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# Overcoming the Barrier of Narrative Adherence in Conflicts Through Awareness of the Psychological Bias of Naïve Realism

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## Abstract

One significant socio-psychological barrier for peaceful resolution of conflicts is each party's adherence to its own collective narrative. We hypothesized that raising awareness to the psychological bias of naïve realism and its identification in oneself would provide a path to overcoming this barrier, thus increasing openness to the adversary's narrative. We conducted three experimental studies in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Studies 1 and 2, conducted among Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Israelis, respectively, revealed that participants with hawkish political ideology reported greater openness to the adversary's narrative when they were made aware of naïve realism bias. Study 3 revealed that hawkish participants at the baseline adhered to the ingroup narrative and resisted the adversary's narrative more than dovish participants. They were also more able to identify the bias in themselves upon learning about it. This identification may explain why the manipulation led to bias correction only among hawkish participants.

## Keywords

naïve realism, psychological bias, socio-psychological barriers, collective narrative, intractable conflict

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## Introduction

Socio-psychological barriers to conflict resolution play a powerful role in fueling intergroup conflicts and obstructing peace-making processes. These barriers consist of an integrated operation of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes, combined with a pre-existing repertoire of rigid conflict-supporting beliefs, worldviews, and emotions (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011). They are responsible for a psychological closure that leads to cognitive freezing, thus preventing any consideration of alternative information that could potentially facilitate acceptance of ideas that promote peacemaking processes. The socio-psychological barriers to conflict resolution and the elements behind them have been studied extensively (e.g., Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003; Halperin & Bar-Tal, 2011; Porat, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2013; Ross & Ward, 1995). But identifying the barriers is only the first step. The more critical step is developing an understanding of how they might be overcome, especially in the context of violent, long-lasting intractable conflicts, which are generally perceived as insolvable. Indeed, this is the challenge of the present research.

One significant socio-psychological barrier for the peaceful resolution of conflicts is each party's adherence to its own

collective narrative. A collective narrative accounts of a “community's collective experiences, embodied in its belief system and represents the collective's symbolically constructed shared identity” (Bruner, 1990, p. 76). In the context of intractable conflicts, the involved parties construct conflict-supporting narratives that consist of two major sub-narratives pertaining to the continuum of time from past through present and to the future: (a) the narrative of the past, which refers to the collective memories of the conflict and (b) the narrative of the present and future, which refers to the ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013). At the climax of intractable conflicts, these conflict-supporting narratives achieve a dominant status among society members. The narratives tend to tell a simplified one-dimensional story about the conflict, the adversary, and the ingroup (Adwan, Bar-Tal, & Wexler,

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in press; Devine-Wright, 2003). Consequently, rival groups in a conflict, motivated by contradictory goals and interests, adopt negating collective narratives of the same events (Kelman, 1999; Salomon, 2004; Tint, 2010). Each side tends to see itself as a victim and as righteous, while viewing the other as a perpetrator with no legitimate claims, fostering a sense that acknowledging the other side's narrative undermines one's own narrative (Biton & Salomon, 2006). Most importantly, adherence to the ingroup's own collective narrative in conflicts inherently involves selective, biased, and distortive information processing of conflict-related issues and events, leading each side to attend mostly or only to information that justifies and supports its own narrative and to reject evidence that validates the adversary's narrative (Bar-Tal, Oren, & Nets-Zehngut, 2014).

We suggest that adherence to the ingroup's own collective narrative may be driven by what Ross and Ward (1996) define as *Naïve Realism*: The conviction that one's own views are objective and unbiased, whereas the other's views are biased by ideology, self-interest, and irrationality. This conviction prevents serious consideration of the other's supposedly biased views and leads to the formation and maintenance of a one-sided perspective. In turn, this perspective may deepen misunderstandings, disagreements, and antagonism between individuals and groups.

The purpose of the present research is to empirically examine a method for overcoming the psychological barrier of adherence to one's own collective narrative—to open people to information pertaining to the adversary's narrative. To address this goal, we offer an innovative intervention involving the exposure of people to the nature and implications of naïve realism. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict serves as an apt context for examining this method, as it is widely acknowledged as a prototypical prolonged intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998, 2013). To this end, we will first briefly introduce the concept of socio-psychological barriers to conflict resolution, focusing on the adherence to one's own collective narrative as a significant barrier. We will then discuss the psychological bias of naïve realism, proposing that awareness to this bias and its identification in oneself may serve as a possible way to overcome the barrier of narrative adherence. Finally, we will present the studies undertaken as a part of the present research.

### **Socio-Psychological Barriers to Conflict Resolution**

The literature on intractable conflicts has long identified socio-psychological factors that emerge in light of the challenges presented by the presence of an intractable conflict as eventual barriers to the conflict's resolution (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1998; Ross & Stillinger, 1991). Throughout the years, a number of approaches have been proposed to describe the nature of these socio-psychological barriers. One approach has focused on cognitive and motivational processes that serve as pivotal barriers in times of peacemaking, leading

to biased information processing, such as optimistic overconfidence, reactive devaluation, and naïve realism (Maoz, Ward, Katz, & Ross, 2002; Mnookin & Ross, 1995; Ross & Ward, 1995). Another approach is based on a study of specific content (i.e., societal beliefs) and addresses beliefs such as delegitimization of the adversary, a sense of victimhood, a strong sense of patriotism, or mistrust (Bar-Tal, 1998, 2007; Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003; Kelman, 1987, 2005; Kramer & Carnevale, 2001). A third notable line of research has focused on the emotional factors that underlie many conflicts, such as fear and hatred, and their unique contribution to hindering support for peaceful resolutions (Bar-Tal, 2001; Cheung-Blunden & Blunden, 2008; Halperin, 2008, 2011; Lake & Rothchild, 1998). Recently, Bar-Tal and Halperin (2011) proposed a general integrative theoretical framework for socio-psychological barriers to conflict resolution that integrates cognitive, motivational, and emotional elements with worldviews and conflict-supporting societal beliefs.

The above-noted barriers provide a prism through which society members perceive and interpret the conflict. The present research focuses on the barrier of adherence blindly to one's own collective narrative and resistance to the adversary's narrative leading to a selective, biased, and distorted processing of information about conflict-related issues. We suggest that this barrier specifically plays a central role in amplifying and reinforcing information consistent with the ingroup's beliefs, while inhibiting and discouraging any processing of alternative ideas and information, and especially those presenting the adversary's perspective. Consequently, this barrier obstructs the penetration of new ideas, which are a necessary condition for the success of peacemaking processes.

