrators are linked to different emotions, we suggest that the need for apologies may often be mismatched: apologies are given when victims require them least, and not when they require them most. This notion is best exemplified by considering the role of the intentionality of transgressions.

3.1.2 Intentionality

Intentionality refers to an individual's desires, beliefs, awareness, and abilities to perform a particular action (Malle & Knobe, 1997; Malle & Nelson, 2003). An act is regarded as intentional if the actor sets out to perform the action and succeeds. In the case of transgressions, this means that the actor has willfully harmed the victim.

Intentionality is of particular interest for the present research because it is a central element in the experience of transgressions and injustice. Perceptions of intentionality influence attributions of culpability and blameworthiness for transgressions, and people's tendency to respond to them with forgiveness or retribution (Darley & Pittman, 2003; Fincham, 2000; Struthers et al., 2008). Importantly, intentionality has also been shown to influence the emotions that underlie victims' and perpetrators' apology needs, namely anger and guilt (McGraw, 1987). Therefore, intentionality may reveal when victims' and perpetrators' need for apology do or do not align.

How may intentionality affect the emotions that underlie the victims' and perpetrators' need for apology, and, consequently, their perceptions of that need? Intentional transgressions indicate that the harm suffered by the victim was due to the perpetrator (rather than to external circumstances). Hence they evoke more feelings of injustice (Darley & Pitman, 2003; Miller, 2001) and anger than unintentional transgressions do (Berkowitz & Heimer, 1989; Betancourt & Blair, 1992; Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998; Quigley & Tedeschi, 1996). Indeed, the relationship between the intentionality of the transgression and anger is one of the best-established findings in the justice literature (Miller, 2001). Intentional transgressions consequently lead to a victim having a stronger desire for compensation and retribution (Darley & Pittman, 2003). As such, it is likely that victims desire an apology particularly after *intentional* transgressions.

For perpetrators, the intentionality of a transgression is closely linked to guilt, being particularly experienced by perpetrators after unintentional transgressions (McGraw,

1987). According to Baumeister and colleagues (1994), there are two important sources of guilt. First, guilt is experienced as a result of anxiety for social exclusion. After an unintentional transgression, a valuable relationship is distorted beyond the perpetrators' will, as such, the perpetrator experiences anxiety over social exclusion as the victim might decide to end the relationship with the perpetrator. This anxiety results in feelings of guilt (Baumeister et al., 1994). When a perpetrator transgresses intentionally, the relationship with the victim is less likely to be important to him/her and relational deterioration is more likely to have been anticipated and considered acceptable. Thus, the perpetrator experiences less anxiety for social exclusion.

Intentionality also has important consequences for feelings of guilt because the former influences the empathy that perpetrators feel towards the victim. In the case of an intentional transgression, perpetrators are aware beforehand that they will commit the transgression (i.e., it is expected; McGraw, 1987). The perpetrator thus has had time to rationalize the transgression beforehand, thereby guarding him/herself against feelings of guilt (Baumeister, 1999; Tsang, 2002). In contrast, unintentional transgressions come unexpected to the perpetrator. Therefore, he/she does not have any rationalizations ready to guard him/herself against feelings of guilt. In short, these processes, anxiety for social exclusion and rationalizations, suggest that perpetrators will experience guilt particularly after unintentional transgressions and as a consequence, will want to apologize particularly after unintentional, rather than intentional transgressions.

In sum, these arguments lead us to predict a mismatch between the victims' and the perpetrators' need for apology. Because victims and perpetrators may desire apologies after different types of transgressions, this apology mismatch could have important consequences for reconciliation after different types of transgressions. Because perpetrators ultimately decide whether to apologize or not, it seems likely that apologies will be issued mainly after unintentional transgressions as perpetrators have the highest need to apologize after unintentional transgressions. In contrast, this mismatch would also suggest that victims are unlikely to receive apologies for transgressions for which they particularly desire apologies, namely intentional transgressions. Because apologizing has been shown to have positive effects on forgiveness (e.g., McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Ohbuchi, et al., 1989), it stands to reason that unintentional transgressions are forgiven more often than intentional transgressions.

3.1.3 The present research

The aim of the present paper is to study the incongruence between perpetrators' willingness to apologize and victims' desire to receive an apology and the subsequent effects of this incongruence on reconciliation. We argue that the emotional processes that underlie the victims' and perpetrators' respective needs for apologies – that is guilt on the part of perpetrators and anger on the part of victims – may not be complementary, and as a

consequence victims and perpetrators desire an apology at very different instances. We suggest that intentionality, which is uniquely associated with each of the above-mentioned emotional process, may reveal this mismatch. This incongruence in turn may have important consequences for forgiveness after the transgression. We tested these predictions in three studies. Study 1 was an initial test of our ideas using an autobiographical narrative task, similar to the task designed by Baumeister and colleagues (1990). In study 2, we introduced another manipulation of perspective and intentionality relying on a vignette methodology. In study 3, we again relied on an autobiographical narrative tasks but this time we also included measures of actual apology behavior and forgiveness after the transgression in order to explicitly show the effects of the mismatch both on needs for apologies and behavior and subsequent forgiveness.

3.2 EXPERIMENT 3.1

3.2.1 Method

Participants and design. In total, 202 undergraduates (97 women, $M_{(age)} = 20.00$, $SD_{(age)} = 1.72$) participated in return for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (perspective: victim vs. perpetrator) × 2 (intentionality: intentional vs. unintentional transgression) between-subjects design.

Procedure. Participants were asked to recall an intentional or unintentional transgression of which they were either a victim or a perpetrator.

Victims were asked: *Please recall a situation in which somebody else did something (unintentionally / intentionally) to you that you experienced as unpleasant or unjust*. Perpetrators were asked: *Please recall a situation in which you did something (unintentionally / intentionally) that this other person experienced as unpleasant or unjust*. Next, participants were asked to write a small paragraph describing the transgression. Afterwards, we assessed our manipulation check, mediating variables, and dependent variable.

Measures. All questions were answered on a 1 (= *not at all*), to 7 (= *very much*) scale.

Manipulation check. We checked our intentionality manipulation in the autobiographical narratives by asking "To what extent was it the other's / your intention to do something unpleasant or unjust?"

Mediating variables. We asked participants in the victim conditions: "*How angry were you after this other person did something unpleasant or unjust?*" and participants in the perpetrator conditions: "*How guilty did you feel after you did something unpleasant or unjust?*"

Dependent variable. We assessed the need for an apology with (victim): "*To what extent did you want to receive an apology from this other person?*" and (perpetrators). "*To what extent did you want to offer an apology to this other person?*"

3.2.1 Results

In all the analyses of Studies 1, 2, and 3, categorical predictors were effect-coded (unintentional = -1, intentional = 1; victim = -1, perpetrator = 1).

Manipulation check. A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables revealed a main effect of perspective ($b = -.51$, $t(198) = -4.54$, $p < .001$) and a main effect of intentionality ($b = .92$, $t(198) = 8.15$, $p < .001$). The interaction effect was not significant ($b = -.16$, $t(198) = -1.38$, $p = .17$). Participants in the unintentional conditions perceived transgressions as less intentional ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.46$) than participants in the intentional conditions ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.88$). Moreover, victims ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.93$) perceived the transgression as more intentional than the perpetrators did ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.77$).

Need for apologies. A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables revealed a main effect of intentionality ($b = -.26$, $t(198) = -2.09$, $p = .04$), but not of perspective ($p = .62$). The main effect of intentionality showed that the need for apologies was generally higher after unintentional ($M = 5.32$, $SD = 1.66$) than after intentional ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 1.99$) transgressions.

More importantly, this effect of intentionality was qualified by the predicted interaction between perspective and intentionality ($b = -.41$, $t(198) = -3.25$, $p = .001$; for cell means, see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1
Means (SD's) for need for apologies, anger, and guilt in Study 3.1

	Need for apologies		Anger	Guilt
	Victim	Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Unintentional	4.86 (1.77)	5.81 (1.39)	5.00 (1.46)	5.81 (1.14)
Intentional	5.16 (1.85)	4.46 (2.08)	5.67 (1.53)	5.04 (1.79)

Note: anger was only measured among victims; guilt was only measured among perpetrators

Planned comparisons revealed that after an unintentional transgression, perpetrators were more willing to apologize than victims desired an apology ($b = .47$, $t(198) = 2.63$, $p = .009$). Conversely, when the transgression was intentional, victims desired an apology significantly more than perpetrators were willing to apologize ($b = -.35$,

$t(198) = -1.96, p = .05$). Perpetrators wanted to give an apology more after an unintentional transgression than after an intentional transgression ($b = -.68, t(198) = -3.76, p < .001$). For victims, we did not find a significant difference in the need for apologies after intentional and unintentional transgressions ($b = .15, t(198) = .83, p = .41$).

Mediation analyses. We hypothesized that specific emotions (i.e., anger on the part of the victim and guilt on the part of the perpetrator) would mediate the relationship between intentionality and willingness to give / receive an apology. We only measured anger among victims and guilt among perpetrators. We thus split our sample into victims and perpetrators and analyzed separately whether these specific emotions mediate the effect of intentionality on willingness to give/receive an apology. Mediation was tested using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2012), using 5000 bootstrap resamples. The reported confidence intervals are bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals of the probability distribution of the indirect effect.

Victims. A regression analysis revealed a significant (total) effect of intentionality on anger ($b = .33, t(100) = 2.25, p = .03$): victims were angrier after intentionally transgressions than after unintentional transgressions. We also obtained a significant positive effect of anger on the willingness to receive an apology ($b = .52, t(100) = 4.87, p < .001$). Finally, the indirect effect of intentionality on the willingness to receive an apology, via anger, was significant ($b = .17, S.E. = .10, 95\%$ CI (two-sided): [.03; .42]), while the direct effect was not significant ($b = -.03, S.E. = .17, t(99) = -.16, p = .87$). This analysis shows that there is an indirect effect of intentionality through anger on the willingness to receive an apology.

Perpetrators. Our analysis obtained a significant (total) effect of intentionality on guilt ($b = -.39, t(98) = -2.55, p = .01$), meaning that perpetrators felt less guilty after intentional than after unintentional transgressions. Guilt also significantly influenced the willingness to offer an apology ($b = .88, t(98) = 10.31, p < .001$). Moreover, the total indirect effect of intentionality on apologies through guilt was significant ($b = -.32, S.E. = .13, 95\%$ CI (two-sided): [-1.19; -.1]). The direct effect of intentionality on need for apologies was also significant ($b = -.36, S.E. = .13, t(97) = -2.69, p = .008$). This analysis thus supports our prediction that perpetrators are more willing to offer an apology after an unintentional transgression than after an intentional one because they feel guiltier in the former instance than in the latter one.

3.2.3 Discussion

Study 1 was largely in line with our predictions. Perpetrators wanted to apologize after unintentional transgressions more than after intentional ones. This effect was mediated by guilt. Moreover, we found evidence for our proposed mismatch in the sense that perpetrators wanted to apologize significantly more than victims wanted to receive an apology after unintentional transgressions, while perpetrators wanted to apologize

significantly less than victims wanted to receive an apology after intentional transgressions. We did not find a significant difference between the intentional and unintentional conditions for victims (although the mean difference was in the right direction). However, the indirect effect of intentionality on victims' need for apologies, mediated by anger, was significant, showing that for victims, the need for apologies is predicted by anger.

3.3 EXPERIMENT 3.2

Study 2 was designed to extend the findings of Study 1. To experimentally control the type of transgression, we employed a scenario study in which participants were either the victim or the perpetrator of the same transgression. Moreover, we wanted to provide a more stringent test of the emotional processes that underlie this mismatch. While Study 1 revealed that the relationship between intentionality and need for apologies is mediated by anger (victims) and guilt (perpetrators), we were unable to rule out that anger could also play a role in the perpetrators' willingness to apologize, and that guilt could influence a victims' desire for apologies. To show conclusively that anger mediates *only* the victims' need for apology, and that guilt mediates *only* for perpetrators, we measured both emotions in both the victim and perpetrator conditions in Study 2.

3.3.1 Method

Participants and design. A total of 248 undergraduate students (126 women, $M_{(age)} = 19.68$, $SD_{(age)} = 1.94$) participated in exchange for course credit. They were randomly assigned to a 2 (perspective: victim vs. perpetrator) × 2 (intentionality: intentional vs. unintentional transgression) between-subjects design.

Procedure. Participants were presented with a short scenario. The scenario for the victims was (manipulation between brackets): *Imagine the following situation. Your colleague (accidentally/intentionally) breaks your coffee mug by pushing it off your desk. You were very fond of this coffee mug.* For the perpetrator, the scenario was (manipulation between brackets):
You (accidentally/intentionally) break your colleague's coffee mug by pushing it off your colleague's desk, causing it to break. Your colleague was very fond of this coffee mug. After the participants read the scenario, we assessed the manipulation checks, mediators, and the dependent measure[3].

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[3] A potential methodological problem of the current scenario is that participant find it hard to imagine the scenario happening. We included a measure for how well the participant could imagine the scenario from happening: "How hard was it for you to imagine the described situation?" (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). We included this item as a control variable in our moderated multiple

Measures. All questions were answered on a 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much* scale.

   Manipulation check. We checked our manipulation of intentionality with the following item: "To what extent was it (your intention / the intention of your colleague) to break the coffee mug?"

   Anger and guilt. We measured anger in both perspectives by asking: "How angry would you feel about your mug being broken?" Guilt was measured in both perspectives by asking: "How guilty would you feel about your mug being broken?"

   Need for apology. The need for apology was measured by asking perpetrators: "To what extent would you want to offer an apology to your colleague?", and victims: "To what extent would you want to receive an apology from your colleague?"

3.3.2 Results

   Manipulation check. A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables revealed a main effect of intentionality ($b = 1.57$, $t(244) = 14.01$, $p < .001$) and a main effect of perspective ($b = -.37$, $t(244) = -3.26$, $p = .001$). The interaction effect was not significant. Participants in the unintentional conditions perceived transgressions as less intentional ($M = 1.46$, $SD = .87$) than participants in the intentional conditions ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 2.25$). Moreover, victims ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 2.31$) perceived the transgression as more intentional than perpetrators did ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 2.34$).

   Need for apologies. A regression analysis with intentionality and perspective as independent variables revealed a main effect of intentionality ($b = -.24$, $t(244) = -2.64$, $p = .009$), but not of perspective ($p = .42$). The main effect of intentionality showed that the need for apology was generally higher after unintentional ($M = 5.96$, $SD = 1.31$) than after intentional ($M = 5.79$, $SD = 1.55$) transgressions.

   More importantly, the effect of intentionality was qualified by the predicted cross-over interaction between perspective and intentionality ($b = -.46$, $t(244) = -5.00$, $p < .001$; see Table 3.2 for cell means).

Table 3.2
Means (SD's) for need for apologies, anger, and guilt in Study 3.2

	Need for apologies		Anger		Guilt	
	Victim	Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Unintentional	5.71	6.49	3.38	3.34	3.17	5.39
	(1.46)	(.64)	(1.75)	(1.70)	(1.94)	(1.66)
Intentional	6.15	5.08	4.91	3.25	3.20	4.55
	(1.24)	(1.85)	(1.80)	(1.97)	(1.98)	(2.10)

mediation model. Including this control variable did not significantly change the results of our analysis, the indirect effects through anger for victims and guilt for perpetrators were still significant.

Planned comparisons revealed that after an unintentional transgression, perpetrators were more willing to apologize than victims desired an apology (b = .39, $t(244)$ = 3.00, p = .003). Conversely, when the transgression was intentional, victims desired an apology more than perpetrators were willing to apologize (b = -.53, $t(244)$ = -4.07, p < .001). Perpetrators wanted to give an apology more after an unintentional transgression than after an intentional transgression (b = -.71, $t(244)$ = -4.66, p < .001). Victims wanted to have an apology more after an intentional than after an unintentional transgression (b = .22, $t(244)$ = 2.07, p = .04)[4, 5].

