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Abstract

Political apologies, which typically consist of (a) admission of injustice/wrongdoing, (b) acknowledgment of harm and/or victim suffering, (c) expression of remorse, (d) acceptance of responsibility, (e) offer of repair, and (f) forbearance, often meet opposition from the constituency of the apologizing government. This study investigated which of these six elements people would most strongly oppose. Eight hundred Japanese participants (400 men and 400 women, 20 to 79 years) indicated how much resistance they would feel to the Japanese government's expression of each of the six elements in a hypothetical political apology to an (unspecified) Asian country. The strongest resistance was associated with elements (a), (b) and (c), followed by elements (d) and (e), and the weakest resistance was reported for element (f). An exploratory cluster analysis identified the existence of a minority of the most resistant individuals ($n = 64$), whose mean resistance scores for elements (a) to (e) were greater than 5.5 on a 7-point scale. This group most strongly opposed elements (c) and (d), which were not the elements that the entire sample most strongly opposed. The most resistant individuals appear to have different sentiments regarding their government's political apologies than the rest of the population.

Keywords: political apology, resistance, acceptance of responsibility, remorse

Resistance to the Six Elements of Political Apologies:

Who Opposes Which Elements?

Issuing political apologies is considered a crucial first step toward intergroup reconciliation (Blatz & Philpot, 2010; Brooks, 1999; Hornsey & Wohl, 2013; Minow, 2002). Psychological studies have shown that victim group members tend to receive political apologies favorably (e.g., Blatz, Day, & Schryer, 2014; Philpot & Hornsey, 2008). Nevertheless, controversy remains as to whether these political apologies foster forgiveness from victim group members (reviewed by Blatz & Philpot, 2010; Hornsey & Wohl, 2013). Negative findings regarding the political apology–forgiveness link may be due to moderation effects of third variables, such as a lack of trust in the perpetrator group (e.g., Hornsey & Wohl, 2013; Nadler & Liviatan, 2006) and the perpetrator group members’ opposition to political apologies (e.g., Brooks, 1999; Korff, 2019; Kristof, 1995). Such opposition is likely to discredit the sincerity of apologies and thus undermine their positive effects on victim group members (Wohl, Matheson, Branscombe, & Anisman, 2013). Despite its potential importance, as Hornsey and Wohl (2013) observed, “far less research has focused on how members of perpetrator groups feel about apologies” (p. 21). The primary purpose of this research was to fill this gap by examining the strengths of perpetrator group members’ opposition to different elements of political apologies. This research focused on Japanese citizens’ opposition to the government’s apology for its invasion of Asian countries during World War II.

Although it has not been well recognized, Japanese officials have occasionally apologized for the country’s wrongdoings during World War II (Brooks, 1999; Philpot & Hornsey, 2011). These political apologies have not necessarily been well received by members of victim groups (Brooks, 1999), and have even met opposition from ingroup members,

especially those who believed that Japan's intention was to liberate other Asian countries from Western colonization, thus justifying its actions (Kristof, 1995). Such ingroup member opposition to political apologies is not a Japanese phenomenon. For example, in McGarty et al.'s (2005) Study 1, which asked non-Indigenous Australians about their support for an official apology to Indigenous people, only 27% of participants expressed explicit support for the government's apology.

In a recent study on Japanese people's endorsement of government apologies, Mifune, Inamasu, Kohama, Ohtsubo, and Tago (2019) investigated individual differences variables that would predict support for government apologies on several issues, ranging from ocean pollution caused by the nuclear power plant accident in Fukushima to atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers during World War II. Irrespective of the issue for which Japan would apologize, support for political apologies was negatively correlated with militarism, conservatism, and social dominance orientation (SDO). Of the three correlates, SDO, which refers to one's tendency to endorse the existence of hierarchies among social groups (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994), has recently engaged researchers' interest in the context of reconciliation. Hornsey et al. (2017) found negative correlations between SDO, along with political conservatism, and endorsement for apologies in general. Furthermore, Karunaratne and Laham (2019) found that SDO, especially an anti-egalitarianism subscale of SDO, was negatively correlated with support for political apologies.

