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Obstacles to reconciliation and forgiveness among victim groups of unacknowledged past trauma and genocide

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Abstract

Groups in conflict often resist efforts toward reconciliation with the outgroups. Despite the growing research examining processes underlying support for reconciliation, we know little about how resentment might drive members of victim groups that have experienced violence and atrocities to oppose reconciliation and reduce their willingness to forgive the perpetrator group. Using the context of the Turkish-Armenian conflict, the present research investigated the association of ingroup identification, ingroup glorification, and resentment with willingness to reconcile and forgive among Armenians in their homeland context (Armenia; Study 1) and Armenian-Americans in the hostland context (the U.S.; Study 2). In Study 1, stronger Armenian identification and Armenian glorification predicted more resentment toward the Turks, which, in turn predicted less forgiveness and less support for reconciliation. Study 2 replicated the findings of Study 1 regarding the associations of ingroup glorification but not ingroup identification. However, Study 2 also demonstrated that identification with diaspora identity (i.e., American identity) predicted positive intergroup outcomes. Results point to the important relationship between different modes of identification both in the homeland and hostland countries and intergroup-related outcomes through resentment, and to the obstacles to reconciliation and forgiveness among victim groups of unacknowledged past trauma and genocide.

Keywords: identification, glorification, resentment, reconciliation, forgiveness, diaspora identity, Armenian genocide, homeland identity

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Obstacles to reconciliation and forgiveness among victim groups of unacknowledged past trauma and genocide

Mass violence and genocide, recent or historical, if not acknowledged and addressed properly, can lead to resentment and hostility among members of the victim group. This resentment is often carried on over generations. For instance, Armenians feel that the Turks' lack of acknowledgment of mass killings "put salt in the wound" (Vollhardt & Nair, 2018, p. 416). Denial of violence by perpetrator groups, therefore, poses an important obstacle to reconciliation efforts. For members of victim groups, it is hard to consider reconciliation or forgiveness without receiving acknowledgment or justice for past misdeeds. Forgiveness, for instance, is often prescribed as an important factor in reducing intergroup tensions, but also for its beneficial effects for the victims, giving them the power back (Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008). Surprisingly, we know little about the factors and processes that might drive members of victim groups to oppose reconciliation and reduce their willingness to forgive the perpetrator group, especially in contexts of unacknowledged past violence.

Victim groups of unacknowledged past trauma and genocide may be less willing to forgive perpetrator groups because perpetrator groups' lack of acknowledgment may elicit negative affective responses such as resentment (Kalayjian, Shahinian, Gergerian, & Saraydarian, 1996). Kalayjian et al. (1996) have demonstrated in their study, where the experiences of the survivors of the Ottoman-Turkish Genocide of the Armenians (1915-1923) were explored, that Armenian genocide survivors expressed a range of negative affect, including resentment, hatred, and rage when asked about their reactions to the Turkish denial of the genocide. We argue that, in contexts where past trauma and genocide of victim groups are unacknowledged, collective resentment against the perpetrator due to unacknowledged violence will reduce willingness to forgive and reconcile. However, to date, there has been very little research examining the role of resentment in intergroup relations (for an exception see Mészáros & Szabó, 2018; Vollhardt, Mazur, & Lemahieu, 2014). To our knowledge, this research is the first to investigate the role of resentment in forgiveness and reconciliation among victim groups, specifically, among Armenian communities in Armenia and the Armenian diaspora in the United States in the context of the Armenian genocide.

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Further, considering that not all group members feel the same way about the violence that their group has experienced in the past, we also examined an important individual-level predictor of conflict-relevant attitudes—identification with the ingroup and ingroup glorification—in predicting resentment, as well as attitudes towards reconciliation and forgiveness. The role of ingroup identification and glorification shapes attitudes in conflict more generally, and especially reactions to ingroup perpetrator events (e.g., justification of harm doing; Leidner, Castano, Zaiser, & Giner-Sorolla, 2010). However, we know less about "whether" and "how" ingroup identification and ingroup glorification differentially predict victim groups' resentment of the perpetrator group, and their attitudes towards reconciliation and willingness to forgive the perpetrator. The present research examined this important issue in the understudied context of the Armenian genocide unacknowledged by Turkey.

Resentment, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness. Researchers have sought to identify factors that can inhibit intergroup forgiveness and found that negative emotions such as fear and anger (Van Tongeren, Burnette, O'Boyle, Worthington & Forsyth, 2014), competitive victimhood (Noor et al., 2008a; Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013; Uluğ, Lickel, Leidner, & Hirschberger, 2020), as well as experience of conflict (Cehajic, Brown, & Castano, 2008; Noor et al., 2008a; Voci et al., 2015), are the barriers to intergroup forgiveness and reconciliation. We contribute to this literature by examining the role of resentment as an inhibitor of intergroup forgiveness and reconciliation in a context of unacknowledged genocide.

The concept of resentment was defined by Mullet, Neto, and Rivière (2005, p. 160) as an "emotional complex consisting of bitterness, hostility, residual fear, and residual anger in response to perceived harm from an offender." This definition of resentment is particularly useful for past unacknowledged injustice that is considered in the present research, as it highlights the persistent and residual emotions following the harm done. Some scholars, however, have conceptualized and measured resentment as integral to forgiveness (Brown, Wohl, & Exline, 2008; Noor et al., 2008a), whereas others conceptualized and measured forgiveness separately from resentment (Cehajic et al., 2008; Greenaway, Quinn, & Louis, 2011; Hanke et al., 2013; Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006; Hewstone et al., 2004; Leonard, Yung, & Cairns, 2015; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). We adopt the latter view. We argue that while the feeling of resentment might be inevitable among

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victim groups in cases of unacknowledged trauma (i.e., people do not necessarily control how they feel about a situation), group members still have agency over their decisions, such as whether to forgive the perpetrator or not. Consistent with this, DiBlasio (2000) argues that forgiveness is a cognitive process, and it is related to decision making: "emotional readiness is not a factor in the decision process [of forgiveness]. There is a separation of reason from feelings in making the forgiveness decision, followed by an act of will" (p. 150). Based on this, we conceptualize resentment as an affective variable (e.g., emotion) and forgiveness as a cognitive variable (e.g., an intent/decision for action).