Anger. Regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables and anger as dependent variable revealed main effects on anger of perspective (b = -.22, $t(244)$ = -3.50, p < .001) and intentionality (b = .19, $t(244)$ = 2.97, p = .003). After a transgression, victims were angrier (M = 4.11, SD = 1.93) than perpetrators (M = 3.30, SD = 1.83), and both were angrier after intentional transgressions (M = 4.36, SD = 2.01) than after unintentional ones (M = 3.37, SD = 1.72). These effects were qualified by a significant interaction effect (b = -.21, $t(244)$ = -3.34, p = .001). Simple effects analyses

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[4] In this study, we included a measure of harm severity: (perpetrators) "To what extent would you feel that you harmed your colleague?"; (victims) "To what extent would you feel that you are harmed by your colleague?" (both on a 1 = *not at all*, to 7 = *very much* scale). A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables and harm severity as dependent variable indicated a significant main effect of perspective (b = .68, $t(242)$ = 6.62, p < .001), intentionality (b = .56, $t(242)$ = 5.45, p < .001), and a significant interaction between perspective and intentionality (b = −.27, $t(242)$ = −2.63, p = .009). The main effect of perspective indicated that perpetrators (M = 4.36, SD = 1.54) considered that they harmed the victim more severely than victims felt that they were harmed (M = 2.98, SD = 1.71). Moreover, intentional transgressions (M = 4.11, SD = 1.71) were generally perceived as more harmful than unintentional transgressions (M = 2.80, SD = 1.60). The interaction effect indicated that only victims differed in their perceptions of harm severity depending on the intentionality of the transgression: they considered intentional transgressions (M = 3.84, SD = 1.76) significantly (b = .82, $t(242)$ = 7.03, p < .001) more harmful than unintentional transgressions (M = 2.19, SD = 1.21). Perpetrators considered intentional (M = 4.65, SD = 1.48) and unintentional (M = 4.07, SD = 1.56) transgressions equally (b = .29, $t(242)$ = 1.73, p = .09) harmful. We added harm severity both as a covariate and as an extra mediator in our moderated multiple mediation model. For neither of the perspectives was the indirect effect through harm severity significant. Moreover, in both analyses, a significant indirect effect through anger and guilt remained. These analyses show that harm severity does not explain our effects.

[5] An alternative explanation for why perpetrators are less willing to apologize after intentional than after unintentional transgressions is that perpetrators might fear that their apology will be rejected by the victim particularly after an intentional transgression. In order to test this alternative explanation, we measured whether fear of rejection of the apology was a concern to perpetrators with "Would you feel worried that your colleague might reject your apology in this situation?" (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *completely*). A regression analysis with intentionality as independent variables did not show a significant main effect of intentionality. Hence, our data do not provide evidence that perpetrators were more worried about an apology being rejected after intentional compared to unintentional transgressions. Moreover, inclusion of this item in as an extra mediator did not indicate a significant indirect effect through this fear of rejection item, while the indirect effect through guilt was still significant.

(Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003) indicated that the intentionality of the transgression significantly influenced anger among victims ($b = .40$, $t(244) = 5.52$, $p < .001$) but not among perpetrators ($b = -.02$, $t(244) = -.22$, $p = .82$). Victims were angrier than perpetrators after intentional transgressions ($b = -.43$, $t(244) = -4.78$, $p < .001$), but equally angry after unintentional transgressions ($b = -.001$, $t(244) = -.11$, $p = .91$).

To test whether anger indeed predicts the victims' need for an apology but not the perpetrators', we conducted a regression analysis with anger and perspective as independent variables and need for an apology as the dependent variable. We obtained a significant main effect of anger ($b = .65$, $t(244) = 7.20$, $p < .001$), but no significant main effect of perspective ($b = .07$, $t(244) = .81$, $p = .42$), or a significant interaction ($b = .005$, $t(244) = .05$, $p = .96$).

Guilt. A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as predictor variables and guilt as dependent variable yielded a significant main effect of perspective ($b = .42$, $t(244) = 6.81$, $p < .001$), indicating that after a transgression, perpetrators felt guiltier ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 1.92$) than victims ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.95$) did. We did not obtain a significant main effect of intentionality ($b = -.10$, $t(244) = -1.55$, $p = .12$), and also no significant interaction effect ($b = -.10$, $t(244) = -1.66$, $p = .10$). Simple effects analyses indicated that intentionality only affected guilt among perpetrators ($b = -.20$, $t(244) = -1.95$, $p = .05$), and not among victims ($b = .006$, $t(244) = .09$, $p = .93$). Hence, although the interaction term is not significant, the simple slopes analyses show a pattern on guilt consistent with our hypotheses. Nevertheless, these results should be interpreted with caution.

To test whether guilt predicts perpetrators', rather than victims' need for an apology, we conducted a regression analysis with guilt and perspective as independent variables and the need for apology as dependent variable. We obtained a main effect of guilt ($b = .28$, $t(244) = 6.21$, $p < .001$) and of perspective ($b = -1.46$, $t(244) = -6.56$, $p < .001$). Importantly, we also obtained the predicted interaction effect between guilt and perspective ($b = .28$, $t(244) = 6.12$, $p < .001$). Simple effects analyses indicated that guilt only predicted perpetrators' need for apologies ($b = .56$, $t(244) = 7.47$, $p < .001$), but not the need for apologies among victims ($b = .003$, $t(244) = .07$, $p = .94$).

Mediation. Mediation was tested using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2012), using 5000 bootstrap resamples. The reported confidence intervals are bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals of the probability distribution of the indirect effect.

We tested our model by using intentionality as the independent variable, anger and guilt as mediators in parallel, need for apologies as dependent variable and perspective as moderator, moderating the path from intentionality to anger and to guilt. In line with our hypotheses, we obtained for victims a significant indirect effect of anger ($b = .24$, $S.E. = .06$, 95% CI (two-sided): [.15; .38]) but not of guilt ($b = -.001$, $S.E. = .02$, 95% CI (two-sided): [-.03; .04]). For perpetrators, we obtained a significant indirect effect of guilt ($b = -.04$, $S.E. = .03$, 95% CI: [-.12; -.0007]), but not of anger ($b = -.01$, $S.E. = .07$, 95% CI

(two-sided): [-.15; .12]). While the conditional direct (unmediated) effect of intentionality on victims' need for apologies was not significant ($b = -.05$, *S.E.* $= .09$, $t(240) = -.50$, $p = .62$), it was for perpetrators' apology needs ($b = -.51$, *S.E.* $= .13$, $t(240) = -3.86$, $p < .001$). The total effect of intentionality on the need for apologies was not significant ($b = -.06$, $t(246) = -.93$, $p = .35$).

3.3.3 Discussion

The results of Study 2 are consistent with our mismatch hypothesis. Victims have a significantly higher need for apologies than perpetrators after intentional transgressions, while perpetrators have a significantly higher need for apologies than victims after unintentional transgressions. Moreover, we find that guilt only mediates the relationship between intentionality and need for apologies for perpetrators, while anger mediates only the victims' need for apologies.

Two findings were not in line with our hypotheses. First we did not find a significant interaction effect between anger and perspective on the need for apologies, meaning that in this study anger was predictive for the need for apologies for both victims and perpetrators. This might just result from testing the same effect across multiple studies. Even if an effect exists objectively, statistical logic dictates that some replication attempts will not show the effect (Schimmack, *in press*). A more substantial post-hoc explanation for this finding relates to the specific nature of this study. Specifically, perpetrators may have interpreted this question as being angry at *themselves* for the coffee mug being broken. This would be in line with our finding of a positive effect of anger on the willingness to apologize of perpetrators. A second finding that was not in line with our hypotheses was that, although guilt mediated the relationship between intentionality and need for apologies for perpetrators, there was still a significant direct (i.e., unmediated) effect of intentionality on the need for apologies. This finding suggests that other mechanisms, besides guilt, may also play a role in the effects of intentionality on the willingness to apologize. Moral disengagement might be a likely mechanism, such as victim derogation.

3.4 EXPERIMENT 3.3

We conducted Study 3 to test whether the results of Study 1 and 2 can be generalized to a different population (i.e., working adults). This would strengthen the relevance and scope of the mismatch between victim's and perpetrator's need for apologies. A second reason for conducting Study 3 is our aim to gain more insight into actual apology behavior and subsequent forgiveness. As explained in the introduction, apologies generally lead to forgiveness (e.g., McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997).

As such, we predicted that the transgression would more likely be forgiven after an apology than when no apology is given. Because apologies are more likely to be offered after unintentional than after intentional transgressions, this would also imply that unintentional transgressions are more likely to be forgiven than intentional transgressions.

3.4.1 Method

Participants and design. A total of 383 working adults (286 women, $M_{(age)}$ = 37.36, $SD_{(age)}$ = 10.5) were recruited through an online research participation scheme of a European distance-learning university. They participated for course credit. The participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (victim vs. perpetrator) × 2 (intentional vs. unintentional transgression) between-subjects design.

Procedure. This study was conducted on the Internet and we used the same instructions as for the autobiographical narratives in Study 1, but in this case, we asked the participants to recall a transgression from their own workplace.

Measures. Unless otherwise specified, all measured were answered on a 1 = *not at all*, to 7 = *very much* scale. The manipulation check and the need for apologies were measured in the same way as in Study 1. Anger and guilt were measured for both victims and perpetrators. In order to measure anger, we asked: "How angry were you after you/this other person did something unpleasant or unjust?" To measure guilt, we asked: "How guilty did you feel after you/this other person did something unpleasant or unjust?"

Apology behavior. To measure whether an apology was issued or not after the transgression, we asked victims: "Did you receive an apology from this other person?", and we asked perpetrators: "Did you offer an apology to the other person?" The answer scale was dichotomous: *Yes* or *No*.

Forgiveness. To check whether the transgressions were eventually forgiven or not, we asked victims: "I have forgiven the other person for what he/she did." and perpetrators: "The other has forgiven me for what I did."

3.4.2 Results

Manipulation check. A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables revealed a main effect of intentionality (b = 3.27, $t(379)$ = 5.89, p < .001). The main effect of perspective was not significant (p = .45). Participants in the unintentional conditions perceived transgressions as less intentional (M = 1.81, SD = 1.43) than participants in the intentional conditions (M = 3.54, SD = 2.10). We also obtained an interaction between intentionality and perspective (b = -1.03, $t(379)$ = -2.93, p = .004). This effect revealed the intentionality manipulation to be stronger among victims ($M_{(intentional)}$ = 4.35, SD = 1.94; $M_{(unintentional)}$ = 2.11, SD = 1.49) than among perpetrators

($M_{(intentional)}$ = 2.72, $SD_{(intentional)}$ = 1.94; $M_{(unintentional)}$ = 1.51, $SD_{(unintentional)}$ = 1.32). Nevertheless, both victims (b = 2.24, $t(379)$ = 9.02, $p < .001$) and perpetrators (b = 1.21, $t(379)$ = 4.90, $p < .001$) rated the intentional transgressions as clearly being more intentional than the unintentional transgressions. Our hypotheses imply variations in the *direction* of the effect of intentionality for victims versus perpetrators. Hence, we do not consider these results for the manipulation check to be problematic because they indicate variations in the *strength* of an effect that is in the same direction for victims and perpetrators.

Content coding of the perpetration stories. As an additional manipulation check for the perpetrator conditions, we had all the perpetrator stories of Study 1 and 3 (the two autobiographical narrative studies) coded by a coder blind to the original conditions and our hypotheses. An additional 20 percent was coded by a second coder to check for inter rater reliability.

The stories were coded in four categories, in line with the categorization of Darley and Pittman (2003): accidental, negligent, reckless, and intentional. In addition to this forced-choice categorization, we also had the coders rate each story on a 1 to 7 scale on the extent to which the transgression was accidental, negligent, reckless or intentional. A Chi-square analysis on the categorization of the transgression stories between the two coders showed a highly significant relationship between the two coders ($X^2(9)$ = 126.23, $p < .001$). Correlations between the Likert scales were all high: accidental: $r = .86, p < .001$; intentional: $r = .92, p < .001$; negligent: $r = .79, p < .001$; reckless: $r = .74, p < .001$.

Of the stories, 74 were coded as accidental, 164 were coded as intentional, 24 were coded as negligent and 14 were coded as reckless; 16 were uncodable. These 16 cases were omitted from further analyses. This left a total of 276 cases. Of the stories written in the intentional experimental conditions, 85% was coded as intentional, 1% was coded as accidental, 3% was coded as negligent and 4 % was coded as reckless. Of the stories written in the unintentional conditions, 52% was coded as accidental, 25% was coded as intentional, 15% was coded as negligent and 6% was coded as reckless. Excluding those participants whose stories were not in line with the experimental condition (e.g. described an intentional transgression in the unintentional condition), did not change the data patterns presented hereafter.

Need for apologies. A regression analysis with intentionality and perspective as independent variables revealed a main effect of intentionality (b = -.26, $t(379)$ = -2.55, p = .01) and perspective (b = -.32, $t(379)$ = -3.11, p = .002). The main effect of intentionality showed that the need for apologies was generally stronger after unintentional (M = 4.52, SD = 2.08) than after intentional (M = 4.00, SD = 2.14) transgressions. The main effect of perspective indicated that victims (M = 4.60, SD = 2.08) generally had a stronger need for apologies than perpetrators (M = 3.89, SD = 2.21).

More importantly, we also obtained the predicted interaction between perspective and intentionality (b = -.58, $t(379)$ = -5.64, $p < .001$; see Table 3.3 for cell means).

Table 3.3

Means (SD's) for need for apologies, anger, and guilt in Study 3.3

	Need for apologies		Anger		Guilt	
	Victim	Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Unintentional	4.26	4.78	4.94	3.03	2.09	4.56
	(2.04)	(2.10)	(1.56)	(1.91)	(1.45)	(1.95)
Intentional	4.89	3.10	5.89	3.33	2.20	3.59
	(1.88)	(2.00)	(1.07)	(1.89)	(1.69)	(1.87)

Planned comparisons revealed that victims wanted to receive an apology more after an intentional than after an unintentional transgression ($b = .32$, $t(379) = 2.18$, $p = .03$). Perpetrators wanted to give an apology more after unintentional than after intentional transgressions ($b = -.84$, $t(379) = -5.80$, $p < .001$). In line with the mismatch hypothesis, we found that perpetrators were somewhat more willing to apologize than victims desired an apology after an unintentional transgression ($b = .26$, $t(379) = 1.74$, $p = .08$). Although, the pattern in is the hypothesized direction, the difference is not significant and should be interpreted with caution. Conversely, when the transgression was intentional, victims desired an apology significantly more than perpetrators were willing to apologize ($b = -.90$, $t(379) = -6.40$, $p < .001$).

Anger. A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables and anger as dependent variable revealed main effects on anger of perspective ($b = -.56$, $t(379) = -13.33$, $p < .001$) and intentionality ($b = .15$, $t(379) = 3.72$, $p < .001$). After a transgression, victims were angrier ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.40$) than perpetrators ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.90$), and both were angrier after intentional ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 2.00$) than after unintentional transgressions ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.99$). These effects were qualified by a significant interaction effect ($b = -.08$, $t(379) = -1.93$, $p = .05$). Simple effects analyses indicated that victims were significantly angrier after intentional than unintentional transgressions ($b = .24$, $t(379) = 3.99$, $p < .001$). We did not find any effect on anger among perpetrators ($b = .07$, $t(379) = 1.27$, $p = .21$).

To test whether anger indeed predicts the need for an apology for victims but not for perpetrators, we conducted a regression analysis with anger and perspective as independent variables and need for an apology as the dependent variable. We obtained a significant interaction of anger and perspective ($b = -.50$, $t(379) = -5.67$, $p < .001$). A simple effects analysis indicated that anger only predicted the need for an apology for victims ($b = .59$, $t(379) = 5.99$, $p < .001$), and not for perpetrators ($b = -.10$, $t(379) = -1.44$, $p = .15$). We also obtained a main effect of anger ($b = .24$, $t(379) = 3.97$, $p < .001$), indicating that participants generally perceived a greater need for apologies as they became angrier.

Guilt. A regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as predictors and guilt as dependent variable yielded significant main effects of perspective ($b = .48$, $t(379)$

= 10.74, $p < .001$) and intentionality ($b = -.11$, $t(379) = -2.40$, $p = .02$). After a transgression, perpetrators felt guiltier ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.96$) than victims ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.58$), and both felt guiltier after unintentional ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 2.11$) than after intentional transgressions ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.91$). These effects were qualified by a significant interaction effect between perspective and intentionality ($b = -.13$, $t(379) = -2.99$, $p = .003$; see Table 3 for cell means). Simple slopes analyses indicated that perpetrators felt guiltier after unintentional than after intentional transgressions ($b = -.24$, $t(379) = -3.81$, $p < .001$). We found no effect on guilt among victims ($b = .01$, $t(379) = .47$, $p = .64$).