Although the aforementioned studies focused on individual differences, it is noteworthy that political apologies could also vary in terms of their elements. Since political apologies typically comprise multiple elements (Blatz, Schumann, & Ross, 2009), it is worth investigating which elements are more prone to trigger opposition. According to Blatz et al.'s content analysis

of political apologies offered by several countries for their historical injustices, the political apologies often included the following 10 elements: (a) admission of injustice/wrongdoing, (b) acknowledgment of harm and/or victim suffering, (c) expression of remorse, (d) acceptance of responsibility, (e) offer of repair, (f) forbearance, (g) praise for victim groups, (h) praise for perpetrator groups (i.e., apologizer groups), (i) praise for the present system of perpetrator groups, and (j) dissociation of injustice from the present system. The first six of these elements (i.e., a–f) are also typically found in interpersonal apologies (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006; Kirchhoff, Wagner, & Strack, 2012; Lazare, 2004; Schlenker & Darby, 1981). The last four elements (i.e., g–j) are unique to political apologies. Notice that the last three elements (i.e., h–j) are meant to foster the perpetrator group members' acceptance. Therefore, one would not expect elements (h) to (j) to arouse opposition. In addition, in their content analysis, Blatz et al. (2009) did not find element (g) (i.e., praise for victimized groups) in two Japanese political apologies (and we did not see many instances of this element in Japanese political apologies). Accordingly, we decided to focus on opposition to the first six elements, which happened to be common to both interpersonal and intergroup apologies. Parenthetically, many scholars of interpersonal and intergroup apologies consider (c) and (d) to be core elements of apologies (e.g., Blatz & Philpot, 2010; Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Hornsey & Wohl, 2013). In fact, these are the first and second entries on Blatz et al.'s (2009) original list. However, to facilitate the presentation of the results, we decided to re-order the six elements.

In the present study, we wrote six hypothetical elements of a political apology that Japan could communicate to an Asian country for its wrongdoings during World War II. To avoid confounding participants' country-specific emotions, we did not specify the target country of the hypothetical apology. Participants reported how strongly they would feel resistance if each of the

six elements was included in Japan's apology to an Asian country. The primary purpose of this research was to compare the six resistance scores to understand which elements would induce stronger opposition from Japanese people. Due to a lack of previous studies dealing with ingroup members' reactions to their government's apologies (Hornsey & Wohl, 2013), we admit that this research is exploratory in nature. In fact, based on recent theorization of barriers to apologizing in the interpersonal context (Schumann, 2018), several different predictions can be derived.

According to Schumann, there are three barriers to interpersonal apologizing: (i) low concern for the victims, (ii) perceived threat to the self-image, and (iii) perceived apology ineffectiveness.

These three barriers may extend to the group apology context. First, if a lack of concern for the victims causes opposition, stronger resistance should be associated with (b) acknowledgment of victim suffering and (c) expression of remorse. Second, if the self-image maintenance motive causes opposition, stronger resistance should be associated with (a) admission of injustice and (d) acceptance of responsibility. Moreover, the same concern could enhance resistance to the core elements of apologies—(c) expression of remorse and (d) acceptance of responsibility—because not apologizing allows transgressors to maintain their perceived power/status (Okimoto, Wenzel, & Hedrick, 2013). Finally, if perceived apology ineffectiveness causes opposition, stronger resistance should be associated with the core elements of apologies—elements (c) and (d). Given that several plausible predictions were conceivable, we analyzed differences in the six resistance scores without any *a priori* predictions.

The secondary purpose of this study was to investigate individual differences in opposition to political apologies. To achieve this goal, we not only correlated participants' opposition scores with their scores on individual differences measures but also categorized participants into three groups using a cluster analysis based on their opposition scores. Individual

differences measures that we included in this study could be broadly divided into three groups. The first group consisted of four variables that have been studied mostly in the context of interpersonal relationships and reconciliation. These interpersonal reconciliation-related variables are *proclivity to apologize* (Howell, Dopko, Turowski, & Buro, 2011; Howell, Turowski, & Buro, 2012), *trait forgivingness* (Berry, Worthington, O'Connor, Parrott, & Wade, 2005), and *trust* and *caution* adapted from Yamagishi and Yamagishi's (1994) trust scale. We decided to include these interpersonal reconciliation-related measures because Mifune et al. (2019) recently found a parallel pattern between interpersonal and international reconciliation contexts—SDO, which was found to be negatively associated with proclivity to apologize at the interpersonal level (Hornsey et al., 2017), was also negatively associated with support for political apologies. Accordingly, we predicted that individuals high in proclivity to apologize would not oppose political apologies. In the same vein, we predicted that individuals high in trait forgivingness, which was positively correlated with proclivity to apologize at the interpersonal level (Ohtsubo, Yamaura, & Yagi, 2015), would not oppose political apologies.