Thus, bridging the gaps between the adversaries' contradictory collective narratives is a key challenge in the peace-building process, as it may eventually pave the way to the ultimate goal of constructing a new integrative narrative that both groups can adopt (Auerbach, 2009; Korostelina, 2012; Minow, 1999; Salomon, 2004). This long process requires acknowledgment of events and facts that were omitted from the ingroup's narrative, illuminating the events from different perspectives, providing a balanced interpretation of various events and processes of the past, and even assuming responsibility for past collective misdeeds (Auerbach, 2009; Bar-Tal, 2013). However, the first step requires recognition that at least part of own narrative is biased and selective. This recognition may lead to the willingness to open up to the other's narrative. But how can this critical goal be achieved? In the present research, we aim to examine a possible intervention designed to increase the openness of people involved in intractable conflict to the collective narrative of the adversary group. This intervention is based on an attempt to raise people's awareness to the psychological bias of naïve realism and to allow them to identify this bias in themselves.

## *Awareness to the Bias of Naïve Realism and Its Identification in One's Self*

We suggest that the tendency of the adversaries in a conflict to adhere to their own collective narratives, while rejecting one another's narratives, is amplified by the universal cognitive-psychological bias of naïve realism. This bias denotes a human tendency to believe that (a) she sees stimuli and events as they are in objective reality and holds social attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and priorities that stem from a relatively dispassionate, unbiased, and essentially "unmediated" apprehension of the information or evidence at hand; (b) other rational social perceivers will generally share her reactions, behaviors, and opinions—provided that they have had access to the same information and that they too have processed that information in a reasonably thoughtful and open-minded fashion; and (c) the failure of a given individual or group in question to share her views arises not from rationally held information and beliefs, but rather from other reasons (Ross & Ward, 1996). Under this human tendency of naïve realism, there exist three possible reasons that could explain others' disagreement with the naïve realist's beliefs: (a) they may have been exposed to different information than she was; (b) they may be lazy, irrational, or otherwise unable or unwilling to derive reasonable conclusions from objective evidence in a normative fashion; and (c) they may be biased by ideology, self-interest, or some other distorting personal influence (Ross & Ward, 1996).

Given the nature of naïve realism, we believe that it plays a powerful role in maintaining and reinforcing the ingroup's collective narratives. It does so by negating the possibility that alternative interpretations of the events can be accurate or that the same historical event can be viewed and remembered in more than one way. More importantly, if naïve realism plays such a pivotal role in preventing any serious consideration of the outgroup's collective memory, its alteration may help to overcome that obstacle.

Accordingly, in the present research, we propose an indirect intervention designed to overcome the psychological barrier of biased collective narrative without directly referring to the outgroup. Our intervention is based on evidence from previous research, which showed that raising people's awareness to the influence of unconscious psychological biases on their thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors led them to be less affected by these specific biases in their judgments and decision-making (see, for example, Pronin & Kugler, 2007; Rand, 2003; Schul, 1993).<sup>1</sup> Hence, we hypothesized that raising awareness to naïve realism and addressing its implications and disadvantages for human relations would make people less biased by naïve realism and more open to the adversary's narrative regarding the conflict. We also hypothesized that the relations between naïve realism awareness and openness to the adversary's narrative would be moderated by ideology. Namely, we hypothesized that ideologically hawkish participants would be more affected by our proposed indirect intervention than

dovish participants,<sup>2</sup> who may be more open to the other group's narrative to begin with.

The reason we hypothesized that "hawks" would be more affected by a naïve-realism-awareness intervention is that they are generally more closed to the outgroup's narrative than are "doves." Drawing on theories on bias correction (e.g., Wegener & Petty, 1997; Wilson & Brekke, 1994), we know that adequate bias correction requires both identification of the bias and efforts to correct it. Bias identification and correction often result from individuals' realization about the nature of their naïve theories on how potentially biasing factors influence their views (Wegener, Petty, & Dunn, 1998). In other words, when people become aware of a bias and identify it in themselves, they attempt to overcome the bias by correcting it. Therefore, because hawkish people are generally more closed than dovish people to the adversary's narrative, we hypothesized that they would be more likely to identify in themselves the bias of naïve realism when considering an intergroup conflict, and thus more likely to correct their bias, thus leading to greater openness to the adversary's narrative.

## **The Present Research**

To test these hypotheses, we conducted three studies in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In Study 1, we experimentally manipulated awareness to naïve realism and measured this awareness's causal effect on self-reported openness to the adversary's narrative with regard to major events in the conflict among Jewish Israelis. Study 2 replicated Study 1 among Palestinian Israelis sample. In Study 3, we once again experimentally manipulated awareness to naïve realism among Jewish Israelis, but this time we also assessed the extent to which participants identified the bias in themselves as a possible explanation for the effects examined in Studies 1 and 2.

## **Study 1**

The goal of Study 1 was to examine how awareness to naïve realism affects openness to the adversary's narrative in the context of intractable intergroup conflicts. To examine this effect, we conducted an experimental study among Jewish Israelis in which this awareness was manipulated. We then examined participants' level of openness to the adversary's narrative using a self-report measure. We hypothesized that induced awareness to naïve realism would be associated with higher levels of openness to the adversary's narrative regarding major events in the history of the conflict and that this effect would be moderated by political ideology.

## **Method**

**Sample.** Participants were 61 Jewish Israeli undergraduate and graduate students (of which 2 were excluded for reasons

stated below) from different disciplines: business administration, public policy, labor studies, and law (33% male, 67% female,  $M_{age} = 30.92$ ,  $SD = 8.54$ ), who participated in the study voluntarily. In terms of political orientation, about 43% of all participants defined themselves as moderate or extreme rightists, about 20% as centrists, and about 36% as moderate or extreme leftists (1% unspecified).

**Procedure.** The study was conducted during class time. To avoid any suspicion of demand characteristics, participants were informed by the researcher that they are participating in two separate studies combined together for logistic reasons. The participants filled out a questionnaire that included two parts. The introduction to the first part informed the participants that they are participating in a study on reading comprehension. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of the following two texts: (a) a text describing the psychological bias of naïve realism with reference to interpersonal conflict (i.e., couple;  $n = 31$ ), (b) a neutral control text, unrelated to cognitive biases ( $n = 30$ ). The second part of the questionnaire included an introduction that notified the participants that the second study examines attitudes regarding educational and social issues. In fact, this introduction was followed by measures of the proposed dependent variable, openness to the adversary's narrative. Finally, participants were debriefed about the nature and the goals of the study.

**Naïve realism manipulation.** Participants in the naïve realism condition read a short text describing the psychological bias of naïve realism. After describing the nature of the bias, the text emphasized the negative implications of this cognitive bias on human life, as it promotes a unilateral point of view, mental fixation, and missed opportunities for change. The texts also stated that the bias is a universal human phenomenon, despite its absence from the awareness of many. Below is an example excerpt from the text:

Naïve Realism is the human tendency to form one's own worldview regarding various subjects, perceived by an individual as the only truth. Accordingly the individual believes that other people's reluctance to share his or her views arises from ignorance, irrationality, an inability to draw reasonable conclusions from objective evidence, ideological biases, or self-interest. The psychological bias of naïve realism causes people to see the world in a unilateral and simplistic manner. As a result of this bias, people tend to ignore or reject any information that does not fit their pre-existing worldview, which is perceived by them as the only truth. Consequently, they fail to see things from several points of view and may miss opportunities for change and progress.