To test whether guilt predicts the need for an apology for perpetrators but not for victims, we conducted a regression analysis with guilt and perspective as independent variables and need for an apology as dependent variable. We obtained the predicted interaction effect between guilt and perspective ($b = .40$, $t(379) = 9.15$, $p < .001$). Simple slopes analyses indicated that guilt only predicted the need for apologies for perpetrators ($b = .77$, $t(397) = 12.47$, $p < .001$), and not for victims ($b = -.13$, $t(379) = -1.71$, $p = .09$). We also obtained a main effect of guilt ($b = .32$, $t(379) = 6.49$, $p < .001$), indicating that participants perceived a greater need for apologies as they felt guiltier.

Mediation analyses. Mediation was tested using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2012), using 5000 bootstrap resamples[2]. Like in the previous studies, the reported confidence intervals are bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals of the probability distribution of the indirect effect.

We tested our model by using intentionality as the independent variable, anger and guilt as mediators in parallel, need for apologies as dependent variable and perspective as moderator, moderating the paths from intentionality to anger and to guilt and the paths from anger to need for apologies and guilt to need for apologies. In line with our hypotheses, for victims, we obtained a significant indirect effect of anger ($b = .14$, $S.E. = .04$, 95% CI (two-sided): [.07; .22]) but not of guilt ($b = -.003$, $S.E. = .008$, 95% CI (two-sided): [-.03; .008]). For perpetrators, we obtained a significant indirect effect of guilt ($b = -.18$, $S.E. = .05$, 95% CI (two-sided): [-.28; -.08]), but not of anger ($b = -.01$, $S.E. = .01$, 95% CI (two-sided): [-.04; .008]). The conditional direct (unmediated) effect of intentionality on need for apologies for victims was not significant ($b = -.03$, $S.E. = .12$, $t(382) = .28$, $p = 78$), while the conditional direct effect for perpetrators was significant ($b = -.41$, $S.E. = .11$, $t(382) = -3.63$, $p < .001$). The total effect of intentionality on the need for apologies was also significant ($b = -.12$, $t(381) = -2.43$, $p = .02$).

Need for apologies predicting apology behavior. One of the reasons to conduct Study 3 was to investigate the behavioral implications of the apology mismatch. As explained in the introduction, because perpetrators have the highest need for apologies and unintentional transgressions and perpetrator ultimately decide whether to apologize our not, we expected that a perpetrator's need for apologies would be predictive of whether an apology was issued or not. A logistic regression analysis with perspective and need for apologies as independent variables and apology behavior as dependent variable indicated a main effect of need for apologies ($b = 1.19$, Wald $= 56.24$, $p < .001$) and perspective ($b =$

.45, Wald = 11.35, p = .001). We also found a significant interaction between need for apologies and perspective (b = -1.75, Wald = 30.51, p < .001), showing that need for apologies was only predictive for whether an apology was issued for perpetrators (b = 2.06, Wald = 59.73, p < .001), but not for victims (b = .31, Wald = 3.36, p = .07).

Intentionality predicting apology behavior. Because perpetrators have the highest need for apologies after unintentional transgressions, we expected that apologies are mainly issued after unintentional transgressions. A logistic regression analysis with perspective and intentionality as independent variables and apology issued as dependent variable yielded a main effect of intentionality (b = 1.15, Wald = 14.53, p < .001). Neither the effect of perspective nor the interaction effect was significant.

Because in logistic regression analysis lower order "main effects" are contingent upon the interaction term (Jaccard, 2001), we tested a model without the interaction term between perspective and intentionality. This analysis showed that compared to unintentional transgressions, the chance of an apology being issued after an intentional transgression becomes significantly smaller (b = 1.18, Wald = 29.04, p < .001, odds ratio = 3.25): the likelihood of an apology being issued after an intentional transgression is significantly less than 50% (b = -.94, Wald = 35.84, p < .001, odds = .39, percentage likelihood 28%). After an unintentional transgression, the likelihood of an apology being issued was equivalent to an apology not being issued at all (b = .24, Wald = 2.47, p = .12, odds = 1.27, percentage likelihood 56%).

Effect of apologies on forgiveness. As previous research has shown that apologies aid in being forgiven, we expected that perpetrators who apologized would be forgiven more than perpetrators who did not apologize. A regression analysis with apology issued (effect coded: no = -1; yes = 1), perspective, and intentionality as independent variables and forgiveness as dependent variable showed a significant main effect on forgiveness of apology issued (b = .81, t(375) = 8.81, p < .001), of intentionality (b = -.27, t(375) = 2.93, p = .004), and of perspective (b = -.21, t(375) = -2.33, p = .02). Transgressions were generally forgiven more after an apology was issued (M = 5.92, SD = 1.36) than if an apology was not issued (M = 4.2, SD = 1.90); unintentional transgressions are generally forgiven more (M = 5.44, SD = 1.71) than intentional transgressions (M = 4.44, SD = 1.94); and victims indicated they had forgiven the perpetrator more (M = 4.99, SD = 1.86) than perpetrators indicated that they were forgiven (M = 4.83, SD = 1.94). Neither the two-way interactions nor the three-way interaction were significant (p > .25).

3.4.3 Discussion

The results of Study 3 extend our model in a number of ways. First, we replicated our previous findings in a different population (i.e., employees). Second, in line with our model, we could also show that the mismatch has consequences for actual apology behavior and subsequent forgiveness. Whether an apology is issued or not is predicted by

the perpetrator's need for apologies and not by the victim's needs. Indeed, since the perpetrator's need for apologies is higher after unintentional transgressions than after intentional ones, apologies were issued more often after unintentional than after intentional transgressions. This also means that victims are unlikely to receive an apology when they have a high need for an apology and that the victim's need for an apology is not taken into account by the perpetrator when deciding whether to apologize or not. Finally, we were able to show that the apology mismatch has consequences for whether perpetrators are forgiven or not. Perpetrators are forgiven more when they apologize. As such, unintentional transgressions are forgiven more than intentional transgressions.

3.5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

We showed across three studies that perpetrators and victims have different needs for apology, depending on the intentionality of the transgression. Victims have a stronger preference for an apology after intentional transgressions than after unintentional ones. This effect is mediated by anger: victims become angrier after intentional than after unintentional transgressions, and therefore desire apologies more. For perpetrators, intentionality affects the need for apology in the opposite direction: perpetrators prefer to apologize after unintentional than after intentional transgressions, partly because they feel guiltier after unintentional transgressions. Moreover, in Study 3 we showed that apologies are indeed issued more after unintentional than after intentional transgressions; behavior that is in line with the perpetrator's need for apologies but has no relationship to the victim's need for apologies. An apology in turn does lead to more forgiveness by the victim, as such perpetrators are forgiven more after unintentional than after intentional transgressions.

In the introduction of this paper, we argued that the apology-forgiveness cycle may not always represent an empirical reality as the victim's and perpetrator's perspectives on transgression are so divergent. Our findings highlight that the initiation and success of the apology-forgiveness cycle is highly dependent on the intentionality of the transgression. Perpetrators are particularly motivated to initiate the apology-forgiveness cycle by apologizing after unintentional transgressions. As such, unintentional transgressions are forgiven more often than intentional ones. However, in these situations (i.e., unintentional transgressions) victims are not very angry. Hence, the increased forgiveness after unintentional transgressions seems to be a joint effect of an apology and a relatively mild emotional reaction on the part of the victim. In situations where victims experience the greatest injustice and particularly desire apologies – after intentional transgressions – perpetrators are far less likely to apologize. Yet, after intentional transgressions, a victim's need for apologies seems to have little influence on whether an apology is issued or not. Indeed, in these situations, the absence of an apology may even increase victims' anger (Ohbuchi et al., 1989). This in turn increases the risk of further

escalation of the conflict. As such, intentional transgressions pose the greatest challenge for mediation and reconciliation initiatives because of the strong emotional reactions of victims combined with very incongruent reconciliatory motivations of the perpetrator.

It is interesting to note that although we find that victims generally want an apology more after intentional than after unintentional transgressions, related research on the effects of apologies paradoxically shows that that apologies may be of little value or even be counterproductive after intentional transgressions (Struthers et al., 2008). As such, victims particularly desire an apology after intentional transgressions but at the same time, apologies seem to have limited impact in those situations. What is a possible explanation for these incongruent findings regarding the need for apologies and the actual effect of apologies on victims after intentional transgressions? One potential explanation may be found in the role of forecasting errors in the apology process, whereby victims believe that they will be content if they receive an apology, but when they have actually received one, are less satisfied than they thought they would be (De Cremer et al., 2010). These findings again demonstrate the challenge of reconciliation after intentional transgressions: even when victims receive an apology after an intentional transgression (i.e., the perpetrator initiates the cycle), this may not necessarily mean that the apology is reciprocated with forgiveness.

3.5.1 The role of guilt in the perpetrator's willingness to apologize

Our studies showed a clear connection between feelings of guilt and the perpetrator's willingness to apologize after interpersonal transgressions. This is in line with recent conceptualizations of guilt, which have stressed the interpersonal effects of guilt, arguing that guilt motivates people to take relationship-restoring action (Baumeister et al., 1994; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Our findings connect well with this research, showing that indeed apologies as a tool for reconciliation are predicted by feelings of guilt. Focusing on the relationship between guilt and apologies therefore seems to be a promising avenue for future research on apologizing.

In this context, it is also important to distinguish guilt form other emotional reactions that perpetrators may feel after a transgression, such as compassion or sympathy. Guilt can arise when a people feel causally responsible for the harm inflicted upon the victim (Baumeister, et al., 1994). As such, guilt differs from feelings of compassion or sympathy, which may arise when someone sees a victim suffer (i.e., from a third party perspective; Gayannee, 2008; Regan, 1971). Guilt only arises when people feel personally responsible for the harm.

In the current set of studies, we showed that feelings of guilt have an important influence on the perpetrator's willingness to apologize. The emergence of guilt in a perpetrator is however complex. For instance, in this research we showed that the intentionality of the transgression is an important predictor for feelings of guilt.

Sometimes, however, transgressions are not easily categorized as either intentional or unintentional, having both intentional and unintentional characteristics. Since the premeditated nature of intentional transgressions provides the perpetrator with an opportunity to guard him/herself against feelings of guilt by means of a priori rationalizations (e.g., Tsang, 2002), it seems likely that unanticipated effects of transgressions will make a perpetrator feel guilty. For instance, intentionally throwing a friend into the pool during a party probably does not make the perpetrator feel guilty as this was a premeditated act. However, suppose the friend unbeknownst had his new mobile phone in his pocket, which then broke as a result of getting wet. This unexpected effect of the transgression is likely to make the perpetrator feel guilty. Indeed, depending on the rationalizations and foreseen effects of an intentional transgression, the perpetrator may feel guilty for specific aspects of the transgression and may decide to either apologize or not.

In the present studies, we focused on guilt experienced directly after the transgression. However, when taking a longer time frame, the relationship between intentionality and guilt may become more complex. Perpetrators may guard against feelings of guilt with certain rationalizations. However, it seems likely that some of those rationalizations are reinterpreted later by the perpetrator and then deemed inadequate. As such, intentional transgressions may have the potential to cause guilt at a later time. Since these rationalizations are not present with unintentional transgressions, we would predict that in the long run, perpetrators may feel guiltier about intentional than unintentional transgressions, and if given the choice, would want to apologize more for something they had done intentionally than for something they had done unintentionally. It could therefore be that the apology needs of victims and perpetrators become more aligned longer after the conflict. How long this may take is of course open to empirical investigation.

3.5.2 Strengths and limitations

One of the strengths of the present research is the use of a combination of different methodologies for answering our research questions. We combined scenario methodology, which gives control over the transgression and thus increasing internal validity (Aronson, Wilson, & Brewer, 1998), with autobiographical narrative methodology, which is more emotionally involving and has a higher ecological validity (Baumeister, et al., 1990; Gonzales, Manning, & Haugen, 1992; Zechmeister, & Romero, 2002). In addition to this pluralistic methodological strategy, we sampled both students and employees to test the generalizability of our results. The fact that we showed similar findings across these different methodologies and populations increases our confidence in the proposed mismatch between victims' and perpetrators' need for apologies.

A possible limitation of the present study is that we cannot be certain whether the task of remembering a victim episode is significantly different from remembering a

perpetrator episode. Previous research comparing these perspectives also mentions this limitation (e.g., Baumeister, et al., 1990). Participants might have had self-presentational concerns, selecting episodes that present themselves rather positive in their role of a considerate victim (after an unintentional transgression) or a misunderstood perpetrator (after an intentional transgression).   Yet, given that we find the same effects across different types of methodologies (i.e., scenario methodology and autobiographical narrative), we feel confident that this limitation of the autobiographical narrative methodology has had no significant effect on our findings.

Another important issue that must be addressed is that we only focused on a specific type of transgression, that is, anger-provoking transgressions. Victims can respond to transgressions in a number of different ways, not only with anger but also, for instance, with contempt and estrangement (Fischer & Roseman, 2007; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). We focused on anger-provoking transgressions because anger is conceptualized as an emotion that can drive reconciliation (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). As such, the apology-forgiveness cycle seems to mainly refer to anger-inducing transgressions. Yet, studying how reconciliation can be achieved after contempt-inducing transgressions would be an interesting extension of the apology-forgiveness cycle. Indeed, after unintentional contempt-inducing transgressions, forgiveness may not follow as the victims are unwilling to reconcile.

On the methodological side, we relied on two different items in our analyses of our main dependent variable: one for victims and one for perpetrators. Although a direct comparison between the means on these different items (i.e., comparing perpetrator's and victim's need for apologies after intentional or unintentional transgressions) was important for testing our proposed mismatch, this might be problematic because these were in fact two different items. Nevertheless, by looking only at the data pattern within the victim and perpetrator conditions, it is clear that intentionality influences the need for apologies of victims and perpetrators in opposite directions. Since these effects are in line with our hypotheses, we feel confident that this comparison across the different items does not pose a serious threat to the validity of our findings.

A final limitation of the current set of studies is the absence of behavioral data after experimentally induced transgressions. Although this would be an important extension of the current findings, there are some important ethical and methodological problems with such a design. We can experimentally create unintentional and intentional transgressions with the participants as victims. However, creating situations in which participants are the perpetrators presents important challenges due to the rather active role of a perpetrator compared to the passive role of a victim (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). From a practical perspective, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to create situations in which participants intentionally transgress against one another in the lab (there are methods for creating unintentional transgressions; Leunissen et al., 2012). Moreover, creating a situation in which one intentionally transgresses against another individual might be ethically undesirable as this would induce a substantial amount of stress on the research

participants. Due to these considerations, we decided to test our hypotheses in scenario and autobiographical narrative methodologies only.

3.5.3 Concluding remarks

Due to the interpersonal nature of conflict and reconciliation between the perpetrator and the victim, apologizing is a dynamic social process. Unfortunately, the psychological underpinnings of this dynamic process have not yet been investigated in much detail. Our present results show that victims and perpetrators do not necessarily share the same perspective regarding the function of an apology, thereby making reconciliation efforts more difficult than initially anticipated.

CHAPTER 4

4. THE RELATIONAL MAINTENANCE FUNCTION OF APOLOGIZING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most common and expected ways for perpetrators to respond to a transgression is to apologize (Goffman, 1971; Lazare, 2004). Research shows that apologies generally have positive effects on victims' responses, leading to less anger (Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989) and more forgiveness from the victim (Leunissen, De Cremer, Reinders Folmer, & Van Dijke, 2013; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). Regretfully, we know very little about factors that motivate perpetrators to apologize (Leunissen, De Cremer, & Reinders Folmer, 2012; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). This forms a serious gap in our knowledge on reconciliation, because normally it is the perpetrator who is expected to initiate the reconciliation process (Leunissen et al., 2013).

In the present paper, we take a functional approach to apologizing. This means that perpetrators have a goal when they apologize (i.e. relational repair) and that this goal should be predictive of whether they are willing to apologize or not. For perpetrators, an apology is an instrument that can be used to reconcile, that is, to repair a damaged relationship (Leunissen et al., 2013).

As apologies repair a damaged relationship, it stands to reason that, in order for perpetrators to be motivated to reconcile, they should consider the damaged relationship itself valuable. This idea is based on the "valuable relationship hypothesis" (De Waal, 2000). This hypothesis holds that reconciliation between individuals is more likely when the relationship is valuable to the individuals involved in the conflict (Aureli, Cords, & Van Schaik, 2002; McCullough, Root, Luna, Berry, Tabak, & Bono, 2010; Silk 2002).