As for trust and caution, Ohtsubo et al. (2019) found that these variables were correlated with trait forgivingness at the interpersonal level. In the intergroup reconciliation context, trust in the other group is considered an important moderator variable of the effect of apologies on forgiveness (e.g., Hornsey & Wohl, 2013; Nadler & Liviatan, 2006). More relevant to the current purpose, Leunissen, De Cremer, and Reinders Folmer (2012) revealed an interesting interaction effect between trust and expectation of forgiveness. Low trusters were reluctant to apologize in the absence of the expectation that they would be forgiven. However, when they expected forgiveness, they became more eager to make an apology. The effect of the expected forgiveness was smaller for high trusters. Again, because we expected some parallel between the

interpersonal and intergroup contexts, we predicted that trust would be associated with resistance to political apologies. Caution is conceptually intertwined with trust. In developing their trust scale, Yamagishi and Yamagishi (1994) identified people's cautious tendency to deal with others as a factor independent of trust, which represents one's belief in the benevolence of others. Caution may be relevant to one's expectation to be forgiven. Accordingly, we decided to include in this study the caution subscale of Yamagishi and Yamagishi's trust scale, along with their trust subscale.

The second group of individual differences variables included one's attitude of conciliation toward international conflicts. These measures were adapted from Ohtsubo's (2018) study that tested the valuable relationships hypothesis, which was originally proposed in primatology (de Waal, 2000), in the context of international conflict resolution. The valuable relationships hypothesis posits that primates, including humans, are predisposed to reconcile with valuable partners. A straightforward prediction is that people who value relationships with other countries support their country's concession-making to peacefully resolve international conflicts. Notice that the core idea of the valuable relationships hypothesis is consistent with Russett and Oneal's (2001) triangulating thesis of peace, which considers economic interdependence (i.e., relationship value of the trading partner) as one of three factors that reduces the likelihood of outbreaks of war. Ohtsubo assessed Japanese respondents' general valuation of eight countries by asking them to rate how much they value the relationships with those respective countries (as a manipulation check and its filler task). These eight relationship value scores were highly correlated with each other. Ohtsubo also asked respondents to report their support for Japan making concessions to other countries in the context of several political issues. Confirming the above prediction, the relationship value score was positively correlated

with the aggregated concession score. In the context of the present study, we expected the relationship value and concession scores to be negatively correlated with the resistance score.

The third group of individual differences measures included militarism, political conservatism, and SDO. These three variables were found to be positively correlated with opposition to political apologies in Mifune et al.'s (2019) study. In addition, Karunaratne and Laham (2019) independently found a negative correlation between SDO (especially the anti-egalitarian subscale) and support for intergroup apologies.

As stated above, the primary purpose of this study was to determine which of the six elements of political apologies would elicit stronger opposition from ingroup members. To achieve this goal, we compared the mean resistance scores associated with the six elements. The secondary purpose of this study was to explore individual differences underlying opposition to political apologies. For this secondary purpose, we deployed two analytic strategies. Firstly, we conducted a multiple regression analysis whereby we regressed the resistance score on a set of individual differences variables. Secondly, we conducted a cluster analysis whereby we categorized participants according to their patterns of opposition to the six elements.

Method

Participants

The present study included 800 Japanese citizens (400 men and 400 women) recruited through an online survey service provided by Cross Marketing Inc., Japan. As the participants were voluntary registrants of the service, the sample is not necessarily representative of the Japanese population. They ranged in age from 20 to 79 years (mean \pm *SD* = 50.53 \pm 15.57 years). Participants completed the survey at home via the internet. Due to the absence of relevant prior studies, we did not conduct a power analysis to determine the sample size. Instead, we decided

on the largest sample size given budget constraints.

