Affirmation, Acknowledgment of In-Group Responsibility, Group-Based Guilt, and Support for Reparative Measures

Sabina Čehajić-Clancy
Sarajevo School of Science and Technology

Daniel A. Effron
Stanford University

Eran Halperin and Varda Liberman
Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya

Lee D. Ross
Stanford University

Three studies, 2 conducted in Israel and 1 conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, demonstrated that affirming a positive aspect of the self can increase one's willingness to acknowledge in-group responsibility for wrongdoing against others, express feelings of group-based guilt, and consequently provide greater support for reparation policies. By contrast, affirming one's group, although similarly boosting feelings of pride, failed to increase willingness to acknowledge and redress in-group wrongdoing. Studies 2 and 3 demonstrated the mediating role of group-based guilt. That is, increased acknowledgment of in-group responsibility for out-group victimization produced increased feelings of guilt, which in turn increased support for reparation policies to the victimized group. Theoretical and applied implications are discussed.

Keywords: self-affirmation, acknowledgment of in-group responsibility, group-based guilt, reparations

Social scientists, activists, and politicians all agree that sustainable intergroup reconciliation requires that groups victimized in the course of conflict receive acknowledgment of their victimization and reparations ranging from public apology and memorials to financial compensation (Čehajić & Brown, 2010; S. Cohen, 2001; Gilbert, 2001; Lederach, 1997; Minow, 1998; Tutu, 1999). Indeed, what must be acknowledged is not only the suffering of the victims but also the responsibility of the perpetrators. Gaining support for the relevant forms of acknowledgment among those whose group or nation has been the source of victimization, however, is apt to be difficult. Group members may respond to calls for acknowledgment and reparation with some mixture of denial, justification, claims that unfortunate events are inevitable in group conflict, or citations of even more serious transgressions committed by others in other conflicts (Halperin, Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Rosler, & Raviv, 2010).

Defensiveness of this sort, which can stand in the way of efforts to improve intergroup relations and to take measures that would give a minimal sense that justice has been done, can arise from at least two different sources. The first is the motivation to maintain a positive image of one's group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In particular, strategies that allow individuals to view their group positively despite its wrongdoing may increase the willingness to acknowledge such wrongdoing. The second potential source is the motivation to maintain a positive self-image. Given that people derive feelings of self-worth and integrity in part from group membership, acknowledging transgressions committed by group members can be highly self-threatening. Accordingly, strategies that allow individuals to view themselves positively despite their group's wrongdoing may increase acknowledgment.

Following this logic, the present research tested the effectiveness of two strategies for overcoming defensiveness and thereby enabling in-group members to acknowledge their group's responsibility for wrongdoing, to experience and express feelings of guilt on behalf of the in-group, and, ultimately, to endorse reparations for those who have been victimized. The first strategy involves allowing members of the victimizing group to bolster or affirm a positive image of the self, whereas the second involves allowing them to bolster or affirm a positive image of their group.

Self-Affirmation

According to self-affirmation theory (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988), people can tolerate a threat to a specific aspect of their identity if they are able to maintain a global sense of self-integrity. One way of doing so is to bolster a valued aspect of identity that is irrelevant to the aspect being threatened. Such bolstering, or *self-affirmation*, can be accomplished by reflecting on an important value or source of pride irrelevant to the threat at hand (McQueen & Klein, 2006). This type of reflection, moreover, has been shown to decrease the need to respond in a biased or

defensive manner to potentially threatening challenges to one's competence or rationality (e.g., G. L. Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000; Harris & Napper, 2005; Jacks & O'Brien, 2004; Reed & Aspinwall, 1998; Sherman & Cohen, 2002; Sherman, Nelson, & Steele, 2000). We contend that the self-threatening nature of in-group wrongdoing constitutes a barrier to acknowledging such wrongdoing, even for individuals who were not personally involved in the wrongdoing or even if it was committed before they were born. This barrier may be overcome by making sources of self-integrity that are unrelated to the relevant group membership salient.

Some prior research suggests that self-affirmation can reduce defensiveness in the face of potentially threatening facts about a group with which one identifies. For example, Sherman, Kinias, Major, Kim, and Prenovost (2007) showed that reflecting on a personally important value reduced the tendency of sports team members and fans to engage in biased ("group-enhancing") attributions for team successes and failures. Similarly, Adams, Tormala, and O'Brien (2006) found that White participants who completed a self-affirmation procedure reported perceiving more racism, expressed greater belief that White Americans deny racism, and rated the average White person as more racist than did participants who had not been induced to self-affirm. There is also evidence that self-affirmation may even increase the willingness of citizens to question the wisdom of the policies of their country and its leadership. In one study, reflecting on a personally important value increased American participants' willingness to express agreement with a Muslim author who claimed that U.S. foreign policy in the Islamic world was partially to blame for breeding terrorists such as those responsible for the 2001 attacks (G. L. Cohen et al., 2007). This effect was only observed, however, when participants had previously been prompted to think about the importance of standing up for their values. Finally, some evidence suggests that self-affirmation can encourage the giving of resources to out-groups: Harvey and Oswald (2000) found that a self-affirmation manipulation increased the importance White undergraduates placed on funding programs for Black students but only when these participants had previously watched a video depicting a violent response to a Black civil rights protest.

The present studies constitute a sterner test of the power of self-affirmation. They test its capacity to induce individuals to acknowledge their group's responsibility for serious moral transgressions—in particular, Israelis' responsibility for past and ongoing victimization of Palestinians and Bosnian Serbs' responsibility for the Srebrenica genocide and other atrocities committed against non-Serbs—and to support material compensation for victimized out-groups. With these studies, we not only seek to demonstrate the power of self-affirmation but also to use self-affirmation to reveal how concerns about self-integrity can represent a significant barrier to taking steps toward reducing intergroup conflict.

Group Affirmation

If bolstering individuals' sense of global self-integrity allows individuals to acknowledge in-group wrongdoing, can bolstering their sense of their group's global integrity similarly allow such acknowledgment? On the one hand, such *group affirmation* (Sherman et al., 2007) seems to be an appealing strategy for reducing defensiveness. People may feel better able to tolerate a threat to a specific aspect of a group's identity (e.g., evidence of wrongdoing) if they think about other positive aspects of the group's identity (e.g., group accomplishments that inspire pride). Indeed, it could even be argued that group affirmation ought to be particularly effective insofar as it represents an attempt to defend against group-based threat directly. Whereas self-affirmation may allow in-group wrongdoing to threaten one's positive image of the group without threatening one's positive image of oneself, group affirmation may reduce the magnitude of the relevant threat to group image itself. There is at least some evidence for the efficacy of group affirmation. In Sherman et al. (2007), group affirmation (in this case, reflecting on a value important to one's sports team) proved to be just as effective as self-affirmation in reducing the amount of "group-serving" bias in assessments of team failures and successes.

On the other hand, there are reasons to doubt that group affirmation can increase the willingness of individuals to acknowledge and redress their group's responsibility for serious wrongdoing in the context of intergroup conflict. Reflecting on a positive aspect of a group may allow individuals to acknowledge group actions that involve a lack of competence, care, or effort (e.g., poor performance by a sports team) while they maintain a positive global view of the group's worth (Sherman et al., 2007). But maintaining a positive view of one's group while simultaneously acknowledging harassment, harm, and even killing of innocent civilians is a greater challenge. Self-affirmation may be more effective in prompting such acknowledgment, because its success relies on addressing the self-threatening implications of in-group wrongdoing that one did not commit oneself rather than on directly addressing the group-threatening implications of such wrongdoing.