Some scholars argue that resentment precedes forgiveness, and it should be overcome for forgiveness to occur (e.g., McLernon, Cairns, & Hewstone, 2002). To borrow from Joseph Butler, a moral philosopher who wrote extensively on resentment and forgiveness (as cited in Weitzel, 2007, p. 251):

> … excessive hurt and resentment impede one's ability to forgive. We know that if one is able to forgive, then one is not feeling excessive resentment, since forgiveness and excessive resentment are incompatible. All this means is that overcoming one's excessive resentment is an obstacle to doing whatever it is we do when we forgive.

Nadler (2012) argues that victims' resentment is likely an important mechanism that protects the members of victim groups against superficial reconciliation processes, which he calls "cheap forgiveness" and "false reconciliation." By contrast, perpetrator groups' acknowledgment of past atrocities, such as acknowledgment of Poles in the context of the Kielce Pogrom and Germans in the context of the Holocaust, has been demonstrated to reduce resentment among victim group members, such as Jewish Americans (Vollhardt et al., 2014). Therefore, efforts for reconciliation and forgiveness in contexts that involve the denial of past mass violence and genocide should consider the feelings of resentment among victim group members.

Building on this literature, we expect that resentment about the past misdeeds and mass violence should be an important negative predictor of attitudes towards reconciliation and forgiveness in victim groups whose genocide has not been acknowledged. Despite the potential central importance of resentment for victim group members whose victimization is denied/not acknowledged, to our knowledge, no previous studies have examined how resentment relates to openness to reconciliation

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and willingness to forgive the perpetrator group. As resentment for unacknowledged genocide is a mechanism through which victim groups resist normalizing the relations with the perpetrator group, such as reconciling with or forgiving them, we expect resentment to serve as an important obstacle of reconciliation and forgiveness among victim group members of historical trauma.

The Role of Ingroup Identification and Ingroup Glorification on Intergroup Outcomes

Ingroup identification is a double-edged sword: sometimes leading to more positive outcomes such as intergroup tolerance (Brewer & Pierce, 2005), whereas other times, it may lead to more negative consequences such as feelings of identity conflict and ingroup favoritism (Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996). In line with this, studies focusing on the role of ingroup identification on forgiveness have produced different results. Some studies demonstrate that strong ingroup identification is a barrier to forgiveness (Cehajic et al., 2008; Greenaway et al., 2011; Hanke et al., 2013; Hewstone et al., 2006; Leonard et al., 2015; Noor et al., 2008a; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005), whereas other studies demonstrate that ingroup identification—especially higher order identifications such as identification with humanity—can be a facilitator of forgiveness (e.g., Noor, Brown, Taggart, Fernandez, & Coen, 2010; Greenaway et al., 2011; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). Yet, other studies demonstrate no significant relationship between ingroup identification and forgiveness (Hamer, Penczek, & Bilewicz, 2017; Hewstone et al., 2006; Leonard et al., 2015; Philpot & Hornsey, 2011).

These different findings might be explained by taking into account the effects of different modes and content of ingroup identification. Roccas, Klar, and Liviatan (2006) distinguished between identification (i.e., *attachment* such as a sense of emotional connection and a desire to contribute to one's group) and glorification (i.e., a sense of superiority to other groups and deference to the authorities of one's own group). These dimensions differentially predict intergroup outcomes in conflict contexts. Among members of perpetrator groups, it is particularly higher ingroup glorification, but not levels of identification, that predict higher dehumanization of outgroup victims (Leidner et al., 2010), lower support for peace (Rovenpor, Leidner, Kardos, & O'Brien, 2016), denial of responsibility for ingroup wrongdoing (Bilali, 2013), support for aggression (Federico, Golec, & Dial, 2005), outgroup hostility (de Zavala, Peker, Guerra, & Baran, 2016), and outgroup derogation (Blank & Schmidt, 2003). Ingroup glorification seems to serve a protective function to the identity and image threats that committing harm poses to the ingroup.

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Some research on ingroup identification has also examined their influence on victim group's intergroup outcomes, including willingness to reconcile and forgive. For example, Wohl and Branscombe (2005) found that Jewish participants were less willing to forgive the perpetrator group (i.e., Germans) when they were induced to think of themselves as belonging to their ingroup compared to a more inclusive human group. Similarly, two studies demonstrated that higher identification with the victimized group predicted lower willingness to forgive the perpetrators (Brown et al., 2008) and to reconcile (Noor et al., 2008b) with the perpetrator group, though these studies did not examine ingroup glorification. However, studies focusing on the relationship between common ingroup identification and forgiveness revealed different results: In Poland, Hamer, Penczek, and Bilewicz (2018) did not find a significant relationship between ingroup identification and intergroup forgiveness. Their analyses suggested different suppressing processes that might explain the lack of effects through increased human identification which predicted higher forgiveness and increased collective narcissism which predicted lower forgiveness (Hamer et al., 2018).

The present research extends this literature by examining the consequences of ingroup identification versus ingroup glorification for forgiveness and attitudes towards reconciliation among victim groups. It also highlights the role of resentment as an important barrier to forgiveness and reconciliation among victim groups of unacknowledged trauma. Specifically, we examine how ingroup identification and ingroup glorification might predict resentment toward the outgroup for the past unacknowledged ingroup victimization.

Considering the different findings on the role of ingroup identification in the literature, we do not draw specific hypotheses on its effects. It is, however, possible that ingroup identification may predict higher resentment among victim groups of unacknowledged genocide and trauma, which in turn would predict less forgiveness and lower willingness to reconcile. This is because people who are more strongly attached to their groups (i.e., high identifiers) may be more sensitive to the ingroup's victimization (e.g., Bilali, 2012) and more likely to carry resentment due to the unacknowledged collective trauma.

We expect that ingroup glorification is likely to positively predict resentment but negatively predict attitudes toward reconciliation and forgiveness. The first rationale for this prediction is based on the literature that demonstrates that ingroup glorification drives negative intergroup outcomes such

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as retribution among victim groups (e.g., Iqbal & Bilali, 2018). The second reason for this prediction is that in contexts where the unacknowledged injustice and trauma (such as a genocide) has become an important part of that group's identity content (Vollhardt & Nair, 2018), the denial or lack of acknowledgment is likely to be particularly insulting for group members who glorify and take pride on their group (i.e., for high glorifiers), leading therefore to higher resentment among these group members.