The initial general description of the psychological bias of naïve realism was followed by a paragraph demonstrating how it functions in the context of conflicts: "Research has shown that the bias of naïve realism intensifies conflicts and misunderstandings between individuals and groups, because once disagreements arise, each party adheres to its own point

of view and sees reality solely through its own eyes." In this context, we provided an example of interpersonal universal conflict (i.e., between married couples), to avoid association with the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Participants in the control condition were not exposed to the text about the nature of naïve realism, and instead read a neutral text about Fiedler's Contingency Model of leadership.

## Measures

**Manipulation check.** To assess participants' understanding of the manipulation text they read, we used a four-item true/false scale addressing the bias in the experimental group (e.g., "one of the problems with naïve realism is its hindrance of the ability to see things from several different points of view"). No participants were omitted as a result of not understanding the manipulation text.

**Moderating variable.** *Political Orientation*, as a moderating variable, was measured with a five-level scale, with levels labeled as follows: 1 = *extreme right*, 2 = *right*, 3 = *center*, 4 = *left*, 5 = *extreme left*.

**Dependent variable.** *Openness to the adversary's narrative* was assessed using a three-item scale composed of items referring to three historical conflict-related events. Participants were asked to rate their feelings or thoughts toward the adversary's attitudes regarding these events. The scale was designed for the current study on the basis of *The Collective Narratives Questionnaire* first introduced by Sagy and her colleagues (Sagy, Adwan, & Kaplan, 2002). The scale appeared three times, each time specifically referring to each of the following three historical events in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: The 1948 War,<sup>3</sup> the Camp David Peace Summit of 2000,<sup>4</sup> and the 2008–2009 Gaza War/Operation Cast Lead.<sup>5</sup> As a cover, participants were told that the democratic schools in Israel would like to establish a school museum that will present the history of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict through its central events. For this reason, participants were told that the schools are collecting information on some events from both Israeli and Palestinian sources. This statement was preceded by a short description of the schools' findings regarding the event at hand. The text regarding the 1948 War, for example, was as follows:

With regard to the War of Independence/1948 War, the schools' examination revealed that many Israelis view the war as an event that was necessary for their survival and independence and one that was forced on the State of Israel. On the other hand, many Palestinians view the 1948 War as their Nakba (Catastrophe), which seriously harmed the Palestinian nation and prevented them from realizing their rights on their land. How do you feel or what do you think about these attitudes?

Participants then responded to the three items regarding the historical event at hand, on a scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*fully agree*). The items were as



**Table 1.** Bivariate Correlations Between the Study's Variables (Study 1).

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Openness to the adversary's narrative	3.14	1.01	—				
2. Political orientation	2.92	1.12	.71**	—			
3. Experimental condition	—	—	-.06	-.23	—		
4. Age	30.92	8.54	.25	.26*	-.21	—	
5. Sex	—	—	.14	.16	-.12	.07	—

\* $p < .05$  level (two-tailed). \*\* $p < .01$  level (two-tailed).

follows: (a) “I can understand the point of view of the Palestinians who hold this belief;” (b) “I think the Palestinian attitudes regarding this issue are legitimate;” (c) “I think the Palestinian attitudes regarding this issue should not be presented in schools, even if they are true.” The scale yielded an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .93$ .

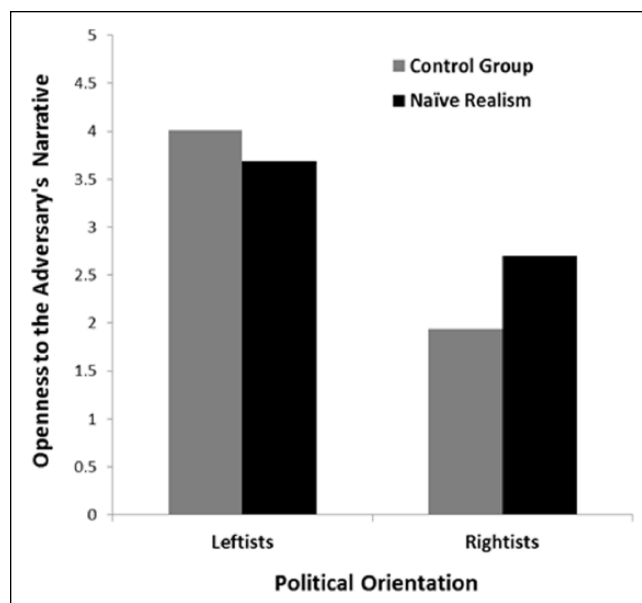
Finally, we also measured socio-demographic information, including age and sex.

**Ruling out demand characteristics.** Toward the end of the study, participants were asked to freely describe what they believed the purpose of the study was, allowing us to investigate the potential influence of demand characteristics on our findings (see, for example, Rubin, Paolini, & Crisp, 2010). Almost all participants (97%) indicated purposes that were unrelated to our research hypothesis, whereas two participants indicated some level of awareness of the study's true aim, leading us to exclude them from our analysis.

## Results and Discussion

We first present descriptive statistics on the study's main variables. The mean score of openness to the adversary's narrative was 3.14 ( $SD = 1.01$ ), which is located slightly above the middle of the scale. Next, we examined the correlations among all variables in the study as well as the socio-demographic variables (see Table 1). We found that openness to the adversary's narrative was highly correlated with political orientation ( $r = .71, p < .01$ ). This finding indicates that rightist participants were less open to the adversary's narrative than leftist participants. The high correlation between openness to the adversary's narrative and political orientation emphasizes the challenge we face when trying to increase the openness of rightist people to the adversary's narrative.

To examine whether the manipulation affected openness to the adversary's narrative as a function of political orientation, we used Hayes's (2012) PROCESS command: Model 1,  $R^2 = .59, F(3, 54) = 26.08, p < .0001$ . Within this model, and taking into account the interaction, there was no significant main effect for the naïve realism manipulation ( $b = .21, SE = 0.18, t = 1.19, p = .23$ ).



**Figure 1.** Estimated values of openness to the adversary's narrative as a function of political orientation and experimental condition among Jewish Israelis (Study 1).

More importantly, the two-way interaction was significant ( $b = -.47, SE = 0.16, t = -2.95, p = .004$ , 95% confidence interval [CI] =  $[-0.80, -0.15]$ ), indicating that ideology moderated the manipulation's effect on openness. An analysis of the conditional effects revealed that the manipulation had a significant effect on participants with right-wing orientation (those whose political orientation was 1 standard deviation below the mean score;  $b = .75, SE = 0.25, t = 2.94, p = .004$ ). As expected, the manipulation did not significantly affect openness to the adversary's narrative among left-wing participants (those whose political orientation was 1 standard deviation above the mean score;  $b = -.32, SE = 0.25, t = -1.24, p = .21$ ; see Figure 1).