Although the valuable relationship hypothesis has been developed primarily in the field of primate biology, it is arguably particularly relevant to conflict resolution in humans because of our strong reliance on close relationships. A wealth of evidence indicates that forming and maintaining close relationships is a fundamental human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Indeed, the dissolution of close relationships is a consistent cause of anxiety and people go to great lengths in order to prevent existing relationships from falling apart (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The idea that reconciliation is facilitated by relational closeness has received some attention in the forgiveness literature (i.e. the victim perspective in conflict). For instance, research has shown that people are more likely to forgive close others (Karremans & Aarts, 2007; McCullough, Luna, Berry, Tabak, & Bono, 2010). Likewise, revenge following a transgression is less likely in close relationships (Burnette, McCullough, Van Tongeren, & Davis, 2012).

To our knowledge no research has investigated how relational closeness influences reconciliation attempts by perpetrators. Yet, in line with our idea, previous research has

shown that perpetrators become worried about their public image, ostensibly due to a fear of being excluded from the moral community (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Arguably, fearing that one is excluded from a relationship should only be a strong motivator to reconcile when that relationship is important to the perpetrator.

If people perceive a transgression as a threat to a close relationship, then one would expect that perpetrators will undertake actions that promote reconciliation particularly after they have transgressed against a close other. Because an apology forms an important reconciliation tool, we suggest that perpetrators will be more willing to apologize for a transgression to a victim of which the perpetrator feels he/she has a close relationship with than a less close relationship.

Furthermore, we predict that the process by which relationship closeness leads to a higher willingness to apologize is the experience of guilt. Guilt has been conceptualized as an emotion that people experience when an important relationship is damaged; motivating people to take relationship restoring action over the anxiety of social exclusion (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). As close relationships are more important to people than less close relationships, one would expect that people feel guiltier when transgressing against someone they feel close to than someone they do not feel close to. What is interesting about this is that the experience of guilt is not due to the (severity of the) transgression itself but is mainly predicted by the relationship between the perpetrator and victim. Thus, the same transgression should evoke more guilt when it is committed against a close other than against a more relationally distant other. Indeed, research has shown that guilt is experienced more frequently in close relationships (Baumeister, Stillwell, Heatherton, 1995). Moreover, other research provides some indirect evidence on the relationship between relational closeness and feelings of guilt about a transgression. Research by Leunissen and colleagues (2013) shows that perpetrators feel less guilty about intentional than about unintentional transgressions. The authors explain this finding by pointing out that when someone commits a transgression intentionality, the relationship is less likely to be important to the perpetrator (Leunissen et al., 2013; see also McGraw, 1987).Because guilt motivates people to take relationship restoring action, one would expect that the guiltier someone feels about a transgression, the more willing that person must be to apologize for a transgression. Previous research on apologizing has indeed found that feelings of guilt are a reliable predictor for apologizing (Leunissen et al., 2013).

4.2 THE PRESENT STUDIES

The present research was aimed at examining the hypothesis that perpetrators are more willing to apologize for a transgression when they transgressed against someone they feel close to than someone they feel less close to. We expect this to happen because close relationships are more valuable to perpetrators and therefore they are more strongly

motivated to reconcile. We expected guilt, as a motivator of relationship restoring behavior, to mediate the relationship between relational closeness and apology behavior. In three studies, we either measured relational closeness or manipulated it. Moreover, we use both student and employee samples to show the relevance of our relational closeness effect to professional, as well as private relationships, showing that this is a very general effect.

4.3 EXPERIMENT 4.1

4.3.1 Method

Participants. A total of 157 participants (54 women; $M_{(age)} = 20.47$, $SD_{(age)} = 2.17$) participated for course credit.

Materials. The study was introduced to the participants as a study on social experiences with a focus on negative experiences. Participants were asked to recall and describe a situation in which they did something unjust or immoral towards another person (autobiographical narrative methodology is commonly used in interpersonal conflict studies; e.g. Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990; Leunissen et al., 2013). After participants had described this situation we asked how close they felt to the victim before they committed the transgression with 6 relational closeness items (based on items by Arriaga & Agnew, 2001): 1) I felt emotionally attached to this other person, 2) The other meant a lot to me, 3) I would have found it very hard if I would not have any more contact with this other person, 4) I hoped that my relationship with this other person would never end, 5) I thought that in the future I would have to deal a lot with this other person, 6) I assumed that in the future I had to deal a lot with this other person ($\alpha = .97$; a principal component analysis indicated that all 6 items loaded on a single factor with an Eigenvalue of 5.14, explaining 85.60% of the variance).

Guilt was measured with "how guilty did you feel in this situation?" Apology behavior was measured by asking participants whether they had apologized to this other person (either *yes* or *no*).

4.3.2 Results

Logistic regression analysis with relational closeness as independent variable and whether the participant had apologized as the dependent variable indicated a significant effect of relational closeness ($b = .38$, Wald $= 16.79$, $p < .001$).
Linear regression analysis with relational closeness as independent variable and guilt as dependent variable indicated a significant effect ($b = 3.96$, $t(155) = 28.29$, $p < .001$).

Moreover, logistic regression analysis with guilt as the independent variable and whether the participant had apologized as the dependent variable indicated a significant effect of guilt ($b = .40$, Wald $= 15.78$, $p < .001$). Mediation analysis, using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (Hayes, 2012), showed a significant indirect effect of relational closeness through guilt on apologies ($b = .13$, $S.E. = .07$, 95% CI (two-sided): [.02; .30])[6].

4.4 EXPERIMTENT 4.2

4.4.1 Method

   Participants. A total of 104 participants (54 women; $M_{(age)} = 35.84$, $SD_{(age)} = 11.97$) participated though the online participation system MTurk. Participants were paid $ 1.00 for completing the survey. Participants were randomly assigned to a close or distant condition.
   Materials. Participants were presented with a scenario in which they were asked to imagine that were in a romantic relationship. One night, they went to party without their romantic partner. At this party they ran into an attractive acquaintance. After this party, they walked home together with their acquaintance. When home, they engage in some moderate infidelity ("you start making out for a little while"). Later on, it turns out that the partner found out what happened. We manipulated relational closeness by stating in the close relationship that the relationship was going great and that you feel very close to your partner. In the distant relationship condition we stated that the relationship was not going very well and that you feel more and more distant from your partner.
   Measures. We checked our closeness manipulation with two items which were averaged 1) How close do you feel to your partner? And 2) how valuable is this relationship to you? ($r = .68$, $p < .001$). We measured the willingness to apologize with: Would you apologize to your partner about what happened after the party? Feelings of guilt were measured with: Would you feel guilty about what happened after the party? (all on a $1 = $ *not at all*, $7 = $ *very much* scale)

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[6] An alternative explanation for this finding is that perpetrators commit less severe transgressions against close others and therefore apologize more easily. In order to control for transgression severity, we measured it by asking: "The situation just described was very serious", "the situations I just described was very intense", and "The situation I just described was really bad" ($\alpha = .84$; all on a $1 = $ *not at all*, to $7 = $ *very much* scale). Including this scale as a covariate in the mediation model did not change the presented findings; there was still a significant effect of relational closeness through guilt on apology behavior.

4.4.2 Results

Manipulation check. An ANOVA with our relational closeness manipulation as the independent variable and the closeness check as the dependent variable indicated a significant effect of our closeness manipulation ($F(1, 102) = 35.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$). As expected participants in the close condition, participants felt closer to their partner ($M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.31$) than participants in the distant condition ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.71$).

      Willingness to apologize. An ANOVA with our relational closeness manipulation as the independent variable and the willingness to apologize as the dependent variable indicated a significant main effect ($F(1, 102) = 17.08$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$). Participants were more willing to apologize when they were in a close ($M = 6.38$, $SD = 1.01$) than in a distant relationship ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.74$).

      Guilt. An ANOVA with our relational closeness manipulation as the independent variable and feelings of guilt as the dependent variable indicated a significant main effect ($F(1, 102) = 13.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$). Participants who were in a close relationship felt more guilty about the infidelity ($M = 6.31$, $SD = 1.10$) than participants in a distant relationship ($M = 5.22$, $SD = 1.86$). Moreover, a linear regression analysis with guilt as the independent variable and the willingness to apologize as the dependent variable indicated a significant positive effect ($b = 1.15$, $t(186) = 12.04$, $p < .001$).

      Mediation analysis. Mediation analysis, using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (Hayes, 2012; 5000 bootstrap samples), showed a significant indirect effect of relational closeness through guilt on apologies ($b = -.37$, $S.E. = .11$, 95% CI (two-sided): [-.63; -.17]).

4.5 EXPERIMENT 4.3

4.5.1 Method

      Participants. A total of 80 employees (32 women; $M_{(age)} = 33.45$, $SD_{(age)} = 10.34$) participated though the online participation system MTurk. Participants were paid $1.00 upon completion of the survey. They were employed for an average of 3.76 ($SD = 2.88$, range: [.5; 18]) years in their respective organizations.

      Materials. We employed a similar design as in Study 1: participants were asked to recall a situation in which they did something unpleasant, unfair or unjust towards someone else. It was stressed that this situation must have occurred at work. Participants were asked to write down a short paragraph on what happened

      Measures. Relational closeness was measured using the high-quality relationship measure (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). This is 10-item scale measures relational quality between coworkers at work. The items were adapted slightly to fit the interpersonal context of our study. An example item is "There is a great deal of respect between me and

this other person [the person to whom was transgressed]". The scale had an excellent reliability ($\alpha = .90$). Guilt was measured with "How guilty did you feel about what you had done?" Apology behavior was measured by asking the participants whether or not they had apologized for what they had done (either *yes* or *no*).

4.5.2 Results

A logistic regression analysis with the high-quality relationship measure as independent measure and apology behavior as the dependent variable indicated a significant effect of high-quality relationship ($b = 1.62$, Wald $= 14.57$, $p < .001$, odds ratio: 5.056)[7]. High-quality relationship was also positively related to feelings of guilt about the transgression ($b = .77$, $t(78) = 3.88$, $p < .001$) and guilt in turn was positively related to apologizing ($b = .98$, Wald $= 10.69$, $p = .001$, odds ratio: 2.67). Finally, a mediation analysis (Hayes, 2012), indicated a significant indirect effect of high-quality relationship through guilt on apology behavior ($b = .22$, *S.E.* $= .14$, 95% CI: [.005; .56]).

4.6 DISCUSSION

Across 3 studies, we showed that relational value reliably predicts whether perpetrators are willing or not to initiate reconciliation by means of an apology. We showed this effect using different measures of relational value (relational closeness, quality of relationships) and by manipulating relational closeness. Moreover we showed this effect across private as well as professional relationships.

As reconciliation is a necessary step to continue in a damaged relationship, we predicted that perpetrators would be motivated to reconcile when the damaged relationship was valuable to the perpetrator. This is indeed what we found. In support of our argument that perpetrators are more willing to reconcile in valuable relationships, we showed that transgressing against a close other creates stronger feelings of guilt than transgressing against someone more distant. As guilt is an emotion that motivates people to take relationship restoring action, one would indeed predict that transgressing against someone you feel close to creates stronger feelings of guilt. Moreover, in line with the idea that apologies provide an important means to restore a relationship for perpetrators (Leunissen et al., 2013), we showed that guilt positively influences a perpetrator's willingness to apologize.

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[7] As in Study 1, we included a measure of transgression severity: "How severe was the unpleasant, unfair or unjust act that you just described?" (1 = *not at all*, to 7 = *very much*). Including this measure as a covariate did not change the reported effect. High-quality relationships was still a significant predictor for whether an apology was offered or not.

4.6.1 Implication for research on apologies

The nature of apologies as a tool mainly aimed at preserving valuable relationships is further underscored by the findings that the transgression itself had no influence in the willingness to apologize. Relational closeness was a predictor for the willingness to apologize after the same transgression (Study 2) and also after statistically controlling for transgression severity (Study 1 and 3). Indeed, from a normative perspective perpetrators, should apologize for a transgression independent of the quality of the relationship with the victim because an apology is mainly a mechanism to restore social and moral order (Tavuchis, 1992). Additionally, from this normative perspective, perpetrators should be more willing to apologize as the transgression severity increases (as more severe transgression represent a greater challenge to the moral order). These normative perspectives are not supported by our findings. In contrast, we showed that perpetrators are rather instrumental in their decision to reconcile by means of an apology. Only when the relationship with the victim is important are perpetrators willing to take the first step by apologizing. Interestingly, normative perspectives on apologizing do not capture these motivations to reconcile and therefore they are seen as being of little predictive value of actual behavior (e.g. Bennett & Earwaker, 1994; Tavuchis, 1992). Empirical research on reconciliation, however, has shown that victims and perpetrators have their own motivations to reconcile (e.g. Leunissen et al., 2013; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) and that victims' and perpetrators' perspective on when reconciliation should be initiated can differ substantially (Leunissen et al., 2013). For this reason it is important to zoom in more closely on the perpetrators' motivations as they are the ones who are expected to initiate the reconciliation process.

4.6.2 Theoretical contributions

Research on apologizing and reconciliation lacks an overarching theoretical conceptualization of perpetrator behavior. Importantly, there is not theory that predicts and explains when and why perpetrators are willing to apologize or reconcile with a victim. We believe that the "valuable relationship hypothesis" provides important theoretical framework through which reconciliation can be studied. First of all, it provides an ultimate explanation of why reconciliation occurs (Scott-Philips, Dickins, & West, 2011). For primates who live in groups, social relationships are important for reproduction, survival and access to important resources. Reconciliation helps to perverse these relationships when a conflict occurs (De Waal, 1996). It is in this light not surprising that individuals are more motivated to reconcile when those relationships that are important to them are threatened due to a conflict. Our research indeed shows that the threat to those important relationships motivates people to reconcile.

Although the valuable relationship hypothesis provides are simple predictive framework, the basic idea is applicable to a host of social situations and relational indicators. In this paper, we have zoomed in on two indicators of relational value (i.e. relational closeness and relational quality). However, other social variables can also influence relational value. For instance power, defined as 'the capacity to alter others' states by providing or withholding resources and administering punishments' (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003, p. 267), likewise provides relational value, especially for those in a low power position. A straightforward prediction, based on this theoretical framework, is that when a perpetrator transgresses against a high-power person, he/she is more motivated to reconcile than when the perpetrator transgress against a low-power person. This can be predicted because the relationship of a low power perpetrator with a high power victim is valuable as the victim can provide valuable resources to the perpetrator. In contrast, when a high power perpetrator transgresses against a low power victim, initiation of reconciliation by the perpetrator is much less likely as the relationship is of less value to a high power perpetrator. Interdependence is another indicator of relational value. As a perpetrator is more interdependent on a victim for valued outcomes, the more this relationship is valuable to a perpetrator. As such, when a transgression threatens a relationship that is characterized by high interdependence between perpetrator and victim, perpetrators are more likely to initiate reconciliation, as for instance by apologizing. As such, we believe that the valuable relationship hypothesis provides an important theoretical framework that helps us to understand why perpetrators initiate reconciliation (i.e. to preserve valuable relationships) and when they initiate reconciliation (when a transgression threatens a relationship that is valuable to them).

4.6.3 Strengths and limitations

An important strength of the current set of studies is that we show the same effects when using autobiographical narrative methodology, which has a high external validity with scenario methodology in which we could control for the type of transgression. Moreover, we operationalized relational closeness in a number of different ways: as a generalized need; as specific to the victim of a recalled transgression; and manipulated using a scenario methodology. Indeed, the fact that we find the same results over a number of different methodologies and measurements gives us confidence in the presented results and conclusions.

4.6.4 Concluding remarks

Interpersonal conflict is an inevitable part of living and working together in groups. It is therefore important to understand when people are willing to reconcile following a conflict. A functional approach to this phenomenon can help us understand when and why people are willing to do so.

CHAPTER 5

5. SORRY *SEEMS* TO BE THE HARDEST WORD: FORECASTING ERRORS IN THE AVERSIVENESS OF APOLOGIZING[8]

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the wake of a transgression, perpetrators are typically expected to respond to their misconduct by apologizing (Goffman, 1971). Indeed, apologies serve an important function in the regulation of the aftermath of conflicts. For instance, they help to foster forgiveness between victim and perpetrator (Leunissen, De Cremer, Reinders Folmer, & Van Dijke, 2013; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997), reduce anger towards the perpetrator (Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989), and they help reestablish cooperation between victim and perpetrator (Bottom, Gibson, Daniels, & Murnighan, 2002).

Despite these positive effects of apologies (including many effects that also benefit the perpetrator), perpetrators are generally reluctant to apologize (Lazare, 2004; Leunissen, De Cremer, & Reinders Folmer, 2012). Recent advances in research on apologizing and reconciliation have revealed a number of reasons why perpetrators may not apologize. Perpetrators might see their behavior as justified, therefore not willing to apologize (Baumeister, 1999; Leunissen et al., 2013). Moreover, apologizing means surrendering power by providing the victim with the choice to forgive or not, and risking subsequent demand for reparations (Leunissen et al., 2012; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Additionally, by admitting blame for a transgression, perpetrators might lose their positive standing in the community (Schönbach, 1990) and reduce feelings of positive self-worth (Okimoto, Wenzel, & Hedrick, 2013).