Historical Background of the Turkish-Armenian Relations

The origins of the current conflict between Armenians and Turks date back to the last periods of the Ottoman State. Armenians were one of the ethnic groups within the Ottoman State. Particularly the last periods of the Ottoman State witnessed significant political and economic transformations (e.g., the rising nationalist movements), increasing social inequalities, harsh discrimination against Christian minorities, and Ottoman Armenians' social change demands including aspirations to create a new state (see De Waal, 2015; Özdoğan & Kılıçdağı, 2012; Saray, 2010). In addition, many factors such as the oppressive politics of the regimes of Sultan Abdul-Hamid II, the Committee of Union and Progress,[1] and the outbreak of the *World War I* influenced this turmoil in the Ottoman State, in which Armenians were increasingly depicted as a threat (see Gocek, 2014; Levy, 2005). "The Relocation and Resettlement Law,[2]" which the Ottoman State implemented in 1915 to prevent the spread of Armenian rebellions in Anatolia (see Çiçek, 2005), resulted in the Armenian genocide. Although there is no consensus about how many Armenians lost their lives, many scholars estimate that over a million Armenians have been killed intentionally between 1915 and 1922 (Akçam, 2006; Bloxham, 2005; Hovannisian, 1997).

The known Armenian diaspora began with the massacre and forcible deportations of the Armenians, especially in 1915-1918 (Tölölyan, 2000). Some of the Armenians who survived the atrocities joined the geography of historical Armenia that remained under Russian domination until the USSR's collapse in 1991. Other survivors settled in the Middle East, such as in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iran. Armenians also dispersed to many different countries such as Ethiopia, France, Argentina, Greece, Italy (Cohen, 2008; Tölölyan, 2000). Especially in the 1970s, many Armenians

[1] Ottoman Turkish: İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti. The Committee of Union and Progress, in other words, the Young Turk opposition movement, emerged against the regime of Sultan Abdul-Hamid (Abdulhamit) II (1876-1909) (see Hanioğlu, 1995).

[2] Turkish: Sevk ve İskân Kanunu.

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immigrated to North America from the Middle East (see Karasu & Uluğ, 2020, for a detailed discussion).

Although still unknown, the number of Armenians living in the U.S. is estimated to be approximately 800,000 (Tölölyan, 2000). Being mostly direct descendants of genocide survivors, the Armenian diaspora community has been very active and vocal in pushing the U.S. government to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. After over a century, in 2019, the Armenian-Turkish conflict has finally been acknowledged by the United States Chamber of Congress, and the 1915 mass killings were defined as genocide.

Overview of Studies

In two studies, we investigated the role of ingroup identification and glorification on resentment, as well as attitudes toward reconciliation and willingness to forgive among a sample of Armenians in Armenia (Study 1) and a sample of diaspora Armenians in the United States (Study 2). We also propose that resentment against the perpetrator group serves as a key pathway that explains the association between higher ingroup glorification and willingness to reconcile and forgive the perpetrator group. That is, we hypothesize that stronger ingroup glorification would predict more resentment toward Turks, which in turn would predict less forgiveness and positive attitudes toward reconciliation. We also examine how the strength of ingroup identification, beyond ingroup glorification, relates to resentment. Considering the prior findings on the role of ingroup identification in predicting outcomes related to ingroup victimization, we treat the role of ingroup identification as an exploratory research question in this study. We test these relationships in a path model where we examine the association of the independent variables (i.e., ingroup identification and glorification) with outcome variables (i.e., forgiveness and reconciliation) via the hypothesized mediator (i.e., resentment).

Study 1

Method

Participants and Procedure

A total of 350 self-identified Armenian participants completed a paper-pencil survey in Armenia in 2017. As all the participants responded to all the items, we included all of them in the analyses. Convenience sampling was used: 182 participants were students from Yerevan State

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University and Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, and 168 participants were community members in Yerevan. Two hundred twenty-nine participants were women, and 121 were men. Participants' age ranged from 17 to 80 (M = 32.39; SD = 15.37). Participants' average political orientation on a scale from 1 (*liberal*) to 7 (*conservative*) was 3.83 (SD = 1.94), indicating a wide variety of responses across the political spectrum.

Measures[3]

With the exception of the demographic items mentioned above, all items used 7-point response scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). All means and *SD*s are reported in Table 2.

Armenian identification. Ingroup identification was assessed by adapting four items from Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, and Williams (1986), Cameron (2004), and Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, and Manstead (1998): "*Being an Armenian is not important to me*" (reverse coded), "*I like being a member of the Armenian community*," "*I feel a bond with the Armenians*," and "*Being an Armenian is an important part of how I see myself*" (α = .81).

Armenian glorification. Armenian glorification was measured with three items adapted from Roccas et al. (2006): "*The Armenian nation is better than other nations in almost all respects*," "*Relative to other nations, we are a very moral nation*," and "*It is disloyal for Armenians to criticize Armenia*" (α = .81).

Resentment. As mentioned earlier, we follow recent studies that have measured resentment as a separate concept (Mészáros & Szabó, 2018; Vollhardt et al., 2014) by using the resentment items that other studies have sometimes included in forgiveness scales (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Noor et al., 2008a). Resentment toward the Turks was measured by adapting four items from Brown et al. (2008), Noor et al. (2008a) and Vollhardt et al. (2014): "*I do not feel any ill-will at all toward Turks*" (reverse item), "*I do not feel any resentment whatsoever toward Turks*" (reverse item), "*I feel a great deal of animosity toward Turks*," and "*I hold feelings of resentment toward the Turks for their misdeeds*" (α = .79).

[3] The authors have no conflict of interest to declare. The authors confirm that the manuscript adheres to ethical guidelines specified in the APA Code of Conduct as well as authors' national ethics guidelines. All materials are available at https://osf.io/cuyt3/?view_only=c5bc9a90d82e48e299ccebfa4a0a82bf

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Forgiveness. We used two items to measure forgiveness (Noor et al., 2008a; Takaku, Weiner, & Ohbuchi, 2001): "*I am prepared to forgive the Turks for their misdeeds*" and "*I am able to let the Turks off with their misdeeds*" (r = .70).