Another reason why group affirmation may fail to increase acknowledgment of in-group wrongdoing is that bolstering group pride via affirmation may lead individuals to link their own identities more closely to their group membership (Cialdini et al., 1976). Subsequently, in-group wrongdoing may seem more self-relevant, and its acknowledgment may thus feel more self-threatening. For these reasons, acknowledging in-group wrongdoing and endorsing reparative measures may not become any easier and, in some cases, may become more difficult when one has engaged in a group affirmation.

Feelings of Group-Based Guilt and Support for Reparations

Acknowledging in-group responsibility is a crucial step on the path toward victim reparation, but it is only the beginning of the process required for reconciliation and for eventual fulfillment of the requirements of justice. Such acknowledgment and associated feelings of guilt on behalf of one's group (i.e., group-based guilt) are related to a motivation to repair the damage caused by the behavior of one's in-group (e.g., Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Brown & Čehajić, 2008; Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Čehajić, 2008; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; McGarty et al., 2005; Swim & Miller, 1999). Correlational studies have provided evidence of an association between group-based guilt on the part of nonindigenous Australians and their support for government policies favorable to the indigenous community (McGarty et al., 2005),

Serbian adolescents' endorsement for reparations to Bosnian Muslims (Brown & Čehajić, 2008), and Israelis' support for compensating Palestinians for Israeli actions in the occupied territories (Sharvit, Halperin, & Rosler, 2008). In the present research, we examined whether self-affirmation and group affirmation can increase feelings of group-based guilt by increasing acknowledgment of in-group wrongdoing, and we tested the mediating role of group-based guilt in increasing support for reparative measures.

Although the research cited above has established a link between group-based guilt and support for reparations, we included both of these variables in our analyses in order to clarify the process by which self-affirmation can produce support for reparations—a goal with both theoretical and practical importance. In pursuing this goal, we wished to advance a different model from that offered by Harvey and Oswald (2000), who found that self-affirmation increased White participants' willingness to allocate resources to university programs serving African Americans but only after participants had watched a video meant to induce group-based guilt about the historical mistreatment of African Americans.

Harvey and Oswald (2000) explained this effect by positing that self-affirmation reduced guilt and shame in response to the video and, thus, "any influence that guilt and shame might have had on support for Black programs was nullified" by self-affirmation (p. 1808). Because group-based guilt and shame were measured before the self-affirmation manipulation, however, this explanation could not be adequately tested. Furthermore, it is worth noting that participants who watched the video in the absence of self-affirmation proved to be less supportive of such programs—a finding that Harvey and Oswald attributed to an increase in group-based guilt and shame. Yet, given that these emotions were positively, not negatively, correlated with support in this condition, it seems likely that some other aspect of their manipulation reduced support. The model we test makes opposite predictions to the model advanced by Harvey and Oswald. In particular, we predict that self-affirmation, by allowing individuals to acknowledge wrongdoing by members of their group, should increase feelings of group-based guilt, which in turn should increase willingness to allocate resources to out-group members as reparations for the harm they suffered at the hands of the in-group.

An Overview of the Current Studies

Three studies investigated the relationships between affirmation of the self or the group, acknowledgment of wrongdoing and in-group responsibility for such wrongdoing, feelings of guilt on behalf of the group, and support for reparation policies. For the purposes of our investigation, we defined acknowledgment of in-group responsibility as conscious and public acceptance that the actions of one's in-group have violated important moral precepts (Čehajić & Brown, 2010; Dimitrijevic, 2006).

To strengthen the external validity of our proposed model, we conducted our studies in two different cultural contexts. Studies 1 and 2 were conducted among Jews in Israel, just before (April–May 2008) and 2 months after (December 2008–January 2009) the completion of the Israeli–Palestinian war in Gaza. Participants in the third study were Serbs, living in the eastern part of the city of Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were asked about their attitudes and feelings in regard to the Srebrenica genocide of July 1995. Despite differences between these two populations and between the enormities of the events at the center of each study, both events represent a clear case in which one group was severely harmed by the other group.

In Study 1, we sought to establish that self-affirmation would increase participants' acknowledgment of out-group victimization and in-group wrongdoing and to determine the extent to which group affirmation would do the same. We also examined the effect of these manipulations on participants' willingness to acknowledge unwelcome facts about political consequences of the events in question and the steps required to achieve an end to the conflict. Studies 2 and 3 were focused on potential downstream consequences of the two manipulations, in particular, their impact on feelings of guilt and, as a result of such feelings, support for reparations to members of the victimized groups.

Study 1: Effects of Self-Affirmation and Group Affirmation on Acknowledgment of Group Wrongdoing

An important precondition for supporting reparations to a victimized group is the willingness to acknowledge the fact of such victimization and of in-group wrongdoing. Our first study contrasted the effects of self-affirmation and group affirmation on the willingness of Israeli participants to acknowledge Palestinian suffering and the role that Israel played in causing it. The intergroup conflict in this disputed area of the Middle East has deep roots, beginning a century ago as the goals of Palestinian nationalism and Zionism clashed. But the conflict has been particularly heated since the founding of the state of Israel in 1948 and in the aftermath of the war between Israel and the Arab states surrounding it that ensued and subsequent wars that resulted in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. In particular, following the collapse of the Oslo peace process and the escalation of violence in the conflict in September 2000, both parties once again have taken unilateral actions and engaged in low-intensity confrontation that have burdened both sides but have produced particular hardship for Palestinians living in the "occupied territories."

Method

Participants.   Two hundred fifty-one Israeli students (116 women, 133 men, 2 unspecified; mean age = 24.35 years, SD = 2.20) from Haifa University in Israel participated in this study as a class exercise. After giving written consent, participants completed the study in the last 20 min of their class, upon request of their lecturer. They were informed that they were participating in a study about attitudes and emotions regarding Israeli society. They were randomly assigned to a self-affirmation condition (n = 91), a group affirmation condition (n = 78), or a control condition (n = 82).

Procedure.

Affirmation manipulations.   Participants in the *self-affirmation* condition completed an experimental manipulation used frequently in past research (see McQueen & Klein, 2006). After reading that "People differ from one another in the importance they place on traits, values, and different life domains," they were asked to rank a list of values (*living in the moment, politics, relationships with friends and family, loyalty and integrity, reli-*

gious values, sense of humor, contributions to society, democracy and equal rights, creativity, and *intellectual curiosity*) in order of personal importance. Then they were asked to write about a time when their top-ranked value had been important to them and to explain why the value held personal importance.

Participants in the *group affirmation* condition completed a similar manipulation, adapted from Sherman et al. (2007). After reading that "Groups and nations differ in the importance they place on values, life domains, and certain characteristics" and being asked to think about "what makes Israeli society unique," participants ranked a list of values in order of their importance within Israeli society. The values on the list (*social solidarity, trust between people, relationships with friends and family, loyalty and integrity, readiness to sacrifice for one's nation, morality, warmth, candidness, democracy, creativity,* and *scientific achievements*) overlapped considerably with those on the list in the self-affirmation condition, in some cases with minor changes in wording to make the values more pertinent to Israeli society. Participants then wrote about a time when that value was important to their nation and explained why it is meaningful to Israel.

Participants in the control condition neither listed nor ranked values. Instead, they were asked to write about what they would pack to take on a long trip and to explain why.

Dependent measures. Following the affirmation or control task, participants were shown eight statements related to the Israel–Palestinian conflict that we expected participants to find threatening with respect to their Israeli identity (see Table 1).[1] Four of the statements pertained to the political implications of the conflict (e.g., "For a real peace with the Palestinians, we are going to have to give up some areas in and around Jerusalem that our leaders are now saying they will not give up"). Four other statements, those of primary interest in our present research, pertained to Israel's past and ongoing victimization of Palestinians (e.g., "The behavior of our soldiers toward Palestinians at the checkpoints is, in many cases, humiliating, hurtful, and cruel"). After reading each statement, participants rated their agreement with it (1 = *Strongly disagree,* 5 = *Neutral,* 9 = *Strongly agree*).[2] Finally, participants provided demographic information and indicated their political orientation on a 5-point scale (1 = *extreme right,* 2 = *right,* 3 = *center,* 4 = *left,* 5 = *extreme left*).