Individual Differences Measures

All participants answered the same questionnaire, which comprised the following sections. (0) The first page was a screening page including demographic items (e.g., age, gender). (1) The first section included the trust scale consisting of two subscales—trust and caution—each of which was measured with five items (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994; Yamagishi et al., 2015). The scale included “Most people are basically honest” (trust) and “You should always be on your guard when interacting with other people” (caution). (2) The second section contained the proclivity to apologize measure (PAM) consisting of eight items (Howell et al., 2011; Ohtsubo et al., 2015). Among these items was “I tend to downplay my wrongdoings to the other person, rather than apologize” (reverse-coded). (3) The third section contained the trait forgivingness scale (TFS) consisting of 10 items (Berry et al., 2005; Ohtsubo et al., 2015). TFS included “I can forgive a friend for almost anything.” (4) The fourth section was meant to measure the primary dependent variables of this research—that is, resistance to the six elements of political apologies (explained in more detail below; see also Table 1). (5) The fifth section asked participants to indicate how valuable they thought the relationship with each of the following eight countries would be for Japan: France, the United States of America, Thailand, China, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, South Korea, and Germany. This measure was adapted from Ohtsubo’s (2018) filler task. The eight relationship value scores were aggregated for each participant as the single relationship value score. (6) The sixth section measured militarism by asking participants to indicate the extent to which they would agree with the following sentence on a 4-point scale (1 = “not at all” to 4 = “very much”): “In international politics, it is often necessary to use military power to protect national interests” (Mifune et al., 2019). This item

allowed participants to use a response option of “don’t know.” Those who chose this option were excluded from the analyses involving militarism. (7) The seventh section measured political conservatism by having participants rate their political attitude on an 11-point scale with two poles: 0 = “progressive” and 10 = “conservative,” with 5 representing “neutral” (Jost et al., 2007; Mifune et al., 2019). (8) The eighth section asked participants to indicate their level of support for political concession/compromise to improve relations with other countries in Japan’s four international conflicts: the northern territories issue with Russia, the comfort women issue with South Korea, the Senkaku Islands dispute with China, and the North Korea abduction issue (Ohtsubo, 2018). (9) The ninth section contained the SDO₆, consisting of 16 items, including “Some groups of people are just more worthy than others” (Pratto et al., 1994; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Mifune & Yokota, 2018). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of these individual differences variables can be found in Table 2.

Six Elements of Political Apology

Central to the purpose of this study was the fourth section: the assessment of resistance to six political apology elements. We wrote the six hypothetical elements (see Table 1) referring to the following public statements/declarations that the Japanese government had issued in the past: *Joint communique of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People’s Republic of China* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan, 1972); *Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono on the result of the study on the issue of “comfort women”* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan, 1993); *Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1995); *Japan–Republic of Korea joint declaration* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 1998); and *Japan–DPRK Pyongyang declaration* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2002). Participants were asked to imagine that the Japanese government would issue a political apology

to an Asian country that it had colonized during World War II (the country was not specified in the questionnaire). Each element entailed a question asking participants to indicate the intensity of the resistance they felt on a 7-point scale: 1 = “do not feel any resistance at all” to 7 = “feel very strong resistance.” The order of the six elements was randomized across participants. Table 1 lists the six elements in the order of resistance.

Ethics and Data Availability

This study was approved by the research ethics committee at the first author’s institute. The Japanese materials, data, and the codes and results of the reported analyses in the HTML format (created by R Markdown) are available in the Open Science Framework (**ULR is inserted here**).

Results

Resistance to the Six Apology Elements

We first examined which political apology elements were associated with stronger resistance. Mean resistance scores for the six elements are summarized in Table 1 (see also Figure 1 for the distributions of participants’ responses to the six elements). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the six elements as repeated measures revealed the significant main effect of political apology element, $F(5, 3995) = 36.95, p < .001$, although the effect size was small, $R^2 = .019$. Post hoc tests by Tukey’s method showed that the resistance scores for (a) admission of injustice/wrongdoing (3.85 ± 1.50), (b) acknowledgment of harm/victim suffering (3.85 ± 1.51), and (c) expression of remorse (3.76 ± 1.60) were significantly greater than the resistance scores for the other three elements (details of the post hoc test results can be found in the supplementary HTML document in OSF). In addition, the resistance scores for (d) acceptance of responsibility (3.58 ± 1.53) and (e) offer of repair (3.49 ± 1.46) were significantly

greater than the resistance score for (f) forbearance (3.25 ± 1.54).