Attitudes toward reconciliation. Attitudes toward reconciliation were assessed by adapting four items from Noor et al. (2008a): "*The Armenians and the Turks need to change the relationship with each other*," "*Reconciliation requires that the Armenians and Turks interact respectfully with each other*," "*The Armenians need to talk with the Turks about issues that divide us*" and "*Reconciliation between Armenians and Turks is not necessary*" (reverse item) (α = .79).

Results

Construct Validity

We examined empirically the assumed distinction between resentment, forgiveness as well as reconciliation. Using the Calis Procedure in SAS 9.4, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to find out whether our resentment, forgiveness, and reconciliation items were represented by two latent factors (forgiveness, including resentment and forgiveness items, and reconciliation) or three latent factors (resentment, forgiveness, and reconciliation). As demonstrated in Table 1, the three-factor model yielded a better fit to the data than the two-factor model, as indicated by the fit estimates of each model, as well as the chi-square difference statistics, $\chi 2\Delta(df = 3) = 116.77$, $p < .001$.

[Insert Table 1]

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 demonstrates descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among Armenian identification, Armenian glorification, and outcomes scales. On average, participants were highly identified with their ingroup (M = 6.24) and tended to glorify their own group (M = 4.41; rated slightly above the mean of the scale). The resentment toward Turks was above the mean of the scale as well (M = 4.65). Even though Armenians, on average, seemed pro-reconciliation (M = 5.21), they were not very willing to forgive the Turks (i.e., rated slightly below the mean of the scale; M = 3.26).

Bivariate correlations indicated that Armenian identification correlated positively with Armenian glorification, resentment towards the Turks, and negatively with forgiveness. However, it was unrelated to attitudes toward reconciliation (see Table 2). Similarly, Armenian glorification correlated positively with resentment and negatively with forgiveness and attitudes toward

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reconciliation. Resentment correlated negatively with forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation. Last, forgiveness correlated positively with attitudes toward reconciliation.

[Insert Table 2]

Path Analyses

Using the Calis Procedure in SAS 9.4 with maximum likelihood estimation (ML), we conducted a path analysis to provide one simultaneous test of our hypotheses with respect to the two outcome variables (forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation), using Armenian identification and Armenian glorification as exogenous variables and resentment as an endogenous mediating variable. Armenian identification and Armenian glorification were specified to predict resentment, as well as attitudes toward reconciliation and forgiveness. Resentment was also specified to predict attitudes toward reconciliation and forgiveness (see Figure 1). We accounted for covariation between the two independent variables, as well as two outcome variables. The model fit the data perfectly well, $\chi^2(1) = .089$, $p = .765$, $RMSEA = .00$, $SRMR = .00$, $NFI = 1.00$, $CFI = 1.00$, $AIC = 28.09$.

[Insert Figure 1]

Stronger Armenian identification and Armenian glorification significantly predicted more resentment toward Turks. In turn, stronger resentment toward Turks significantly predicted less forgiveness and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation. Importantly, as expected, the indirect effects of identification and glorification on the outcome variables through resentment were significant (see Table 3). In addition, Armenian identification was also associated positively with attitudes toward reconciliation, but it was not significantly associated with forgiveness. By contrast, stronger Armenian glorification was associated with less forgiveness and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation.

[Insert Table 3]

Discussion

Study 1 offered support for our hypothesis that stronger Armenian glorification would predict less willingness to forgive the perpetrator group and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation, via higher resentment toward Turks. As predicted, the results suggested that glorifying the victim's own group is associated with resentment toward the perpetrator group, and ultimately may weaken willingness to forgive and reconcile with the perpetrator group.

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The findings of Armenian identification showed a similar pattern to Armenian glorification, but smaller size effects: stronger Armenian identification also predicted less willingness to forgive Turks and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation, via increased resentment toward Turks. Even though Armenian identification also directly predicted more positive attitudes toward reconciliation, different from ingroup glorification, it did not directly predict forgiveness. As mentioned earlier, ingroup identification is seen as a double-edged sword: both leading to more positive outcomes (Brewer & Pierce, 2005) and leading to more negative consequences (Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996). In a recent study by Hamer et al. (2018), a significant relationship between ingroup identification and intergroup forgiveness was not found. They argued that different suppressing processes through 1) increased human identification which predicted higher forgiveness, and 2) increased collective narcissism which predicted lower forgiveness might explain the lack of effects. We believe our results related to ingroup identification complement the findings in the literature by showing that ingroup identification may not predict forgiveness directly but indirectly through higher resentment among victim groups of unacknowledged genocide.

Study 1 had some limitations, though. We observed a very high level of Armenian identification in Study 1 ($M = 6.71$; $SD = .85$ on a 7-point scale; see Table 2). It is possible that this limited variability in Armenian identification may have affected relations among the key variables in Study 1. We, therefore, conducted a second study for which we recruited a sample of Armenian-American participants in the diaspora context who may be less identified with their Armenian identity, to examine associations between Armenian identification and glorification, resentment, and willingness to forgive and reconcile with the perpetrator group. The aim in Study 2 was to demonstrate that the processes found in Study 1 are not unique to a specific sample and context but replicate in other contexts (e.g., diaspora context) that differ in many respects such as level of homeland identification, hostland identification and past experiences of violence.

Study 2

The past experiences of violence in one's country of origin can still be meaningful for people, even generations after. These experiences often are carried to places where survivors and their descendants migrate (Martinovic, Jetten, Smeekes, & Verkuyten, 2018; Ünal, Uluğ & Blaylock, 2020). This is especially relevant for diaspora Armenians as they are the direct descendants of the

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Armenian genocide (Cohen, 2008; Tölölyan, 2000). The content and meaning of Armenian identity might also be different for diaspora Armenians compared to Armenians in Armenia, both because of the diaspora status, but especially because diaspora Armenians are direct descendants of the Armenian genocide. That is, Armenian identity in this context might be especially tied to the unacknowledged genocide.