In addition, because the sample was skewed in terms of sex, we also examined whether the independent variables interacted with sex in their effect on openness to the adversary's narrative. Using Hayes's (2012) PROCESS command—Model 3:  $R^2 = .62, F(7, 50) = 12.14, p < .0001$ —we found no significant three-way interaction for the manipulation, political ideology, and sex on openness ( $b = .04, SE = 0.38, t = .11, p = .91$ ).

As hypothesized, the results of Study 1 show that awareness to naïve realism increases openness to the adversary's narrative among participants with right-wing orientation, but not among leftist participants. It can be assumed that when rightist people, who are generally characterized by less openness to the adversary's narrative than leftist people, become aware of naïve realism, they reconsider their attitudes toward the adversary's narrative regarding conflict events and therefore demonstrate more openness than rightist people who are not aware of this cognitive bias. On the other hand, leftist

participants, who are more open to the other group's narrative because of their political orientation, are not affected by the intervention and thus no difference was found between the two leftist groups.

One limitation of this study is the focus on one party in the conflict, and the results may therefore be difficult to generalize to different parties in different power positions. As adherence to one's own collective narrative characterizes all parties involved in intractable conflicts, we wanted to see whether the effect found among Jewish Israelis could also be found among Palestinians, who are perceived as a much weaker party. Nevertheless to bridge between positional differences of the parties in conflict, also the weaker side needs to be open to the narrative held by the counterpart.

## Study 2

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict involves two parties with asymmetric powers, where the State of Israel is perceived as the powerful sovereign, so the goal of Study 2 was to ensure that the manipulation's effect can also be replicated among Palestinians—the so-called weaker party. Adding another group also allowed more generalization of the findings. For this purpose, we again employed the experimental design used in Study 1, this time administering it among Palestinian Israelis. We expected to find a similar pattern to the one found in Study 1, such that Palestinian Israelis participants in the naïve realism condition would be more open to the adversary's narrative than those in the control condition, and that this effect would be moderated by their political ideology.

## Method

**Sample.** Participants were 79 Palestinian Israelis undergraduate students of education (91% female, 9% male,  $M_{\text{age}} = 26.34$ ,  $SD = 5.35$ ). As a convenience sample drawn from a college of education, most of the participants were female, in accordance with the general sex distribution in such colleges. All students voluntarily participated in the study during class time.

**Procedure.** All procedures and instructions were the same as in Study 1. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups: (a) naïve realism with reference to interpersonal conflict ( $n = 40$ ) and (b) a control group ( $n = 39$ ). No participants were omitted due to either a failure to understand the manipulation text or because they guessed the study's goals.

**Measures.** All measures were translated into Arabic and evaluated using back translation by two additional independent experts. As a result of political and cultural differences between the two groups, the Jews and the Palestinians, as well as the asymmetry in the power relations between them, we adapted the moderating variable and the dependent variable to the Palestinian population as follows.

**Moderating variable.** As the measure of political ideology used in Study 1 is not suitable for Palestinians in Israel, who are not a dominant group in the Israeli political system and are therefore considered on the left regardless of the content of their ideology, we used an alternative moderating variable: *Adherence to the Ethos of Conflict*. Ethos of conflict is a measure of ideology related specifically to the context of intractable conflict. Because it refers to the content of ideological beliefs rather than self-placement on the political spectrum, it was better suited to tap ideological differences among our Palestinian participants. We measured the ethos using a 10-item version of the 16-item scale developed by Bar-Tal and his colleagues (Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Zafran, 2012). The scale contains items that measure each of the eight themes of the ethos that have been suggested by Bar-Tal (2000, 2007, 2013): patriotism, justness of the ingroup's goals, security, positive collective self-image, ingroup victimization, delegitimization of the opponent, unity, and peace. All items were ranked on scales ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*fully agree*), and the scale yielded an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .73$ .

**Dependent variables.** As a result of the specific situation of Palestinian citizens in Israel in terms of power relations, we used a two-item scale to assess *openness to the adversary's narrative*: (a) “I can understand the point of view of the Jewish Israelis who hold this belief,” (b) “I can accept at least part of the details presented in the Jewish Israelis' attitude regarding this issue.” As in Study 1, each item appeared three times, each time referring to one of three historical conflict-related events. The scale yielded an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .83$ .

## Results and Discussion

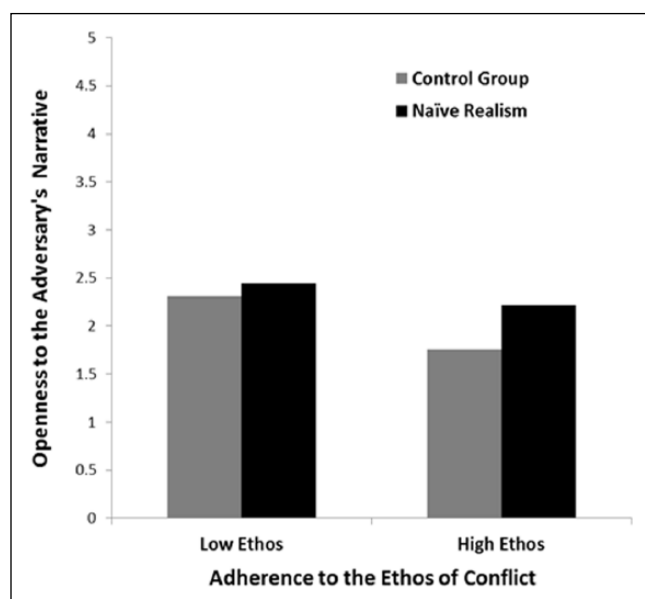
Descriptive statistics on the main study's variables revealed that the mean score of openness to the adversary's narrative was 2.18 ( $SD = 0.72$ ), which is located slightly below the middle of the scale. Next, we examined the correlations among all variables in the study as well as the socio-demographic variables (see Table 2). We found that openness to the adversary's narrative was moderately correlated with ethos of conflict ( $r = -.25$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This finding indicates that participants with high adherence to the ethos tended to be less open to the adversary's narrative than low-ethos participants.

We then conducted an analysis of the interactive effect of the experimental condition and adherence to the ethos of conflict on openness to the adversary's narrative, using Hayes's (2012) PROCESS command: Model 1,  $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F(3, 75) = 3.35$ ,  $p = .02$ . Within this model, and taking into account the interaction, the analysis produced a marginally significant main effect for the experimental condition ( $b = .28$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ ,  $t = 1.86$ ,  $p = .06$ ), indicating that in general, participants in the naïve realism condition reported

**Table 2.** Bivariate Correlations Between the Study's Variables (Study 2).

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Openness to the adversary's narrative	2.18	0.72	—				
2. Adherence to the ethos of conflict	4.41	0.72	-.25*	—			
3. Experimental condition	—	—	.20	-.02	—		
4. Age	26.34	5.35	.01	.05	.15	—	
5. Sex	—	—	.20	-.04	.04	-.34**	—

\* $p < .05$  level (two-tailed). \*\* $p < .01$  level (two-tailed).