Therefore, it may not be surprising that perpetrators hold negative associations with the act of apologizing, and therefore may not easily apologize (Lazare, 2004). But are these associations accurate? Anecdotal evidence suggests that perpetrators are generally content with the apologies they have offered (Lazare, 2004), and empirical research shows that they feel more regret over the apologies they have not offered than over apologies they have offered, suggesting that perpetrators look back positively at apologies they have offered (Exline et al., 2007). These findings are not in line with the negative associations that perpetrators hold with apologizing. Perpetrators predict a strong aversiveness towards apologizing (Lazare, 2004), but this aversiveness is not present when looking back at apologies that were given. Could it be that perpetrators make a forecasting error when predicting the aversiveness of apologizing?

Research on affective forecasting shows that people are usually inaccurate in predicting the intensity of the hedonic consequences of future events (Wilson & Gilbert, 2003; Wilson et

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[8] This chapter is based on Leunissen, De Cremer, Van Dijke, Reinders Folmer, (under review)

al., 2000). For example, people overestimate the intensity of regret they will experience when just missing the subway (Gilbert, Morewedge, Risen, & Wilson, 2004), and they overestimate the intensity of happiness that they will experience when their favorite football team wins (Wilson, et al., 2000).

Although apologizing has both negative and positive effects for perpetrators, it is likely that a perpetrator's forecast on the act of apologizing is disproportionately influenced by the negative effects associated with apologizing. This prediction follows from research showing that the potential for negative effects causes more distress than the potential for positive effects (see Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 1991; Taylor, 1991), thus giving negative effects a greater impact on forecasting errors (Gilbert et al., 1998). At the same time, perpetrators may underestimate the psychological mechanisms that ameliorate distress once it is experienced (i.e. the psychological immune system; Gilbert et al., 1998). This results in a forecasting error in which perpetrator overestimate the experienced aversiveness of an apology.

In the present paper, we aim to provide more insight into a perpetrator's decision to apologize by investigating whether perpetrators accurately construe the act of apologizing. It is important to know whether perpetrators indeed overestimate the aversiveness of apologizing because people's decisions to take a certain course of action are often based on how people predict the future hedonic consequences of those actions. Most research up till now has investigated interpersonal processes that predict a perpetrators willingness to apologize. We aim to increase our understanding of the apology process by looking at intrapersonal variables, which are arguably also important in this process (Okimoto, et al., 2013). In Studies 1 we show that people make a forecasting error by overestimating the predicted aversiveness of an apology compared to the experienced aversiveness in a controlled laboratory experiment. In Study 2, by using an autobiographical narrative methodology, we show the same effect using naturally occurring apologies in organizational settings. Finally, in Study 3 we show this forecasting effect with a within-subjects design and also show that the forecasts have an effect of apology behavior.

5.2 EXPERIMENT 5.1

In this study, we aim to show our proposed forecasting effect by showing that the predicted aversiveness of an apology is higher than the aversiveness people actually experience when apologizing. To test this forecasting effect, we had participants commit an interpersonal transgression. We compared responses of participants who were asked to imagine apologizing for the transgression with those of participants who were asked to actually apologize. We also included a third condition in which participants imagined committing a transgression and imagined apologizing for the transgression. As we expect that people's perceptions of an apology are already shaped before they commit a transgression, we included this condition to show that the forecasted aversiveness of an

apology is not contingent upon whether a perpetrator has already committed a transgression or not, but rather on the act of apologizing.

5.2.1 Method

Participants & design. A total of 118 students (58 women; M_{age} = 21.4; SD_{age} = 2.7) participated for partial course credit. They were randomly assigned to a *imagined transgression & imagined apology*, a *real transgression & imagined apology* or a *real transgression & real apology* condition.

      Procedure. The first part of the experiment was designed to create a transgression. After the participants had committed the transgression we introduced our forecasting manipulation and finally we assessed the dependent variables.

      Transgression. We used a paradigm developed by SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel (*in press*) to experimentally create a transgression. The study was introduced to participants as a study on performance-contingent pay. It was explained that participants could win points in this experiment. These points earned participants tickets for a lottery for a 50 euro gift voucher. Participants would play a pub quiz against another participant who was ostensibly also in the lab (in reality, the interaction with this other 'player' was preprogrammed). Before participants played the game, they were asked to divide 60 points between themselves and the other player (the other player could also divide 60 points). After the pub quiz, the 60 points would be divided in accordance with the proposed division of the winner of the pub quiz.

      After participants proposed a division of the points, they continued to the pub quiz game. This game consisted of 5 multiple choice questions and 5 questions on which participants had to estimate the correct answer (e.g. How many moons does the planet Mars have?). Participants would receive 1 point for each correctly answered question. The player who was closest to the correct answer would receive the point for each 'estimate question'. The quiz was rigged by telling participants afterwards they were closer to the real answer than their opponent was on the estimation questions. As such, we could tell every participant that they were the winner of the quiz and that the points would be divided as they had decided at the beginning of the experiment.

      Forecasting manipulation. Participants in the *real transgression* conditions were told that they had divided the points less fairly than the other player and not in accordance with the social norms in these kinds of situations. Participants in the *real transgression & imagined apology* condition were asked to imagine apologizing to the other player for this. Participants in the *real transgression & real apology* condition were told that they had to apologize for this to the other player. On the next screen, they could type in the apology and send it to the other player. Participants in the *imagined transgression & imagined apology* condition were asked to imagine they had divided the point unfairly and not in accordance with social norms in these situations, and were asked to imagine apologizing

for this. After the manipulation, (forecasted) aversiveness towards apologizing was measured with: How "stressful", hard", "unpleasant", "humiliating" it was (would it be) to apologize? (α = .89). These 4 items loaded on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 3.03, explaining 75.84% of the variance.

5.2.2 Results

An ANOVA showed a main effect of the forecasting manipulation ($F(2, 115)$ = 6.30, p = .003, η^2 = .10). Planned comparisons indicated that participants in *the real transgression & real apology condition* experienced less aversiveness towards apologizing (M = 2.55, SD = 1.50) than participants predicted in the *forecasted transgression & forecasted apology* condition (M =3.74, SD = 1.47; p = .001) and participants in the *real transgression & forecasted apology* condition (M =3.33, SD = 1.55; p = .03). There was no difference in predicted aversiveness between the *imagined transgression & imagined apology* condition and the *real transgression & imagined apology* condition (p = .45).

5.2.3 Discussion

These results support our hypothesis that perpetrators make a forecasting error when predicting how aversive it is to apologize[9]. Perpetrators in both imagined apology conditions overestimated the aversiveness of apologizing compared to the aversiveness that perpetrators experienced in the real apology condition. Perpetrators also overestimated the aversiveness of an apology when imagining both committing a transgression and imagining apologizing for it. This shows that the forecasting error does not only emerge when people have already committed a transgression but rather that aversiveness is generally associated with apologizing.

5.3 EXPERIMENT 5.2

Study 2 was designed to test whether these effects also generalize to meaningful interpersonal settings. In Study 1, the interpersonal offense and the apology were situated

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[9] We replicated this study in order to address a possible alternative explanation. Participants received specific instructions about how to actually apologize (by typing the apology into the pop-up screen, which would then be communicated via the computer network) whereas participants who imagined apologizing did not receive such specific instructions. Therefore, it could be that participants' imagined apology actually took a more aversive form (e.g., having to do it in public) compared to the apology in the real apology condition. To address this, we added in the two forecasting conditions the instructions: *Imagine that you were told to apologize for this by means of typing a message on the next screen*. The results (N = 89) showed the exact same pattern as reported in Study 1.

in a (preprogrammed) computer network setting, allowing for strong experimental control. Yet, this relatively anonymous setting may also have minimized identity effects of the apology, thus potentially limiting our conclusions to offenses of low severity. Study 2 was designed to address this. This time, we asked participants to remember an apology episode or to imagine an apology episode in the context of their daily work (taken from Leunissen et al., 2013).

5.3.1 Method

Participants & design. A total of 74 participants (29 women; $M_{(age)} = 32.31$; $SD_{(age)} = 9.23$) participated in this study. Participants were recruited through the online system Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Participants were asked to participate only if they had a job. Participants were randomly assigned to a forecasting or experience condition.

     Procedure. This study was introduced as a study on social experiences at work. In the forecasting condition, participants were asked: *Please imagine the following situation: In the near future you do something that somebody else in your organization experiences as unpleasant or unjust. This can be an error you made, a (serious) disagreement of opinion, or a personal conflict. Imagine that you would apologize for this.* Participants in the experience condition were asked: *Please remember a situation from the near past in which you did something that somebody else in the organization that you work in experienced as unpleasant or unjust and for which you apologized. This can be an error you made, a (serious) disagreement of opinion, or a personal conflict.* Participants in the experience condition were also asked to write down a paragraph on the incident. Averseness of apologizing was measured with the same items as in Study 1 and 2 ($\alpha = .89$; the 4 items loaded on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 2.87, explaining 71.63% of the variance).

     In order to control for potential differences in severity of the imagined versus real transgressions, we asked: "How severe is the situation that you imagine apologizing for?" (Forecast condition) and "How severe was the situation that you just described?" (Experience condition). All items were measured on a 1 (*not at all*), to 7 (*very much*) scale. We also assessed the communication channel that was used to deliver the apology: "How do you imagine apologizing?" or "How did you apologize?" (Answer options: *Face-to-face, through email, through telephone, by letter, other*).

5.3.2 Results

Across the two conditions, the mean transgression severity was 4.27 ($SD = 1.50$), there was no significant difference between the forecast and experience condition on this measure ($p = .10$). A regression analysis our forecasting manipulation (effect coded: forecast condition

= -1, experience condition = 1) and transgression severity (standardized) as independent variables showed a significant effect of our forecasting manipulation on apology averseness (b = -.34, $t(70)$ = -2.25, p = .03, r^2 = .07). As expected participants in the forecast condition predicted that it would be more averse to apologize (M = 4.34, SD = 1.18), than participants in the experience condition (M = 3.36, SD = 1.68). We also obtained a significant effect of transgression severity (b = .70, $t(70)$ = 4.45, p < .001, r^2 = .22), indicating that the more severe a transgression was perceived to be, the more aversive participants considered apologizing to be. The interaction effect between our forecasting manipulation and transgression severity was not significant (p = .91), thus revealing no evidence that the forecasting effect is limited to offenses of low severity.

Inspection of the apology communication channel showed that 93% of participants imagined apologizing, or had apologized, face-to-face. An analysis on this subsample showed the same effect of our forecasting manipulation (p = .009), even when controlling for transgression severity (p = .049).

5.3.3 Discussion

In Study 2, we replicated our forecasting effect using naturally occurring apologies. This study adds to the ecological validity of the reported effects in this paper. Additionally, it shows that the forecasting effect that we find in Study 1 is not limited to anonymous situations that potentially have low identity effects but also emerges in the case of face-to-face apologies. Finally, the forecasting effect was found regardless of the severity of the offense, also suggesting that potential identity effects do not influence the forecasting effect.

5.4 EXPERIMENT 5.3

Study 3 was designed to show that the forecasted averseness of apologies had an effect on people's apology behavior. Do people who generally consider apologies averse, apologize less than those who consider apologies less averse? Moreover, we wanted to test our forecasting error prediction in a field setting using naturally occurring transgressions and apologies. To do this, we conducted an organizational field study using two measurements separated in time.

5.4.1 Method

Participants & design. This study was part of a larger multi-wave study. We invited 834 employees from a variety of occupations in the Netherlands to participate in the study. A

total of 673 employees responded at the first measurement, and 446 employees responded again at the subsequent measurement point (there were 22 days between the last day that employees could respond at T1 and the first day that employees could respond at T2). Of the employees who completed both surveys, 264 were male (59.2%). The mean age was 42 years, 11% had a college degree and the respondents worked on average 11.89 years in their organization.

Materials and procedure. The instructions for the first measurement (i.e. the forecasting measurement, T1) were the same as the forecasting condition in Study 2. Forecasted averseness of apologizing was also measured with the same 4 items as in the forecasting condition of Study 2 ($\alpha = .91$; a principal component analysis indicated that all four items loaded on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 3.16, explaining 79.9% of the variance).

The instructions for the second measurement point of the study (T2) were the same as the instructions of the experience condition of Study 2. After this, participants were first asked to write a (short) paragraph on what happened. Whether participant had apologized or not in this period was used as our first dependent variable. The experienced averseness towards apologizing was measured using the same 4 items as in the experience condition of Study 2 ($\alpha = .88$; a principal component analysis indicated that all four items loaded on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 3.16, explaining 79.2% of the variance).

Data analysis strategy. To test our prediction that people who forecasted high averseness towards apologizing are less likely to apologize, we tested whether forecasted apology aversion is a predictor for whether people had apologized or not. Second, to test whether people make a forecasting error when predicting the averseness of apologizing, we contrasted the forecasted and experienced averseness towards apologizing in the subsample of those respondents who had apologized.

5.4.2 Results

Of the 446 employees who responded at the second measurement point, 186 (41.7%) employees indicated they had not apologized. A logistic regression analysis with forecasted averseness of apologizing as continuous independent variable and apology behavior as dependent variable indicated a significant effect of forecasted averseness ($b = -.23$, Wald $= 5.71$, $p = .02$). The likelihood of apologizing among respondents who did not consider it aversive to apologize (-1 SD) was significantly higher than 50% ($b = .59$, Wald $= 16.59$, $p < .001$, Odds: 1.80, percentage likelihood of an apology: 64%). For respondents who forecasted that it would be relatively aversive to apologize (+1 SD), the likelihood of actually apologizing did not significantly differ from 50% ($b = .13$, Wald $= 1.00$, $p = .32$, Odds: 1.14, percentage likelihood of an apology: 53%). A paired sample t-test on the subsample of respondents who had indicated that they had apologized, overestimated the

averseness of an apology at T1 ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.38$) compared to the actual averseness at T2 ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.41$; $t(259) = 2.15$, $p = .03$).

5.4.3 Discussion

In study 3, we showed that the forecast on apology aversiveness has consequences for apology behavior. The more aversive people forecasted apologizing to be, the less likely they were to have apologized. Moreover, among those who had apologized we still find our proposed forecasting effect, showing that the predicted aversiveness of apologizing is higher than the actual experienced aversiveness.

5.5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

Perpetrators are usually aversive towards apologizing, but is it really such an aversive thing to do? Based on the affective forecasting literature, we predicted that perpetrators might overestimate how aversive apologizing is (Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). In Study 1 we showed that perpetrators commit a forecasting error by overestimating the aversiveness of an apology. Moreover, we showed that this forecasting error does not depend on whether people have already committed a transgression. Thus, this process is not specific to the psychological state that is activated by having done wrong (e.g., guilt, identity concerns); rather, it seems to reflect a more generalized negative belief about the aversiveness of apologizing. In Study 2 and 3, we extended these controlled laboratory results to meaningful real-world offenses and apologies.

5.5.1 Implications

This research suggests that the reconciliation process is often hindered because of the way perpetrators misconstrue the delivery of an apology. That perpetrators make this forecasting error regarding the aversiveness of an apology is important because people's decision to pursue a certain course of action is often based on affective forecasts (Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). Therefore, the decision to apologize is likely to depend also on how perpetrators construe the act of apologizing itself. Overestimating how aversive an apology will be thus leads to an underutilization of apologies (Study 3). As withholding apologies has negative consequences for the aftermath of conflict, such as increased anger among victims (Ohbuchi et al., 1989), this forecasting error thus contributes to conflict escalations.

These studies also shows that research on reconciliation and apologies can benefit from studying intra-psychological processes that influence a perpetrators willingness to apologize in addition to interpersonal processes. Intrapsychological processes regarding

the willingness to apologize and the effect of apologies on the perpetrator is an area that is largely unexplored (Okimoto et al., 2013).

5.5.2 Future directions

As the studied forecasting effect does have a negative impact on a perpetrators willingness to apologize, future research should investigate how this forecasting effect can be ameliorated. This might not be an easy task given people's preoccupation with negative over positive effects of behavior (Baumeister et al., 2001). Because perpetrators seem to focus mainly on the negative implications that apologies have for them, and give to little weight to the positive effects that apologies have, informing perpetrators on the positive side of apologizing may be a simple and effective way of motivating them to apologize, thereby aiding reconciliation between victim and perpetrator. Indeed, by stressing the positive effects of apologizing, it may shift the balance in favor of apologizing.

