Narrative Communication: How Sending and Receiving Impact Statements on Past Ingroup Suffering Influences Conflict Attitudes

Brooke Burrows

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NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION: HOW SENDING AND RECEIVING IMPACT STATEMENTS ON PAST INGROUP SUFFERING INFLUENCES CONFLICT ATTITUDES

A Thesis Presented

by

BROOKE BURROWS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION: HOW SENDING AND RECEIVING IMPACT STATEMENTS ON PAST INGORUP SUFFERING INFLUENCES CONFLICT ATTITUDES

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ABSTRACT

NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION: HOW SENDING AND RECEIVING IMPACT STATEMENTS ON PAST INGROUP SUFFERING INFLUENCES CONFLICT ATTITUDES

SEPTEMBER 2021

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In the aftermath of mass violence or harm perpetrated against one group by another, commemoration or memorialization processes held by the victim group are often a space in which narratives of impact and suffering are expressed and shared. While there may be no formal or direct calls for justice or policy during these commemoration processes, prior research indicates that such public forums, ranging from truth commissions to museum exhibits, may have diverse impacts on individual emotions as well as attitudes towards the broader conflict implicated (Humphrey, 2000; Reeves & Heath-Kelly, 2020). The current work proposes a closer examination of such intragroup commemoration processes for reflecting and sharing statements of ingroup suffering, specifically examining the possibility that intragroup communication of victim narratives can lead to a range of conflict perpetuating and conflict resolution attitudes, dependent on the type of narrative communication and subsequently evoked emotions. Across three studies, the research explores how sending and receiving ingroup victim narratives across both private and public contexts can lead to divergent emotional experiences, and thus divergent outcomes for intergroup conflict related attitudes. Study 1, a quasi-experiment
found that the relationship between feelings of empowerment and peaceful conflict resolution attitudes was strengthened for Americans who reflected on the impact of 9/11 during its commemoration day in contrast to a non-commemorative day, just as the association of meaning derived from conflict with conflict perpetuating attitudes was also strengthened. Study 2 experimentally manipulated the public process of sending narrative communication, in contrast to private reflection, and demonstrated that the public context significantly increased both feelings of empowerment and meaning derived from conflict and replicated the downstream impacts on conflict attitudes of Study 1. Finally, Study 3 extended these findings by adding a receiving component to the narrative communication, which resulted in higher levels of ingroup identity, as well as lower levels of peaceful conflict resolution support. Together, these three studies help to illustrate the complexity of both the psychological processes and resultant conflict attitudes that can arise from communicating narratives of ingroup suffering.

*Keywords*: intergroup conflict, victim narratives, empowerment, meaning, conflict attitudes, memorials
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Even the smallest act of service, the simplest act of kindness, is a way to honor those we lost, a way to reclaim that spirit of unity that followed 9/11."
- Former President Barack Obama, speaking on the 10th Anniversary of September 11th

"No day shall erase you from the memory of time."
- A quote from Virgil's Aeneid, which adorns the 9/11 Memorial Museum

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York City, political and community leaders within the United States sought to unify the country with messages of empowerment for a better future as well as words to maintain meaning within the memory of the tragic event. Twenty years later and these narratives continue at the 9/11 Memorial Museum where visitors examine the impact and continued significance of September 11th, 2001 on the American populace. Not only does the Museum provide an expansive space for documenting the story of 9/11, it also provides opportunity for visitors to contribute their own stories, memories, and opinions: In the “Reflecting on 9/11” Exhibition, visitor recordings about the ramifications of 9/11 on their own lives are included in a digital archive, with the possibility of even being featured in one of the museum’s galleries (“Exhibitions”). Although psychological research provides insight in the role of narrative expression in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, much of the prior literature focuses on examining intergroup dynamics and ingroup-outgroup perspectives on conflict (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler 2012; Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe & Rothschild, Z. K. 2012). The current work instead proposes a closer examination of intragroup processes for reflecting and communicating narratives of suffering within the context of an ingroup audience.
1.1 The Communication of Victim Narratives within Intergroup Conflict

Though strategies and goals for conflict resolution vary across context, navigating the conflict narratives upheld by both victim and perpetrating groups has been a priority of transitional justice and conflict resolution literatures. In the case of large-scale societal violence and/or human rights violations, approaches such as criminal tribunals or trials, truth commissions, public monuments, and commemorations all emphasize public engagement with conflict narratives (for a review of approaches to address intergroup violence, see Leidner & Li, 2015). Research across peace psychology and related fields similarly provides avenues for addressing intergroup conflict through interventions geared towards dialogue, education, and meaningful contact between ingroup and outgroup members (Tropp, 2012).

Common to almost all of these approaches is the assumption that open and direct communication about past harm will increase the likelihood of peaceful conflict resolution in the present (Gibson, 2004). For example, truth commissions, an increasingly utilized form of transitional justice since the 1970s, draws primarily on public testimony from both victims and perpetrators who recount their experiences of suffering or of harm-doing (Hayner, 2006). Similarly, intergroup dialogue interventions emphasize the importance of giving and taking perspective and encouraging participant “voice,” or the capacity of participants to tell their own conflict narrative (Bruneau & Saxe 2012; d’Estree, 2006). However, the relationship between communicating experiences of ingroup suffering and beneficial outcomes at both individual and intergroup levels has been contested: For example, critics of truth commissions question the premise that ‘revealing is healing’ for either the individual or group dynamic (Humphrey, 2000;
Mendeloff, 2004) and more recent findings from other post-conflict interventions that utilize public narratives of suffering also highlight harmful consequences such as re-traumatization at the individual level and reinforced social hierarchies at the group level (Brounéus, 2008; Dixon et al., 2010).

With the communication of victim narratives, in some form or another, almost always being emphasized as a key component of conflict resolution processes, understanding the specific role that victim narratives play in individual attitudes around navigating the conflict becomes critical. Prior research on victim narratives demonstrates that intergroup conflict outcomes can be both negatively and positively impacted depending on the content of narrative beliefs espoused (Vollhardt, 2009). Victim narratives have been linked to renewed violence when memories of past harm are kept vivid and emotionally charged (Rice & Benson, 2005) and when the ingroup’s suffering becomes perceived as a uniquely severe and painful victimization (Lifton, 2003). Conversely, victim narratives have been linked to prosocial beliefs and reconciliatory attitudes when they help to provide social acknowledgement or redress (Maercker & Müller, 2004) and when they increase empathy for the suffering of other groups (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008). These characteristics backbone the distinction made between competitive victimhood, the tendency to see one’s ingroup as having suffered more than an outgroup (Young & Sullivan, 2016), and inclusive victimhood, which considers the perspective of the outgroup and acknowledges the suffering of both groups (Adelman et al., 2016). Competitive victim narratives have been consistently demonstrated to encourage and maintain cycles of conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998; Hammack, 2009) while increasing evidence supports the capacity of inclusive victim consciousness to help
improve intergroup relations (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015; Vollhard, Nair, & Tropp, 2016; Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhard, 2015).

However, while victim narrative type, competitive or inclusive, has seen increased academic attention within social psychological research in a variety of intergroup contexts, less focus has been given to victim narrative communication taking place within the context of commemoration or memorialization processes specifically designed for uplifting victim narratives. Outside of the field of social psychology, memorials have been described as “sites of narrative and performance… that might be a productive idea for dealing with historic conflicts that continue to be lived out in various ways in contemporary society” (Harris, 2010). For example, in Northern Ireland public memorials commemorating the Troubles help to create a sense of place and past remembrance. However, they also risked solidifying a singular narrative and assigning blame to the ‘other’ (McAtackney, 2016). Similarly, research from Bosnia-Herzegovina, where memorials have been considered one of five primary forms of reparations following the Bosnian War, highlights the inherent risk of commemorative activities in complicating intergroup reconciliation through the creation of guilt and blame (Jeftic, 2013). While these works acknowledge the diverse repercussions of memorial spaces at both individual and societal levels, they provide less direct empirical evidence into the link between the psychological emotions experienced in commemorative spaces and the subsequent conflict attitudes that may develop.

The following three studies are therefore unique in explicitly testing how publically sending and receiving narratives of ingroup suffering within the context of a memorialization process may influence two key psychological processes, namely
individual feelings of empowerment as well as the perception of meaning derived from the conflict. At the same time, the prevalence of these emotions are both implicated in downstream conflict perpetuating and conflict resolving attitudes.

1.2 Private vs. Public Sending of Victim Narratives: A Dual Model Framework

Like the 9/11 Memorial, many commemoration spaces provide a public forum for victims to share personal experiences of harm and suffering. Literature related to the concept of “voice” suggests that publicly communicating victim narratives will be associated with greater feelings of empowerment and that having voice is considered a pre-requisite for validating identity and shifting power in addition to providing feelings of acknowledgement necessarily for conflict resolution (Green & d’Estre, 2010; d’Estre, 2006). Specifically, within social psychological research, the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation has demonstrated that to enhance victims’ willingness to reconcile, restoration of power and status is required (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). In addition, the ability to openly express one’s opinion within a conflict has been previously linked to greater perceptions of justice and fairness in a later resolution activity (Folger et al., 1977). To the degree that public communication of ingroup harm taking place during a commemoration process validates identity and promotes having voice and feeling empowered, it may increase the likelihood of more peaceful, conflict resolution attitudes.