Results

One participant in the self-affirmation condition, two in the group affirmation condition, and 15 in the control condition failed to respond to the writing prompt. To avoid biasing our sample, we retained all of these participants in our analysis. (Comparable results were obtained if these participants were excluded.)

Values selected for affirmation task. Participants in the two affirmation conditions chose to write about similar values. In the self-affirmation condition, most wrote either about relationships with friends and family (52%) or about loyalty and integrity (33%). In the group affirmation condition, most similarly wrote either about relationships with friends and family (32%) or about a readiness to sacrifice oneself for one's nation (35%)—a value that seems closely related to loyalty. No other value in either condition was chosen by more than 8% of participants.[3]

Agreement with statements. Given the close association between political ideology and attitudes about the conflict in Israel,

we used political orientation as a covariate in the following analyses. Although this self-report variable was assessed after the manipulation, it did not differ among conditions, $F(2, 246) = 0.81$, $p = .45$. Table 1 displays participants' mean level of agreement with each of the eight potentially threatening statements, as well as means adjusted for political orientation (M_{adj}). The analyses described below separately examined agreement with statements about political implications and victimization. We first tested for omnibus condition differences using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) that included political orientation as a covariate. (Two participants who did not indicate political orientation were excluded.) The more participants located themselves on the political right, the less they tended to agree with the statements—a pattern that was significant in most of the ANCOVA results we report. No interactions with political orientation were observed. We then performed pairwise comparisons on adjusted means using Fisher least significant difference (LSD) tests (which appropriately control the familywise error rate in pairwise comparisons among three groups; Wilcox, 2003).

Agreement with statements about political implications. We first analyzed the statements about the political implications of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Due to low intercorrelations among these items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .29$), we analyzed each item individually. (Because not all participants responded to all items, the degrees of freedom differ among some analyses; see Footnote 1.) Two of the items provided evidence of between-conditions differences. The first stated that the military actions in Gaza cost Israel dearly in the international public opinion, $F(2, 111) = 2.81$, $p = .06$. For this item, self-affirmation ($M_{adj} = 6.77$) increased agreement with this statement relative both to the group affirmation condition and to the control condition ($M_{adj} = 5.68$ and 5.74, respectively; $ps \leq .05$). The second item stated that Israel must concede areas of Jerusalem in order to achieve peace. Although the omnibus ANCOVA failed to reach significance, $F(2, 244) = 2.01$, $p = .14$, pairwise comparisons indicated that, again, self-affirmation ($M_{adj} = 5.53$) increased agreement relative to the control condition ($M_{adj} = 4.80$, $p < .05$) but not to the group affirmation condition ($M_{adj} = 5.12$, $p > .26$). No significant differences between conditions emerged on the remaining two nonvictimization items ($Fs < 1$), although in both cases the self-affirmation condition yielded slightly higher agreement than the control condition (see Table 1).

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[1] We collected our data in two waves. The first wave included only five items, and the second wave included all eight items. As this variation did not affect our results, we combined waves.

[2] After each statement, participants also indicated their certainty about their agreement and their comfort expressing the statement. These items did not respond to the manipulations and thus are not discussed further.

[3] Within each affirmation condition, participants' responses to our measures did not differ significantly as a function of whether participants wrote about one of the two most chosen values or about a different value. The exception was for agreement with the item about international public opinion in the self-affirmation condition (loyalty: $M = 8.23$, $SD = 0.83$, $n = 14$; family: $M = 6.50$, $SD = 2.33$, $n = 20$; other: $M = 4.88$, $SD = 2.23$, $n = 8$), $F(2, 39) = 8.28$, $p < .001$. As this finding was unpredicted, suffers from problems of unequal cell size and variance, and did not replicate for the other items, we urge caution in interpreting it.

Table 1
Study 1: Agreement With Threatening Statements

Statement	Control			Group affirmation			Self-affirmation		
	M (SD)	M_{adj}	n	M (SD)	M_{adj}	n	M (SD)	M_{adj}	n
	Statements about political implications								
"For a real peace with the Palestinians, we are going to have to give up some areas in and around Jerusalem that our leaders are now saying they will not give up."	4.68 (2.53)	4.80	79	5.18 (2.70)	5.12	78	5.58 (2.46)	5.53	91
"'Time is not on our side.'" As the time goes by, our position at the negotiation table gets weaker and weaker."	5.35 (2.42)	5.39	80	5.90 (2.27)	5.88	78	5.74 (2.20)	5.72	91
"Hamas cannot be exterminated by military actions."	5.06 (3.07)	5.19	36	5.14 (2.90)	5.06	37	5.55 (2.96)	5.49	42
"The military actions in Gaza cost Israel dearly in the international public opinion."	5.69 (2.01)	5.74	36	5.70 (2.65)	5.68	37	6.79 (2.26)	6.77	42
	Statements about victimization								
"Israel is not the only victim of the conflict."	5.14 (2.40)	5.25	80	5.53 (2.57)	5.47	78	5.80 (2.46)	5.75	91
"The behavior of our soldiers toward Palestinians at the checkpoints is, in many cases, humiliating, hurtful, and cruel."	4.80 (2.26)	4.91	80	5.08 (2.32)	5.02	78	5.73 (2.37)	5.68	91
"Many of the Palestinians who lived here and left in the 1948 war did not leave of their own free will; they were forced to leave their homes through transfers or military evacuations."	4.24 (1.96)	4.34	79	4.51 (1.99)	4.46	78	4.76 (2.46)	4.71	91
"Too many innocent Palestinians, including women and children, were killed by the Israeli military actions in Gaza."	4.47 (2.48)	4.60	36	4.73 (2.71)	4.65	37	4.98 (2.62)	4.93	42
Composite of victimization statements	4.68 (1.71)	4.79	80	5.01 (1.79)	4.95	78	5.40 (1.90)	5.35	91
Composite of all statements	4.90 (1.29)	4.99	80	5.23 (1.41)	5.18	78	5.57 (1.43)	5.53	91

Note. M_{adj} indicates the mean was adjusted for political orientation. For participants with missing data, composites were calculated based on nonmissing responses. Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard deviations.

Agreement with statements about victimization. We next examined the four statements of primary theoretical interest in our research: those acknowledging that Palestinians had been victimized in the conflict with Israel and implicating Israel's culpability in this victimization (see Table 1). Agreement with these statements tended to be lower than agreement with the political implication statements overall, although the between-conditions differences that emerged were at least as large. Moreover, the intercorrelation between the items was large enough (Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$) for us to submit their average to a single analysis. It indicated that level of agreement with the statements differed significantly across the three conditions, $F(2, 245) = 2.95$, $p = .05$. Participants agreed with the statements significantly more in the self-affirmation condition ($M_{adj} = 5.36$) than in the control condition ($M_{adj} = 4.79$, $p < .05$) and marginally more than in the group affirmation condition ($M_{adj} = 4.95$, $p = .10$), with no difference in agreement between the control and group affirmation conditions ($p = .51$).[4]

It is further worth noting that only in the self-affirmation condition did participants express a mean level of agreement with these victimization items that was significantly on the "agree" side of the scale midpoint, $t(90) = 2.01$, $p < .05$. The relevant mean for participants in the group affirmation condition was almost exactly at the midpoint of the scale, $t(77) = 0.03$, *ns*, and the mean for

those in the control condition was slightly but not significantly below it, $t(79) = 1.65$, $p = .10$.