Victims may likewise have an influence on the positive and negative expectations regarding the effects of an apology. Previous research has shown that more forgiving victims are more likely to receive an apology (Leunissen et al., 2012). Indeed, if the victim takes a forgiving stance towards perpetrator, this may influence the forecasts that perpetrators have regarding an apology. As forgiveness is more likely to follow in close relationships (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991), the type of relationship between perpetrator and victim may also have an important influence on the reported forecasting error.

5.5.3 Strengths and limitations

By using an online environment in Study 1, we were able to keep the setting in which an apology was offered constant within the *real apology* condition (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004). Yet, this controlled setting also implies a limitation because participants did not apologize face-to-face, thereby potentially minimizing the identity costs of an apology. We therefore replicated the effect obtained in Study 1 in a naturalistic setting in which the overwhelming majority of respondents apologized in a face-to-face manner (Study 2). A limitation of such a face-to-face setting is that changes in how victim react and behave towards the perpetrator also have an influence on the experienced averseness of the apology, thus potentially making the imagined and real apology setting less directly comparable. A limitation of Study 2 and 3 is that participants both imagined a transgression and imagined apologizing for it. Although the results of two lab studies showed that the forecasting effect was driven by the (imagined) apology and not whether the transgression was imagined or not, this remains a limitation of the field studies. In sum, to validly answer our research question, it is important to achieve both high levels of

experimental control and ecological validity by combining different research methodologies

5.5.4 Conclusion

Apologies are an important instrument for victim and perpetrator to reconcile. However, perpetrators have negative associations with apologies, therefore often choosing to withhold an apology. Our studies revealed that perpetrators overestimate the averseness of apologizing, focusing too little on the positive effects that apologies also have for a perpetrator. Indeed, when it comes to apologizing, sorry *seems* to be the hardest word.

CHAPTER 6

6. GENERAL DISCUSSION

In this thesis, I have aimed at providing a better understanding of an important and understudied aspect of reconciliation and trust repair, namely a perpetrator's willingness to apologize. In order to do this, I investigated a number of components of a transgression and post-transgression period that are likely to influence this willingness to apologize: the role of the victimized party, the intentionality of the transgression, the relational value of the relationship for the perpetrator, and finally the construal of apologizing itself.

6.1 Summary of the empirical findings

In Chapter 2, I investigated how a victim's reaction to a transgression influences the perpetrator's willingness to apologize. Here, I advance the argument that apologizing is a socially risky strategy for a perpetrator. Apologies may have positive effects for a perpetrator, such as being forgiven and a victim being more willing to reestablish cooperation with the perpetrator. However, apologizing may also have negative effects. By admitting blame, a perpetrator risks the possibility of a host of aversive social consequences such as rejection, humiliation and punishment, which would not be the case if they had not accepted blame by apologizing. As such, if the victim is willing to forgive, the perpetrator is better off by apologizing. However, if the victim is not willing to forgive a perpetrator is better off by not apologizing. Based on this instrumental approach to apologizing, I predicted that perpetrators would thus be influenced by how likely they think it is that a victim will reciprocate an apology with forgiveness. Cues like how the victims reacts towards a perpetrators after a transgression are likely to influence this.

Additionally, because perpetrators have to trust the victim to reciprocate their apology with forgiveness, we expected that dispositional trust would moderate the effect of a victim's reaction to a transgression on the willingness to apologize. While people high in dispositional trust generally expect that others are trustworthy and willing to reciprocate cooperative behavior, people low in dispositional trust base their expectations more on environmental cues of a person's trustworthiness. As such, I expected that the effect of a victim's reaction to a transgression would be particularly pronounced among people low in dispositional trust.

In order to test this hypothesis, I designed a new lab paradigm in which participants were induced to commit a transgression against another participant who was ostensibly also in the lab. After participants had committed this transgression, the likelihood of forgiveness was manipulated by means of a message that participants received from the other participant. This message indicated that the victim was either likely to forgive or unlikely to forgive. The results showed that perpetrators were indeed

more willing to apologize when it was likely that the victim would reciprocate with forgiveness. Moreover, this effect was particularly pronounced among participants low in dispositional trust, and not among those high in dispositional trust. We also found evidence of our proposed mechanism. The moderated relationship between a victim's reaction to a transgression and the willingness to apologize was mediated by the perception that an apology would indeed restore the relationship between perpetrator and victim in this situation.

In Chapter 3, I investigated how specific types of transgressions shape the willingness of a perpetrator to apologize and a victim's desire to receive an apology. This chapter was aimed at investigating how the intentionality of the transgression (i.e. intentional vs. accidental) shapes the willingness to apologize and to receive an apology. Second, I investigate the congruence of these apology needs between victims and perpetrators. In order to understand the influence of intentionality on apology needs, I investigated how different emotions that are experienced by victims and perpetrators after a transgression shape the need for apologies. More specifically, I hypothesized that guilt would be an important emotional catalyst for the perpetrator's willingness to apologize. The intentionality of the transgression was expected to have an important influence on whether perpetrators experience guilt and thus, through guilt, on their willingness to apologize for the transgression. I expected that perpetrators would mainly feel guilty after unintentional transgressions and not so much after intentional transgressions. In contrast, I expected that anger would drive the need for an apology for victims. However, the relationship between intentionality and anger is opposite to the relationship between intentionality and guilt. Anger is more strongly experienced after intentional than after unintentional transgressions.

Because I expected that the willingness to give an apology and the desire to receive an apology would be driven by anger (victims) and guilt (perpetrators), and that anger and guilt are differentially influenced by the intentionality of the transgression, I expected a mismatch between a perpetrator's willingness to apologize and a victim's desire to receive an apology. I expected that perpetrators would mainly want to offer an apology after accidental transgressions because they feel a strong sense of guilt, while victims, who are less likely to experience anger after unintentional transgressions, would not have a strong desire for an apology. On the other hand, after an intentional transgression, victims were expected to feel anger about the transgression and would thus have a strong desire for an apology while perpetrators, who are less likely to feel guilty about the transgression, would not be willing to offer an apology as they do not feel guilty. This would thus constitute a mismatch because perpetrators mainly want to apologize when victims do not have a strong desire for an apology (i.e. after unintentional transgressions), while perpetrators do not want to apologize when victims have a particularly strong desire for an apology (i.e. after intentional transgressions).

Across three experiments, I showed that perpetrators and victims have indeed different apology needs depending on the intentionality of a transgression. In experiment

3.1 I used a free recall task (asking participants to remember a situation in which they were either perpetrator or victims of either an accidental or intentional transgression) and asked about the associated emotions and apology needs. In experiment 3.2 I used a scenario of a transgression of which participants were either victim or perpetrator. By using a scenario methodology I was able to exclude that systematic differences in transgressions caused our proposed effects. Finally, in experiment 3.3 I tested my hypothesis again with a free recall task among employees in a work setting (rather than students) and we also measured subsequent apology behavior and forgiveness. The results were in line with the hypotheses. Victims mainly wanted to receive an apology after intentional transgressions while perpetrators mainly wanted to offer an apology after unintentional transgressions. the reason for these differing need was indeed that the emotions of guilt and anger are oppositely affected by the intentionality of a transgression.

This chapter adds to our understanding of apologizing by showing the importance of guilt in a perpetrators willingness to apologize. Likewise, for victims anger is a reliable predictor for the desire of an apology. I showed a mismatch between the perpetrator's and victim's need for apologies after these types of transgressions. This illustrates how different perceptions of post-transgression behavior can lead to further conflict, especially after intentional transgressions. These studies are among the few that have looked at victims and perpetrators simultaneously, showing that the desires to reconcile and make amends can often be mismatched after a conflict. Indeed, these conflicting desires can add to conflict escalation due to different motivations of the parties involved.

In Chapter 4, I zoomed in on the type of relationship that a perpetrator has with the victim. Based on the Valuable Relationship Hypothesis, I predicted that the willingness of a perpetrator to apologize should be contingent on the relational closeness between victim and perpetrator. As apologizing is a means for a perpetrator to restore a broken relationship, whether or not a perpetrator is motivated to restore that relationship should be depended on whether the perpetrator considers that relationship valuable. Across 3 experiments, using both free recall and scenario methodologies, different populations (students and employees) and different measures and manipulations of relational closeness, I indeed found relational closeness to be a reliable predictor of the willingness to apologize. As in Chapter 3, the effect of relational closeness on the perpetrators willingness to apologize was mediated by feelings of guilt. Perpetrators feel guiltier when they transgress against a close, rather than a distant other and the guiltier they feel, the higher their willingness to apologize. These data thus provide more support for the role of apologies as a mechanism to maintain valuable relationships in the aftermath of a conflict or transgression. Moreover, it provides more evidence for the role of guilt as an emotion that motivates people to take relationship restoring action.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I zoomed in on an important intrapsychological cause that can predict a perpetrator's willingness to apologize, namely the aversiveness of apologizing itself. Despite the often cited positive effects of apologies on victims, perpetrators hold strong negative associations with apologizing. But are these associations

accurate? Is apologizing as aversive as perpetrators expect it to be? Based on the literature on affective forecasting, I predicted that perpetrators overestimate the aversiveness of apologizing. Across two lab experiments and two organizational field studies, I indeed found that perpetrators overestimate the aversiveness of apologizing. These results show that perpetrators may underuse apologies due to how they misconstrue the act of apologizing. Indeed, this forecasting error may lead to perpetrators refraining to apologize because they misconstrue the act of apologizing itself. Withholding an apology in the aftermath of a transgression may cause a conflict to escalate. This thesis thus shows that interpersonal, situational, and intrapersonal factors can all influence the willingness to apologize for a transgression.

6.2. Theoretical implications

This thesis provides some new insight into the current ideas on reconciliation and trust repair. A prevalent model in reconciliation is the apology-forgiveness cycle. The apology-forgiveness cycle is a rudimentary model on forgiveness that assumes that a perpetrator takes initiative to reconcile (i.e. apologizes) and a victim reciprocates with forgiveness. Based on this research in this thesis, it seems there are some problems with this model. First, in Chapter 2 we show that the causality assumed in the model (from apology to forgiveness) can also work the other way around. That is, signs of forgiveness can also encourage apologies. As such, the relationship between apologies and forgiveness is much more complicated than the apology-forgiveness cycle would suggest. Moreover, Chapter 3 shows that apologies are mainly offered after transgressions of which the victim is not particularly angry in the first place, and such quiet forgiving. This shows that the relationship between apologies and forgiveness is at least in part explained by the type of transgression that has been committed: in situations in which an apology is offered, victims are already quiet forgiving.

      A second implication that the current thesis has for research on reconciliation and trust repair consists of the function of apologies. The function of an apology is said to come from reaffirmation to certain moral norms (Gill, 2000; Tavuchis, 1991). This prevents the perpetrator from being excluded from the moral community but also ensures the victim and the community that the moral standards that they live by will by upheld in the future. My research shows that at least for perpetrators, apologies do not seem to have this moral function. A number of research findings do not support this view on apologies. First, perpetrators apologize less after intentional than after unintentional transgressions. Arguably, intentional transgressions pose a stronger threat to moral norms than unintentional transgressions. Thus, perpetrators do not apologize more when there is a greater threat to the moral status quo. Second, the relationship between the victim and perpetrator matters in the perpetrators willingness to apologize. The relationship between the victim and perpetrator should not matter according to this moral perspective, what

matters is the transgression itself. Nevertheless, I find differences depending on the relationship closeness between victim and perpetrator, among the same transgressions. Finally, the victim's reaction to a transgression, in which a stronger negative reaction towards the perpetrator could be indicative of the moral outrage associated with a transgression, influence perpetrators to apologize less. As such, these reactions do not aid in restoring moral order and perpetrators are not motivated by these reactions to apologize. As such, these perspectives on apologies (apology-forgiveness cycle and the moral function of apologies) do not provide a good theoretical framework because they either do not provide any predictions on when perpetrators are willing to apologize (i.e. the apology-forgiveness cycle) or the predictions are not supported by the current research findings (i.e. the moral perspective on apologizing).

Below, I offer a alternative theoretical perspective on apologizing. I do this for two reasons. First, I hope that this will contribute to theory building on apologizing and reconciliation in general. There are very few theories and/or models developed on reconciliation (e.g. Kim et al., 2009; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) and in order to advance this field, we need to have theories that provide us with testable hypotheses. Perspectives like the apology-forgiveness cycle and the moral functions of apologies do not offer testable predictions, nor are they in line with the current set of studies. Second, a comprehensive theoretical model may help to provide insight into the question why humans, like other kinds of other primates or other species such as hyenas for that matter (Schino, 2000), have developed mechanisms to cope with conflict and to initiate and accomplish reconciliation. As such, this theory does not only provide the answers to the 'when' question (when do people apologize?) but also to the "why" question (why do people apologize?).

This perspective is based on the Valuable Relationship Hypothesis (De Waal, 2000). The Valuable Relationship Hypothesis originated from primate research on reconciliation. It states that reconciliation will be especially likely to occur when there is a conflict between two parties of which the relationship represents a high social or reproductive value (De Waal, 2000). This idea is based on the fact that primates live in groups and that they are dependent on others for survival and reproduction (Brewer, 2004; De Waal, 2000). Social relationships provide benefits and conflict threatens these benefits. Therefore, a mechanism, which we now call reconciliation, was developed that help to preserve these relationships in the wake of a conflict. As such, reconciliation is functional, or as De Waal (1996) describes it: "The goal of conflict settlement is not peace per se; it is the maintenance of relationships of proven value" (p. 231).

While the Valuable Relationship Hypothesis originates from research on primates, these processes are obviously applicable to human reconciliation as well. Humans also are social animals and rely upon social relationships for their safety, wellbeing, and reproduction. These needs and benefits are also threatened whenever conflicts emerge. This is particularly the case when conflicts occur within valuable relationships. Individuals are not equally dependent on everybody in their group (strangers vs. friends for instance); some relationships are more valuable to them than others. For

individuals, it is important to maintain those relationships that are valuable to them. This means that when a conflict arises people should be most motivated to reconcile when that relationship is valuable to them. For perpetrators, an apology is a means to reconcile. Thus applying this Valuable Relationship Hypothesis to the willingness to apologize (or more in general, to reconcile) leads to the hypothesis that perpetrators should be more willing to apologize when they have transgressed in a valuable relationship. As such, it is the value of the relationship between perpetrator and victim that should be predictive of whether a perpetrator is willing to apologize to a victim.

Can we reinterpret the findings in this thesis in terms of the Valuable Relationship Hypothesis? Chapter 4 is obviously the most direct test of this idea, showing that perpetrators do indeed initiate reconciliation at higher rates in close compared to more distant relationships. As close relationships are considered to be more valuable to people than more distant relationships, it is to be expected based on the Valuable Relationship Hypothesis that perpetrators would initiate reconciliation at a higher rate towards close rather than distant relationships. This indeed shows that apologizing serves the function of preserving valuable relationships in the aftermath of conflict.

Chapter 3 also provides a test, although more indirect. As explained in chapter 3, intentional transgressions cause less guilt than unintentional transgressions because the relationship with the victim is deemed to be less important to the perpetrator. The damage to the relationship is, in a way, taken into account when committing an intentional transgression. With unintentional transgressions this is not the case. Unintentional transgressions cause a relationship to become under strain without the perpetrator intending, or even anticipating. Indeed, is seems hard to imagine to intentionally transgress in a relationship that is deemed valuable to the perpetrator. Therefore, the intentionality of the transgression can be seen has indicative of the value that the perpetrator assigns to the relationship. While accidental transgressions can happen in both valuable and less valuable relationships, intentional transgression are more diagnostic, being more prevalent among less valuable relationships. Indeed, because intentional transgressions are planned, and the perpetrator is aware of the damage that an intentional transgression does to the relationship beforehand the final decision to actually commit the transgression means that the perpetrator is prepared to damage the relationship. As such, the finding that perpetrators are more willing to apologize after unintentional transgressions can be explained within the Valuable relationship hypothesis framework as the types of relationships that one transgresses in intentionally are generally less important to the perpetrator than the relationships that one transgresses in unintentionally.