Resistance and Individual Differences Variables

For exploratory purposes, we investigated the relationship between individual differences measures and resistance to political apologies. Since all six resistance scores were significantly correlated with each other (see Table S1 in the Supplementary Materials) and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was sufficiently high ($\alpha = .85$), the aggregated resistance scores were regressed on the nine individual difference scores along with gender and age (see Table S2 for the correlation matrix of the nine individual differences scores; see also Table S3 for correlations between the non-aggregated resistance scores and the nine individual differences scores). The entire regression model was significant, $F(11, 730) = 11.52, p < .001, R^2 = .15$. As summarized in Table 2, trust, proclivity to apologize, relationship value, and concession tendency were negatively associated with aggregated resistance, while militarism, conservatism, and SDO were positively associated with aggregated resistance. Of these significant variables, the absolute value of the standardized regression coefficient was greatest for SDO ($\beta = .24$), followed by proclivity to apologize ($\beta = -.17$). In other words, SDO was more strongly associated with opposition to political apologies than one's general tendency to apologize. It is worth noting that SDO and proclivity to apologize were the only two variables that were significantly associated with all six resistance scores in separate multiple regression analyses, except for the marginally significant coefficient of proclivity to apologize for element (a) (see Table S4 in the Supplementary Materials for the results of the separate multiple regression analyses).

Do Different Types of People Oppose Different Elements?

We subsequently conducted a cluster analysis for exploratory purposes. Conducting a cluster analysis with Ward's method, we divided participants into subgroups according to their resistance to the six apology elements. Visually inspecting the dendrogram (see the supplementary R Markdown HTML file), we chose the three-cluster solution. The three clusters consisted of the largest cluster including 510 participants (because this cluster included more than 60% of the participants, their response pattern was similar to that of the entire sample), the smallest cluster including 64 participants whose resistance scores were very high across the six elements, and a cluster of the 226 most conciliatory participants. Henceforth, these three clusters will be referred to as the typical, resistant, and conciliatory groups, respectively. In addition, we checked on the four-cluster solution. However, we found new two clusters, which were within the conciliatory cluster in the three-cluster solution, to be rather redundant (the four-cluster solution can be found in a supplementary R Markdown HTML in OSF).

Figure 2 shows the distributions of the three groups' resistance scores across the six elements. A series of three one-way ANOVAs involving the six resistance scores as repeated measures revealed the significant main effect of the apology element for all three groups. However, the three groups differed in terms of which elements they most/least strongly opposed. In the typical group ($F(5, 2545) = 35.86, p < .001, R^2 = .05$, for the omnibus test), as in the entire sample, elements (a) and (b) elicited the strongest resistance and element (f) the least. In the resistant group ($F(5, 315) = 24.14, p < .001, R^2 = .21$), element (c) elicited the strongest resistance, followed by element (d), which was associated with the second highest resistance and not significantly different from element (c), but also not significantly different from elements (b) and (e). In the conciliatory group ($F(5, 1125) = 14.51, p < .001, R^2 = .04$), the resistance scores

exhibited a mirror image of the resistant group's scores—the lowest resistance was elicited by element (d), followed by elements (e) and (c). Element (f), forbearance, was associated with a rather high mean resistance in this group.

Figure 2 and the results of one-way ANOVAs suggested that the group differences were pronounced around the middle elements—that is, elements (c) and (d). This interpretation was confirmed by a series of six general linear model analyses predicting the six resistance scores from the two dummy coded group variables (i.e., [0, 1, 0] and [0, 0, 1]). These analyses yielded R^2 of .31, .44, .59, .62, .48, and .14 for elements (a) to (f), respectively (for details of the results, see the supplementary R Markdown HTML file in OSF). In other words, the dummy coded group variables accounted for the largest portion of the variance in resistance to elements (c) and (d). These two elements (i.e., expression of remorse and admission of responsibility) were the elements most strongly opposed by the resistant group. Visual inspections of the middle panel of Figure 2 suggested that these two elements were associated with not only high mean scores but also extremely small variance—almost all resistant individuals chose one of the two highest resistance rating points in response to (c). The same pattern, albeit slightly less extreme, held for (d). In fact, as we already noted, these two elements (i.e., expression of remorse and admission of responsibility) are considered core elements of apologies (Blatz et al., 2009), and the results of this section imply that the most resistant individuals found making an apology itself unacceptable.