Discussion

Affirming the importance to the self of a personal value increased Israeli participants' willingness to agree with statements about Palestinians' victimization and Israeli culpability for that victimization. Our data suggested that self-affirmation also increased participants' support for certain potentially threatening statements about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in general, although the omnibus tests of differences among the three conditions did not reach statistical significance for these items. Affirming the importance of a collective value to Israeli society produced no such effects.

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[4] Condition differences also emerged when all eight items about victimization and political implications were included in a single scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .67$, $F(2, 245) = 5.00$, $p < .01$. Participants expressed more agreement in the self-affirmation condition ($M_{adj} = 5.53$) than in either the control condition ($M_{adj} = 4.99$, $p < .005$) or the group affirmation condition ($M_{adj} = 5.18$, $p < .05$). Means for the latter two conditions did not differ significantly ($p = .29$).

Study 1 gave participants an opportunity to acknowledge both the fact of Palestinian victimization and the role that Israeli soldiers and military actions played in causing such victimization, both of which would seem to be important steps on the path to addressing and mitigating the consequences of such victimization. Studies 2 and 3 examined whether affirmation could allow participants to acknowledge even more psychologically difficult statements about their group: These studies explicitly asked participants how much responsibility they perceived their nation in general (in addition to specific individuals and actions) as bearing for victimization and wrongdoing. To test the robustness of the principal findings and to address some potential issues of interpretation unique to the specifics of the manipulations employed in our initial study, the studies that follow also used a different manipulation of self-affirmation and group affirmation. Following Klein, Blier, and Janze (2001), we simply asked participants in Studies 2 and 3 to recall a meaningful event that made them feel proud of themselves (self-affirmation) or of their in-group (group affirmation).[5] This manipulation constituted an improvement over that used in Study 1 in that participants' attention was directed toward competence-based rather than morality-based qualities, the latter of which are more relevant to the context of intergroup transgressions.

Study 2: Group-Based Guilt and Support for Reparations Among Israelis

The acknowledgment of in-group responsibility for causing victimization can provide the psychological basis for feelings of group-based guilt (Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002; Leach, Snider, & Iyer, 2002). These feelings reflect the appraisal that the acts of victimization violate norms or values to which the group is committed (Branscombe, 2004; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006) and can in turn motivate group members to rectify the wrongdoing and to compensate the victims (Doosje et al., 1998).

In Study 2, we began our effort to link self-affirmation to feelings of group-based guilt and support for reparations. After completing an affirmation or control task, Israeli participants read a passage describing a recent, much-publicized event in which an Israeli military strike killed an innocent Palestinian family. Participants then indicated the extent to which they acknowledged Israeli responsibility for the event, their feelings of group-based guilt, and their support for reparation policies for Palestinians. We hypothesized that self-affirmation would increase acknowledgment of responsibility for in-group wrongdoing, which would increase group-based guilt, which in turn would increase support for reparations to victims. On the basis of the results of Study 1, we did not expect group affirmation to have these effects.

Research Context

In December 2008, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict escalated once again as violence erupted after a half-year cease-fire between Israel and the Hamas movement ruling the Gaza Strip. Missile attacks against Israel intensified, and Hamas launched a wide-scale offensive in the Gaza Strip that caused 1,300 Palestinian casualties, 13 Israeli casualties, and extensive destruction on the Palestinian side.

In one of the most documented events during the war, the three daughters and a niece of Az-a-Din Abu El-Aish, a Palestinian physician who works at a large Israeli hospital, were killed in his home by the Israeli army (IDF). In his anguish and grief, Abu El-Aish pleaded in a press conference held in the hospital for an end to the violence and for the peaceful coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians. He also insisted that there had been no military justification for targeting his house. (The mother of an Israeli wounded soldier who was a patient in that hospital angrily broke into his speech and accused him of harboring weapons or terrorists; otherwise, "why would anyone bomb his house?") An internal investigation conducted by the IDF confirmed the doctor's story, saying that his house had not been identified as a threat. We chose to examine reactions to this event because we expected that Israeli participants would find it especially shocking and identity threatening.

Method

Participants. One hundred thirty-nine Jewish Israeli students (59 men, 78 women, 2 unspecified; mean age = 24.41 years, SD = 2.52) participated in the study. Random assignment placed 46 in the self-affirmation condition, 47 in the group affirmation condition, and 46 in the control condition.

Procedure. Data were collected in three Israeli academic institutions: the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, the Open University, and Tel Aviv University. Participants in all three institutions completed the study as a class exercise in the last 20 min of their class, after giving written consent and upon request of their lecturer. Participants were told that the experimenters were conducting two different studies that were grouped together for reasons of convenience only. In the "first study," which ostensibly examined the antecedents of life success, participants received the writing prompt for the self-affirmation, group affirmation, or control condition. Participants in the self-affirmation condition were prompted to describe a personal success, how it made them feel, and what it reflected about them. Those in the group affirmation condition described a success by a group with which they identified, how it made them feel, and what it reflected about their group.[6] The control condition employed the task used in Study 1. In the "second study," participants read about the killing of the Palestinian doctor's family and then responded to our dependent measures. Debriefing took place immediately after the completion of the questionnaire.

Measures. Participants responded to all items on 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility was measured

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[5] Pretest data with 57 Israeli participants drawn from the same population as in Study 2 revealed that, relative to the control condition used in our studies, the self- and group affirmation manipulations used in Studies 2 and 3 significantly increased current feelings of pride ($ps < .001$), and they did so to a statistically equivalent extent. Furthermore, neither manipulation affected other measures of mood ($ps > .17$). Only group affirmation significantly boosted the extent to which participants defined themselves as members of a group ($p = .03$), and self-affirmation did not ($p = .72$). A more detailed account of this pretest can be obtained from the first author.

[6] As we expected, almost all participants in that condition (93.5%) chose groups that are closely related to their Jewish, Israeli, or Zionist identity.

with a 5-item scale (Cronbach's α = .82). The first two items assessed readiness to acknowledge that in-group members committed atrocities during the war, with an emphasis on the specific event mentioned in the introduction. The two statements were "I acknowledge that, in some cases during the war, members of my group violated international laws" and "I do not believe that members of my group committed atrocities during the war" (reverse coded). The additional three items explicitly cited the responsibility of the nation of Israel: "I consider Israel to be responsible for atrocities such as the killing of the doctor's family," "I think that Israel should feel responsible for the violation of international laws it has committed during the war," and "I think that in some cases during the war, Israel should have behaved differently."

Group-based guilt was measured with a four-item scale that yielded a satisfactory internal reliability (Cronbach's α = .84). The four items were as follows: "When I think about things Israel has done during the war (e.g., the killing of the doctor's family), I sometimes feel guilty"; "I occasionally feel guilty for the human rights violations by members of my group during the war"; "When I think about the way IDF soldiers hurt Palestinians and their property during the war, I sometimes feel guilty"; and "I do not feel any guilt for the things Israel has done to Palestinians during the war" (reverse coded).

Support for reparation policies was measured with the following four items (Cronbach's α = .90): "I think that Israel owes something to the Palestinian people because of the things we have done to them during the war in Gaza"; "I think that formal Israeli representatives should apologize to the Palestinians for some of the things we have done to them during the war"; "I think that Israelis should help, as much as they can, Palestinians to restore their houses"; and "I think that innocent Palestinians who were hurt during the war deserve some form of compensation from Israel."

Results

Factor analysis. To reaffirm the distinctiveness of group-based guilt, acknowledgment of in-group responsibility, and support for reparations, we conducted a maximum likelihood factor analysis with varimax rotation. This resulted in three clearly distinct factors with eigenvalues greater than 1: four group-based guilt items loaded onto the first factor (.57 to .75; cross loadings < .37), the five items measuring acknowledgment of in-group responsibility loaded onto the second factor (.59 to .91; cross loadings < .27), and the four support for reparation items loaded on the third factor (.64 to .84; cross loadings < .29). The three factors accounted for 74.05% of the variance.