**Figure 2.** Estimated values of openness to the adversary's narrative as a function of adherence to the ethos of conflict and experimental condition among Palestinian Israelis (Study 2).

greater openness to the adversary's narrative than those in the control condition.

Although there was no significant interaction ( $b = .22$ ,  $SE = 0.21$ ,  $t = 1.04$ ,  $p = .29$ , 95% CI =  $[-0.20, 0.66]$ ), an analysis of the conditional effects revealed the same trend as in Study 1: The manipulation had a significant effect on participants with high adherence to the ethos of conflict (those whose adherence to the ethos was 1 standard deviation above the mean score;  $b = .45$ ,  $SE = 0.22$ ,  $t = 2.05$ ,  $p = .04$ ). As expected, the manipulation did not significantly affect openness to the adversary's narrative among low-ethos participants (those whose adherence to the ethos was 1 standard deviation below the mean score;  $b = .12$ ,  $SE = 0.22$ ,  $t = .55$ ,  $p = .58$ ; see Figure 2).

The results of Study 2 are consistent with those from Study 1, providing further support for our hypothesis by showing that awareness to naïve realism leads to greater

openness to the adversary's narrative among people with high adherence to the ethos of conflict. Furthermore, the results show that awareness to naïve realism has a positive effect on the openness to the adversary's narrative not only among the Jewish Israeli powerful majority side in the conflict but also among members of the other side, the Palestinians, with different culture and power position. Thus, we were able to generalize the findings of the first study.

As noted above, to rule out the possibility of demand characteristics in the participants' responses in these studies, we used two main strategies. First, the study's two parts appeared separate in both form and content, with a separate set of instructions preceding each, and participants were also told by the experimenter that they would be participating in two studies on different subjects. Second, toward the end of the study, participants were asked, in an open question, what they believed the purpose of the study to be. The fact that only a very small percentage of the participants in Study 1, and none in Study 2, were aware of the hypothesis suggests that the goals of the studies were not obvious. Taken together, this evidence suggests that the findings we have identified represent a genuine psychological phenomenon rather than artifacts caused by the participants' expectations.

The results of Studies 1 and 2 support our hypothesis, showing that awareness to naïve realism can increase openness to the adversary's narrative among hawkish Jewish Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli participants, but not among dovish participants. Nonetheless, our findings in these two studies did not offer an explanation for these effects. In trying to explain why they occur, one possibility is that because hawkish people tend to be more closed to the adversary's narrative from the outset, when they are presented with information about naïve realism they may be more likely to identify it in themselves. This identification may explain why they are also better able to correct this bias upon learning about it. Similarly, it may be that because dovish participants are at their base more open to the adversary's narrative, they see themselves as such, and may thus be less likely to believe that they are plagued by naïve realism when learning about this bias. Therefore, they are not affected by the new information and do not change their evaluations. To examine this possibility, we conducted an additional experimental study.

### Study 3

The first goal of Study 3 was to examine whether one's baseline openness to the adversary's narrative would moderate the effect of awareness to naïve realism on openness to the adversary's narrative and to new alternative information about the conflict. The second goal was to examine whether participants who at the baseline tend to be closed to the adversary's narrative would indeed identify in themselves the bias of naïve realism more than those who at the baseline tend toward openness to the adversary's narrative. Such an



examination may indicate the process underlying the intervention's observed effects.

We hypothesized that participants whose baseline openness to the adversary's narrative is low would be more influenced by the manipulation and therefore correct their bias more than those whose baseline openness is high. We also hypothesized that the former participants would be better able to identify the bias in themselves.

## Method

**Sample.** Ninety-four Jewish Israeli participants (49% male, 51% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 42.38$ ,  $SD = 15.95$ ) were recruited from the general population using an online survey platform that offers monetary compensation in return for participation in surveys. In terms of political orientation, about 53% of these participants defined themselves as between being moderately to extremely rightist, about 32% as centrist, and about 15% as moderately to extremely leftist. Four participants were excluded from our analyses for different reasons: 2 due to a failure to follow instructions and 2 as a result of guessing the study's purpose.

**Procedure.** Participants were contacted twice in separate times (3 days apart) and asked to complete several allegedly separate studies regarding their attitudes and opinions on general social and political issues. At T1, we measured participants' pre-intervention (baseline) openness to the adversary's narrative. The pre-intervention measure of openness to the adversary's narrative examined how firmly entrenched participants were in their initial views. The T2 questionnaire followed a similar design to the one used in Studies 1 and 2, but with several important modifications. Participants were informed that they are participating in two separate studies—a reading comprehension study and a study examining attitudes regarding educational and social issues. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: (a) naïve realism with reference to intergroup conflict ( $n = 42$ ) and (b) a control group ( $n = 52$ ). The modified naïve realism text was designed to examine whether the manipulation could have an influence even when referencing intergroup conflict (but without directly mentioning the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, to avoid demand characteristics). By referring to intergroup conflict in the manipulation, we were able to ensure that participants' identification of the bias was related to the context of intergroup conflict, which is the core issue of the present study. Following the manipulation check, we measured the extent to which participants in the experimental group, who read about naïve realism, identify this bias in themselves. Next, participants were directed to a distraction task that was presented as part of the reading comprehension study. They subsequently began what was presented as the second study, and responded to the proposed dependent variables: openness to the adversary's narrative and openness to new alternative information about the conflict. We added a

second dependent variable to assess directly how consciously the participants are willing to receive new information about the adversary's view, even if it may contradict their own conflict-supporting beliefs. This variable provided an additional and more general aspect of openness to the adversary's narrative, without referring to concrete conflict-related content.

**Naïve realism manipulation.** Participants in the naïve realism condition read a short text describing the psychological bias of naïve realism as in Studies 1 and 2. This time, the text referred to an intergroup conflict. That is, after describing the nature of the bias, its negative implications, its universality, and its functions in the context of conflicts, instead of providing an example of interpersonal conflict between married couples, we provided an example of intergroup conflict (i.e., between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland). Below is an excerpt from the text:

A study conducted in Northern Ireland among Protestant and Catholic students, during the bloody conflict in their country between Protestants and Catholics, found that 81% of the Protestants and 84% of the Catholics students tended to see this conflict from a subjective point of view, solely through their own side's eyes. For example, they tended to perceive their violent actions against the other side as reasonable, justified, and defensive, while perceiving the actions of the other side as unreasonable, unjustified, and a product of cruelty and psychopathy. Furthermore, when they were asked to identify the source of the differences between their own positions and those of the other side, each group described its position in the conflict as objective, rational, and real, whereas the adversary's position was seen as non-objective, irrational, and distorted. In addition, each side tended to believe that any rational and clever person who would hear the details of this conflict would prefer and justify its position over the other side's.

