

Rebuilding Trust in Romantic Relationships After a Betrayal

Connery Knox & John K. Rempel

INTRODUCTION

- **Betrayals** in romantic relationships damage trust
- Which/whose actions best **rebuild** trust?
- Do these actions differ for **victim** versus **transgressor** perspectives¹?

METHOD

- Survey of 302 undergrads in relationships
- Described a **betrayal** done by either:
 - them (126 “**Transgressors**”), or
 - their partner (176 “**Victims**”)
- Measured trust & responses to betrayal

Transgressor actions

- Commitment to rebuild trust
- Apology & taking responsibility
- Vulnerability & giving up control
- Emotional openness & behaviour change

Victim actions

- Commitment to rebuild trust
- Retaliation/using betrayal as a weapon
- Teamwork & emotional vulnerability
- Giving transgressor a chance

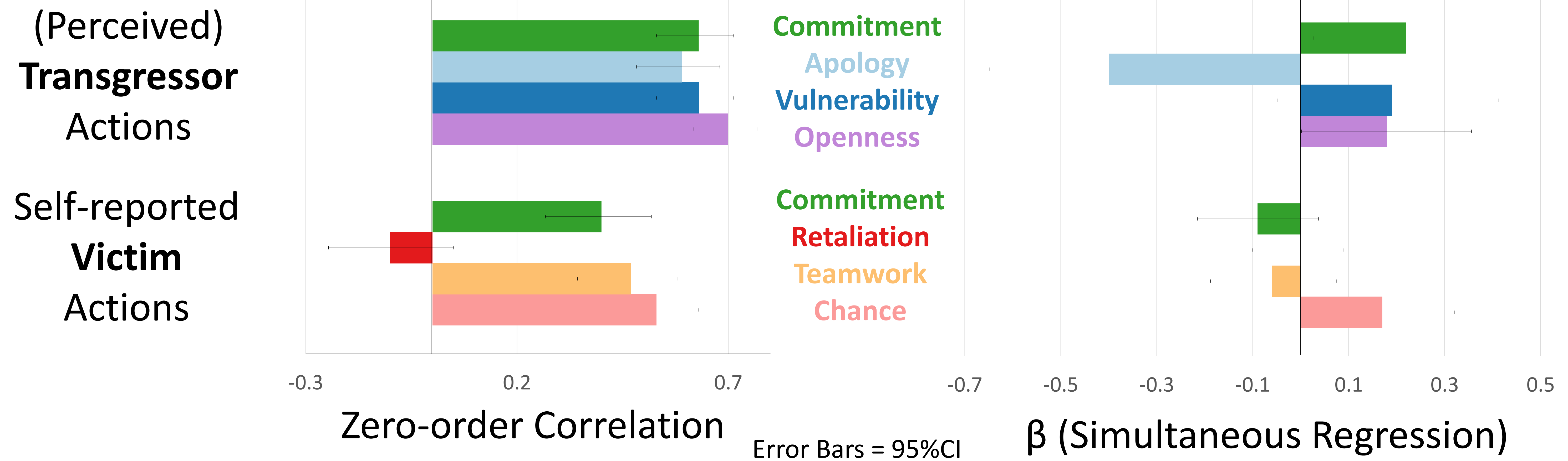
- Regressions controlled for betrayal importance and relationship satisfaction

REFERENCES

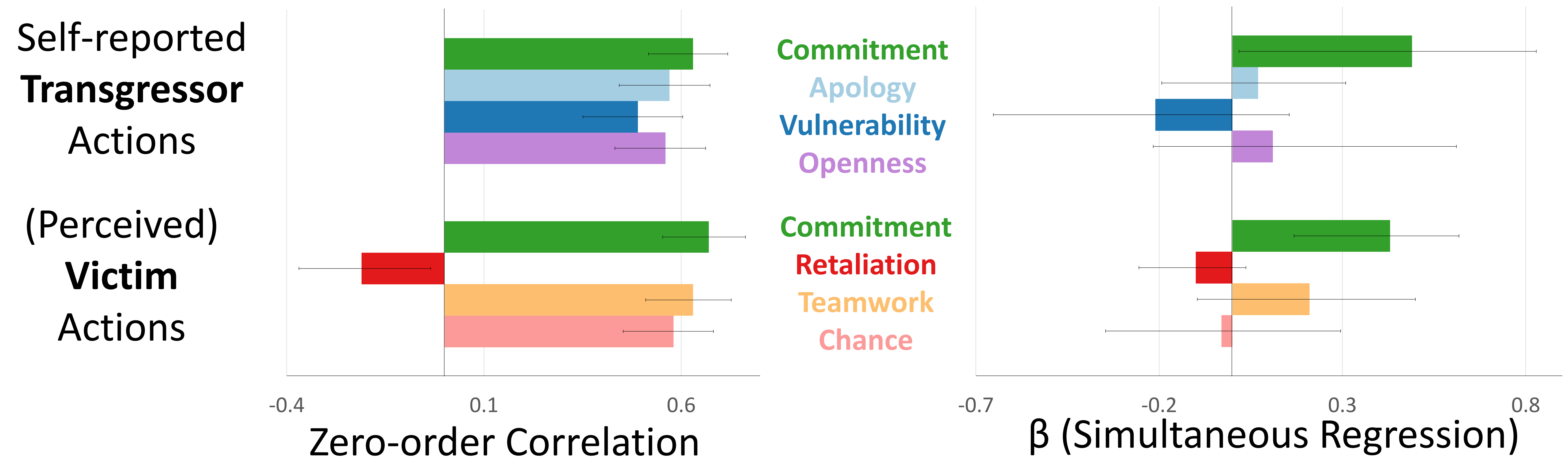
1. Mitchell et al., (2021)

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Victim Perspective: What Predicts My Trust?



Transgressor Perspective: What Predicts My Partner's (Perceived) Trust?



- **Commitment to rebuilding trust from either partner predicts greater relationship trust above other pro-relationship actions**
- All pro-relationship actions positively associated with trust at zero-order
- Retaliation can pose an obstacle to trust rebuilding
- Future dyadic research: partner responses to same betrayal