Manipulation effects. In the first stage of data analysis, one-way analyses of variance were used to test whether the self- and group affirmation manipulations had a significant effect on acknowledgment of in-group responsibility, group-based guilt, and support for reparation policies. As in Study 1, we used Fisher LSD post hoc tests as a procedure for comparison. See Table 2 for means and standard deviations for all measures across conditions.

Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility. Our initial analysis revealed an effect of experimental condition, $F(2, 136)$ =

Table 2

Study 2: Means and Standard Deviation for All Measures by Condition

Measure	Self-affirmation (n = 46)		Group affirmation (n = 47)		Control (n = 46)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility						
Item 1	4.93[a]	1.56	3.98	1.94	4.50	1.87
Item 2	5.26[a,b]	1.78	4.08	2.20	4.02	1.93
Item 3	4.57[a]	1.76	3.36	2.23	3.96	2.02
Item 4	4.22[a]	1.83	3.23	2.07	3.83	2.22
Item 5	4.61	1.69	4.02	2.29	3.96	2.12
Composite	4.72	1.37	3.74	1.64	4.04	1.50
Group-based guilt						
Item 1	4.07[a,b]	2.02	2.81	2.12	2.91	1.91
Item 2	4.50[a,b]	1.77	3.31	2.50	3.56	2.04
Item 3	4.24	1.80	3.73	1.82	3.91	1.94
Item 4	3.43[b]	1.83	2.91	2.03	2.67	1.94
Composite	4.06	1.54	3.14	1.72	3.26	1.47
Support for reparation policies						
Item 1	3.59[a,b]	1.77	2.53	1.95	2.67	1.94
Item 2	3.33[a,b]	1.46	2.36	1.84	2.63	1.77
Item 3	3.60[a,b]	1.48	2.80	1.93	2.46	1.63
Item 4	3.24[a]	1.38	2.31[c]	1.41	3.22	2.14
Composite	3.36	1.27	2.50	1.91	2.81	1.91

Note. For item content, see the main text.
[a] Indicates significant difference between the self-affirmation and group affirmation conditions (p < .05). [b] Indicates significant difference between the self-affirmation and control conditions (p < .05). [c] Indicates significant difference between the group affirmation and control conditions (p < .05).

5.14, $p = .007$. Participants in the self-affirmation condition were significantly more likely to acknowledge in-group responsibility ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.37$) than were those in the group-affirmation condition ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.64$, $p = .01$), but they were only marginally more likely to do so than those in the control condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.50$, $p = .09$). The level of acknowledgment of in-group responsibility was equivalent between participants in the group-affirmation condition and those in the control condition ($p = .38$).

Group-based guilt.   Our initial analysis revealed a main effect of experimental condition, $F(2, 136) = 4.39$, $p = .014$. Levels of group-based guilt were higher within the self-affirmation condition ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.54$) than the group affirmation condition ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.72$, $p = .02$) or the control condition ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.47$, $p = .04$). Again, the levels of group-based guilt expressed by participants in the latter two conditions were very similar ($p = .78$).

Support for reparation policies   Our initial analysis revealed a main effect of experimental condition, $F(2, 132) = 3.56$, $p = .03$. Support for the relevant reparation policies, like the other measures we have considered, again proved to be greater for participants in the self-affirmation condition ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.27$) than for those in the group affirmation condition ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.73$, $p = .009$) or the control condition ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.55$, $p = .09$), although the second comparison was only marginally significant. And once again, the group affirmation and control condition respondents did not differ on the relevant measure ($p = .33$).

Predictive model.   In order to examine the proposed theoretical model (see Table 3 for correlations between variables), we advanced a structural model using AMOS 6 software (Arbuckle, 2005). In light of the fact that no significant differences were found between the group affirmation condition and the control condition with respect to any of the dependent variable measures considered, we combined these two groups for the purposes of this analysis (i.e., contrasts code self-affirmation as 2 and group affirmation and control as −1).

In the hypothesized model, experimental condition was specified as an exogenous variable predicting acknowledgment of in-group responsibility, which predicted group-based guilt, which in turn predicted support for reparation policies. In this model, we not only considered in-group responsibility as a mediator (through group-based guilt) of support for reparation policies but also specified a direct path between such acknowledgment of in-group responsibility and support for reparation policies.

Our hypothesized model fit the data well, $\chi^2(2) = 1.83$, $p = .40$; normed fit index (NFI) = .99, comparative fit index (CFI) = .99,

root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .01. Standardized parameter estimates are presented in Figure 1. Adding the path between the contrast and group-based guilt did not yield significant associations between these two variables. Corresponding with the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results, the experimental manipulation of self-affirmation increased acknowledgment of in-group responsibility ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$), which significantly and directly predicted group-based guilt ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$). Finally, group-based guilt partially mediated the effect of acknowledgment of in-group responsibility on support for reparation policies; that is, acknowledgment of in-group responsibility predicted support for reparation policies both directly ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$) and through the mediation of group-based guilt ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$; Sobel's $z = 5.23$, $p < .001$).

We also tested whether our hypothesized model, described above, fit the data better than did two alternative models. In the first of these alternative models, we dropped the direct path between acknowledgment of in-group responsibility and support for reparation policies, testing the assumption that the entire association between these variables would be mediated through group-based guilt. This model fit the data poorly, $\chi^2(3) = 25.01$, $p = .00$; NFI = .86, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .23, and was significantly inferior to the hypothesized model ($\Delta df = 1$, $\Delta\chi^2 = 23.19$, $p < .001$). In the other alternative model, group-based guilt was considered as predictor of support for reparation through the mediation of acknowledgment of responsibility. Again, this model fit the data worse than did our hypothesized model, $\chi^2(3) = 35.03$, $p = .00$; NFI = .81, CFI = .82, RMSEA = .28; $\Delta df = 1$, $\Delta\chi^2 = 33.2$, $p < .001$. Overall, then, our hypothesized model received strong support.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 offered support both for our specific predictions and for our hypothesized model. For Israeli participants, writing about a meaningful event that made them feel personally successful increased their acknowledgment of in-group responsibility for individuals harmed by the aggressive actions Israel conducted in Gaza. This increased participants' feelings of group-based guilt for that harm, which in turn increased participants' support for various forms of compensatory reparations. As we anticipated, writing about a meaningful event that our pretesting showed made people feel proud but also increased identification with a group (see Footnote 5) did not produce the same level of acknowledgment and support for compensation. Indeed, on some measures this group affirmation manipulation yielded mean

Table 3
Study 2: Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for All Variables

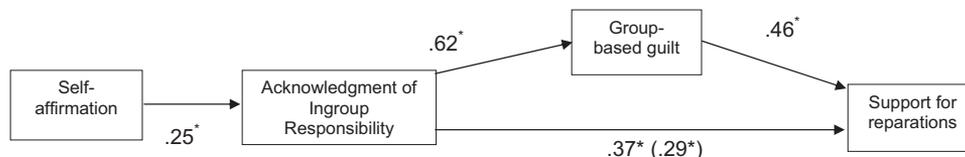| Variable	1	2	3
1. Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility	—	.55***	.61***
2. Group-based guilt		—	.66***
3. Support for reparation policies			—
M	4.17	3.48	2.89
SD	1.50	1.58	1.56

Note. $N = 139$.
*** $p < .001$.

Figure 1. Study 2: From self-affirmation to support for reparation (Israel). Values in parentheses reflect the inclusion of the mediator (group-based guilt) in the equation. $R^2 = .56.$ * $p < .05.$

responses that were even less favorable, although not significantly so, than those seen in the control condition.