## Measures

**Moderating variable.** *A Firmly Entrenched Narrative Closure* (FENCE) served as the pre-intervention measure of participants' openness to the adversary's narrative, and was selected as the moderating variable. FENCE was proposed as an individual-difference construct characterizing motivations to protect the historical group narrative and block hostile counter-narratives. The developed 12-item scale was validated and tested with the Israeli-Jewish sample (Klar & Baram, in press). In the present study we used a 5-item version of this scale. The items included in the scale are as follows: (a) "The history of the conflict we grew up with is eventually the most accurate one"; (b) "Many things that we learned about the conflict have been shown to be wrong" (reverse-coded); (c) "A firm, unified attitude towards the history of the conflict will strengthen the nation"; (d) "I get annoyed with people who tend to blame our side for what has happened between the Arabs and us"; (e) "People who doubt we are right strengthen the other side." The items were anchored at 1 (completely disagree) and 7 (fully agree). High

scores on this scale indicate high adherence to the ingroup narrative and low openness to the adversary's narrative. The scale yielded an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .62$ .

**Dependent variables.** To strengthen our measurement of openness, we used two different following variables: openness to the adversary's narrative and openness to new alternative information about the conflict.

*Openness to the adversary's narrative* was assessed using a four-item scale. The scale appeared three times, each time referring to one of three historical conflict-related events, as in Studies 1 and 2. The scale consisted of two items from Studies 1 and 2 and two new items that refer to the ingroup's narrative, thus expanding the scope and the meaning of the measured concept. The items were as follows: (a) "I think the Palestinian attitudes regarding this issue are legitimate"; (b) "I think the Jewish Israeli view regarding this issue does not reflect the whole reality"; (c) "I can accept at least part of the details presented in the Palestinians' view on this issue"; (d) "It could be that at least part of the details presented in the Jewish Israeli view do not reflect the truth regarding this issue." As in Studies 1 and 2, the scale ranged from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*fully agree*). It yielded an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .88$ .

*Openness to new alternative information about the conflict* was measured using a three-item version of the four-item scale developed by Halperin and Bar-Tal (2011). The items were as follows: (a) "To what extent would you be willing to watch movies that present the Palestinian view regarding the conflict"; (b) "To what extent would you be willing to personally meet with a Palestinian and hear his/her view about the conflict"; (c) "To what extent would you be willing to receive information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from foreign sources that portray it in an alternative light to the one you already know." The items were anchored at 1 (*not at all*) and 6 (*to a very large extent*). The scale yielded an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .82$ .

*Bias identification* was measured using a four-item scale developed for the purpose of the current study to assess among the participants who were in the intervention condition only, their level of awareness of using naïve realism in their judgments. Participants were asked: "following the text you read, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following sentences?" The items were as follows: (a) "I can identify in me parts of the phenomenon described in the text"; (b) "The text I read is relevant for understanding the way I think"; (c) "The text made me better understand my behavior in different situations"; (d) "Here and there I find myself acting in accordance with the phenomenon described in the text." The items were anchored at 1 (*completely disagree*) and 5 (*fully agree*). The scale yielded an internal reliability of  $\alpha = .82$ .

**Control variable.** As control variable, we measured political orientation using a five-level scale as in Study 1, with levels labeled as follows: 1 = *extreme right*, 2 = *right*, 3 = *center*, 4 = *left*, 5 = *extreme left*.

**Table 3.** Bivariate Correlations Between the Study's Variables (Study 3).

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Openness to the adversary's narrative	2.39	0.70	—						
2. Openness to alternative information	2.87	1.21	.45**	—					
3. FENCE	4.79	1.10	-.59**	-.27**	—				
4. Political orientation	2.58	0.89	.46**	.43**	-.39**	—			
5. Experimental condition	—	—	.13	.22*	-.03	-.08	—		
6. Age	42.38	15.95	.09	.03	-.03	.28**	—		
7. Sex	—	—	.08	-.03	.02	-.12	.10	—	

Note. FENCE = Firmly Entrenched Narrative Closure.

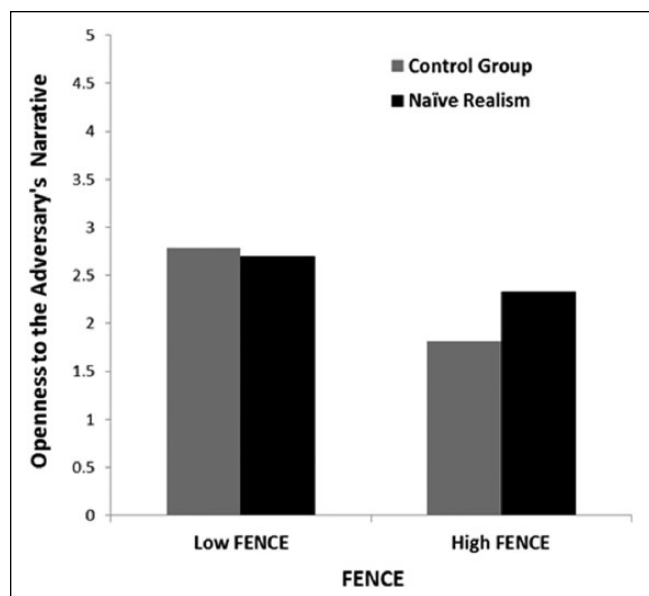
\* $p < .05$  level (two-tailed). \*\* $p < .01$  level (two-tailed).

## Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics on the study's main variables revealed that the mean score of openness to the adversary's narrative was 2.39 ( $SD = 0.70$ ), and the mean score of openness to new alternative information about the conflict was 2.87 ( $SD = 1.21$ ), which are both located almost at the middle of each scale. Next, we examined the correlations among all variables in the study as well as the socio-demographic variables (see Table 3). We found that openness to the adversary's narrative was highly correlated with FENCE ( $r = -.59$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and moderately correlated with political orientation ( $r = .46$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, openness to alternative information about the conflict was moderately correlated with FENCE ( $r = -.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and political orientation ( $r = .43$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These findings indicate that participants with high FENCE and a rightist political orientation were generally less open to the adversary's narrative and to alternative information than low-FENCE and leftist participants. It is noteworthy that FENCE was also significantly correlated with political orientation ( $r = -.39$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that participants with a rightist political orientation tended to report high levels of FENCE.

**Examining the interactive effects of the manipulation and FENCE on openness.** We then tested the hypothesized condition  $\times$  FENCE interaction on our first dependent variable, using Hayes's (2012) PROCESS command: Model 1,  $R^2 = .47$ ,  $F(4, 85) = 19.60$ ,  $p < .0001$ . Within this model, and taking into account the interaction, the analysis revealed a marginally significant main effect for the experimental condition on levels of openness to the adversary's narrative, controlling for political orientation ( $b = .20$ ,  $SE = 0.11$ ,  $t = 1.83$ ,  $p = .06$ ). This main effect indicates that in general, participants in the naïve realism condition reported greater openness to the adversary's narrative than those in the control condition.