Characteristics of the Resistant and Conciliatory Groups

To understand the differences between the resistant and conciliatory groups, we computed the means of the nine individual differences variables for the three groups separately. To facilitate the comparison, the nine individual differences variables were first standardized

(i.e., mean \pm *SD* = 0 \pm 1). The 3 (groups) \times 9 (individual differences variables) means are summarized in Figure 3, in which triangles denote the typical group, diamonds the resistant group, and circles the conciliatory group. A series of one-way ANOVAs with the group as the independent variable were conducted for the nine variables separately (see Table S5 in the Supplementary Materials for the results of these ANOVAs). Based on the results of post hoc tests, we denoted the significant differences from the typical group with filled diamonds and circles. As Figure 3 illustrates, the resistant group was characterized by lower levels of trust and concession tendency and higher levels of militarism, caution, and conservatism. The conciliatory group was characterized by higher levels of proclivity to apologize, trait forgivingness, tendency to perceive international relationships as valuable, and trust, and lower SDO and militarism. Interestingly, trust and militarism were the only overlapping variables. Therefore, the resistant and conciliatory groups seemed to be characterized by separate sets of attitudinal variables. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the two variables that were most strongly associated with the aggregated resistance score (i.e., SDO and proclivity to apologize) characterized the conciliatory group, rather than the resistant group.

Discussion

This study examined resistance to the six elements of political apologies separately. The separate assessments allowed us to conduct some novel analyses. First, we found that at the entire sample level, (a) admission of injustice/wrongdoing, (b) acknowledgment of harm/victim suffering, and (c) expression of remorse elicited stronger resistance than (d) acceptance of responsibility, (e) offer of repair, and (f) forbearance. Second, when the six resistance scores were aggregated, the resistance score was significantly positively associated with SDO, militarism, and conservatism, and negatively associated with proclivity to apologize,

endorsement for concession, trust, and valuation of international relationships. Third, a cluster analysis yielded a three-cluster solution consisting of the typical, resistant, and conciliatory groups. The resistant group, which represented less than 10% of the entire sample, most strongly opposed (c) expression of remorse and (d) acceptance of responsibility, which are commonly understood as the two core elements of apologies. Therefore, the resistant group seemed to oppose the very idea of their government issuing apologies. Fourth, we found that the resistant and conciliatory groups seemed to be characterized by relatively non-overlapping sets of individual differences variables. Interestingly, the two strongest predictors of the resistance score for the entire sample (i.e., SDO and proclivity to apologize) differentiated the conciliatory group from the typical group. The resistant group was differentiated from the typical group by a different set of variables, such as political conservatism and opposition to international concession making.

It is worth emphasizing that the separate assessment of resistance to the six elements allowed us to identify the most resistant group, whose resistance scores were greater than 5.5 on a 7-point scale for five of the six elements. This group most strongly opposed elements (c) and (d). As we surmised in the introduction section, this pattern would be predicted if the resistant group's primary concern was self-image maintenance motive and/or perceived apology ineffectiveness in Schumann's (2018) model of barriers to apologizing. In other words, the present study suggests that strongest opposition to Japanese governmental apologies may be driven by a small resistant group's motive to maintain their self-image associated with perceived power/status (Okimoto et al., 2013) and/or their distrust in the effectiveness of political apologies. Notice that we would reach a different conclusion if we did not distinguish the three subgroups—the entire sample seems to more strongly oppose elements (a), (b), and (c). This

opposition pattern, especially opposition to elements (b) and (c), suggests that it is driven by low concern for the victimized group (Schumann, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that the cluster analysis-based approach allows us to more accurately map underlying motives to opposition to political apologies.