Study 3: Group-Based Guilt and Support for Reparations Among Bosnian Serbs

Study 3 was designed in part to demonstrate that our findings on the effects of self-affirmation were not somehow unique to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and could be replicated in the context of a conflict where the misdeeds and victimization were more extreme and horrific and, therefore, even more threatening to the sense of identity and personal and group integrity. In this study, we examined Serbian participants' support for reparations to victims of the Srebrenica genocide that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995.

We attempted to extend our findings by including an additional variable in our predictive model: willingness to assume personal responsibility for in-group wrongdoing, which some authors have argued might be a particularly important antecedent of group-based guilt and a key mediator of subsequent responses (Čehajić & Brown, 2008; Leach, 2007). Although acknowledgment of in-group responsibility entails recognizing that members of one's group are to blame for wrongdoing, a willingness to take on personal responsibility entails sharing in the collective blame for the misdeeds of one's group—even if one did not personally take part in those misdeeds. In the model we tested, acknowledgment of in-group responsibility for atrocities leads to greater feelings of group-based guilt, in part by increasing one's willingness to assume personal responsibility for the group's atrocities.

Research Context

The dissolution of Yugoslavia and, in particular, the legacy of Slobodan Milosevic left over 200,000 dead (a majority of the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina). Left in its wake were three million displaced persons and refugees, three million land mines, and over 300 mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Stamkoski, 1995). These mass and collective atrocities, aimed particularly at non-Serbian populations, included acts of genocide: In July 1995, over 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were systematically massacred by Serbian forces under the command of Gen. Ratko Mladic.

Although the collective violence that raged in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended with the Dayton Peace Accord in 1995, intergroup relations have remained severely strained, and the prospect of reconciliation in most spheres of everyday life remains far from reach. Moreover, despite international initiatives and intense media exposure, most Serbs still seem reluctant to acknowledge their own group's responsibility for the atrocities committed against others. The Srebrenica genocide has not yet been fully acknowledged for what it was either by Serbian officials or by the majority of ordinary Serbs, many of whom continue to minimize the harm done to Bosnian Muslims and to rationalize it by contrasting it with atrocities perpetrated against Serbs during World War II.

It was against this backdrop that we conducted Study 3. Participants were adolescent Bosnian Serbs, too young to have been directly involved in the perpetration of war crimes but old enough to be aware of the Srebrenica genocide and other atrocities committed by their group.

Method

Participants. A total of 137 high school students were contacted, of whom 117 agreed to participate in this study. Sixteen participants in the self-affirmation or the group affirmation condition who did not complete the manipulation were excluded because they were unable to think of a relevant success; four participants in the group affirmation condition were excluded because they wrote about a time when they personally (rather than their group) experienced a success. Our final sample thus included 97 participants (26 young men, 66 young women, and 5 unspecified; mean age = 18.09 years, $SD = .61$), with 31 in the self-affirmation condition, 28 in the group affirmation condition, and 38 in the control condition.

Procedure. Data were collected in Lukavica, an eastern part of Sarajevo City where a majority of Serbs live. The manipulation and the dependent measures were presented as two distinct, unrelated studies: the first about stories of individual (or group) successes and the second about social psychological processes involved in dealing with the war (1992–1995). Two questionnaires, written in the Bosnian language using the Latin alphabet, were distributed. Participants filled out the questionnaire in their classroom on a voluntary basis during regular class time, receiving the writing prompts (described in Study 2) appropriate to their experimental condition, and then completed the dependent measures described below. They were thoroughly debriefed at the conclusion of the study.

Measures. Study 3 employed measures very similar to those used in Study 2, although their specific content, of course, now applied to events in Bosnia and Herzegovina rather than Israel. All responses were made on 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility was measured with five items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). Two items captured participants' readiness to acknowledge the fact of in-group atrocities, and the last three items aimed to capture a perception that the in-group not only had committed those atrocities but also was responsible for them. These items were "I am ready to acknowledge that members

of my group have committed atrocities," "I acknowledge that in some cases atrocities were committed by members of my group," "I consider my group to be responsible for atrocities which they committed," "I perceive my group responsible for their crimes," and "I think that my group should feel responsible for their crimes."

Willingness to assume personal responsibility for in-group wrong-doing was measured with the following three items (Cronbach's α = .79): "Although I personally did not do anything wrong, I am ready to take on the responsibility for the crimes committed in the name of my group"; "Although I am not personally responsible for what has happened, I am ready to take on the responsibility for the behavior of my group"; and "I think that future generations should carry a responsibility for their group's atrocities."

Group-based guilt was measured with the following two items taken from Study 2 (Cronbach's α = .93): "When I think about things my group has done during the war, I sometimes feel guilty" and "I occasionally feel guilty for the human rights violations by members of my group during the war."

Support for reparation policies, both those involving monetary compensation and those involving simple apology, was measured with the following five items (Cronbach's α = .78): "I think my group owes something to members of other groups because of the things they have done to them"; "I think that representatives of my group should apologize to other groups for the past harmful actions"; "I think that members of my group should help, as much as they can, other group members to return to their homes"; "I believe members of my group should try to repair some of the damage they caused during the war"; and "I think that members of other groups deserve some form of compensation from my group for what happened to them during the war."

Results

Factor analysis.   As in Study 2, we conducted a maximum likelihood factor analysis with oblique rotation in order to establish the distinctiveness between the variables. This resulted in four clearly distinct factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1: all acceptance of in-group responsibility items loaded onto the first factor (.43 to 1.0; cross loadings < .17); two group-based guilt items loaded onto the second factor (.74 to .95; cross loadings < .17); all items measuring acknowledgment of in-group responsibility loaded onto the third factor (.79 to .83; cross loadings < .09); and all reparation items loaded onto the fourth factor (.41 to .81; cross loadings < .26). These four factors accounted for 67.67% of the variance.

Manipulation effects.   One-way ANOVAs were used in order to determine whether our measures differed across conditions. Given that the sample sizes differed across conditions to a proportionately larger extent than in our prior two studies, we employed a Hochberg test as a post hoc procedure for comparison (although simple pairwise comparison produced the same results). See Table 4 for means and standard deviation for all measures and individual items across conditions.

Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility.   Our initial analysis revealed an effect of experimental condition, $F(2, 94) = 5.50$, $p = .006$. Consistent with the results of Studies 1 and 2, participants assigned to the self-affirmation condition were more likely to acknowledge in-group responsibility ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.70$) than

were those in either the group affirmation condition ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.40$, $p = .006$) or the control condition ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.59$, $p = .05$). The mean level of acknowledgment by participants in the latter two conditions did not differ significantly ($p = .95$).

Group-based guilt.   We also found an effect of the manipulation on group-based guilt, $F(2, 94) = 6.33$, $p = .003$. As in Study 2, participants in the self-affirmation condition showed significantly higher levels of acknowledgment ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 2.22$) than did those in the group-affirmation condition ($M = 1.32$, $SD = 0.78$, $p = .002$). Although, as predicted, participants expressed more group-based guilt in the self-affirmation condition than in the control condition ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.68$), this effect did not reach significance ($p = .14$). Once again the relevant means for the group affirmation and control conditions did not differ significantly ($p = .22$).

Personal acceptance of in-group responsibility.   Our analysis of participants' willingness to personally take on responsibility for in-group wrongdoing failed to reveal significant condition differences, $F(2, 94) = 1.91$, $p = .15$.

Support for reparation policies.   We found a significant effect of our manipulation on support for reparation policies, $F(2, 94) = 4.74$, $p = .01$. As in Study 2, participants in the self-affirmation condition expressed significantly more support for such policies ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.53$) than those in the group-affirmation condition ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.01$, $p = .009$). As predicted, participants in the self-affirmation condition also expressed more support than those in the control condition ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.48$), although this effect failed to reach significance ($p = .16$). Also, as has been the case for all of measures discussed thus far, differences in responses by participants in the group affirmation and control condition did not approach significance ($p = .46$).