What about chapter 2? A forgiving reaction of a victim implies that the victim is still interested in having a cooperative relationship with the perpetrator. Indeed, in this experiment, relational value may have been communicated by the victims by means of an (un)forgiving response of the towards the perpetrator. Previous research has indeed established this relationship between relational value and forgiveness, showing that

forgiveness is more likely to follow in a relationship that is valuable to the victim (e.g. McCullough et al., 2010). Forgiving communication is thus a sign that a relationship is valuable, and perhaps more importantly, an unforgiving reaction shows that the relationship is no longer valuable to the victim. Perpetrators thus act on this information and incorporate this in their willingness to reconcile. After all, why would a perpetrator invest in a relationship that in all likelihood will cease to exist? This line of reasoning is supported by research of Exline and colleagues (Exline et al., 2007) who show that perpetrators regret offering apologies when they were not reciprocated by forgiveness and as such did not lead to reconciliation. This shows again that perpetrators do not apologize for the sake of apologizing (or perhaps to reaffirm certain social or moral norms that usually guide our behavior, but were broken in the case of a transgression). It does however support the relational repair function of apologizing as the decision to apologize or not is contingent upon the relational repair that an apology elicits.

Thus, the current set of studies provides results that one would expect based in the valuable relationship hypothesis framework on apologizing. As such, this framework can be applied to human reconciliation behavior (in this case apologizing) and has predictive value on when initiation of reconciliation is more likely.

6.3 Future research

Future research should be aimed at expanding this framework on apologizing and valuable relationships. The valuable relationship hypothesis provides a theoretical framework which helps to predict when people apologize, namely when a conflict threatens a relationship that is valuable to them. Is also helps us to understand why people apologize, namely to maintain relationships that are valuable to them. This framework opens up new avenues for future research. I will discuss these for research on reconciliation on both perpetrators and victims.

6.3.1 Future research on the perpetrator

As mentioned before, the basic premise of the valuable relationship framework is that perpetrators are more motivated to reconcile when a relationship is valuable to the perpetrator. It should also be noted that this concept of relational value can be applied to a host of variables that all shape relational value. When is a relationship valuable? I define relational value in terms of interdependence between two parties involved in the conflict (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). The more dependent someone is on outcomes that another person can provide through the relationship, the more 'costly' a conflict is for that person and the more motivated that person should be to reconcile. Interdependence in turn is shaped by three factors, namely satisfaction level with the relationship, quality of

alternatives to the current relationship and the investment size in the relationship (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). As these variables shape the interdependence between (at least) two parties, so should be the willingness to reconcile after a conflict. This straightforward prediction has a wide array of applications such as in close relationships, social dilemmas and power differences. For instance, power differences may shape relational value. Power is defined as: 'the capacity to alter others' states by providing or withholding resources and administering punishments' (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003, p. 267). As such, for perpetrators in a relatively low power position the relationship is likely to be more valuable compared to a high power position because the low power person is more dependent on the high power person. Initiation for reconciliation is as such more likely when the perpetrator holds a relatively low power position compared to the victim.

6.3.2 Future research on victims: Victim initiated reconciliation

The valuable relationship hypothesis can also be expanded to provide new hypotheses about the role of victims in the reconciliation process. Although in most research – and also in the minds of most people - on reconciliation, it is the perpetrator who is expected to take the initiative to reconcile, victims have likewise an incentive to reconcile. Indeed, most research today on reconciliation and trust repair has investigated (the effects of) tactics that perpetrators use to restore the relationship. In fact, it has implicitly (or explicitly) been assumed that perpetrators *should* take the first step in the reconciliation process, and not victims. Nevertheless, in case of conflict, both victims and perpetrators often have an incentive to restore a damaged relationship. After all, conflicts can harm the interest of both the perpetrator and the victim and are stressful for both parties (Aureli, 1997). This is especially the case when someone has been victimized in a valuable relationship. Victims, like perpetrators can also take the initiative for reconciliation (e.g. Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991). I call this concept victims initiated reconciliation.

Victim initiated reconciliation is any behavior, displayed by a victim, aimed at restoring the relationship between victim and perpetrator after a conflict took place. As such, it differs from forgiveness. Forgiveness is a rather passive response to experienced injustice. It is defined as the absence of revenge or avoidance motivations of the victim towards the perpetrator (McCullough et al., 1997). Victim initiated reconciliation is an active response as it implies that victims take active steps to reconcile (Aquino, Tripp & Bies, 2006). These responses include constructive behavioral responses towards the perpetrator, aimed at preserving the relationship and can be categorized as voice or loyalty responses (Rusbult et al., 1991). Voice is an active, constructive response, aimed at discussing the problem with the perpetrator and looking for ways to prevent similar conflicts from happening in the future. Loyalty is a constructive response characterized by

forgoing a destructive response to a conflict, and instead behaving cooperatively, aimed at preventing any further relational deterioration.

Based on the valuable relationship hypothesis, I expect that both perpetrators and victims are more willing to take initiatives for reconciliation when the relationship is valuable to them. Research on victims initiated reconciliation is important for a number of reasons. First of all, it is important to understand how conflicts can be reconciled. Conflicts are an inevitable part of social and organizational life so we need to understand the dynamics of conflict reconciliation in order to manage them. Research on conflict resolution has mainly investigated the victim perspective of conflicts, conceptualizing the victim as a rather passive receiver of trust repair tactics. The assumption underlying this perspective usually is that perpetrators are the ones to take the first step in the reconciliation process. Nevertheless, perpetrators are often reluctant to do so (e.g. Leunissen et al., 2012). Victims however may also have an incentive to repair the broken relationship. It is therefore important to understand what victims can do themselves about the conflicts they are faced with and when they are likely to do something about it. This idea has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this research would advance our understanding of conflict resolution by taking a dyadic perspective on conflict resolution, something that is ignored to a large extent in current theorizing on this topic (Leunissen et al., 2013). In order to truly understand when reconciliation takes place, we need to take into account the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and the motivations of both parties after a conflict emerged. The idea that it is relational value that drives reconciliation, and not morality or social norms, provides a novel perspective on conflict resolution. Although this idea has a long standing in primate research on reconciliation (e.g. De Waal, 2000) is has been largely ignored in research on human conflict resolution. The valuable relationship hypothesis provides however clear predictions on how reconciliation at the dyadic level should unfold.

6.4 Practical implications

Apologies have a very tangible effect in the real world. Not only in private settings are apologies effective but they also form an important part of more formal mediation efforts and restorative justice conferences. For instance, Cohen (1999) describes an interesting case on the Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Lexington, KY. Like most hospitals in the US, this medical center too had huge legal costs battling medical malpractice law suits. Previous to 1987, they had a policy not to disclose any medical errors, and when an error came to light, they followed the usual route through their lawyers. In 1987, after two particularly costly law suits they adopted a radically new policy. Now, when an error was discovered, they took initiative to inform the patient, explained what happened and apologized for the mistakes that were made. The results in terms of lawsuits were substantial. The number of law suits dropped significantly and even when a case went to

court, the average amount of settlement dropped substantially. The results are explained by pointing to the desires of victims after a medical mistake. Victims were mainly interested in what went wrong and in an acknowledgement of their damages as a result. Money (a lawsuit), was not that important and was usually fueled by the secrecy and lack of empathy from the hospital. This is an excellent case to show both the positive effects of apologies (more satisfied victims and lesser costs for the perpetrator) and the negative effects of not apologizing (the pre-1987 period with extensive legal costs with the hospital).

What can this research teach us that we can use to fully benefit from the positive effects that apologies may have? It is first important to understand and acknowledge that perpetrators have their own motivations to apologize and that these motivations are fueled by their own situational characteristics. It is not necessarily the case that when victims desire an apology that perpetrators are motivated to apologize. In mediation efforts, practitioners need to take this into account.

The emotion of guilt has been shown to be a reliable predictor of apology behavior. Indeed, certain types of transgressions (accidental; chapter 3) and relationships (e.g. close relationships; chapter 4) cause more feelings of guilt which in turn lead to a higher willingness to apologize. So guilt provides one mechanism which lead to apologies. This also means that a fruitful strategy for victims to receive an apology is to make perpetrators feel guilty, the techniques of which were studied by Vangelisti and colleagues (Vangelisti, Daly, & Rudnick, 1991).

It is also important to manage how victims react to a transgression during mediation. My research shows an important influence on the willingness of perpetrators to apologize is the reaction of the victim to a transgression. Apologies can have negative social effects for perpetrators such as an impaired social image in the eyes of others (see chapter 5) and perpetrators may already be concerned about their public moral image after they committed the transgression (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). As such, the willingness to apologize is also contingent upon the likelihood that a victim will accept the apology and reciprocate with forgiveness. This also means that when victims desire an apology, it is advisable not to react to angry or communicate strong feelings of injustice or intentions for revenge. This will not motivate a perpetrator to apologize, but rather will make the perpetrator more defensive and cautious.

On a more general level, this research shows the importance of valuable relationships as a determinant of apologizing. This once again underlines the importance to create positive work environments in which coworkers have high quality relationships and are interdependent on each other. Creating these work conditions will lead to an environment in which perpetrators are motivated to apologize whenever they have wronged a coworker.

Finally, the present findings highlight the importance of addressing false beliefs about apologizing. We have shown that forecasting errors regarding the aversiveness of apologies shape a perpetrator's willingness to apologize. Perpetrators tend to focus too much on the negative side of apologizing leading to a biased view of the effects of an

apology. This in turn leads to an underuse of apologies and thereby to further conflict escalation (Cohen, 1999; Ohbuchi et al., 1989). It is therefore important to inform perpetrators about the true nature of apologizing.

6.5 Concluding thoughts

In his 2000 article, De Waal remarks that 'Ironically, research on how animals spontaneously make up after fights was for a long time ahead of how humans accomplish the same goal' (De Waal, 2000, p. 589). Although research on reconciliation and trust repair has become more prevalent during the last 15 years and has increased our understanding of this important part of social life, the work is far from over. This is mainly exemplified by the lack of research on the perspective of the perpetrator.

This is unfortunate because in most cases, it is the perpetrator who is at least expected to initiate reconciliation. Whether they actually do this, or perhaps when victims do this is, of course, open to empirical investigation. Nevertheless, in order for us to truly understand reconciliation we need to have more knowledge on the motives and determinants of a perpetrator's willingness to reconcile. Apologies provide one of the most important reconciliation tools that perpetrators have at their disposal and therefore research on apologizing can provide a fruitful approach to this caveat in our understanding. I hope that this thesis provides both the theoretical underpinnings and the methodological tools that will aid in future investigations on this topic.

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SUMMARY

Conflict and transgressions are an inevitable part of living and working on groups. After a transgression there is often a strong need for the conflicting parties to reconcile and to restore trust. An apology is one of the most common ways for a perpetrator to initiate the reconciliation process. Indeed, numerous studies have shown the positive effects of an apology on the reconciliation process. However, contrary to the large body of research on the effects of an apology, almost no research has investigated when perpetrators are actually willing to offer such an apology. This is surprising, given the fact that an apology can only elicit its positive effects on reconciliation when a perpetrator is willing to offer one. In this dissertation, I have investigated the willingness of perpetrators to apologize in four lines of research.

In the first line of research (Chapter 2), I investigated how a victim's reaction to a transgression influences the perpetrator's willingness to apologize. Here, I claim that apologizing is a socially risky strategy for a perpetrator. Apologies may have positive effects for a perpetrator, such as being forgiven. However, by admitting blame, a perpetrator risks the possibility of a host of aversive social consequences such as rejection, humiliation and punishment. Based on the instrumental approach to apologizing, I predicted that perpetrators would thus be influenced by how likely they think it is that a victim will reciprocate an apology with forgiveness. Cues like how the victims reacts towards a perpetrators after a transgression are likely to influence how likely a perpetrator thinks it is an apology will be reciprocated with forgiveness. Additionally, because perpetrators have to trust the victim to reciprocate their apology with forgiveness, we expected that dispositional trust would moderate the effect of a victim's reaction to a transgression on the willingness to apologize. While people high in dispositional trust generally expect that others are trustworthy and willing to reciprocate cooperative behavior, people low in dispositional trust base their expectations more on environmental cues of a person's trustworthiness. As such, I expected that the effect of a victim's reaction to a transgression would be particularly pronounced among people low in dispositional trust. The results showed that perpetrators were indeed more willing to apologize when it was likely that the victim would reciprocate with forgiveness. Moreover, this effect was particularly pronounced among participants low in dispositional trust, and not among those high in dispositional trust. We also found evidence of our proposed mechanism. The moderated relationship between a victim's reaction to a transgression and the willingness to apologize was mediated by the perception that an apology would indeed restore the relationship between perpetrator and victim in this situation.

In a second line of research (Chapter 3), I investigated how specific types of transgressions (intentional and unintentional transgressions) shape the willingness of a perpetrator to apologize. Second, I investigate the congruence of the apology needs of victims and perpetrators. In order to understand the influence of intentionality on apology needs, I investigated how different emotions that are experienced by victims (anger) and

perpetrators (guilt) after a transgression shape the need for apologies. The intentionality of the transgression was expected to have an important influence on whether perpetrators experience guilt and thus, through guilt, on their willingness to apologize for the transgression. I expected that perpetrators would mainly feel guilty after unintentional transgressions and not so much after intentional transgressions. However, the relationship between intentionality and anger is opposite to the relationship between intentionality and guilt. Anger is more strongly experienced after intentional than after unintentional transgressions. Because anger and guilt are differentially affected by the intentionality of the transgression, I expected an 'apology mismatch': perpetrators would mainly want to offer an apology after accidental transgressions while victims would not have a strong desire for an apology. On the other hand, after an intentional transgression, victims were expected have a strong desire for an apology while perpetrators, who are less likely to feel guilty about the transgression, would not be willing to offer an apology as they do not feel guilty. Across three experiments, I showed that perpetrators and victims have indeed different apology needs depending on the intentionality of a transgression.

In the third line of research (Chapter 4), I zoomed in on the relationship between perpetrator and victim. Based on the Valuable Relationship Hypothesis, I predicted that the willingness of a perpetrator to apologize should be contingent on the relational closeness between victim and perpetrator. As apologizing is a means for a perpetrator to restore a broken relationship, whether or not a perpetrator is motivated to restore that relationship should be depended on whether the perpetrator considers that relationship valuable. I indeed found relational closeness to be a reliable predictor of the willingness to apologize. The effect of relational closeness on the perpetrators willingness to apologize was mediated by feelings of guilt. Perpetrators feel guiltier when they transgress against a close, rather than a distant other and the guiltier they feel, the higher their willingness to apologize.

Finally, in a fourth line of research (Chapter 5), I zoomed in on an important intrapsychological cause that can predict a perpetrator's willingness to apologize, namely the aversiveness of apologizing itself. Despite the often cited positive effects of apologies on victims, perpetrators hold strong negative associations with apologizing. But are these associations in fact accurate? In this line of research, I showed that perpetrators overestimate the aversiveness of apologizing. These results show that perpetrators may underuse apologies due to how they misconstrue the act of apologizing. Indeed, this forecasting error may lead to perpetrators refraining to apologize because they misconstrue the act of apologizing itself. Withholding an apology in the aftermath of a transgression may cause a conflict to escalate.

Taken together, these results show that a perpetrator's apology behavior can be influenced by a number of factors: the victim itself, the type of transgression, the relationship between perpetrator and victim and how the perpetrator construes the act of apologizing. I conclude by giving an overarching theoretical account of the findings, based on the Valuable Relationship Hypothesis.

SAMENVATTING (DUTCH SUMMARY)

Een verontschuldiging kan een belangrijke rol spelen in het oplossen van conflicten die ontstaan in de nasleep van een normovertreding. Veel onderzoek naar verontschuldigingen heeft zich gericht op het slachtoffer, dus op de partij die een verontschuldiging ontvangt. Dit onderzoek heeft gekeken naar onder welke omstandigheden een verontschuldiging effectief is en welke mechanismen ervoor zorgen dat een verontschuldiging effectief is (bijvoorbeeld de oprechtheid van de verontschuldiging). In tegenstelling tot het onderzoek naar de effecten van verontschuldigingen op slachtoffer, is er opvallend weinig onderzoek gedaan naar de daders, dus de partij die zijn/haar verontschuldigingen aanbied. Er is dus weinig kennis over wanneer daders bereid zijn om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden. In het onderzoek, dat ik presenteer in dit proefschrift, heb ik getracht meer inzicht te geven in de situationele en persoonlijkheidskenmerken van daders die voorspellen of een dader meer of minder bereid is om zijn/haar verontschuldigingen aan te bieden na een normovertreding.