Diaspora identities may play an important role in shaping feelings of resentment, attitudes toward reconciliation, and forgiveness. When victim group members identify with their diaspora identity, they may be less interested in and more distant to their homeland identity. This may be the case when the content of diaspora identity is associated with multiculturalism and diversity and therefore allows diaspora members to identify with their diaspora identity. Identification with the hostland identity, thus, may help victim group members feel less resentment toward perpetrator groups and become more willing to forgive and reconcile with them. We, therefore, hypothesize that identification with the hostland identity (here, American identity) would predict more positive attitudes toward intergroup outcomes such as forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation, through the pathway of less resentment.

Overall, in Study 2, we first aimed to replicate the findings of Study 1 with members of the Armenian diaspora in the United States. Second, we also aimed to extend the findings by examining whether and how the diaspora identity (i.e., American identification) plays a role in shaping intergroup related attitudes such as forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation.

Method

Participants and Procedure

In 2018, a total of 119 self-identified Armenian-American participants living in the United States participated in the survey online. When examined closely, 16% of the responses (19 participants) were missing on some of the items. To examine if missing data influenced our results, we conducted Little's Missing-Completely-At-Random (MCAR) test (e.g., Little & Rubin, 1989). We found that missing data in our sample were missing completely at random, $\chi^2(82) = 67.04$, $p = .884$. Before the data analyses, the expectation-maximization (E.M.) algorithm was employed to substitute the missing values.

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Snowball sampling was used in this study. Survey links were sent via email lists for several Armenian interest groups and churches. Survey links were also handed out at a monthly Armenian men's fraternity group meeting in Worcester, Massachusetts. Seventy-one participants were men, and 48 were women. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 87 (M = 48.97; SD = 20.48). Participants' average political orientation on a scale from 1 (*liberal*) to 7 (*conservative*) was 3.66 (SD = 1.86).

Measures

All items were measured on 7-point response scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). All means and *SD*s are reported in Table 2. Participants completed the same measures as in Study 1: Armenian identification (α = .76), Armenian glorification (α = .60), resentment (α = .86), forgiveness (r = .58), and attitudes toward reconciliation (α = .85).

American identification. To measure the diaspora identification (i.e., American identification), we used the same four items which we used to measure ingroup identification (Brown et al., 1986; Cameron, 2004; Doosje et al., 1998): "*Being an American is not important to me*" (reverse coded), "*I like being a member of the American community*," "*I feel a bond with the Americans*," and "*Being an American is an important part of how I see myself*" (α = .91).

Results

Construct Validity

As in Study 1, a confirmatory factor analysis was calculated to examine the assumed distinctions between resentment, forgiveness and reconciliation. Using the Calis Procedure in SAS 9.4, we conducted a CFA testing a model with two latent factors (forgiveness, including resentment and forgiveness items, and reconciliation) and a model with three latent factors (resentment, forgiveness and reconciliation). As demonstrated in Table 1, the three-factor model yielded a better fit to the data than the two-factor model and was statistically different from the two-factor model, as indicated by the chi-square difference statistics, $\chi 2\Delta(df = 3) = 24.34$, $p < .001$.

Preliminary Analyses

On average, Armenian-Americans highly identified with their ingroup, Armenians (M = 6.32), and diaspora group, Americans (M = 5.74). They tended to glorify their ingroup, Armenians, less than the scale mean (M = 3.72). Similar to Armenians in Armenia, Armenian-Americans' resentment toward Turks was above the mean of the scale (M = 4.98). Even though Armenian-Americans, on

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average, seemed pro-reconciliation (M = 5.06), they were not willing to forgive the Turks (i.e., rated slightly below the mean of the scale; M = 2.84).

Bivariate correlations indicated that identification with the homeland (i.e., Armenian identity) correlated positively with American identification; however, it was unrelated to Armenian glorification, resentment, forgiveness, and attitudes toward reconciliation (see Table 2). Similarly, American identification was not correlated with Armenian glorification, resentment, forgiveness; however, it correlated positively with attitudes toward reconciliation. Armenian glorification, on the other hand, correlated positively with resentment and negatively with forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation. Similar to Study 1, resentment correlated negatively with forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation, and forgiveness correlated positively with attitudes toward reconciliation.

Path Analyses

As in Study 1, we conducted a path analysis to provide one simultaneous test of our hypotheses with respect to the two outcome variables (forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation), using homeland identification (i.e., Armenian identification), diaspora identification (i.e., American identification) and ingroup glorification (i.e., Armenian glorification) as exogenous variables, that were specified to predict resentment as a mediating variable, as well as forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation as outcome variables (see Figure 2). Direct paths from the three exogenous identification measures to outcomes were also specified, as well as the covariation between the three independent variables and the two outcomes. The model fit the data well, $\chi^2(6)$ = 7.80, p = .253, $RMSEA$ = .05, $SRMR$ = .03, NFI = .93, CFI = .98, AIC = 37.80.

[Insert Figure 2]

In this model, only ingroup glorification, but not ingroup identification (i.e., Armenian identification) or diaspora identification (i.e., American identification), was significantly associated with more resentment toward Turks. Similar to Study 1, stronger resentment toward Turks predicted less forgiveness and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation.

Two of the expected indirect effects were significant: The indirect path from ingroup glorification to forgiveness via resentment was significant, and the indirect path from ingroup glorification to attitudes toward reconciliation via resentment was marginally significant (see Table 4). There were also additional direct effects. Similar to Study 1, Armenian glorification was

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significantly associated with less forgiveness and less willingness to reconcile. American identification was significantly associated with more positive attitudes toward reconciliation, but not with forgiveness. The paths from Armenian identification to the two outcomes were not significant.

[Insert Table 4]

Discussion

As in Study 1, Study 2 provided support for our hypothesis that stronger Armenian glorification would predict less willingness to forgive Turks and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation, through the pathway of more resentment toward Turks. Unlike Study 1, ingroup identification (i.e., Armenian identification) was unrelated to resentment, forgiveness, and attitudes toward reconciliation. The results related to hostland identity (i.e., American identity) partially supported our hypothesis: Even though American identification was unrelated to resentment, stronger American identification predicted more positive attitudes toward reconciliation but not forgiveness.