We also found a significant interaction of condition and FENCE on levels of openness to the adversary's narrative,



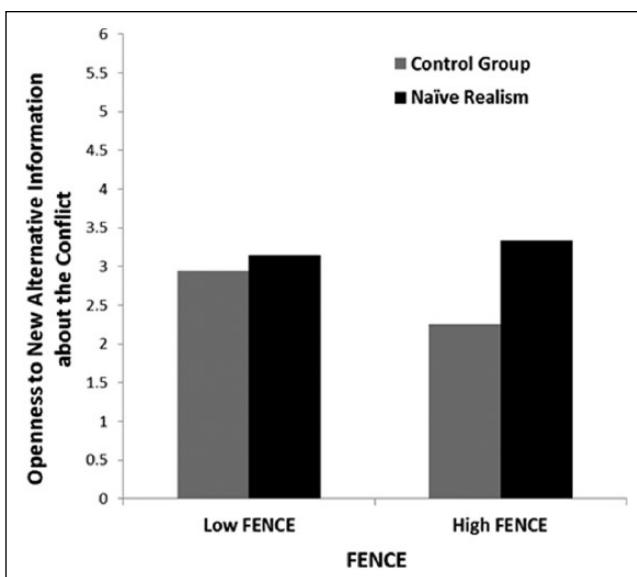
**Figure 3.** Estimated values of openness to the adversary's narrative as a function of FENCE and experimental condition among Jewish Israelis (Study 3).

Note. FENCE = Firmly Entrenched Narrative Closure.

controlling for political orientation ( $b = .27$ ,  $SE = 0.09$ ,  $t = 2.71$ ,  $p = .008$ , 95% CI = [0.07, 0.47]). This interaction indicates that participants' initial openness to the adversary's narrative, as measured using the FENCE scale, moderated the effects of the manipulation. Specifically, an analysis of the conditional effects revealed that the manipulation had a significant effect on participants with high FENCE (examined at 1 standard deviation above the mean score;  $b = .50$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ ,  $t = 3.22$ ,  $p = .001$ ). As expected, the manipulation did not significantly affect openness to the adversary's narrative among low-FENCE participants (those whose FENCE was 1 standard deviation below the mean score;  $b = -.09$ ,  $SE = 0.15$ ,  $t = -.61$ ,  $p = .54$ ; see Figure 3).

Likewise, we tested the hypothesized condition  $\times$  FENCE interaction on the second dependent variable, using Hayes's (2012) PROCESS command: Model 1,  $R^2 = .30$ ,  $F(4, 85) = 9.13$ ,  $p < .0001$ . Within this model, and taking into account the interaction, the analysis revealed a significant main effect for the experimental condition on levels of openness to new alternative information about the conflict, controlling for political orientation ( $b = .63$ ,  $SE = 0.22$ ,  $t = 2.84$ ,  $p = .005$ ). This main effect indicates that in general, participants in the naïve realism condition reported greater openness to alternative information than those in the control condition.

We also found a significant interaction of condition and FENCE on levels of openness to new alternative information about the conflict, while controlling for political orientation ( $b = .39$ ,  $SE = 0.20$ ,  $t = 1.99$ ,  $p = .04$ , 95% CI = [0.0009, 0.79]), indicating that the initial openness to the adversary's narrative moderated the effects of the manipulation. Specifically, an



**Figure 4.** Estimated values of openness to new alternative information about the conflict as a function of FENCE and experimental condition among Jewish Israelis (Study 3).

Note. FENCE = Firmly Entrenched Narrative Closure.

analysis of the conditional effects revealed that the manipulation had a significant effect on participants with high FENCE ( $b = 1.07$ ,  $SE = 0.31$ ,  $t = 3.43$ ,  $p = .0009$ ). As expected, the manipulation did not significantly affect openness to alternative information among low-FENCE participants ( $b = .19$ ,  $SE = 0.31$ ,  $t = .61$ ,  $p = .54$ ; see Figure 4).

**Examining bias identification.** We subsequently conducted an analysis to examine the differences in bias identification between high- versus low-FENCE participants. This analysis was conducted only among participants in the experimental group who were exposed to the naïve realism text, and not among participants in the control group, who were not exposed to information on the bias and therefore could not report if they identified it in themselves.

The analysis revealed a moderate correlation between FENCE and bias identification ( $r = .28$ ,  $p = .07$ ), indicating that participants higher in FENCE (those with low openness to the adversary's narrative) identified in themselves the bias of naïve realism more than those low in FENCE.

To compare the means of high- and low-FENCE participants in bias identification, we created a dichotomous FENCE variable (based on the median FENCE score). When conducting an independent-samples  $t$  test, results revealed that high-FENCE participants scored significantly higher ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) on the bias-identification scale than low-FENCE participants ( $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ),  $t(37) = -2.38$ ,  $p = .02$ . In other words, participants who tend to be closed to the adversary's narrative noticed in themselves the phenomenon of naïve realism more than those who are initially more open to the adversary's narrative.

Following the findings of Studies 1 and 2, the findings of Study 3 show that participants who tend to be, as a baseline, closed to the adversary's narrative are more influenced by a manipulation of awareness to the bias of naïve realism, and therefore correct their bias more than those who are as a baseline more open to the adversary's narrative. Following our manipulation, these participants reported greater openness to the adversary's narrative and to new alternative information about the conflict than those in the control group. The findings also show that participants who tend as a baseline to be closed to the adversary's narrative identified in themselves the phenomenon of naïve realism more than those who tended to be open to the adversary's narrative. This identification of the bias could serve to explain the mechanism behind their bias correction.

The bias-identification account might also provide an explanation for the relative weakness of the ethos interaction in Study 2 compared with the ideology interaction in Study 1, and for the stronger main effect of condition in Study 2 than in Study 1. Because even the low-ethos participants in Study 2, who were supposed to be more open, were reporting openness below the midpoint of the scale. Therefore, it could be that a larger proportion of participants could still see the described bias as potentially applying to them. As a result, the naïve realism awareness condition more generally led to greater openness across levels of the ethos of conflict.

## General Discussion

In every intractable conflict, the involved parties construct collective narratives that support and justify the ingroup's beliefs regarding historical and current events in the conflict, while denying outgroup's narrative, which is at odds with their own. Each party's adherence to its own narrative fuels the conflict by further entrenching the differences at the root of the conflict and creating a new battleground on the issue of historical facts (Bar-Tal et al., 2014). Thus, ingroup's narrative adherence constitutes a serious socio-psychological barrier to peaceful conflict resolution. The purpose of the present research was to examine a novel way to overcome this barrier.

Social scientists attempt to identify ways to overcome socio-psychological barriers that hinder peacemaking process. Researchers have proposed different approaches throughout the years, such as creating encounters between members of the rival societies and facilitating exposure to new convincing alternative information about the conflict, peacemaking, and the rival (Lynch & Galtung, 2010; Maoz, 2011; Pettigrew, 1998). We decided to try a different approach—exposing people to the underlying process that guides their selective, biased, and distortive information processing, with the assumption that when individuals become aware of their limitations they may try to correct them and exhibit more rational behaviors. The socio-psychological literature provides evidence that this method can be effective (e.g., Blair, 2001; Wegener & Petty, 1997; Wilson & Brekke, 1994).