In hoofdstuk 2 heb ik onderzocht hoe de reactie van een slachtoffer na een normovertreding invloed heeft op de bereidheid van een dader om zijn/haar verontschuldigingen aan te bieden. In dit hoofdstuk stel ik dat een verontschuldiging aanbieden voor een dader een sociaal risicovolle strategie kan zijn. Het aanbieden van een verontschuldiging kan positieve effecten hebben voor een dader in de zin dat de dader makkelijker vergeven wordt en de relatie met het slachtoffer kan worden herstelt. Aan de andere kant, behelst een verontschuldiging ook een erkenning dat de dader iets fout heeft gedaan. Dit kan leiden tot verstoting uit de relatie met het slachtoffer, neerbuigendheid richting de dader en eventueel het opleggen van een straf. Een verontschuldiging aanbieden is dus risicovol omdat het kan leiden tot vergeven maar ook kan leiden tot een situatie waarin de dader slechter af is dan wanneer degene niet zijn/haar verontschuldigingen zou hebben aangeboden. Ik voorspel dat daders instrumenteel om zullen gaan met dit risico. Op basis van deze instrumentele benadering verwachtte ik dat de dader meer zijn/haar verontschuldigingen aan zal bieden wanneer de dader het idee heeft dat de verontschuldiging zal leiden tot vergiffenis en minder zijn/haar verontschuldigen aan zal bieden wanneer de dader denkt dat dit onwaarschijnlijk is. Een reactie van een slachtoffer kan informatie geven over of het slachtoffer bereid is om een verontschuldiging te accepteren of niet en te reciproceren met vergiffenis.

Naast de invloed van de reactie van een slachtoffer op een normovertreding, heb ik ook gekeken wat de invloed is van dispositioneel vertrouwen hierin. Een dader moet erop vertrouwen dat een positief gebaar van zijn/haar kant, namelijk het aanbieden van een verontschuldiging, zal worden gereciproceerd met vergiffenis. Dispositioneel vertrouwen heeft waarschijnlijk een invloed op in hoeverre daders denken dat dit gebaar inderdaad wordt gereciproceerd. Mensen die van nature anderen vertrouwen (mensen hoog in dispositioneel vertrouwen) gaan ervan uit dat anderen hun positieve gedrag zullen reciproceren. Echter mensen die van nature anderen weinig vertrouwen (mensen laag in

dispositioneel vertrouwen) laten hun gedrag meer afhangen van situationele informatie waaruit zij kunnen opmaken dat hun positieve gedrag zal worden gereciproceerd. Ik verwachtte dan ook dat vooral mensen die laag in dispositioneel vertrouwen zijn zich zullen laten leiden door de reactie van een slachtoffer na een normovertreding. Mensen die hoog in situationeel vertrouwen zijn gaan ervan uit dat mensen hun gedrag zullen reciproceren en zullen zich dus minder sterk laten leiden door de reactie van een slachtoffer na een normovertreding.

Om deze hypothesen te toetsen hebben we een nieuwe computer procedure ontwikkeld waarbij. Omdat mensen alleen hun verontschuldigingen aanbieden nadat ze een normovertreding hebben begaan moesten we een lab procedure ontwikkelen waarbij het waarschijnlijk was dat de dader een normovertreding zou begaan (voor de details zie 2.2.1). Nadat de dader de normovertreding had begaan, kregen zij een bericht van het slachtoffer van de normovertreding. In dit bericht hebben we gemanipuleerd of het waarschijnlijk was dat het slachtoffer de dader zou vergeven of niet. De resultaten van dit experiment waren in lijn met de verwachtingen. Wanneer daders een bericht ontvingen van een relatief vergevingsgezind slachtoffer, waren zijn meer bereid om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden dan wanneer zijn een bericht ontvingen van een relatief niet vergevingsgezind slachtoffer. Dit effect werd vooral gevonden onder mensen die laag in dispositioneel vertrouwen zijn.

In hoofdstuk 3 heb ik onderzocht hoe de intentionaliteit van een normovertreding de bereidheid van een dader om zich te verontschuldigen beïnvloed. In dit hoofdstuk vergelijk ik deze bereidheid met de behoefte van een slachtoffer om een verontschuldiging te ontvangen. In dit onderzoek kijk ik naar emoties die daders en slachtoffers ervaren na een normovertreding en hoe deze emoties de behoefte aan een verontschuldiging beïnvloeden. Voor daders verwachtte ik dat schuldgevoelens een belangrijke emotie zouden zijn die de bereidheid om een verontschuldiging aan te bieden zou kunnen verklaren. Schuld is een emotie die mensen motiveert om relatie herstellend gedrag te vertonen. Aangezien een verontschuldiging een mechanisme is waarmee een dader een relatie na een normovertreding kan herstellen, verwachte ik dat naarmate een dader zich schuldiger zou voelen over een normovertreding dat ze meer bereid zouden zijn om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden. Voor slachtoffers verwachte ik dat boosheid een belangrijke emotie zou zijn in de behoefte om een verontschuldiging te ontvangen zou beïnvloeden. Boosheid is een emotie die mensen ervaren wanneer zij gevoelens van onrecht ervaren. Deze emotie drijft een behoefte aan compensatie en erkenning van onrecht. Aangezien een verontschuldiging gezien kan worden als een psychologische compensatie voor het onrecht dat is ontstaan na een normovertreding verwachtte ik dat slachtoffers naarmate ze bozer waren over een normovertreding ze een sterkere behoefte zouden hebben om een verontschuldiging te ontvangen.

De intentionaliteit van een normovertreding heeft een effect op zowel de schuldgevoelens die daders ervaren als de boosheid die slachtoffers ervaren. Daders voelen zich schuldiger wanneer zij per ongeluk een normovertreding hebben begaan dan wanneer

zij intentioneel een normovertreding hebben begaan. Slachtoffers worden echter bozer wanneer zij het slachtoffer zijn van een intentionele normovertreding dan over een normovertreding die per ongeluk was. Als zodanig willen daders dus vooral een verontschuldiging aanbieden na een normovertreding die per ongeluk was (omdat ze zich dan relatief schuldig voelen) terwijl slachtoffers vooral een verontschuldiging willen hebben na een normovertreding die intentioneel was (omdat ze dan relatief boos zijn). Dit leidt tot een asymmetrie tussen wanneer daders een verontschuldiging willen aanbieden en slachtoffers er een willen hebben.

Deze verwachtingen heb ik getoetst in 3 experimenten. In twee experimenten (een onder studenten en een onder werknemers) heb ik aan mensen vraagt om een situatie te herinneren waarin ze een normovertreding begaan hadden (dader) of iemand een normovertreding naar hun toe hadden begaan (slachtoffer). Ik vroeg dan naar een normovertreding die of per ongeluk, of intentioneel was. Daarna vroeg ik in hoeverre ze zich schuldig voelden over de normovertreding, dan wel boos waren over de normovertreding en in hoeverre ze een verontschuldiging wilden geven of wilde krijgen. Daarnaast heb ik een experiment gedaan waarbij ik een normovertreding beschreef die geschreven was vanuit een slachtoffer of daderperspectief en die of intentioneel of per ongeluk was (in deze studie was de normovertreding dus steeds hetzelfde). De resultaten van deze drie experimenten lieten consistent zien dat daders inderdaad bereid zijn om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden op momenten dat slachtoffer weinig behoefte hebben aan een verontschuldigingen (na een normovertreding die per ongeluk ging) terwijl daders weinig bereid zijn om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden wanneer slachtoffers een sterke behoefte hebben aan een verontschuldiging (na intentionele normovertredingen). De verklaring voor deze asymmetrie is inderdaad dat de intentionaliteit van de normovertreding de emoties schuld en boosheid op een tegengestelde manier beïnvloed.

In hoofdstuk 4 heb ik de onderzocht hoe de relatie tussen dader en slachtoffer de bereidheid tot verontschuldigen beïnvloed. In dit onderzoek baseer ik me op de Waardevolle Relatie Hypothese (De Waal, 1989; 2000). Deze hypothese stamt uit onderzoek naar verzoening onder primaten. De basis van de hypothese is relatief simpel: naarmate een relatie belangrijker is voor de betrokkenen van een conflict wordt de kans dat er tot verzoening wordt overgegaan groter. In dit onderzoek hebben we onderzocht of dit ook opgaat voor mensen. Aangezien een verontschuldiging een belangrijk instrument voor een dader is om een relatie te herstellen, verwachtte ik dat naarmate de waarde van een relatie zou toenemen de bereidheid van een dader om zich te verontschuldigen ook zou toenemen. Daarnaast heb ik, net als in hoofdstuk 3, onderzocht of de bereidheid om te verontschuldigen inderdaad wordt gedreven door schuldgevoelens. Schuldgevoelens leiden tot relatie herstellend gedrag. Als mensen meer gemotiveerd zouden zijn om belangrijke relaties te herstellen dan impliceert dit dat mensen zich schuldiger zouden moet voelen na een normovertreding wanneer de relatie met het slachtoffer van de normovertreding belangrijker is voor de dader.

Ik heb dit onderzocht in drie experimenten. In de eerste heb ik mensen gevraagd een normovertreding die zij begaan hadden te beschrijven. Daarna heb ik gemeten hoe belangrijk de relatie met het slachtoffer voor de dader was en of zij hun verontschuldigingen hadden aangeboden na de normovertreding. In een tweede studie heb ik een normtransgressie beschreven waarin ik de waarde van de relatie heb gemanipuleerd. Tot slot in een derde studie heb ik normtransgressies op het werk onder werknemers onderzocht. Ook hier heb ik gekeken naar de waarde van de relatie met het slachtoffer voor de dader. De resultaten waren in lijn met de verwachtingen. Daders waren inderdaad meer bereid hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden wanneer zij een normovertreding hadden begaan waarbij de relatie met het slachtoffer belangrijk voor hun was. Dit effect werd gedreven door schuldgevoelens. Daders voelen zich schuldiger wanneer ze een normoverteding begaan naar iemand die belangrijk voor heb is dan naar iemand die minder belangrijk voor hen is (ook na dezelfde normovertreding voelen mensen zich schuldiger naarmate de relatie met het slachtoffer belangrijker voor hen wordt). Dit onderzoek laat zien dat de relatie tussen dader en slachtoffer van belang is in de bereidheid van daders om zich te verontschuldigen. Daders gebruiken een verontschuldiging na een normovertreding om relaties die belangrijk voor hen zijn te herstellen.

In mijn laatste empirische hoofdstuk, hoofdstuk 5, kijk ik naar een intrapsychologisch effect in de bereidheid van een dader om een verontschuldiging aan te bieden. In hoofdstukken 2, 3 en 4 heb ik steeds onderzocht hoe situationele kenmerken een invloed hebben op de bereidheid to verontschuldigen (bijv. hoe het slachtoffer reageert). In dit hoofdstuk heb ik gekeken naar een intrapersoonlijk proces dat de bereidheid om te verontschuldigen beïnvloed. Dit onderzoek was gebaseerd op de observatie dat daders aan de ene kant sterke negatieve associaties hebben met het aanbieden van een verontschuldiging maar ook positief terug kijken op verontschuldigingen die zij hebben aangeboden. Het lijkt er dus op dat daders inschatten dat het aanbieden van een verontschuldiging erg negatief is maar dat wanneer ze het eenmaal gedaan hebben dat het wel meevalt. Deze observatie zou verklaard kunnen worden aan de hand van de affectieve voorspellingsfout. Onderzoek naar de affectieve voorspellingsfout laat zien dat mensen over het algemeen erg slecht zijn in het voorspellen van hun affectieve reacties op toekomstige gebeurtenissen. Zo overschatten mensen hoe blij ze zullen zijn wanneer hun favoriete voetbalteam wint en overschatten mensen hoe lang ze zich rot voelen nadat een romantische relatie uit gaat. Aangezien mensen dus erg slecht zijn in het inschatten van de affectieve reacties van hun toekomstige handelingen zou er dus ook toe kunnen leiden dat daders overschatten hoe negatief het is om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden.

We hebben dit idee getoetst in drie studies. In een eerste lab experiment lieten we mensen op een experimentele wijze een normovertreding begaan. Aan de ene groep mensen vroeg we om zich voor te stellen om zich hiervoor te verontschuldigen en vroegen we hoe negatief het zou zijn om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden; aan de andere groep vroegen we om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden en vroegen we ze om aan te geven hoe negatief ze het aanbieden van een verontschuldiging vonden. Mensen die zich

voorstelden om zich te verontschuldigen overschatte inderdaad hoe negatief het zou zijn om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden vergeleken met mensen die het echt gedaan hadden. Dit effect hebben we nog twee keer gerepliceerd in twee veldstudies. De resultaten laten zien dat daders zich in hun keuze om zich wel of niet te verontschuldigen ook laten leiden door hoe zij zich voorstellen dat het zal zijn om een verontschuldiging aan te bieden.

In het afsluitende Hoofdstuk 6 geef ik eerst een samenvatting van de onderzoeksbevindingen van hoofdstuk 2 tot en met 5. Vervolgens geef ik hier een theoretische integratie van de onderzoeksbevindingen van hoofdstukken 3, 4 en 5. Ik maak hier gebruik van de Waardevolle Relatie Hypothese (De Waal, 2000). Specifiek beargumenteer ik dat de uiteindelijk functie van het aanbieden van een verontschuldiging voor een dader is het behouden van relaties die waardevol zijn voor de dader. Of een dader zijn verontschuldigingen aan zal bieden is dus afhankelijk van de waarde die de dader toeschrijft aan de relatie met het slachtoffer. De waarde van de relatie kan gekenmerkt worden door de hechtheid of kwaliteit van de relatie met het slachtoffer (hoofdstuk 4), het type normovertreding dat een dader begaat (Hoofdstuk 3). Namelijk bij intentionele normovertredingen wordt de schade van de normovertreding aan de relatie ingecalculeerd door de dader. Dit betekent dat intentionele normovertredingen vooral gebeuren in relaties die relatief weinig waarde hebben voor de dader. Tot slot heeft ook het slachtoffer invloed op de waarde die een dader toekent aan een relatie (hoofdstuk 2). Een niet vergevingsgezinde reactie van een slachtoffer communiceert dat het slachtoffer nog weinig waarde hecht aan de relatie met de dader. Daders nemen dit mee in hun beslissing om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden. Dit leidt ertoe dat daders minder bereid zijn om hun verontschuldigingen aan te bieden wanneer het slachtoffer een weinig vergevingsgezinde indruk maakt vergeleken met een meer vergevingsgezind slachtoffer. Ik sluit af met een aantal suggesties voor vervolgonderzoek op basis van dit theoretische kader.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joost (Josephus Matheus) Leunissen was born on the 8th of November, 1983 in Haarlem, The Netherlands. He grew up in the coastal village of Noordwijkerhout. After graduating from high school at the Dalton Lyceum in Voorburg in 2001, he went on to study public administration at Leiden University. In 2002, he participated in an elective course in social and organizational psychology. This elective fueled his interest and enthusiasm for social psychology and as a result he decided to take up the study of psychology as well. After finishing his Bachelor in psychology in 2007, he enrolled in the research master program, at Leiden University, with a specialization in social and organizational psychology. In 2008, he graduated for his doctoraal in Public administration. A year later, 2009, he graduated (Cum Laude) from the Research Master program. In September 2009 he started at the Rotterdam School of Management with his PhD project entitled "why do people apologize?", under supervision of David De Cremer, Marius van Dijke and Chris Reinders Folmer. During his PhD, he studied the social psychological underpinnings of a perpetrator's willingness to apologize. His work has been published in such journals as the *Journal of Economic Psychology* and the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. Joost is currently a visiting research fellow at the Centre for Research on Self and Identity at the University of Southampton.

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ALL APOLOGIES
ON THE WILLINGNESS OF PERPETRATORS TO APOLOGIZE

Conflict and transgressions are an inevitable part of living and working on groups. After a transgression there is often a strong need for the conflicting parties to reconcile and to restore trust. An apology is one of the most common ways for a perpetrator to initiate the reconciliation process. Indeed, numerous studies have shown the positive effects of an apology on the reconciliation process. Contrary to the large body of research on the effects of an apology on a victim, almost no research has investigated when perpetrators are actually willing to offer such an apology. Given that an apology can only elicit its positive effects on reconciliation when a perpetrator is willing to offer one, it is imperative to understand when perpetrators are willing to do so.

This dissertation is the first to systematically investigate the situational and personality determinants of a perpetrator's willingness to apologize. In this dissertation, I investigate how victims can influence the willingness of perpetrators to apologize. I show how different types of transgressions influence the both the willingness to apologize and the congruence between a perpetrator's willingness to apologize and a victim's desire to receive an apology. I also focus on how the type of relationship between victim and perpetrator influences the willingness to apologize. Finally, in this dissertation, I show how perpetrators often biased towards overestimating the aversiveness of apologizing can have an important effect on their willingness to apologize.

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