At the same time, by increasing the salience of the harm suffered within the conflict context, public communication of narratives may cause victims to gain more meaning from the conflict and in turn support conflict-perpetuating attitudes (Rovenpor et al., 2019). For example, previous work related to collective memory has found that engagement with commemoration practices for the 9/11 attacks resulted in greater
misattribution of responsibility for the attacks by Iran as an outgroup, in addition to
greater vigilance against Iran in regards to foreign policy choices (Hakim & Adams,
2017). Considering these two different but potentially co-occurring mechanisms of
empowerment and meaning derived from conflict, the current research investigated how
publicly communicating messages of ingroup suffering influenced attitudes towards both
conflict-perpetuation and resolution (for a model of these expected associations, see
Figure 1). In addition, the research distinguished between communication as an
individual dynamic (i.e., only sending a message) and as an intragroup dynamic (i.e.,
sending a message and receiving messages from ingroup members).

Restoring Empowerment for Peaceful Conflict Resolution

The Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation developed by Shnabel and Nadler
(2008), indicates the role of victim empowerment in attitudes related to willingness to
reconcile. It provides a framework for engaging with the socio-emotional needs of
conflict, a foundational step in creating long-term reconciliation processes, and posits that
intergroup conflict is maintained through psychological threats that differ across victim
and perpetrator identities. As outlined by the model, being a perpetrator within conflict
evokes threats to moral identity; countering this threat requires perpetrators to restore
their moral image. Conversely, being a victim within conflict evokes threat to power and
agency; countering this threat requires victims to regain their sense of power (Shnabel &
Nadler, 2008). From this perspective, empowerment is defined as “the sense of being an
autonomous and influential social actor, who is treated justly and whose rights are
respected” (Shnabel, Nadler, Canetti-Nisim & Ullrich, 2008, pg. 5). Research supporting
the Needs-Based Model largely focuses on an exchange of messages from the victim to
perpetrator (emphasizing acceptance) and from the perpetrator to the victim (emphasizing empowerment). However, more recent work has examined if a third party outside of the conflict could restore a similar sense of empowerment to victim group members through a supportive message and thus help motivate willingness to reconcile: Results for this process were mixed, indicating that messages from a third party increased victims’ sense of power, but not trust, thereby failing to increase victims’ readiness to reconcile (Nadler, & Shnabel 2015).

Considering the many varieties of memorials and public commemorations that are designed primarily for victim group members such as the 9/11 Memorial Museum that do not include participation or even acknowledgement of the perceived perpetrator group, surprisingly little research speaks to how ingroup processes of public acknowledgement and memorialization may influence individual feelings of empowerment for victim group members, and if empowerment gained from intragroup processes can still foster motivations for conflict resolution. Once cross-cultural study of war commemorations found that in several countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia), support for diplomatic approaches to conflict increased during the commemoration day, while military support did not change (Watkins et al., 2020) and intragroup dialogue interventions have been shown to increase willingness toward reconciliation (Ben David et al., 2017). However, neither of these studies linked the resultant conflict resolution attitudes with empowerment gained from the public, ingroup process of victim narrative communication. In consideration of these findings, combined with research emphasizing the overall value of “voice” in peacebuilding and the role of empowerment in constructing alternatives to conflict (Evans, 2008), the current studies consider the
possibility that victim feelings of empowerment gained from narrative communication will be positively associated with peaceful conflict resolution attitudes.

*Conflict Perpetuation through Meaning Derived from Conflict*

In contrast to the potential link between conflict resolution and empowerment, public communication of victim narratives during a memorialization process may also cause victims to gravitate towards future forms of conflict perpetuation by potentially reopening emotional wounds and/or collective memories that incite outgroup directed anger (Brewer, 2006). Research on intergroup conflict has demonstrated that increasing the salience of violent conflict involving an individual’s ingroup in turn increased the amount of meaning people found from conflict by providing them with a sense of personal growth as well as offering a new perspective on life. In this way, meaning derived from conflict was conceptualized as multiple self-valued dimensions of personal identity and collective history provided by the conflict narrative (Rovenpor et al., 2019). Furthermore, individuals were shown to endorse attitudes and behaviors that supported future violence and continued perpetuation of conflict as a way to solidify these sources of positive meaning, evidence aligned with previous literature on the meaning maintenance model (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). The public communication of victim narratives may therefore motivate attitudes supportive of future conflict as associated with an increase of meaning derived out of the experience of ingroup conflict and harm.

1.3 Sending vs. Receiving Victim Narratives

Beyond considering the public component of victim narrative communication, it is also important to distinguish between communicating narratives of suffering when it only involves sending a message and when it involves both receiving and sending
messages from fellow ingroup members, as might be the case in many commemorative process (e.g., reading the narratives of others at a memorial before expressing one’s own narrative). The Social Identity Theory highlights how identity ranges on a continuum from individual to group such that, “a person may categorize himself on the basis of an individual identity, a collective identity, or both, depending on the current social and motivational context—a process known as self-categorization” (Xiao & Van Bavel, 2012, pg. 959; Turner et al., 1987). As public narrative communication shifts from asymmetrical, individual sending to a process of both sending and receiving victim narratives, the relevant ingroup social identity may become strengthened and thus reflected in conflict attitudes: Research indicates that reactions to past harm and victim beliefs are influenced by the strength of identification with the victim group (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008; Pennekamp et al., 2007), and that the way in which individuals respond to past group victimization is dependent on the relevance of the victimization to the individual via group affiliation (Vollhardt, 2009). While increased ingroup identity may manifest in forms of identity attachment with either neutral or even beneficial intergroup components, it could also manifest as ingroup glorification, or a feeling of ingroup superiority over other groups, which is generally associated with conflict perpetuating attitudes (Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006).

Beyond increasing glorification, receiving ingroup victim narratives may also result in increased perspective-taking regarding the suffering of fellow ingroup members. In intergroup conflict contexts, perspective-taking with the outgroup is usually associated with greater conflict resolution attitudes (Todd & Galinsky, 2014). However, recent research in the context of the Iran – U.S. conflict has argued that perspective-taking with
ingroup perpetrators can result in less support for justice efforts due to increased moral disengagement (Li, Leidner, & Fernandez-Campos, 2019). While commemoration processes generally situate the ingroup audience within the context of victim identity, the status of victim vs. perpetrator within most conflicts is rarely clear-cut1: By only perspective-taking with ingroup members, regardless of perceived victim identity, a similar process of moral disengagement and thus reduced support for conflict resolution may occur.

1.4 Research Overview

The current work investigates how public communication of ingroup narratives of suffering during a memorial process may influence attitudes towards both conflict-perpetuation and resolution through different but co-occurring mechanisms of empowerment and meaning from conflict. As the largest terrorist attack on United States soil, September 11th is nationally commemorated with high levels of news coverage on the anniversary date that memorialize both the attack and its victims (“Exhibitions”). The three studies described focus on the context of Americans considering the impact of the September 11th terrorist attacks and their subsequent intergroup conflict attitudes related to countries supporting terrorism, specifically state-sponsored terrorism via Iran, and were interested in participant’s conflict attitudes broadly (e.g., considering American militarism and pacifism and foreign policy strategies) as opposed to individual reconciliation beliefs (e.g., if they would forgive someone involved in the attack). The

1Though outside the scope of this research, it is important to acknowledged the complexity of social identity within conflict situations that goes beyond a dichotomous victim/perpetrator dynamic e.g., that victim and perpetrator roles may not stay static (Gausel, Leach, Mazzotta, & Feuchte, 2018), that perpetrator group members may perceive themselves as victims (Čehajić & Brown, 2010), and that other roles, such as bystander, may also be present (Staub, 1993).
use of Iran as an outgroup follows the lead of previous research (Hakim & Adams, 2017) that examined how commemorations of 9/11 have often aligned with politically motivated foreign policy goals targeting countries such as Iraq and Iran within the “War on Terror,” regardless of the actual involvement of these countries in the terrorist attack.

For Americans asked to provide a narrative of impact describing the influence of 9/11 on their life, it was expected that the public communication taking place during the anniversary itself would increase both feelings of empowerment as well as meaning derived from conflict as compared to an unrelated, non-commemorative day. By using a quasi-experimental design to examine how communication of ingroup suffering during a public anniversary would impact conflict attitudes, Study 1 was based upon a real-world dynamic. However, to better disentangle the influence of public narrative communication over private reflection, Study 2 experimentally manipulated the conditions of private reflection and public narrative sending for American participants writing about the impact of 9/11. Finally, Study 3 utilized a new manipulation with the goal of capturing a more ecologically valid, bi-directional communication process of ingroup suffering during commemoration spaces in which individuals not only sent impact statements, but also received the impact statements of their ingroup members.
CHAPTER 2

STUDY 1

2.1 Introduction to Study 1

To first consider how the communication of ingroup victimization narratives that takes place during a commemorative anniversary may influence the association between feelings of empowerment and meaning derived from conflict with downstream conflict attitudes, a quasi-experimental study design in which Americans reflected on the impact of 9/11 on either the actual anniversary of the terrorist attack or on an unrelated, random day was utilized. Considering the outlined dual pathway model, Study 1 examined if feelings of empowerment would be positively associated with using diplomatic forms of conflict resolution and more general peacemaking attitudes, while feelings of meaning derived from conflict would be negatively associated with the same measures and positively associated with militaristic forms of conflict resolution and more general militaristic attitudes. In addition, Study 1 also examined if the 9/11 commemoration condition would have a significantly stronger association between empowerment and reconciliatory attitudes and between meaning derived from conflict and militaristic attitudes than in the non-commemorative condition, considering that more participant narrative communication could be reasonably expected to be taking place throughout the day.