General discussion

The present research examined the role of resentment due to unacknowledged genocide on inhibiting forgiveness and positive attitudes toward reconciliation in two samples in the homeland context (i.e., Armenians in Armenia) and among a diaspora group in the hostland context (i.e., Armenians in the United States). While some research has considered resentment (or lack thereof) as part of forgiveness, we argued, and our data empirically revealed, that resentment can be studied apart from, and as an antecedent of forgiveness. In both studies, higher resentment significantly predicted less forgiveness and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation. Our research contributes to previous literature that has identified barriers to intergroup forgiveness including ingroup identity and negative emotions (e.g., anger, fear) (Van Tongeren et al., 2014), competitive victimhood (Noor et al., 2008; Shnabel et al., 2013; Uluğ et al., 2020), as well as experience of conflict (Cehajic et al., 2008; Noor et al., 2008a; Voci et al., 2015). We add resentment to the list of such barriers that drive members of victim groups that have experienced violence and atrocities to oppose reconciliation and reduce their willingness to forgive the perpetrator group (see Mészáros & Szabó, 2018; Vollhardt et al., 2014).

Although we used resentment as an antecedent of forgiveness and attitudes toward reconciliation, our studies are correlational, and thereby we cannot draw causal claims. It is likely that the relationship between resentment and forgiveness is more complex and likely cyclical. For

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instance, some scholars see forgiveness as the cure of resentment (e.g., McCullough, 2008). This is because resentment is sometimes viewed as a form of psychic bondage, from which forgiveness can provide a psychic liberation (e.g., Tylim, 2005). From this perspective, forgiveness can start a cycle of healing that could help the person to free oneself from negative feelings such as resentment. Future longitudinal studies could shed light on processes through which resentment and forgiveness might influence each other over time.

Furthermore, resentment is viewed as a negative feeling and a barrier to improving intergroup relations. We note that in the context of denial and unacknowledged genocide, resentment is justified among victim groups, and it might protect victims from superficial reconciliation (Nadler, 2012) and continued injustice. So, it is fair to argue that resentment is *not* the problem; it is the situation that has led to resentment that produces these undesirable outcomes. Although we did not study justice in the present research, it is possible that resentment might also motivate sustained demands for justice. This research has implications for policy and practice focusing on reconciliation, suggesting that any efforts or interventions for reconciliation and forgiveness should consider addressing the long-lasting feelings of resentment through proper acknowledgment by the perpetrator.

The present research investigated the relationship between ingroup identification and glorification, resentment, forgiveness, and attitudes toward reconciliation from the perspective of a victim group (i.e., Armenians) in relation to a perpetrator group (i.e., Turks). Across both studies, ingroup Armenian glorification, but not Armenian identification, predicted more resentment toward Turks, less forgiveness, and less willingness to reconcile. Moreover, Armenian glorification predicted less willingness to forgive and reconcile with the perpetrator group both directly and indirectly via resentment. Given that ingroup glorification is a form of attachment to the group, but a more defensive one such as collective narcissism (see Cichocka, 2016; de Zavala et al., 2009), our results complement previous literature on the role of ingroup glorification (Bilali, 2013; Blank & Schmidt, 2003; Federico et al., 2005; Leidner et al., 2010; Rovenpor et al., 2016) in negative intergroup outcomes, and extend this literature by showing how ingroup glorification may predict more resentment, less willingness to forgive and less positive attitudes toward reconciliation among victim groups of unacknowledged genocide. As the denial or lack of acknowledgment is likely to be particularly insulting for high glorifiers, ingroup glorification, therefore, leads to higher resentment

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among these group members especially in contexts where the unacknowledged injustice and trauma has become an important part of victim group's identity content (Vollhardt & Nair, 2018).

Armenian ingroup identification did not consistently predict intergroup outcomes across the two studies. In Study 1, stronger Armenian identification predicted more resentment and more positive attitudes toward reconciliation with the perpetrator group (both small size effects), but it was not significantly associated with forgiveness. In Study 2, Armenian identification did not predict any of the intergroup outcomes. The different and null effects of ingroup identification in these studies complement and add to the previous literature that has shown similar inconsistent effects of ingroup identification (Brewer & Pierce, 2005; Cehajic et al., 2008; Gagnon & Bourhis, 1996; Greenaway et al., 2011; Hamer et al., 2017; Hanke et al., 2013; Hewstone et al., 2006; Noor et al., 2008a; Noor et al., 2010; Leonard et al., 2015; Philpot & Hornsey, 2011; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). This is in line with literature underscoring the importance of the meaning attached to group identity in driving the effects of ingroup identification (Bilali, Iqbal, & Çelik, 2018): High identifiers might endorse different meanings and ideologies about being Armenian, which, in turn, would lead to different effects. An additional explanation for such different effects is that ingroup identification might have simultaneously opposing effects: a) more forgiveness through increasing human identification and b) less forgiveness through increasing collective narcissism (e.g., Hamer et al., 2018). In addition, our studies focus on a context of unacknowledged past trauma and genocide for over a century. Therefore, it is likely that Armenians may demand acknowledgment and justice before they become willing to forgive the perpetrator group.

We also aimed to understand the role of diaspora identity (i.e., American identity) in intergroup relations in Study 2. The findings demonstrated that stronger American identification is significantly associated with more positive attitudes toward reconciliation, but not with resentment or forgiveness. These results suggest that the diaspora identity may help victim groups reconcile with perpetrator groups. The content of American identity may be associated with multiculturalism and diversity (Citrin & Sears, 2014), which in turn may have led Armenian Americans to have more positive attitudes toward reconciliation. Diaspora identities might also be construed as more inclusive, which would also foster forgiveness (Cehajic et al., 2008; Greenaway et al., 2011; but see also Noor et al., 2010). This might be especially the case with regard to immigrant groups' construals of

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American identity, which is not based on a single ethnic identity. Thereby, for these groups, American identity can even function as a superordinate identity (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Limitations and Future Directions

Our studies have a few limitations. First, we focused both on attitudes toward reconciliation and forgiveness even though the relationship between forgiveness (as an intrapersonal process) and reconciliation (as an interpersonal process) is sometimes conceptualized as sequential, with forgiveness constituting a step toward achieving reconciliation (Borris & Diehl, 1998; see also McGlynn et al., 2004). In our study, we did not test forgiveness as a predictor of attitudes toward reconciliation (see, e.g., Borris & Diehl, 1998; McGlynn et al., 2004), as we believe that positive attitudes toward reconciliation may occur without forgiveness. According to Fincham (2010, p. 351), "[t]here is no contradiction involved in forgiving a wrongdoer and also ending one's relationship with the person." Importantly, forgiveness is not required for reconciliation because people may reconcile for purely instrumental reasons (Faldetta, 2019). While examining the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation was not a goal of this study, future studies should further investigate the distinction and the relationship between these two important variables.