Although we estimated that the resistant group comprised less than 10% of the entire sample. As mentioned in the method section, the sample of this study was not necessarily representative of the Japanese population. Accordingly, this estimate (i.e., less than 10%) may not be accurate. Even still, there are some reasons to suspect that this group might exert an influence on political decisions more than expected from the results of this study. First, it is possible that we have underestimated the frequency of this group. Those individuals who strongly oppose political apologies may have found this study itself somewhat offensive and therefore stopped responding in the middle. Second, it is plausible to assume that this group would experience anger at their government issuing political apologies. Leach, Iyer, and Pedersen (2006) revealed that action potential is stronger for anger than guilt in the political context (although they compared the action potentials of anger and guilt concerning the ingroup's past misdeeds). If the same asymmetry applies to the resistant group (that is possibly angry about government apologies) and the conciliatory group (that possibly feels guilty about the country's past misdeeds), then anger-driven opposition movements may be more easily mobilized than guilt-driven apology-supportive actions.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study had some limitations. First, we did not include one of the most important proximate emotions of political apologies—that is, collective guilt. Collective guilt is known to motivate the desire to repair damages that one group imposed on the other group (Branscombe,

2004; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006). In Japan, however, the notion of guilt in the context of World War II is associated with a particular view of history (i.e., the masochistic view of history), which is popular among Japanese right-wing individuals (see Coleman, 1997; Efron, 1998, for references to this view in English newspaper articles). Although this view comprises multiple variants, one of them maintains that Japanese citizens were brainwashed into feeling an ill-founded sense of guilt by U.S. Armed Forces during the allied occupation after World War II. Since the primary purpose of this study was to assess participants' resistance to elements of political apologies, we thought it best to avoid specifically asking about guilt, which could unwittingly remind some participants of this peculiar notion of guilt.

The second limitation is associated with the incomprehensiveness of the set of individual differences variables included in this study. For exploratory purposes, we conducted a multiclass discriminant analysis, whereby we attempted to reconstruct the three groups based on participants' individual differences scores (recall that the cluster analysis that identified the three groups used the six opposition scores, but not individual differences scores). As shown in Table S6, individual differences scores allowed us to correctly re-categorize 68% of participants into the three clusters. However, the re-categorization accuracy dropped to 19% and 38% for the resistant and conciliatory groups, respectively (note that due to their low base-rates, the expected accuracy based on a random re-categorization procedure is 9% and 30%, respectively). This result suggests that there must be some other important individual differences variables that characterize these two minority groups. For example, many studies have revealed that national identity inhibits collective guilt (Branscombe, 2004; Wohl et al., 2006) and thus presumably enhances opposition to political apologies. Studies involving a comprehensive set of individual differences measures in this context are necessary to accurately characterize the three groups

identified by the cluster analysis.

The third limitation is that this study did not address the underlying motives of opposition to each element. The correlation with SDO suggests one's concern for losing power by making an apology (Karunaratne & Laham, 2019), which is conceivably associated with Schumann's (2018) second barrier to interpersonal apology-making. At the same time, a sense of guilt probably motivates the desire to apologize as well. Zaiser and Giner-Sorolla (2013) pointed out that guilt may be associated with image improvement motivation, which is again associated with Schumann's second barrier. However, Zaiser and Giner-Sorolla also revealed that support for political apologies (apparently desirable attitudes) may be underpinned by a motivation for obligation shifting whereby the transgressor group attempts to oblige the victim group to accept their apologies and eventually forgive them. Future studies should seek to systematically investigate which of these motives accounts for opposition to/support for political apologies, along with other possible motives.

The fourth limitation is external validity. This study was conducted in the context of the Japanese government's apologies for the country's misdeeds during World War II. Whether Japanese citizens' sentiments toward their government issuing apologies are generalizable to people in other countries and other contexts has yet to be investigated. However, we believe that decomposing political apologies to their elements can enhance our understanding of opposition to (and hopefully support for) political apologies. The fifth limitation is also associated with external validity. This study employed a fictitious apology and its elements. Whether people would react to real political apologies in the same manner requires further investigation. Sixth, this study exclusively focused on the perpetrator group members' reactions. It would be fruitful to complement the present findings by investigating which elements would most effectively elicit

positive reactions from the victim group.