2.2 Study 1 Methods

2.2.1 Participants

In total, five hundred and seventeen individuals were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and received remuneration ($0.75) for their participation in the
study. Of these, 259 participants completed the survey on the 18\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of the September 11\textsuperscript{th} while 258 completed the survey on the unrelated date of October 4\textsuperscript{th}. The proposed sample number was calculated through an a-priori power analysis for two groups with a small effect size ($f=.15$), alpha of .05, and a power of .90 which produced a sample requiring 482 participants. Eighteen individuals were excluded due to having duplicate IP addresses. Participants were also excluded either because they reported having personal ties to Iran ($N = 11$), reported having challenges due to distraction or language difficulties ($N = 10$) or because they asked to have their data withdrawn ($N = 42$). Thus, the final sample consisted of 436 participants: 15.67\% exclusion rate, 56.19\% women, 77.98\% White Americans; $M_{age} = 39.45$, $SD_{age} = 12.44$; on a 9-point scale, where 1 = very liberal and 9 = very conservative, $M_{politic} = 4.37$, $SD_{politic} = 2.38$. For full demographic information for all three reported studies, please see Table 1.

2.2.2 Procedure

After providing consent, participants in the 9/11 commemoration condition were presented with a memorial image of the missing Twin Towers in New York City (see Appendix C) with a short text reminding them of the commemoration date. With the exception of this graphic, an identical survey was used across the two data collection dates. All participants were first prompted to write about the impact of 9/11 with the following text, “On September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2001, nearly 3,000 Americans were killed in a coordinated terrorist attack against the United States. In the following space, please reflect and write about the impact of 9/11 on you and/or other Americans.” Following this writing task, participants responded to the following measures before providing demographic information and being debriefed.
2.2.3 Measures

2.2.3.1 Empowerment

Adapted from Shnabel and Nadler (2008), six items (α = .93, M = 5.46, SD = 1.91) measured the amount of perceived empowerment participants felt following their respective writing tasks (e.g., “After writing, I feel like I could help create change,” “After writing, I feel empowered”).

2.2.3.2 Meaning derived from conflict

Six items adapted from Rovenpor et al. (2017) measured the extent to which participants expressed that they derived a sense of meaning from the 9/11 attacks (e.g., “Because of the 9/11 attacks, I now have a greater sense of purpose in my life”). Adapted from the same paper, four meaning derived conflict subscales with four items each were also used: Growth, the extent to which participants perceived that 9/11 provided a reified sense of national unity, Transformed Perspective, the extent to which participants indicated that 9/11 helped provide them perspective on life, Being Part of Something Important, the extent to which participants perceived that 9/11 provided them with a sense that they lived through an important time in history and are part of something bigger than themselves, and Unity, the extent to which participants indicated that nationality solidarity is increased by conflict. A factor analysis indicated that all scales/items loaded together on a single factor (also see Rovenpor et al., 2019). A composite score combining all items was therefore created (α = .96, M = 6.30, SD = 1.56).

2.2.3.3 Militaristic or diplomatic conflict resolution
Adapted from Li et al. (2017), eight items measured the extent to which participants supported either militaristic or diplomatic conflict resolution strategies between the U.S. and countries that support terrorism e.g., (“The U.S. should impose military strategies against countries that support terrorism as a way to decrease international terrorism,” “The U.S. should actively seek diplomatic dialogue with countries that support terrorism to discuss possible ways to end its support of international terrorism”). The results of an exploratory factor analysis indicated that three items loaded together on diplomatic conflict resolution ($\alpha = .75$, $M = 6.55$, $SD = 1.67$), four items loaded together on violent conflict resolution ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 5.50$, $SD = 2.12$), and one item, endorsement for sanctions, failed to load sufficiently on either composite and was considered in analyses as a single-item.

2.2.3.4 General militaristic and peacemaking attitudes

Adapted from Vail and Motyl, 2010, two measures of attitudes towards intergroup conflict resolution were presented to participants: militarism and peacemaking (militarism consisting of 6 items, e.g., “Threatening aggressive states with military force is often the best way to keep them in check,” ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 5.30$, $SD = 1.79$) and peacemaking consisting of 7 items, e.g., “The United States’ best choice to address the problem of terrorism is to use diplomacy,” ($\alpha = .94$, $M = 6.08$, $SD = 1.88$).

2.3 Study 1 Results

While there was no significant main effect of quasi-condition on feelings of empowerment, meaning derived from conflict, conflict resolution strategy, or conflict attitudes (all $ps > .05$), bivariate correlations conducted in SAS (Statistical Analysis System) across condition demonstrated that despite a high degree of positive correlation,
$r(515) = .53, p < .001$, empowerment and meaning derived from conflict were associated with reconciliatory attitudes in contrasting ways: While empowerment was significantly positively associated with diplomatic strategies for conflict reconciliation, $r(423) = .14, p < .01$, meaning derived from conflict was not, $r(422) = .08, p = .12$. Similarly, while meaning derived from conflict was significantly negatively associated with pacifism, $r(422) = -.28, p < .0001$, empowerment was not, $r(422) = -.01, p = .81$. In addition, when accounting for the substantial overlap between empowerment and meaning derived from conflict, and therefore partialling out meaning derived from conflict from empowerment, empowerment became significantly negatively correlated with militaristic conflict resolution and militaristic attitudes in addition to becoming positively correlated with pacifistic attitudes (see Table 2 for correlations).

### 2.3.1 Multi-Group Path Analysis

To test whether the hypothesis that the effects of empowerment and meaning derived from conflict on reconciliatory outcomes would be significantly stronger for people writing on 9/11 commemoration day than those writing on the non-commemorative day, multi-group path analysis was conducted with a focal interest in the significance and magnitude of the path coefficients and their differences across conditions. For individuals on the non-commemorative day, empowerment was not significantly predictive of any of the four key outcome variables. However, meaning derived from conflict was negatively significantly predictive of peacemaking ($b = -0.18, SE = .08, t = -2.51, p < .01$), and positively significantly predictive of militaristic conflict resolution ($b = .56, SE = .06, t = 10.07, p < .001$), and militarism in general ($b = .44, SE = .06, t = 6.96, p < .001$). See Figure 2.
In contrast, in the 9/11 commemoration condition, empowerment was positively significantly predictive of conflict reconciliation outcomes of diplomatic conflict reconciliation \((b = .25, SE = .08, t = 3.19, p < .001)\) and pacifism \((b = .29, SE = .07, t = 4.14 p < .001)\). At the same time, empowerment was negatively significantly predictive of conflict perpetuating outcomes such that for militaristic conflict resolution \((b = -.15, SE = .07, t = -2.20 p < .01)\), and militarism in general \((b = -.22, SE = .07, t = -3.32, p < .001)\).

For meaning derived from conflict, all outcomes increase in the magnitude of their effect without changing direction such that meaning derived from conflict remained negatively significantly predictive of peacemaking \((b = -0.55, SE = .06, t = -8.76, p < .001)\) and positively significantly predictive of militaristic conflict resolution \((b = .64, SE = .09, t = 11.67, p < .001)\), and militarism in general \((b = .67, SE = .05, t = 12.65, p < .001)\), see Figure 3.

Aligned with the expected associations of the dual process model, stronger effect of empowerment on conflict reconciliation attitudes for those writing on the 9/11 commemoration day than those writing on the non-commemorative day, the path between writing day and pacifism through empowerment was significantly stronger on 9/11, \((b = .21, SE = .10, t = 2.00, p < .05)\) and marginally stronger for diplomatic conflict resolution \((b = .17, SE = .10, t = 1.81, p = .07)\). At the same time, the path between writing day and militarism through meaning derived from conflict was significantly stronger on 9/11, \((b = .25, SE = .11, t = 2.26, p < .05)\).

2.4 Discussion

While the quasi-condition of participant writing on the 9/11 commemoration day in contrast to a non-commemorative day did not result in either mean increases or
decreases for overall conflict-related attitudes, both generally as well as specific to U.S. foreign policy related to terrorism, it did strengthen the associations between the attitudes and feelings of empowerment and meaning derived from conflict and these outcomes. On a day of national commemoration of ingroup suffering for American participants, feeling empowered was significantly more associated with attitudes supportive of peaceful conflict resolution than on a non-commemorative day. Similarly, meaning derived from conflict, through significantly associated with attitudes detrimental to conflict resolution in both quasi-conditions, was significantly more associated on 9/11. Together, these path analyses provide real-world support for how intragroup process of communicating narratives of suffering has potential for creating diverse conflict-related attitudes outcomes depending on the degree it inspires either empowerment (linked to conflict resolution outcomes) or meaning derived from conflict (linked to conflict perpetuation outcomes). When such communications take place during the time frame of a commemorative event that makes salient and acknowledges the ingroup’s past suffering of intergroup violence, these relationships are strengthened.

2.5 Limitations

Study 1 has several limitations that are addressed in Study 2: Most importantly, without knowing the type or degree of engagement participants had with the 9/11 commemorative day itself outside of the study context, it is not clear by what mechanism the associations of empowerment and meaning with conflict outcomes were strengthened. Study 1 did not ask participants about their communication around 9/11 outside of the study context, and in both conditions, participants were asked to write about the impact of 9/11 without specifying the presence of an audience for their communication. To address
this limitation, Study 2 experimentally manipulated whether or not participants wrote
their impact statements as a private reflection or with the intention of sending the
statement to an ingroup audience.