Predictive model.   We once again examined the predictive model encompassing the relevant dependent variable measures (see Table 5 for correlations between variables), coding the effect of the manipulation as we did in Study 2 (i.e., self-affirmation = 2, group affirmation and control = −1). To build on the model examined in Study 2, we also included the measure of willingness to assume personal responsibility for the group's actions, hypothesizing that this willingness would be a significant antecedent of group-based guilt. In particular, we predicted that the effects of acknowledgment of in-group responsibility on group-based guilt would be mediated by willingness to assume personal responsibility.

Our hypothesized model fit the data well, $\chi^2(4) = 5.99$, $p = .19$; CFI = .98, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .98, RMSEA = .07. Standardized parameter estimates are presented in Figure 2. As in Study 2, self-affirmation increased acknowledgment of in-group responsibility ($\beta = .31$, $p < .01$), which in turn predicted guilt directly ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$). Building on Study 2 and consistent with our predictions, the data showed acknowledgement of in-group responsibility also predicted group-based guilt indirectly through the mediating effect of personal responsibility ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$, Sobel's $z = 2.42$, $p = .01$). In other words, personal acceptance of in-group responsibility partially mediated the effects of acknowledgment on guilt. In addition, replicating Study 2, group-based guilt partially mediated the relationship between acknowledgment of in-group responsibility on support for reparation policies (Sobel's $z = 2.21$, $p = .02$). Finally, acknowledgment of in-group responsibility predicted reparation both directly ($\beta = .60$,

Table 4
Study 3: Means and Standard Deviation for All Items by Condition

Measure	Self-affirmation (n = 31)		Group affirmation (n = 28)		Control (n = 38)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility						
Item 1	4.84[a,b]	2.11	3.69	2.17	4.08	2.15
Item 2	4.81[a,b]	2.04	3.00	2.07	4.32	2.21
Item 3	4.09[a,b]	2.30	2.93	1.61	3.10	2.17
Item 4	4.65	2.19	2.93	2.01	3.18	2.29
Item 5	3.45[a,b]	2.20	2.14	1.79	2.47	2.00
Composite	4.32	1.70	3.00	1.40	3.39	1.59
Personal acceptance of in-group responsibility						
Item 1	3.58	2.26	3.14	2.27	2.79	2.03
Item 2	3.61[b]	2.49	3.74	2.34	2.55	1.98
Item 3	2.23	2.03	1.79	1.45	1.63	1.49
Composite	3.14	1.96	2.69	1.65	2.32	1.56
Group-based guilt						
Item 1	2.81[a]	2.19	1.14[c]	.52	2.05	1.67
Item 2	2.97[a,b]	1.83	1.50	1.07	2.08	1.79
Composite	2.89	2.22	1.32	.78	2.07	1.68
Support for reparation policies						
Item 1	2.09	1.83	1.71	1.46	1.76	1.40
Item 2	2.84[a]	2.11	1.71	1.12	2.16	1.88
Item 3	4.97[a]	2.02	3.64[c]	2.16	5.10	2.18
Item 4	4.61[a,b]	1.99	2.93	1.41	3.65	2.14
Item 5	4.19[b]	2.09	3.21	2.11	2.84	2.18
Composite	3.74	1.53	2.64	1.01	3.10	1.48

Note. For item content, see the main text.
[a] Indicates significant difference between the self-affirmation and group affirmation conditions ($p < .05$). [b] Indicates significant difference between the self-affirmation and control conditions ($p < .05$). [c] Indicates significant difference between the group affirmation and control conditions ($p < .05$).

$p < .001$) and indirectly through group-based guilt ($\beta = .52$, $p < .01$).

Alternative models. Some scholars (e.g., Zimmermann, Abrams, & Eller, 2006) have argued that although a willingness to assume personal responsibility for one's group's misdeeds is indeed distinct from group-based guilt, it may be less an antecedent of feelings of guilt than a strategy used to alleviate such feelings. Accordingly, we tested a model where acknowledgment of in-group responsibility would lead to personal acceptance of in-group responsibility through guilt by exchanging the positions of group-based guilt

and acceptance of responsibility in that model. This alternative model offered a relatively poor fit for our data, $\chi^2(4) = 14.49$, $p = .006$; CFI = .886, GFI = .942, RMSEA = .16. Our present predictive model thus proved superior to the proposed alternative.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 were consistent with those of our previous studies. Participants who affirmed themselves by writing about a personal success once again showed a greater willingness to

Table 5
Study 3: Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for All Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility	—	.36***	.26***	.59***
2. Group-based guilt		—	.42***	.43***
3. Personal acceptance of in-group responsibility			—	.18[†]
4. Support for reparation policies				—
M	3.35	2.11	2.69	3.17
SD	1.62	1.78	1.74	1.43

Note. N = 97.
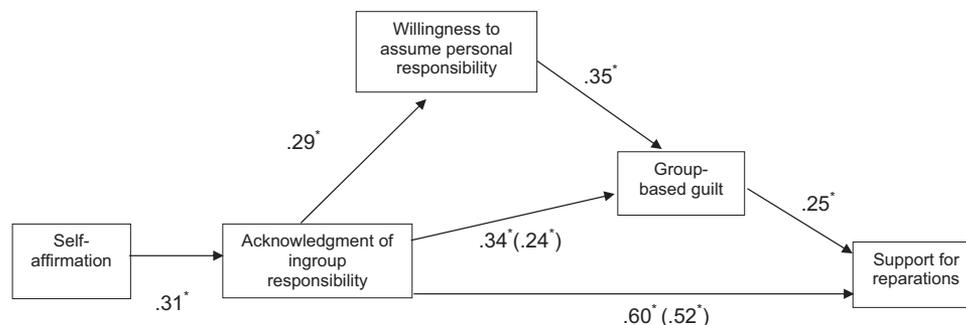[†] $p < .10$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 2. Study 3: From self-affirmation to support for reparation (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Values in parentheses refer to inclusion of the mediators (willingness to assume personal responsibility and group-based guilt, respectively) in the equation. $R^2 = .42.$ * $p < .05$.

acknowledge in-group responsibility for wrongdoing than did participants in the other two conditions in our study. As a result, participants who affirmed themselves felt more guilt on behalf of their group and consequently were more willing to endorse reparation policies for out-group victims of their in-group's wrongdoing. Study 3 also produced support for an additional element in our model: Acknowledgment of in-group responsibility predicted guilt in part because of its association with participants' willingness to assume personal responsibility for the in-group's actions. This finding speaks to the power of self-affirmation. Although it would surely have been easy to avoid assuming personal responsibility for atrocities that occurred before most of them were born, participants who affirmed their personal integrity nonetheless showed some willingness to take on this kind of responsibility. However, a note of caution is in order, as the effects of self-affirmation did not reach statistical significance on all items measuring acceptance of personal responsibility (see Table 4).

As in our previous studies, self-affirmation was more effective in producing these effects than was group affirmation. Indeed, compared to the control condition, group affirmation had no measurable effect on participants' willingness to acknowledge ingroup responsibility or to assume personal responsibility for ingroup wrongdoing; nor did it affect feelings of guilt or support for reparations. Thus, group affirmation seems not to have been effective in reducing defensiveness in the face of a threat to participants' group.

General Discussion

Measures of redress, ranging from simple but formal apology to heavy financial reparations, can play an important role in healing the psychological harm suffered by one group that has been victimized by the actions of another group in the context of intergroup conflict. Feelings of guilt among members of the group that caused the harm can boost support for such policies. But group members may not always acknowledge their group's responsibility for such wrongdoing, much less feel a personal sense of guilt for it (e.g., Čehajić & Brown, 2008; Leach, 2007). Indeed, efforts to bring group wrongdoing to light often meet with denial (S. Cohen, 2001) or rationalization (Halperin et al., 2010; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006) on the part of many members of the relevant in-group.