Finally, this study only examined opposition to the six elements of political apologies. The obvious next step would entail how to write apologies that reduce ingroup members' opposition. It is noteworthy that Kirchhoff and Čehajić-Clancy (2014) revealed that including more elements in group apologies did not increase the victim group members' forgiveness. This implies that governmental apologies could be written in a way that eliminates elements which may trigger strong opposition from ingroup members. Many political apologies attempted to increase the acceptance of ingroup members by including more elements, which praise the apologizing group and its current system (Blatz et al., 2009). However, if the effectiveness of group apologies does not depend on the number of elements included in the apologies, then an alternative may be to eliminate some elements that are likely to induce strong opposition from ingroup members. The most important next steps would be to figure out how to write intergroup apologies that are acceptable to members of both perpetrator and victim groups.

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Table 1

Six Elements of Hypothetical Political Apology and Mean (SD) Resistance to Them

| Element | Hypothetical Sentence Presented to Participants | Mean (<i>SD</i>) Resistance |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| (a) Admission of Injustice/Wrongdoing | Japanese colonial rule did injustice to the citizens of the other country against their will. | 3.85 ^a (1.50) |
| (b) Acknowledgment of Harm/Victim Suffering | Japan caused great damage and suffering to the citizens of the other country. | 3.85 ^a (1.51) |
| (c) Expression of Remorse | Japan expresses deep remorse and a heartfelt apology. | 3.76 ^a (1.60) |
| (d) Acceptance of Responsibility | Japan humbly accepts such historical facts and is keenly aware of the responsibility. | 3.58 ^b (1.53) |
| (e) Offer of Repair | Japan will provide humanitarian aid to the victimized people. | 3.49 ^b (1.46) |
| (f) Forbearance | Japan will never commit such a mistake again. | 3.25 ^c (1.54) |

Note. Different superscripts (^{a, b, c}) on the right side of each mean indicate a statistically significant difference between different letters. Median responses to the top five elements were 4, while the median response to (f), forbearance, was 3.

Table 2

Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis with Cronbach's α Coefficients of the Independent Variables: The Aggregated Resistance Score Regressed on Gender, Age, Trust, Caution, Proclivity to Apologize (PAM), Trait Forgivingness (TFS), Relationship Value, Concession Tendency, Militarism, Conservatism, and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

| | Cronbach's α | Standardized coefficient (β) | SE | t | p |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|------|------|----------------------------|
| Gender (m=1, f=2) | -- | .069 | .036 | 1.94 | 0.053 |
| Age | -- | .049 | .037 | 1.35 | 0.178 |
| Trust | .87 | -.096 | .041 | 2.36 | 0.019 * |
| Caution | .72 | .071 | .037 | 1.90 | 0.058 |
| PAM | .90 | -.170 | .037 | 4.58 | 5.52×10^{-6} *** |
| TFS | .80 | .027 | .039 | 0.70 | 0.487 |
| Relationship Value | .87 | -.074 | .036 | 2.06 | 0.040 * |
| Concession | .83 | -.102 | .038 | 2.71 | 0.007 ** |
| Militarism | -- | .132 | .039 | 3.37 | 0.001 *** |
| Conservatism | -- | .133 | .034 | 3.91 | 1.01×10^{-4} *** |
| SDO | .88 | .235 | .037 | 6.30 | 5.32×10^{-10} *** |

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

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Distributions of resistance to the six elements of political apologies. The numbers in each area indicate the percentage within each element. For rounding errors, the seven numbers within each element do not necessarily sum up to 100.

Figure 2. Boxplots of the resistance scores of the three groups of participants (typical, resistant, and conciliatory groups) with scatter plots. Data points were jittered in both horizontal and vertical directions. The degree of transparency of the data points were set higher for the typical group than the other two groups because of the larger sample size. The numbers around the bottom of the boxplots indicate mean resistance, and the different letters below the means indicate significant differences among the means within each group.

Figure 3. Mean of the nine standardized individual differences scores as a function of group type (typical vs. resistant vs. conciliatory). Filled diamonds and circles indicate that the corresponding mean is significantly different from the typical group mean.