In addition, Study 2 introduced several new measures related to conflict
perpetuating attitudes (e.g., retributive justice) and conflict resolving attitudes (e.g.,
restorative justice, state willingness to reconcile) to further test the dual hypothesis model
across different dimensions of potential conflict attitudes. An exploratory measure of
emotions following the impact statement writing task was also introduced.
CHAPTER 3

STUDY 2

Study 2 sought to experimentally manipulate private reflecting versus public sending of impact statements so as to more clearly determine how sending an ingroup victim narrative in the context of a public commemorative event, in contrast to privately reflecting on it, influences conflict attitudes through both empowerment and meaning in conflict. Study 2 asked American participants to either summarize a short article about the impacts of 9/11 (control condition), write about the personal impact of 9/11 either as a private reflection (private reflection condition), or write about the personal impact of 9/11 for inclusion in the 9/11 Museum’s Exhibition (public sending condition). The public sending condition was expected to increase participant’s feeling of empowerment as well as the meaning derived from 9/11 significantly more than either the private reflection or control conditions, and thus influence conflict attitudes through the co-occurring mechanisms outlined in the dual pathway model: Empowerment was predicted to be negatively associated with conflict perpetuating attitudes and positively associated with peaceful conflict resolution attitudes, while the effects of meaning derived from conflict were expected in the opposite direction. With the goal of empirically untangling the multiple outcomes predicted by the public sending condition, empowerment and meaning were examined as mediating factors in a path analysis.

3.1 Study 2 Methods

3.1.1 Participants

Study 2 recruited 630 American adults online through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The proposed number was calculated through an a-priori power analysis.
calculating a small effect size for three groups with a desired power of .90, an alpha of .05, and $f = .15$ for a sample size of 566, also taking into account the likelihood that some participants’ data may not be usable. Thirty participants did not pay sufficient attention to the manipulation material, as indicated by their incorrect answers to manipulation check questions relating to a provided news article about the 9/11 attack. Thirty-nine participants requested to have their responses excluded from analysis, and an additional 15 participants were excluded on the basis of having duplicate IP addresses recorded for the survey. The data from the remaining 594 participants were used in the subsequent analyses: 12% exclusion rate, 56.05% women; $M_{age} = 37.54$, $SD_{age} = 12.07$; $M_{politic} = 4.63$, $SD_{politic} = 2.44$.2

3.1.2 Procedure

Participants completed an online survey hosted by Qualtrics. They were first presented with a fictitious but allegedly real news article that briefly described both the short- and long-term impacts of the September 11th terrorist attacks on the American people. Following the article, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: In the control condition, participants were asked to objectively summarize the article’s information. In the private reflection condition, participants were asked to write about the personal impact that 9/11 had on them as if writing in a private journal or diary. Before writing, participants in the private reflection condition completed a short attention check to ensure that they understood that their responses were meant to be personal and would be kept private. Finally, participants in the public sending condition were provided with information about a fictitious but allegedly real 9/11 Memorial Museum Exhibition

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2 Due to a coding error in the Qualtrics survey platform, participant responses for racial/ethnic background demographics were unfortunately not recorded for Study 2.
called “Truth & Remembrance: An American Collective Memory of the 9/11 Attacks”.
In this condition, participants were told that although their personal information would remain private, their response to how 9/11 had personally impacted them would be considered for display the public exhibit. In the public sending condition, participants completed an attention check to indicate that they understood that their written statement was meant to be shared in a public and collective manner.

After writing their respective summaries or statements, participants completed measures related to their emotions, sense of empowerment and meaning derived from conflict in the order outlined below. Measures were based on 9-point scales with 1 = strongly disagree and 9 = strongly agree. Next, participants in all conditions were then asked to read a short, factual summary of a lawsuit against Iran for its involvement in the 9/11 attacks as well as a quote adapted from the U.S. Department of State’s 2016 Country Report on Terrorism that linked Iran to international terrorism. The remainder of the survey measures asked participants to evaluate different notions of justice and punishment within the intergroup conflict context of Iran and the United States. At the end of the survey, participants completed routine demographic questions and were fully debriefed. During the debriefing, they were informed about the actual purpose of the study and that neither the news article nor the Memorial Museum Exhibition presented in the public recounting condition were real.

3.1.3 Measures

3.1.3.1 PANAS
Negative and positive emotions were measured using two 10-item self-report scales where $\alpha = .93$, $M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.82$ and $\alpha = .89$, $M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.64$, respectively, by Watson et al. (1988).

3.1.3.2 Empowerment

Empowerment was measured the same as in Study 1, ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 5.17$, $SD = 2.11$).

3.1.3.3 Meaning derived from conflict

Meaning derived from conflict was measured the same as in Study 1, ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 5.97$, $SD = 1.79$).

3.1.3.4 Militaristic or diplomatic conflict resolution

As true for Study 1, the results of an exploratory factor analysis indicated that three items loaded together on diplomatic conflict resolution ($\alpha = .81$, $M = 6.88$, $SD = 1.64$), four items loaded together on violent conflict resolution ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 3.57$, $SD = 2.32$), and one item, endorsement for sanctions, failed to load sufficiently on either composite and was considered in analyses as a single-item.

3.1.3.5 General militaristic and peacemaking attitudes

Measured the same as in Study 1, militarism consisted of six items ($\alpha = .85$, $M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.82$) and peacemaking consisting of 7 items ($\alpha = .93$, $M = 6.36$, $SD = 1.83$).

3.1.3.6 Demands for retributive and restorative justice

Retributive justice was measured using four items ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 6.89$, $SD = 1.98$), adapted from Leidner et al. (2013) for the relevant U.S.-Iran conflict (e.g., “To reinstate justice, Iran needs to be punished for its role in supporting the 9-11 attacks”). Adapted from the same research, five items ($\alpha = .88$, $M = 6.95$, $SD = 1.68$) measured restorative
justice for the U.S.-Iran conflict (e.g., “To restore justice, the United States and Iran need to agree on rules of a peaceful world”). Seven exploratory items were also used to measure the extent to which participants endorsed restorative or retributive justice for a specific Iranian individual accused of terrorism. Four items (α = .82, M = 5.18, SD = 1.98) measured the degree to which participants endorsed fair punishment (e.g., “Farhard should be released from Guantanamo and given a fair trial”) while three items (α = .76, M = 5.73, SD = 1.96) measured the degree to which participants endorsed harsh punishment (e.g., “A terrorist like Farhard should be punished to the maximum extent of the law”) in the context of an Iranian individual being detained at Guantanamo Bay.

3.1.3.7 State willingness to reconcile

Adapted from Shnabel et al. (2009) and Wenzel and Okimoto (2010), five items (α = .79, M = 5.20, SD = 1.54) measured participant’s willingness to endorse reconciliatory action by the United States towards Iran (e.g., “The U.S. should try to do its part to promote reconciliation with Iran”).

3.2 Study 2 Results

A series of general linear models were conducted in SAS 9.4 to investigate the main effects of communication type (control vs. private reflection vs. public sending) on immediate outcomes (e.g., emotions, feelings of empowerment, and meaning derived from conflict) as well as downstream outcomes (e.g., conflict perpetrating attitudes and peaceful conflict resolution attitudes).

3.2.1 Positive and Negative Affect

The main effect of condition on positive affect was significant on the omnibus test, F(2, 590) = 4.73, p = .009, η²_p = .012. Follow-up contrasts revealed that this effect
was driven by the public sending condition \((M = 5.65, SD = 1.65)\) resulting in significantly more positive affect compared to the private reflection condition \((M = 5.12, SD = 1.68)\), \(t(388) = -3.06, p < .01, d = .30\), as well as a marginally significant comparison between public sending and the control condition in the same direction \((M = 5.34, SD = 1.55)\), \(t(385) = -1.86, p = .06, d = .19\). There was no significant effect of condition on negative affect, \(F(2, 590) = 1.33, p = .27, \eta^2_p = .005\).

### 3.2.2 Empowerment

The hypothesis that the public sending condition (relative to the control and private conditions) would increase participant’s sense of empowerment was tested. As predicted, the main effect of condition on empowerment in the omnibus test was significant, \(F(2, 588) = 14.49, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .05\). Follow-up contrasts demonstrated that individuals who participated in public sending \((M = 5.81, SD = 2.12)\) felt more empowered than those who participated in private reflection \((M = 5.06, SD = 2.07; t(388) = -3.58, p < .001, d = .36)\) as well as for those in the control condition \((M = 4.69, SD = 2.00), t(383) = -5.33, p < .0001, d = .54\). The difference between empowerment in private reflection and control conditions was marginally significant, \(t(408) = -1.83, p = .07, d = .18\).

### 3.2.3 Meaning Derived from Conflict

The main effect of condition on meaning derived from conflict was also significant for the omnibus test, \(F(2, 586) = 4.23, p = .015, \eta^2_p = .014\). Follow-up contrasts indicated that the public sending condition was significantly different from both the private reflection, \(t(387) = -2.54, p = .01, d = .25\), and control conditions, \(t(383) = -2.55, p = .01, d = .27\) such that the public sending condition \((M = 6.29, SD = 1.69)\)
evoked greater meaning derived from conflict than either the private reflection condition ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.93$) or control condition ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.72$). There was no significant effect of condition between the private reflection and control condition, $t(406) = -.03, p = .97, d < 0$.

No main effect of condition was found on negative emotions, retributive or restorative justice demands, conflict resolution strategies, general support for militarism or peacemaking, and willingness to reconcile. Main effects by condition are reported in Figure 4 and correlations among key dependent variables are reported in Table 3.