Second, considering that the samples in both studies were not representative, we can not generalize our findings to the whole Armenian population. For instance, we do not know to what extent our results are generalizable to other Armenian diasporas in France and Lebanon, even to Armenian Americans who live in California as different diaspora groups may have more hawkish perspectives related to the conflict (e.g., Ünal et al., 2020). Future studies should also collect data from other Armenian diasporas as well as other diasporas to be able to assess the role of diaspora identity in intergroup relations.

Third, the current study lacked a qualitative analysis of the different understandings of different modes of identities (see Bilali et al., 2018). Future studies should qualitatively investigate the content of those identities and how this content drives intergroup outcomes. For example, what does American and Armenian identification mean for an Armenian-American? Similarly, we do not know what values, norms, and ideologies Armenian identification hold for Armenians living in the homeland. By using a qualitative approach, future studies should examine a detailed account of victim

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groups' understandings of homeland vs. hostland identity, and how they might contribute to attitudes toward conflict- and peace-related outcomes.

Another limitation of the current studies is that we measured forgiveness with only two items, which can be problematic for estimation of latent measurement models (Kline, 2011). We did not have estimation problems in the present analyses as the CFA was estimated with other latent factors containing more than two items each. Some scholars have recently argued that even single-item measures may suffice when a construct is very narrowly defined (e.g., Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007; see also Drolet & Morrison, 2001). As we have used a narrow definition of forgiveness, conceptualizing it as a cognitive variable by distinguishing it from the affective resentment variable, we reduced the number of items that are typically used to measure forgiveness. However, it is important that future studies should develop longer reliable scales to measure forgiveness.

Last, we need to develop a better measure of resentment to understand the role of resentment in intergroup relations, especially for victim groups of unacknowledged past trauma and genocide. Even though previous studies have used the same resentment items we used in our study (e.g., Mészáros & Szabó, 2018; Vollhardt et al., 2014), future studies may focus on developing a fine-grained measure of resentment and pay closer attention to how resentment should be conceptualized differently from forgiveness (Mullet et al., 2003).

Conclusion

This research investigates the perspectives of a victim group in relation to a perpetrator group (Turks) among Armenians in the homeland and Armenian-Americans in the hostland. Our findings highlight the role of resentment as an obstacle to reconciliation and forgiveness among victim groups both in homeland and hostland contexts. Our results highlight how a hostland identity, together with a homeland and glorified identity, predict intergroup outcomes such as willingness to forgive the perpetrator group and reconcile with their members. It is our hope that our studies may pave the way for positive intergroup relations between victim and perpetrator groups in contexts of unacknowledged past trauma and genocide.

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Table 1

Goodness of Fit Indicators of Models for Resentment, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation Items in Studies 1 and 2.

Models	χ^2	*df*	χ^2 *diff*	*RMSEA*	*SRMR*	*CFI*	*Model AIC*
Study 1							
Two-Factor Model	196.17***	32	116.77***	.12	.07	.89	242.17
Three-Factor Model	79.40***	29		.07	.06	.97	131.39
Study 2							
Two-Factor Model	88.28***	32	24.34***	.12	.07	.90	134.28
Three-Factor Model	63.94***	29		.10	.06	.94	115.94

Notes. $N = 350$ in Study 1; $N = 119$ in Study 2; ***$p < .001$.

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Table 2

Variables	M (SD) Study 1	M (SD) Study 2	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Armenian identification	6.24 (.85)	6.32 (.84)	-	-	.31***	.24***	-.18**	-.07
2. American identification	-	5.76 (1.43)	.30**	-	-	-	-	-
3. Armenian glorification	4.41 (1.58)	3.73 (1.67)	.10	-.04	-	.48***	-.38***	-.39***
4. Resentment	4.69 (1.32)	5.01 (1.24)	.00	-.09	.20*	-	-.59***	-.47***
5. Forgiveness	3.28 (1.45)	3.12 (1.32)	.03	-.06	-.31**	-.56***	-	.47***
6. Attitudes toward reconciliation	5.21 (1.82)	5.03 (1.28)	.05	.33***	-.26**	-.28**	.27**	-

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables in Studies 1 and 2.

Notes. Correlations for Study 1 are presented above the diagonal, and correlations for Study 2 are presented below the diagonal; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

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Table 3

Standardized indirect effects (Study 1).

	Indirect effect	*SE*	*t*	*p*	95% CI lower	95% CI upper
Armenian identification						
Forgiveness	-.055	.026	-2.08	.037	-.11	-.05
Attitudes toward reconciliation	-.039	.019	-2.02	.042	-.08	-.02
Armenian glorification						
Forgiveness	-.241	.031	-7.62	< .001	-.30	-.18
Attitudes toward reconciliation	-.173	.029	-5.98	< .001	-.23	-.12

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Table 4

	Indirect effect	*SE*	*t*	*p*	95% CI lower	95% CI upper
Armenian identification						
Forgiveness	-.004	.050	-.097	.922	-.10	.09
Reconciliation	-.003	.020	-.097	.922	-.04	.04
American identification						
Forgiveness	.043	.050	.862	.388	-.06	.14
Reconciliation	.017	.021	.830	.406	-.02	.06
Armenian glorification						

Standardized indirect effects (Study 2).