The present studies examined the effectiveness of two forms of esteem-enhancing affirmation—self-affirmation and group affirmation—in helping to overcome these impediments to acknowledgment of in-group responsibility. In particular, these studies examined the impact of these manipulations on the willingness of participants to acknowledge their group's responsibility for wrongdoing and victimization, ranging from mere harassment and ill-treatment to acts of genocide, and on participants' associated feelings of guilt and support for reparations to the victimized group.

In three studies, conducted in the context of two different real-world intergroup conflict settings with morality-based affirmations (Study 1) and with competence-based affirmations (Studies 2 and 3), we found that opportunities for self-affirmation increased participants' acknowledgment of harm their in-group had inflicted on others. In Study 1, Israelis given the chance to write about an important value showed increased acknowledgment of their group's past and present mistreatment and victimization of Palestinians. In Study 2 (dealing with a specific and relatively recent instance of victimization of an innocent Palestinian) and Study 3 (dealing with the horrific acts of genocide perpetrated by Serbs against non-Serbs), writing about an event that made our participants proud of themselves increased acknowledgment of the group's responsibility for victimizing others, which increased feelings of guilt, which in turn increased support for reparation policies. In some instances, the differences between self-affirmation and control conditions proved to be only marginally significant; however, the pattern of self-affirmation effects was remarkably consistent across three studies.

These studies add to the evidence that bolstering individuals' feelings of global self-integrity (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988) can reduce their inclination and need to respond defensively to threatening information. Our results go beyond prior work by demonstrating that self-affirmation can reduce defensiveness about the misdeeds of one's group even when they involve the most extreme forms of victimization (i.e., murder and other genocidal acts). The results also provide evidence for another positive consequence of self-affirmation: its capacity to foster and facilitate processes that serve the goal of intergroup reconciliation after a history of conflict and victimization.

The effectiveness of our self-affirmation procedures also sheds light on the nature of individuals' reluctance to take certain steps to alleviate intergroup conflict. This reluctance, we have suggested, may stem in part from a desire to maintain a positive image of one's group, but it seems ultimately to stem from a desire to maintain a positive image of the self. Even people who have played no direct role in the wrongdoing may nonetheless feel that the wrongdoing reflects poorly on them as individuals—a feeling that may be especially strong in the context of entrenched intergroup conflict settings with a clear demarcation between "us" and "them" that makes individuals view their group membership as a central aspect of their identity. Defending that part of their identity was made less necessary by our self-affirmation manipulation.

The present studies also showed that group affirmation was consistently less effective than self-affirmation in increasing acknowledgment of wrongdoing, feelings of guilt, and support for reparations. Writing about a group value (Study 1) or an event that made our participants proud of being a member of their group (Study 2 and 3) failed to affect these variables significantly, even though pretesting established that group affirmation was as effective as self-affirmation in boosting participants' immediate feelings of pride (see Footnote 5).

The ineffectiveness of group affirmation in these data apparently conflicts with recent work showing that, at least in one context (i.e., among members and fans of sports teams; Sherman et al., 2007), group affirmation reduced group-serving judgmental biases. The failure of group affirmation to facilitate acknowledgment of wrongdoing and support for reparations in the present research may stem from the type and magnitude of the relevant wrongdoing. Reflecting on a group's values or on past successes that furnish a source of pride may do little to defend against the extreme group-level threat inherent in acknowledging the victimization or even murder of innocent civilians. Also, the fact that our participants themselves were unlikely to have had any role in the wrongdoing being acknowledged meant that no similar obstacle stood in the way of our participants' efforts to maintain a positive self-image. This explanation builds on the finding that self-affirmation reduces defensiveness more effectively when the traits and values that are affirmed are irrelevant to the threat at hand (Aronson, Blanton, & Cooper, 1995; Blanton, Cooper, Skurnik, & Aronson, 1997; Galinsky, Stone, & Cooper, 2000).

The foregoing account may explain why self-affirmation was more effective than group affirmation in our results, but the fact that we found no positive effect of group affirmation merits further comment. This is especially so in light of data reported by Miron, Branscombe, and Biernat (2010) indicating that group affirmation made White American participants rate the harm committed against Africans during slavery in the United States as more severe and, subsequently, made participants report feeling guiltier about this harm. (The investigators did not test the effectiveness of self-affirmation.) Given the differences in participant populations, specific wording of dependent variables, and, most important, historical status of the relevant wrongdoing, we cannot be confident in pinpointing the reason for the relevant discrepancy in results. It is likely that the White American participants felt less threatened by their group's historical wrongdoings (which occurred much further in the past and for most of our participants were not even the deeds of their ancestors) than our participants did in reflecting on the deeds of their countrymen.

The fact that Miron et al.'s (2010) group affirmation procedure, unlike our own, did not strengthen group identification may be relevant. As Sherman et al. (2007) noted, strong identification with one's group may sometimes provide one with the "affirmational resources" that can make a group affirmation procedure effective. But heightened group identification may well increase the psychological costs of acknowledging in-group responsibility for wrongdoing because the more one identifies with one's group, the more that a threat to the group should represent a threat to the self. Together, the results of the present research and those reported by Miron et al. suggest that group affirmation procedures that increase pride without simultaneously increasing group identification may prove at least somewhat effective in increasing acknowledgment of in-group wrongdoing. We would predict, however, that increasing feelings of pride in one's group usually spark increased group identification (Cialdini et al., 1976).

The present research advances the literature on group-based guilt by integrating findings on both the antecedents and the consequences of this emotion. In particular, we have shown both that acknowledgment of in-group responsibility facilitates guilt through personal acceptance of in-group responsibility and that such guilt is associated with greater support for reparative measures. These findings are thus consistent with previous research examining antecedents of guilt (Čehajić & Brown, 2008) and the association of guilt with reparations (e.g., Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Brown & Čehajić, 2008). Moreover, we have shown that a model that integrates empirical findings on predictors and implications of group-based guilt is superior to competing models (e.g., Zimmermann et al., 2006).

Our findings additionally suggest an important revision to a prior theory linking self-affirmation with guilt and support for the giving of resources to out-groups (Harvey & Oswald, 2000). Whereas that theory contained the untested assumption that self-affirmation would affect such support by decreasing feelings of group-based guilt, our results showed that self-affirmation increased these feelings, presumably because it made individuals feel more secure in their sense of self-worth and integrity.

The applied implications of our present results are worth underscoring in light of recent history, in which wars between nations have become rarer but interethnic conflicts have become more prevalent. More research is needed to pin down the specific processes whereby self-affirmation inductions, or alternative interventions, facilitate acknowledgments of wrongdoing and other undertakings required for intergroup reconciliation. And, of course, it will be important to show that such interventions allow the relevant acknowledgment to be made to members of the out-group in real-world contexts, increase support for reparations that exact a real rather than a hypothetical cost, and promote behaviors that are consistent with self-reported attitudes. In the meantime, the present research suggests that self-affirmation holds promise as a strategy to increase acknowledgment of a group's wrongdoing and support for reparations to victimized groups.

We must end on a cautionary note, albeit one that reinforces the central and essentially hopeful message of our findings. Opportunities for individuals to affirm themselves in domains such as education, sport, and art; though connectedness with family and community; or even through good and moral deeds are frequently undermined by the economic, social, and cultural destruction that attends most intergroup conflicts. Societal repair that provides

such opportunities can thus be both a consequence of self-affirmation and a source of further opportunities for such affirmation, in a virtuous circle that benefits all concerned.

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