3.2.4 Path Model Analysis

The impact of public sending on conflict perpetuating attitudes through empowerment without controlling for meaning derived from conflict was first examined through a path analysis in which condition was dummy coded with the public recounting condition as the reference group. Five measures of support for conflict perpetuation (retributive justice, militaristic conflict resolution, sanctions, militarism, and individual harsh punishment) were entered as endogenous variables. The initial model was a good fit to the data, $\chi^2 (5) = 0.70, p = .98, GFI = .9996, SRMSR = 0.0069, RMSEA = 0.0000$, see Figure 5. All individual paths reached significance in a positive direction indicating that public sending was positively predictive of feeling empowered ($\beta = .87, p < .001$) which in turn was positively predictive of the support of conflict and conflict perpetuation for all five considered outcomes: Empowerment predicted retributive justice ($\beta = .18, p < .001$), militaristic conflict resolution ($\beta = .27, p < .001$), sanctions ($\beta = .16, p < .001$), militarism ($\beta = .11, p < .001$), and harsh punishment ($\beta = .10, p < .001$). However, considering the strong correlation between empowerment and meaning derived
from conflict (for Study 1, \( r = .59 \)) and in order to test fully that 1) feelings of empowerment would lead to reduced conflict perpetuation while 2) meaning derived from conflict would increase conflict perpetuation, an additional path analysis was conducted using both variables as dual mediators between experimental condition and the previous five measures of support for conflict perpetuation.

The dual-mediated path model revealed that the addition of meaning derived from conflict as a mediator flipped empowerment’s positive predictive relationship with all five measures to negative (while meaning derived from conflict positively predicted all five outcomes).\(^3\) The model presented was likewise a very good fit to the data, \( \chi^2 (5) = 0.74, p = .98, GFI = .9997, \text{SRMSR} = 0.0055, \text{RMSEA} = 0.0000 \); see Figure 6 for beta values for each individual path, all statistically significant.

**3.3 Study 2 Discussion**

Study 2 demonstrated that public sending, in contrast to private reflection and a control condition, did increase participant feelings of empowerment as well as meaning derived from conflict. While there were no main effects on conflict perpetuating or peaceful conflict resolution outcomes, path model analysis indicated a consistent effect such that the meaning derived from conflict gained through public sending suppressed the reconciliatory outcomes predicted by feelings of empowerment. When the positive indirect relationship between conflict perpetuating outcomes and meaning derived from conflict as a mediator was taken into account, feelings of empowerment became

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\(^3\) In addition, non-significant indirect relationships of experimental condition to pacifism and willingness to reconcile through empowerment became positively predicted by empowerment in the dual-mediated path model.
supportive of negative indirect relationships with the same conflict perpetuating variables (and positively supportive of two resolution variables).

In this way, Study 2 provided additional evidence that greater feelings of empowerment were associated with conflict resolution attitudes while greater meaning derived from conflict was associated with conflict perpetuating attitudes. Study 2 added to the previous findings of Study 1 by demonstrating that the communication of ingroup victim narratives can be associated with divergent outcomes based on feelings of empowerment as well as meaning derived from conflict.

3.4 Study 2 Limitations

While Study 2 replicated the findings of Study 1 across several new dimensions of conflict attitudes, it only examined the process of participant’s sending an ingroup victimization narrative, with no prior reciprocal peer group narrative communication. Within commemorative contexts, individuals would likely encounter or receive the narratives of the ingroup peers in tandem with expressing their own impact statements. By considering this additional layer of ingroup narrative communication through both sending and receiving impact statement, Study 3 continued to explore how victim narrative communication may influence attitudes around conflict with a particular focus on how narrative communication may influence measures of association, attachment, and glorification of ingroup identity.

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4 An additional exploratory study was also conducted which utilized a fourth baseline condition and a different measure of empowerment with the goal of improving the manipulation paradigm. However, no significant effects were established in this study, see Appendix D.
CHAPTER 4

STUDY 3

In Study 2, participants communicated impact statements either as a private reflection process or as a public sending process with the awareness that ingroup members would have the opportunity to read their impact statements. However, the communication of victim narratives is rarely such a one-sided dynamic. In the context of commemorative anniversaries, public memorial exhibitions, and even within smaller dialogue forums, narrative communication often takes place as a social, collective process with individuals both sending their own narratives and receiving the narratives of their peers (Conway, 2010). Study 3 sought to address this dynamic in a further experimental design extending directly from Study 2: In a new receiving condition, participants were asked to read the impact statements of fellow ingroup member narratives before writing their own impact statements with the goal of explicitly testing whether or not the process of both receiving and sending victim narratives could additionally influence conflict attitudes. It was hypothesized that both the public sending as well as the new receiving condition would result in significantly higher levels of empowerment and meaning for participants than in the private reflection condition, replicating results from Study 2.

At the same time, based on previous literature that links strengthened ingroup identity with negative intergroup social dynamics (Roccas, 2006), experiencing narrative communication not just as an individual sender but as an ingroup interaction involving both receiving and sending with ingroup members could strengthen the relevancy of ingroup American identity and that this increase in ingroup identity relevance will result
in less peaceful conflict resolution outcomes for participants within the receiving condition. To examine this possibility, Study 3 included two new measures to test if receiving ingroup impact statements prior to sending their own would strengthen participant’s sense of American identity (inclusion of American identity in the self scale) and sense of American identity closeness and superiority (attachment and glorification scales). In addition, Study 3 also included measures to address potential individual differences that could influence intergroup conflict attitudes, namely trait inclinations for both forgiveness and revenge as well as political beliefs around the causality of 9/11 (e.g., blaming the foreign policy of the United States; blaming the support of terrorism by countries like Iran).

4.1 Study 3 Methods

4.1.1 Participants

Participant recruitment took place online; 818 American adults were recruited through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The proposed number was calculated through an a-priori power analysis calculating a small-medium effect size for three groups with a desired power of .90, an alpha of .05, and small effect size $f = .13$ for a sample size of 748, before taking into account the likelihood that some participants’ data may not be usable. Ninety-nine participants requested to have their responses excluded from analysis, and an additional 6 participants were excluded on the basis of having duplicate IP addresses recorded for the survey. The data from the remaining 713 participants were used in the subsequent analyses (12.84% exclusion rate; 56.24% women; 69.71% White American; $M_{age} = 42.36, SD_{age} = 13.42; M_{politic} = 4.98, SD_{politic} = 2.47.$).
4.1.2 Procedure

As in Studies 1 and 2, participants were first presented with a short news article describing the short- and long-term impacts of the 9/11 terrorist attack. After reading this article, participants were next randomly assigned to one of three conditions: Similar to Study 2, in the private condition, participants were instructed to “write a paragraph or statement about the personal impact that the 9/11 attacks had on you as you would for a private journal entry or reflection” while in the public sending condition, participants were instructed to “write a paragraph or statement sharing your story about the personal impact that the events of 9/11 had on you” for public display at a later point as part of the 9/11 Memorial Museum's Exhibition, "Truth & Remembrance: An American Collective Memory of the 9/11 Attacks". In the receiving condition, participants were first shown five randomly generated impact statements from a larger pool of fifty statements (these statements were taken from Study 2 and controlled for variation in length, content, and emotionality). Participants then completed the same procedure as in the public sending condition. Following the writing task, all participants completed the measures of empowerment and meaning. The remaining measures were subsequently completed in reference to the short, factual summary of U.S. policy related to Iran.

4.1.3 Measures

4.1.3.1 Empowerment and powerlessness

Empowerment was measured the same as in Study 1 and 2, \((\alpha = .93, M = 5.45, SD = 1.88)\). A complementary measure of powerlessness measured the amount of perceived lack of agency participants felt following their respective writing tasks as a replacement
for the more general PANAS scale (e.g., “After writing about the impact of 9/11, I feel powerless”) with five items ($\alpha = .90, M = 4.29, SD = 1.95$).

### 4.1.3.2 Meaning derived from conflict

Meaning derived from conflict was measured the same as in Study 1 and 2, ($\alpha = .95, M = 6.29, SD = 1.54$).

### 4.1.3.3 Militaristic or diplomatic conflict resolution

As true for Study 1 and 2, the results of an exploratory factor analysis indicated that three items loaded together on diplomatic conflict resolution ($\alpha = .79, M = 6.71, SD = 1.60$), four items loaded together on violent conflict resolution ($\alpha = .93, M = 5.18, SD = 2.16$), and one item, endorsement for sanctions, failed to load sufficiently on either composite and was considered in analyses as a single-item.

### 4.1.3.4 General militaristic and peacemaking attitudes

Measured the same as in Study 1 and 2, militarism consisted of six items ($\alpha = .83, M = 5.17, SD = 1.71$) and peacemaking consisting of 7 items ($\alpha = .93, M = 6.38, SD = 1.75$).

### 4.1.3.5 State willingness to reconcile

State willingness to reconcile was measured the same as in Study 2, ($\alpha = .77, M = 5.29, SD = 1.43$).

### 4.1.3.6 Forgiveness and revenge

Three exploratory items measured the degree to which participant’s demonstrated forgiveness as an individual trait, (“I usually try to understand and forgive those who do wrong”), $\alpha = .85, M = 5.88, SD = 1.81$, and three exploratory items measured the degree
to which participant’s demonstrated a desire for revenge as an individual trait (\(I believe in the statement, ‘an eye for an eye’\)), \(\alpha = .70, M = 5.50, SD = 1.74\).

### 4.1.3.7 Ingroup and outgroup blame measures

Three exploratory items measured the degree to which participant’s blamed the United States for the 9/11 terrorist attack, (\(I blame America's foreign policy decisions for causing the 9/11 terrorist attack\)), \(\alpha = .86, M = 4.55, SD = 2.11\), and three exploratory items measured the degree to which participant’s blamed countries like Iran, (\(I blame foreign countries like Iran for supporting acts of terrorism like 9/11\)), \(\alpha = .84, M = 6.18, SD = 2.00\).

### 4.1.3.8 Inclusion of American identity in the self (IOS)

Adapted from Aron, Aron & Smollan, 1992, the IOS Scale a single-item, pictorial measure of closeness in which participants select the degree to which their individual identity (self) overlaps with another identity (in this case, American), \(M = 4.55, SD = 1.70\).