Specifically, we proposed an intervention of raising people's awareness to the universal psychological bias of naïve realism. This bias creates in people the tendency to believe that their own views are objective and unbiased, whereas the other's views are biased by ideology, self-interest, and irrationality (Ross & Ward, 1996). Accordingly, individuals are often closed to others' points of views and tend to negate the possibility that a certain event may be viewed or understood in more than one way. This non-conscious bias also plays a powerful role in the intergroup level, in the context of intractable conflicts, by maintaining each party's adherence to its own collective narrative. We hypothesized that raising awareness to the psychological bias of naïve realism would lead people to identify the bias in themselves and consequently cause them to correct it by being more open to the adversary's narrative regarding the conflict.

In general, our three experimental studies supported our hypothesis and provided evidence that raising awareness to the psychological bias of naïve realism can lead to greater openness to the adversary's narrative regarding conflict-related events and to new alternative information about the conflict. More specifically, Studies 1 and 2 revealed that both Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Israelis who become aware of naïve realism reported greater openness to their adversary's narrative. Moreover, our expectation that people with a hawkish political ideology would be more affected by such awareness than dovish individuals was supported in both studies. Study 3 examined a possible explanation for the effects found in Studies 1 and 2. According to this explanation, dovish individuals view themselves as being already open to the adversary's narrative and thus, they were less able to identify the specific bias in themselves—consequently not correcting for such a bias in their attitudes regarding the adversary. On the other hand, hawkish individuals being generally resistant to the adversary were moved more by awareness to naïve realism. Indeed, we found that they identify the bias in themselves more than others, and those who identify the bias in themselves are more likely to correct it.

## Implications of the Current Findings

The findings of the present research have some important implications. First, they show that it is possible to increase people's openness to their adversary's narrative, even in the context of intractable conflicts, by raising participants' awareness to their cognitive limitations, and in our case by simply describing the psychological bias of naïve realism and allowing the participants to identify the bias in themselves. More importantly, this intervention achieved openness to adversary's narrative without making any direct reference to the rival or the specific conflict, thereby circumventing any possible boomerang effect that could have been brought about by automatic resistance to conflict-related manipulations. Also we found that the intervention is effective in two different



societies and thus the results are generalizable. As this intervention increased openness to the narrative of a long-time adversary, we can assume that it could also increase openness to other parties in other intergroup and interpersonal conflicts and confrontations. Broadening the individuals' view of the other and of the conflict through such interventions may facilitate the conflict's resolution.

Second, the findings illustrate the importance of raising people's awareness to their psychological biases. In doing so, the findings support previous line of research that showed that raising people's awareness to the influence of non-conscious psychological biases on their thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors leads them to correct them and be less affected by these specific biases in their judgments and decision-making (Pronin & Kugler, 2007; Rand, 2003; Schul, 1993). Moreover, this research provides an important contribution to the theory underlying the phenomenon of bias correction (e.g., Wegener & Petty, 1997; Wilson & Brekke, 1994). It identifies the mechanism that makes the bias awareness effective. This approach may also encourage future research with the goal to detect mechanisms involved in different biases, as well as attempts to identify additional psychological biases that are relevant to intergroup conflicts (see, for example, Ross & Ward, 1995; Thompson, Nadler, & Lount, 2006), in order to develop interventions that may help to overcome them.

Third, the findings indicate that raising awareness to naïve realism affects openness to the adversary's narrative among adults, who are usually politically literate and hold crystallized views regarding the conflict and the adversary. In the future, it may be interesting to examine this intervention's effect on children and adolescents, whose political identity is not yet crystallized. A similar effect, if found, may serve as a basis for long-term educational programs among both sides of an intractable conflict. We presume that children and adolescents' exposure and awareness to this human psychological bias during their formative years may positively influence the way they perceive the adversary and process information about it and about the conflict. They may formulate their perceptions toward their adversary in a way that considers its alternative perspective.

### Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations of the current research should be noted. First, the samples used in the three studies were relatively small, and in Studies 1 and 2 they consisted of students. Therefore, the samples may differ somewhat from the general Israeli population in various socio-political aspects. In addition, the first two samples, and particularly the Palestinian sample, were not balanced in terms of sex and included more females than males. Taken together, these issues raise the question of whether we would achieve the same effects among more representative samples. There are several indications that the answer to this question is positive. First, the sample in Study 3 consisted of general

population participants and provided a similar effect to that found among the student samples. Second, we did not find significant interaction between sex and the research's variables, as both males and females displayed similar trends. Nonetheless, future studies should endeavor to replicate and validate these findings in more diverse and representative research samples.

Finally, in all of our studies, we tested the intervention's short-term effects. We suggest that future research examine the endurance of the manipulation's effect on openness to the adversary's narrative by studying whether it would persist over time, even in the face of new conflict-related events and developments.

### Conclusion

Bridging the gaps between contradictory collective narratives of adversaries in conflicts is a key challenge in conflict resolution processes. The first necessary step toward bridging this gap is each side's openness to its adversary's narrative (Adwan & Bar-On, 2004; Auerbach, 2010; Bar-Tal, 2013)—a difficult task to achieve during an intractable conflict. The current research presents a unique and novel way to increase openness to the adversary's narrative by raising awareness to the psychological bias of naïve realism and allowing people to determine whether the bias exists in them. Thus, this research may constitute an important step toward bridging the gaps between the adversaries' contradictory collective narratives in conflicts. By doing so, it may also open a door to the further understanding of ways to overcome barriers in the process of peacefully resolving intergroup conflicts.

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### Supplemental Material

The online supplemental material is available at <http://pspb.sagepub.com/supplemental>.

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## Notes

1. Although contradictory findings also exist (Krueger & Clement, 1994; Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002; Wetzell, Wilson, & Kort, 1981).
2. Israeli society is polarized along ideological line between hawks, who oppose making concession for peace and object to Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, and doves, who favor relinquishing control over these territories for peace (Arian, 1995).
3. The 1948 Arab–Israeli War between the State of Israel and a military coalition of Arab states and Palestinian Arab forces. Known in Arabic as al-Nakba (the Catastrophe) and in Hebrew as the Milkhemet Ha'Atzmaut (War of Independence).
4. Israeli–Palestinian negotiations that took place at Camp David on July 2000, between former United States President Bill Clinton, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and former Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. Ultimately, the negotiations failed to achieve a final status agreement to end the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.
5. A 3-week military operation waged by Israel in the Gaza Strip to stop Palestinian rockets fire into Israel as a part of the confrontation. It began on December 27, 2008 and ended on January 18, 2009, with each side declaring a unilateral ceasefire.

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