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Forgiveness	-.103	.048	-2.14	.032	-.20	-.01
Reconciliation	-.041	.024	-1.66	.095	-.09	.00

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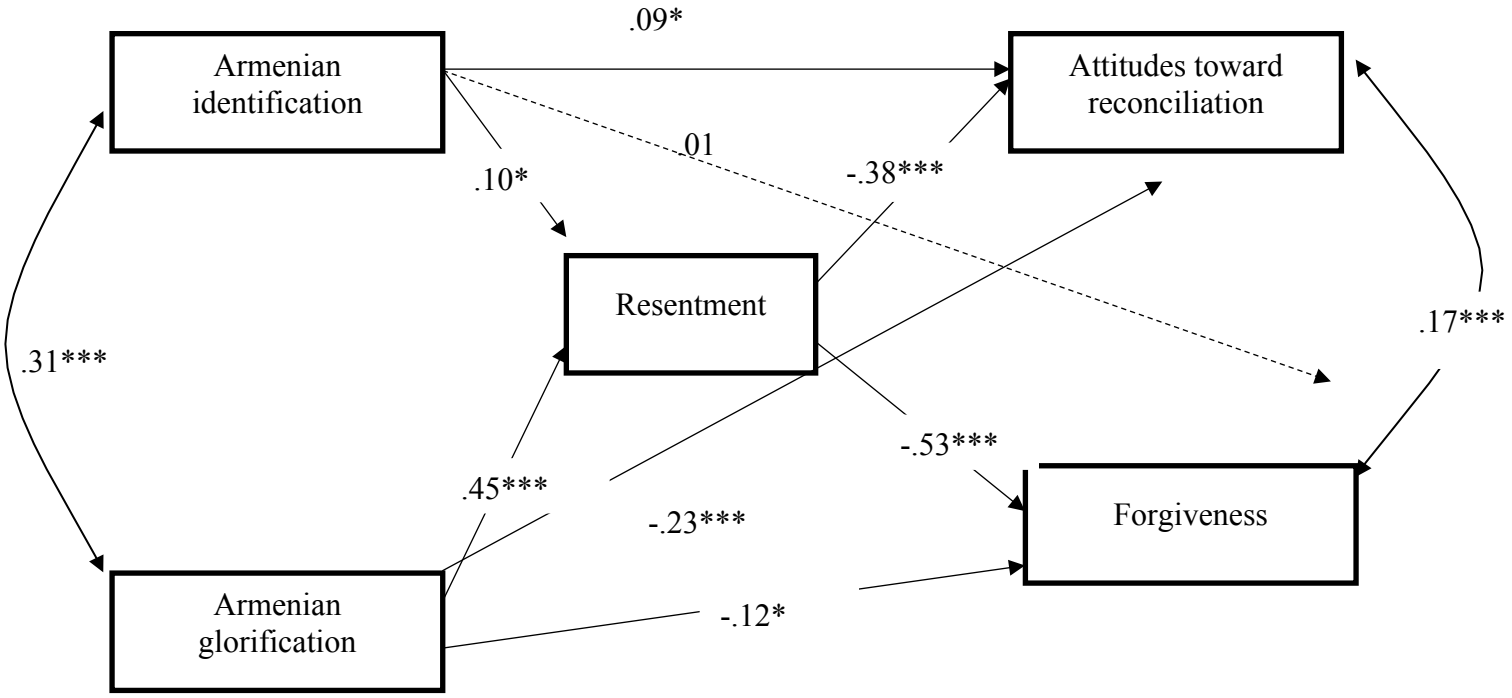

Figure 1. Path model for Study 1

Note. Dashed lines represent non-significant paths. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

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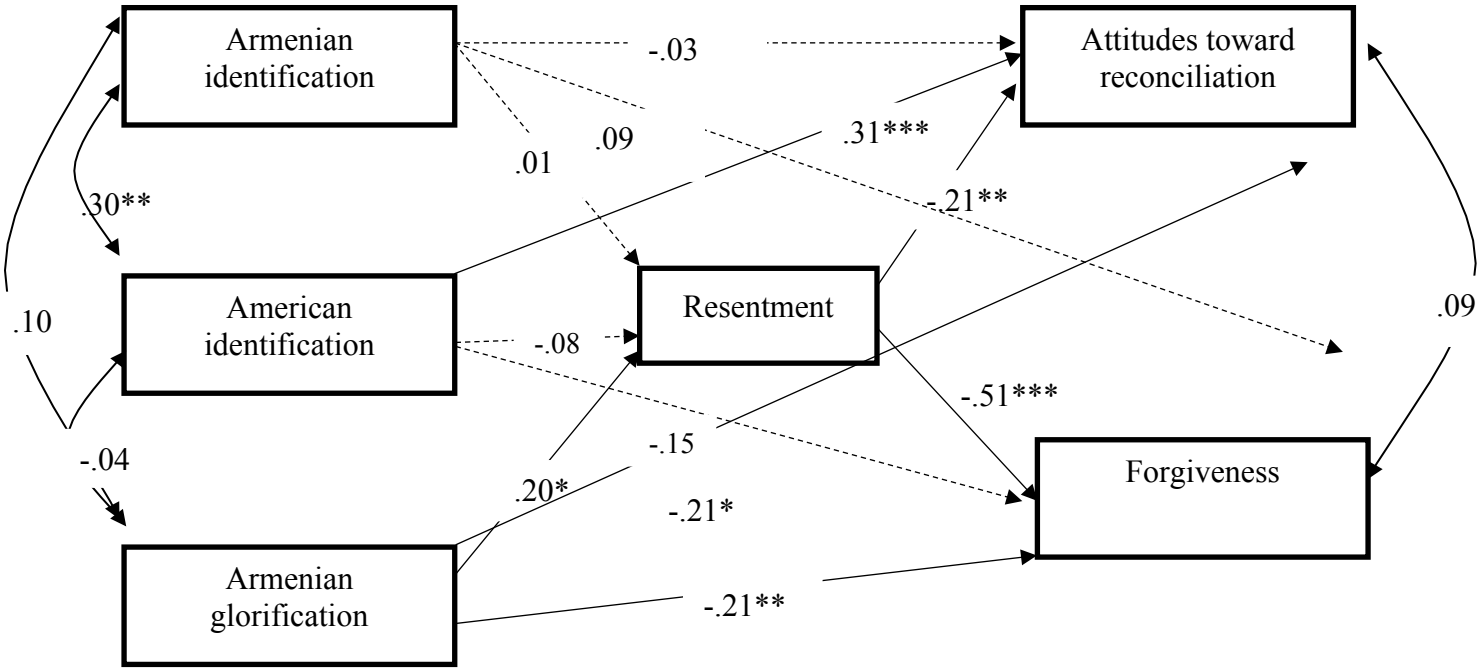

Figure 2. Path model for Study 2

Note. Dashed lines represent non-significant paths. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

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