### 4.1.3.9 Ingroup attachment and glorification

Adopted from Roccas et al. (2006), ingroup attachment was measured with eight statements (\(\alpha = .95, M = 6.76, SD = 1.92\)), considering the importance of the U.S. to participants’ identity and their commitment to the U.S. (e.g., “Being American is an important part of my identity.”). Ingroup glorification was measured with eight statements (\(\alpha = .93, M = 5.26, SD = 1.99\)), considering participants’ belief in the superiority of the U.S. over other nations (e.g., “The U.S. is better than other nations in all respects.”), and their deference to American authorities (e.g., “It is disloyal for Americans to criticize the U.S.”).
4.2 Study 3 Results

Following the same analysis process as Study 2, a series of general linear models were conducted in SAS 9.4 to investigate the main effects of communication type (private reflection vs. public sending vs. receiving) on immediate outcomes (e.g. feelings of empowerment and meaning derived from conflict), downstream outcomes (e.g., conflict perpetrating attitudes and peaceful conflict resolution attitudes), and the new ingroup item items (e.g., IOS and glorification).

4.2.1 Empowerment and Powerlessness

As hypothesized, the main effect of condition on empowerment in the omnibus test was significant, $F(2, 710) = 3.79, p < .023, \eta^2_p = .011$. Follow-up contrasts demonstrated that individuals who participated in public sending ($M = 5.50, SD = 1.90$) and those who participated in public sending and receiving ($M = 5.67, SD = 1.89$) did not significantly differ from one another $t(462) = -1.00, p = .32, d = .09$, and that the difference between empowerment in private reflection ($M = 5.21, SD = 1.83$), and public sending was only marginally significant, $t(473) = -1.65, p = .10, d = .15$. However, participants in the receiving condition did have significantly more feelings of empowerment than those in the private reflection, with $t(491) = -2.73, p = .007, d = .25$.

Likewise, the main effect of condition on feelings of powerlessness in the omnibus test was significant, $F(2, 710) = 5.52, p < .004, \eta^2_p = .015$. Here, participants who participated in private reflection ($M = 4.61, SD = 1.85$) felt significantly more powerless than participants who participated in either public sending ($M = 4.04, SD = 2.02; t(473) = 3.15, p = .002, d = .29$) and receiving ($M = 4.18, SD = 1.96; t(491) = 2.43$, $p = .015$).
There was no significant difference between public sending and receiving conditions, $t(462) = -.77, p = .44, d = .07$.

### 4.2.2 Diplomatic Conflict Resolution

The main effect of condition on attitudes towards diplomatic conflict resolution in the omnibus test was marginally significant, $F(2, 693) = 2.98, p = .05, \eta^2_p = .009$.

Participants who participated in public sending ($M = 6.92, SD = 1.58$) reported marginally significantly more conflict resolution attitudes than either participants in the private reflection ($M = 6.64, SD = 1.62$); $t(453) = -1.87, p = .06, d = .17$), or receiving conditions ($M = 6.62, SD = 1.59$), $t(438) = 1.92, p = .05, d = .18$. There was no significant difference between private reflection and receiving conditions, $t(469) = .08, p = .93, d = .01$.

### 4.2.3 State Willingness to Reconcile

The main effect of condition on attitudes towards state willingness to reconcile in the omnibus test was marginally significant, $F(2, 665) = 3.52, p = .03, \eta^2_p = .011$.

Participants who participated in public sending ($M = 5.50, SD = 1.31$) reported marginally significantly more state willingness to reconcile than either participants in the private reflection ($M = 5.25, SD = 1.45$), $t(444) = -1.82, p = .07, d = .26$, or receiving conditions ($M = 5.14, SD = 1.50$), $t(431) = 2.60, p = .01, d = .18$. There was no significant difference between private reflection and sending and receiving conditions, $t(461) = .83, p = .40, d = .07$.

### 4.2.4 Outgroup Blame

The main effect of condition on feelings of outgroup blame in the omnibus test was marginally significant, $F(2, 693) = 2.98, p = .05, \eta^2_p = .009$. Here, participants who
participated in receiving ($M = 6.34, SD = 1.99$) reported significantly more outgroup blame than participants who participated in only public sending ($M = 5.91, SD = 2.07$); $t(449) = -2.28, p = .02, d = .21$. Participants in the private reflection condition ($M = 6.27, SD = 1.91$) reported marginally significantly more outgroup blame than those in the public sending condition, $t(463) = 1.94, p = .05, d = .18$. There was no significant difference between private reflection and receiving conditions, $t(449) = -.38, p = .71, d = .04$.

4.2.5 Glorification and IOS

As expected, the main effect of condition on glorification in the omnibus test was significant, $F(2, 652) = 3.47, p < .03, \eta^2_p = .011$. Follow-up contrasts demonstrated that individuals who participated in receiving ($M = 5.54, SD = 2.06$) reported significantly higher levels of glorification that those in the private condition ($M = 5.07, SD = 1.88$), $t(452) = -2.53, p = .01, d = .24$, and marginally significantly higher levels than those in the sending only condition, ($M = 5.17, SD = 2.02$), $t(423) = -1.90, p = .05, d = .18$. There was no significant difference in glorification between participants in the public sending and private reflection conditions, $t(435) = -.56, p = .58, d = .05$.

The main effect of condition on the inclusion of American identity with the self followed a similar pattern, albeit with less robust results with a marginally significant omnibus test of main effects, $F(2, 665) = 2.89, p = .06, \eta^2_p = .009$. Here, participants who participated in receiving ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.71$) felt their American identity significantly more included in their sense of self than those who participated in only public sending ($M = 4.36, SD = 1.64$; $t(431) = -2.40, p = .02, d = .23$). There was, however, no significant difference between receiving and private reflection conditions ($M = 4.04, SD = 2.02$),
\( t(461) = -1.35, \ p = .18, \ d = .12 \), or private reflection and public sending conditions, \( t(444) = 1.10, \ p = .27, \ d = .10 \).

No main effect of condition on the omnibus test was found on meaning derived from conflict, military conflict resolution strategies, general support for militarism, general support for peacemaking,\(^5\) individual forgiveness, individual revenge, ingroup blame, or attachment. Main effects by condition are reported in Table 4 and correlations among key dependent variables are reported in Table 5.

**4.2.6 Individual Forgiveness and Revenge Beliefs as Moderator**

To test if individual differences in forgiveness or revenge belief moderated the relationship between condition and the outcome variables, both forgiveness and revenge beliefs were set in interaction terms within a general linear model: For both forgiveness and revenge, across all outcome variables, there was no interaction effect.

**4.2.7 Glorification as Mediator**

To test the hypothesis that within the two public audience contexts, the strength of ingroup identity relevance would mediate the relationship between condition and peaceful conflict resolution attitudes, multiple mediation models were conducted with glorification mediating the relationship between the receiving condition (vs both sending and private reflection) with downstream outcomes (e.g., diplomatic conflict resolution, general peacemaking, state willingness to reconcile) as well as glorification mediating the relation between the sending only condition (vs. both sending and receiving and private reflection) with downstream outcomes.

---

\(^5\) For general peacemaking attitudes, there was however a significant different between the sending condition and the receiving condition such that those who participated in receiving had significantly less peacemaking attitudes, \( t(435) = 2.03, \ p = .04, \ d = .19 \).
For the receiving condition, there was a significant indirect mediation, $b = -0.13$, $SE = .05 [-.24, -.03]$, in which condition positively predicted greater glorification ($b = .42$, $SE = .16$, $t = 2.58$, $p = .01$), and glorification in turn predicted decreased support for state willingness to reconcile ($b = -0.29$, $SE = .03$, $t = -11.19$, $p < .001$). While this indirect mediation was not significant for diplomatic conflict resolution, the same pattern of condition predicting greater glorification and glorification in turn predicting decreased support for peacemaking generally ($b = -0.31$, $SE = .03$, $t = -9.63$, $p < .001$) was also significant, for the indirect mediation, $b = -0.13$, $SE = .05 [-.24, -.03]$, see Figure 7a and Figure 7b, respectively. For the sending only condition, the three corresponding indirect mediations were all insignificant.

4.3 Study 3 Discussion

Study 3 replicated the finding of Study 2 that feelings of empowerment increased in the aftermath of publicly sending an impact statement in contrast to privately reflecting on such a statement. Furthermore, it demonstrated that the increase of empowerment was also present within the sending and receiving narrative condition. In contrast, participants who only privately reflected on their impact statement reported significantly higher feelings of powerlessness than both those who engaging in the sending condition as well as the receiving condition. Inconsistent with Study 2, however, Study 3 did not replicate the increase in meaning derived from conflict for the two public conditions.

At the same time, Study 3 did demonstrate support for the expectation that receiving impact statements of ingroup suffering from ingroup peers before sending one’s own statements would increase several measures of social identity, specifically inclusion of the American identity with the self and glorification. In doing so, the potential peaceful
conflict resolutions benefits associated with greater feelings of empowerment within public sending of victim narratives were undercut: For peaceful conflict resolution attitudes, there were significant differences between only sending and receiving on the downstream conflict attitudes of diplomatic conflict resolution, peacemaking generally, and state willingness to reconcile. Glorification was a significant mediator between the receiving condition for two of these downstream attitudes (peacemaking generally and state willingness to reconcile), however it was insignificant in mediating the same relationship within the sending only condition.
CHAPTER 5

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The three studies reported provide preliminary insight into the psychology outcomes of communicating narratives of ingroup suffering within a commemoration process, and the consequences of those outcomes on later conflict attitudes. Overall, this thesis demonstrates that the communication of ingroup victim narratives in a commemoration setting has the potential for diverse outcomes depending on the extent to which it inspires either empowerment, linked to peaceful conflict resolution outcomes, or meaning in conflict, linked to conflict perpetuation outcomes (Study 1). Furthermore, within intragroup communication of victim narratives, the shift from private reflection to publicly sending narratives to an ingroup audience increases was demonstrated to increase both empowerment and meaning derived from conflict (Study 2). However, while the additional component of not only sending but also receiving victim narratives likewise increased empowerment compared to private reflection, it also strengthened antisocial forms of ingroup identity (e.g., glorification), resulting in reduced support for conflict resolution (Study 3).

The Shift from Private Reflection to Public Sending

Within the scope of the three studies presented, public communication of victim narratives refers to the process of expressing harm suffered to a public audience of fellow ingroup members during a commemorative process. By constraining the studies to focus on the ingroup dynamic of commemoration rather than the intergroup dynamic of narrative exchange or dialogue, the current work is unique in its goal of understanding the basic underlying psychological reactions inherent to public expression of suffering to
an ingroup audience. While prior work in social psychology has laid out frameworks for the components of a convincing intergroup apology (Blatz, Schumann, & Ross, 2009) as well as what elements of conflict narratives help to perpetuate conflict (Oren, Nets-Zehngut & Bar-Tal, 2015), there is relatively little prior work that specifically investigates how individual attitudes and behaviors may shift as individuals construct and express openly their own experiences with harm to an ingroup audience. Across the three studies presented, public communication (or communication taking place during a public commemoration day) was demonstrated to strengthen individual’s feelings of empowerment in contrast to private reflection. Additionally, in two of the studies, public communication strengthened individual’s meaning derived from a perceived intergroup conflict (here, the 9/11 terrorist attack).

**Empowerment & Meaning: Different Sides of the Same Coin?**

Across all three studies, empowerment and meaning from conflict were strongly correlated (for Study 1, $r = .53$, for Study 2, $r = .59$, and for Study 3, $r = .60$) their relationship further demonstrated by empowerment’s association with conflict perpetuating outcomes until controlling for meaning in conflict as seen in Study 2.

Having operationalized the concept of empowerment in line with previous work emphasizing qualities of social influence and strength (Shnabel et al., 2008), it seems possible to consider that feeling empowered following a public victim narrative process could manifest as a general sense of social identity validation in a way that could potentially influence both conflict supporting and conflict reducing attitudes. This notion aligns with other literature on empowerment that suggests the term is fundamentally
about gaining power, without presumptions about its relationship to social benefit or social harm (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010).

While the role of restoring empowerment to victim groups has been established as a key component of conflict reconciliation process (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), depending on the circumstances of the conflict it may also raise the possibility of conflict perpetuation as another avenue by which to obtain or maintain power. In contrast, meaning in conflict necessarily implies an appreciation of the value gained from conflict, with support for conflict perpetuation logically following in the desire to maintain the perceived psychological benefits.

While most literature highlights the prosocial benefits of empowerment (Diener & Biswas-Deiner, 2005; Roguski, 2019), the current studies reveal a more complex role of empowerment in association with downstream attitudes around conflict. Study 3 demonstrated that even though the receiving condition resulted in increased levels of empowerment for participants, it also resulted in increased ingroup glorification and reduced peaceful conflict resolution attitudes. This finding aligns with earlier research observing the potential of “two faces to empowerment” in politicized environments: In the context of young Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal, peacebuilding education teaching youth lessons on agency and choice resulted in some youth choosing to engage in peaceful humanitarian projects while others engaged with political groups advocating for violent political activities (Evans, 2008). In this way, feelings of empowerment resulting from a commemoration or memorial processes appear to be fundamentally about increasing individual sense of identity and agency, potentially motivating both conflict perpetuating and conflict resolving attitudes.
Sending vs. Receiving Ingroup Victim Narratives

Considering the potential malleability of feelings of empowerment for divergent conflict attitude outcomes, one potential factor influencing how empowerment may be expressed is the presence or absence of receiving ingroup victim narratives from ingroup peers. Like at the 9/11 Memorial Exhibition, ingroup process of public victim narrative communication are often an exchange with individuals both voicing their own experiences as well as taking in the experiences of others (Chaitin, 2014). As a quasi-experiment, Study 1 took advantage of this process as it naturally happens on a national day of commemoration for 9/11. Study 3 provided an important collaborating evidence for this distinction by directly comparing outcomes between individuals who simply write their own victim narrative with individuals who engaged first with the narratives of fellow ingroup members. While the intragroup process did increase feelings of empowerment, it also increased several measures of social group identity closeness and decreased support for peaceful conflict resolution, which also highlighted the link between group identity with conflict attitudes (Jackson, 2002). These findings are consistent with work illustrating how commemoration events can create space for individuals to remember elements of the past through the lens of national identity, and in some cases, through a nation glorifying perspective (Sahdra & Ross, 2007; Kurtiş, Adams, & Yellow Bird, 2010).

Limitations and Future Directions

While much of the research literature cited comes from the context of intergroup conflict dynamics, the 9/11 terrorist attack is a particularly challenging case study in the context of ingroup and outgroup identities: Orchestrated by al-Qaeda to not only cause
mass destruction but to also symbolically attack the United States, 9/11 specifically targeted both American identity and American foreign policy goals such as the support of Israel (Laden & Ibn-Lādin, 2005). The subsequent “War on Terror,” launched by the Bush administration with the initial goal of killing bin Laden and destroy the Al Qaeda network, however, has resulted in combat operations in at least 24 countries, and has been used as justification for a number of foreign policy goals and military interventions across the Middle East including in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran (Vine et al., 2020). For this reason, a major limitation of the current research is incomplete study demographics (e.g., the lack of racial/ethnic information in Study 2) and a comprehensive analysis of how individual racial/ethnic and religious identity would shape and inform the psychological experiences around a 9/11 commemoration process and subsequent attitudes in evaluating conflict attitudes. For example, research findings have shown that post-9/11 policies related to terroristic attacks have increased negative political rhetoric around Muslim Americans, and have eroded trust between the Muslim American community and the U.S. government (Gillum, 2018). Future work should therefore move beyond the use of a primarily White, Christian American sample in order to better understand the ways in which nuisances around ingroup identity and conflict perceptions impact commemoration experiences.

In addition to the need for greater critical consideration of study context and its interaction with individual demographics, Study 3 was inconsistent in its failure to replicate an increase in meaning derived from conflict for participants in either of the two public conditions, as expected by the dual pathway model and as found in Study 2. While the reason behind this inconsistency is unclear, Study 3 was conducted during August of
2020, a time period marked by increasing rates of infection and death from the coronavirus pandemic, large scale protests around racial justice, and an upcoming, divisive presidential election. While some evidence suggests that the online studies conduct during the coronavirus pandemic did not significantly change how participants responded to experiments (Peyton, Gregory, Coppock, 2020), it seems reasonable to consider that these national events might especially influence questions related to meaning gained from a previous national tragedy.

Finally, considering that the public communication of ingroup narratives of suffering in a commemorative context are associated with both feelings of empowerment and meaning derived from conflict, and that these psychological processes are associated with different downstream outcomes related to conflict attitudes, further work should investigate what specific elements of narrative communication influence either conflict perpetuating attitudes or peaceful conflict resolution attitudes. This is especially important considering the flexible role that both feelings of empowerment (Evans, 2008) and meaning (Rovenpor et al., 2019; Ho & Cheung, 2010; Boyraz & Sayger, 2010) can have in shaping both prosocial and antisocial behaviors following conflict and/or loss.

When does feeling empowered lend itself towards agency motivated by gaining and maintain power versus agency in undertaking healing and outreach? Under what conditions does meaning from a past suffering manifest as a desire for retribution in contrast to a more transformative, restorative approach? Future qualitative work could utilize more in-depth coding techniques as well as tools such as Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) to examine the actual content of the narrative statements from
within the three studies, and how varying statement themes may be related to both psychological emotions and conflict attitudes.

**Conclusion**

Considering the nearly ubiquitous and varied types of public memorials – from state-recognized forums such as truth commissions to informal speak outs held across college campus to commemoration events – the conducted studies provide a useful foundation for beginning to examine how audience and structure of public victim narrative communication may shape future conflict attitudes. Together, this line of research helps to merge together currently disparate literatures on conflict narratives and psychological processes, indicating how intragroup narrative communication on past suffering can impact conflict attitudes. In doing so, the current research has the potential to help inform the design and structure of commemorative and memorial events so as to avoid the conflict perpetuating pitfalls that can arise from entrenched meaning from conflict and ingroup glorification.
## APPENDIX A: MANUSCRIPT TABLES

### Table 1

*Studies 1-3 participant demographics.*

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Table 2.
Bivariate correlations between empowerment and meaning derived from conflict with conflict attitudes for Study 1. Partial correlations are also presented.

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*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .00
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*p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
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<td>4.75, 1.71</td>
<td>Omni: .06</td>
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Table 5

Bivariate correlations between empowerment and meaning derived from conflict with conflict attitudes for Study 3. Partial correlations are also presented.

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<tr>
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<td>.17***</td>
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<td>Peacemaking</td>
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<td>-.16***</td>
<td>-.16***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to Reconcile</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.24***</td>
<td>-.22***</td>
</tr>
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<td>.10*</td>
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<td>.09*</td>
<td>.16***</td>
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<td>.11**</td>
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<td>.18***</td>
<td>-.22***</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.11***</td>
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<td>Inclusion of Self</td>
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<td>.02</td>
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<td>Attachment</td>
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<td>Glorification</td>
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<td>.61***</td>
<td>.46***</td>
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</table>

*p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001
Figure 1. Dual pathway model of the public expression of victim narratives. Public expression of victim narratives influences conflict supporting or conflict mitigating attitudes through increases in meaning perceived from the conflict and feelings of empowerment, respectively.
Figure 2. Study 1 path model for a non-commemorative day. On a non-commemorative day, participants who were asked to reflect about the impact of 9/11 on their lives demonstrated significant association between perceiving meaning gained from the period of ingroup suffering with militaristic approaches to related conflict; feelings of empowerment were not significantly related to any conflict attitudes.
Figure 3. Study 1 path model for the 9/11 Commemoration Day. On the anniversary of 9/11, participants who reflected about the impact of 9/11 on their lives demonstrated stronger significant associations between perceiving meaning in the ingroup suffering and militaristic strategies to conflict, as opposed to the non-commemorative day. In addition, feelings of empowerment were significantly positively associated with conflict reconciliation strategies and negatively associated with militaristic strategies.
**Figure 4.** Condition effects for Study 2. When participants wrote narrative statements about the impact of 9/11 on their lives as part of a public sending process, they demonstrated greater positive emotions, a greater sense of empowerment, and more meaning derived conflict than those writing privately or as a control.
Figure 5. Study 2 path model with only empowerment as a mediator. When only empowerment was considered as a mediator, the indirect effects of public recounting on measures related to the support of conflict and conflict perpetuation. Although all paths were significant (solid lines), they were in contradiction to our initial hypotheses that feelings of empowerment would support reconciliatory attitudes.
Figure 6. Study 2 dual path model with both empowerment and meaning. Considering both empowerment and perceived meaning in conflict as dual mediators, the indirect effects of public recounting on measures related to the support of conflict and conflict perpetuation mediated by both empowerment and perceived meaning in conflict. Although all paths were significant (solid lines), empowerment flipped to negatively predicting the outcomes measures (grey lines) while perceived meaning in conflict accounted for the positive indirect effect (black lines).
Figure 7a & 7b. Study 3 glorification mediation. When comparing the receiving narrative condition to both the private and only sending narrative condition within Study 3, glorification negatively mediated the relationship between condition and both state willingness to reconcile and peacemaking.
APPENDIX C: STUDY MATERIALS

Study 1: Prompt for individuals with the 9/11 commemoration day condition.

On 9/11 Anniversary, Somber Reflections on Lives, and a World, Changed

On this day eighteen years ago, terrorists associated with al-Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. Almost 3,000 people were killed during the 9/11 attacks, a loss of life that continues to impact Americans and the world.
“Life won’t let us forget.”

CHUNDREA EPPS, offering words of remembrance for her brother Christopher, who died in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

On September 11, 2001, nineteen individuals from the terrorist organization al-Qaeda hijacked four passenger airlines and crashed them into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City as well as the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The attacks, now recognized across party lines to have been supported by Iran, shocked and broke the heart of the entire country.

As the worst act of terrorism on American soil in modern history, the total causalities were devastating. Approximately 3,000 individuals perished. Tragic scenes of individuals jumping from the towers became stamped in the American mind.

The long-term consequences of 9-11 continue to impact the American people: Thousands of tons of toxic debris were spread across Lower Manhattan due to the collapse of the Twin Towers and deaths from 9-11 related cancer and respiratory diseases remain high. Beyond those who suffered personal losses, the devastation caused by the 9-11 attacks changed the United States fundamentally. Heightened security measures designed to prevent future terrorist attacks marked a new era of vigilance in the United States.

The 9-11 Memorial in New York City opened in 2011 and now serves as a reminder of the trauma and tragedy inflicted upon the United States. The Memorial Museum explores the continuing significance of 9-11, and has recently launched a new exhibition to document the personal impact of 9-11 on Americans entitled, “Truth & Courage: An American Collective Memory of the 9-11 Attacks.

More information about the exhibit can be found at: https://www.911memorial.org/museum.
Prompt given to all participants before responding to conflict attitude questions.

“Designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism in 1984, Iran continued its terrorist-related activity in 2016, including the provision of support for Hezbollah in Lebanon, Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza such as Hamas, and al-Qaeda in Syria, Iraq, and throughout the Middle East...

...Iran remained unwilling to bring to justice senior al-Qaeda members it continued to detain and has refused to publicly identify the members in its custody. Since at least 2009, Iran has allowed al-Qaeda facilitators to operate within the country, enabling al-Qaeda to move funds and fighters to Syria and across the Middle East.”
Study 3: Updated prompt given to all participants before responding to conflict attitude questions.
APPENDIX D: EXPLORATORY STUDY 2B

Exploratory Study 2b (baseline condition, alternative empowerment measure)

A baseline condition, in which no priming materials were provided, was included so as to provide a comparison of general feelings of empowerment and perceived meaning in conflict without the context of 9/11. In line with the theoretical framework of the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation, a measure of perceived symbolic and realistic threat was included to examine if increased feelings of empowerment resulted in a reduction of perceived threat, and hence the support of greater reconciliation. Finally, a measure of subjective well-being was also included to examine the hypothesized role of public truth-telling in enhancing not only positive mood but also a generalized sense of life satisfaction.

Method

Participants

We recruited 1,061 American adults online through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The proposed number was calculated through an a-priori power analysis calculating a small effect size for four groups with a power of .90, alpha of .05, and $f = .15$. Data screening procedures included the exclusion of 60 participations who did not pay sufficient attention to the manipulation material, as indicated by their incorrect answers to the manipulation check questions. Fifty-six participants requested to have their responses excluded from analysis, and an additional 11 participants were excluded on the basis of having duplicate IP addresses recorded for the survey. The data from the remaining 934 participants were used in the subsequent analyses (66% women; age $M = \ldots$
The percentage of the sample (12%) excluded from data analysis was similar to the average for online studies (Chandler, Mueller, & Paolacci, 2013).

**Procedure**

In addition to the random assignments of a public recounting, private reflection, and control conditions (all identical to those described in Study 1), an additional baseline condition was added that contained neither priming materials or a writing task. All participants completed measures related to their emotions, sense of empowerment and perceived meaning of conflict in the order outlined below. Unless noted otherwise, measures were based on 9-point scales with 1 = *strongly disagree* and 9 = *strongly agree*. Participants in all conditions were then asked to read a short, factual summary of a lawsuit against Iran for its involvement in the 9/11 attacks as well as a quote adapted from the U.S. Department of State’s 2016 Country Report on Terrorism before evaluating different notions of justice and punishment within the intergroup conflict context of Iran and the United States, completing demographic questions, and being debrief.

**Materials.**

*Meaning Derived from Conflict, Demands for Retributive and Restorative Justice, Militaristic or Diplomatic Conflict Resolution, General Militarism, and Willingness to Reconcile* were all measured. Due to the addition of the baseline condition with no writing task, *Empowerment* items were modified from Study 1a to replace the phrase “after writing” with the phrase “right now” (e.g., “Right now, I feel like I could help create change,” “Right now, I feel empowered”).

*Perceived Symbolic and Realistic Threat.* Drawing from work related to integrated threat theory (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), four items measured participant
beliefs in realistic threat of Iran to the United states (e.g., “Iran is a military threat to the United States) and four items measured participant beliefs in symbolic threat of Iran to the United States (e.g., “By condemning the American way of life, Iran threatens the cultural practices and values of most Americans”).

**Subjective Well-Being.** Participant self-perceived success across multiple dimensions of well-being (relationships, self-esteem, purpose, optimism, etc.) was measured by the eight item Flourishing Scale (Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi, & Biswas-Diener, 2009.

**Results**

**Main Effects.** There was no significant increase in either empowerment or meaning derived from conflict in the public recounting condition. See Table 1A for reliability statistics, means, and standard deviations for all outcome variables.

**Correlational Analysis.** Despite the lack of significant results, this study did replicate associations between reconciliation and militarism such that empowerment was significantly positively associated with willingness to reconcile while meaning was negatively associated. Similarly, empowerment was significantly negatively associated with militarism while meaning was positive, see Table 2A
Table 1A
Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability of Study Measures by Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(\alpha)</th>
<th>Baseline (M, SD)</th>
<th>Control (M, SD)</th>
<th>Private (M, SD)</th>
<th>Public (M, SD)</th>
<th>ANONVA Omnibus</th>
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<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>5.70, 1.79</td>
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<td>5.32, 1.85</td>
<td>5.52, 1.88</td>
<td>(p = .11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<td>6.08, 1.71</td>
<td>5.94, 1.64</td>
<td>(p = .76)</td>
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<td>Retributive Justice</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>6.52, 1.98</td>
<td>6.68, 2.03</td>
<td>6.60, 2.03</td>
<td>6.72, 2.00</td>
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<td>Restorative Justice</td>
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<td>6.61, 1.58</td>
<td>6.69, 1.68</td>
<td>6.76, 1.61</td>
<td>6.69, 1.81</td>
<td>(p = .83)</td>
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<td>5.50, 2.16</td>
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<td>(p = .92)</td>
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<td>Realistic Threat</td>
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<td>(p = .97)</td>
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\(*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001\)
Table 2A.  
*Bivariate correlations between empowerment and meaning derived from conflict with conflict reconciliation attitudes for Study. Partial correlations are also presented.*

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Empowerment (partial Meaning)</th>
<th>Empowerment (partial Meaning)</th>
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<td>0.56***</td>
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<td>0.54***</td>
<td>0.52***</td>
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*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*
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