How do conflict narratives shape conflict- and peace-related outcomes among majority group members? The role of competitive victimhood in intractable conflicts

Article (Accepted Version)


This version is available from Sussex Research Online: http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/101801/

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies and may differ from the published version or from the version of record. If you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher’s version. Please see the URL above for details on accessing the published version.

Copyright and reuse:
Sussex Research Online is a digital repository of the research output of the University.

Copyright and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable, the material made available in SRO has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

http://sro.sussex.ac.uk
How do conflict narratives shape conflict- and peace-related outcomes among majority group members? The role of competitive victimhood in intractable conflicts

Abstract

Previous research in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict context highlighted two opposing conflict narratives: (a) a terrorism narrative and (b) an independence narrative. In this paper, we argue that these narratives are relevant to protracted and asymmetrical intergroup conflict (e.g., independence struggles), and therefore have consequences for conflict- and peace-related outcomes regardless of conflict contexts. We tested this generalizability hypothesis in parallel studies in the context of Turkish-Kurdish (Study 1) and Israeli-Palestinian relations (Study 2) among majority group members (Turks and Jewish Israelis, respectively). We also investigated competitive victimhood as a potential mediating variable in the relationship between conflict narratives on the one side and support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, and support for aggressive policies on the other, in parallel studies with the two aforementioned contexts. We argued that the terrorism narrative is essentially a negation of the narrative of the other group, and the independence narrative is a consideration of that narrative; therefore, competitive victimhood would be lower/higher when the narrative of the other is acknowledged/denied. Results point to the crucial relationship between endorsing conflict narratives and conflict- and peace-related outcomes through competitive victimhood, and to the possibility that these conflict narratives may show some similarities across different conflict contexts.

Keywords: conflict narratives, competitive victimhood, Turkish-Kurdish conflict, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, nonviolence.
How do conflict narratives shape conflict- and peace-related outcomes among majority group members? The role of competitive victimhood in intractable conflicts

Intractable conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian and the Turkish-Kurdish conflict have grim outcomes, including both parties’ alienating each other, forced migration, as well as the violence and trauma associated with ethnopolitical warfare (Fisher, 2006). Compared to other conflicts, intractable conflicts are characterized as being particularly resistant to resolution: irreconcilable, violent, and viewed in a zero-sum nature by their parties (Bar-Tal, 1998). Such conflicts, therefore, make life extremely challenging and stressful (e.g., Qouta, Punamäki, & ElSarraj, 1995). People and groups respond to these challenges and stressors in part by developing narratives to understand the conflict.

Attempting to explain how people understand conflict in general, and intractable conflict in particular, Bar-Tal (1998, 2007) introduced the idea of the ethos of conflict. He argued that people in societies embroiled in intractable conflict cope with the conflict by developing socially shared beliefs about it. The ethos of conflict, therefore, constitutes a socially shared belief system, comprised of eight interrelated themes and beliefs, such as justness of one’s group’s goals, concern about security for one’s group, the special victimization of one’s group, among others. Importantly, this socially shared belief system usually leads to the emergence of a dominant (or master) narrative of the conflict, endorsed by the majority of society (Bar-Tal, 1998; Hammack, 2006). Previous research found that endorsement of the ethos of conflict has consequences for conflict and peace, for example, reducing support for compromise and peaceful conflict resolution (Canetti, Elad-Strenger, Lavi, Guy, & Bar-Tal, 2017). The idea of an ethos of conflict has thus been an important starting point in understanding how people frame intractable conflict, and how this understanding shapes the course of the conflict.

1 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. Materials and data related to the research reported in this manuscript may be obtained by contacting the authors.
Recent research has gone one step further, examining the diversity of conflict narratives (Cohrs, Uluğ, Stahel, & Kışlioğlu, 2015). Given that societies in conflict are often engaged in a lively debate over the nature and cause of the conflict, and ways to manage and/or resolve it (anonymized for review), a focus on the dominant narrative alone risks overlooking these dynamics, as it does not capture all narratives in society. In this sense, the dominant narrative does not give a full account of the reality of societies in conflict. An understanding of the dominant narrative alongside other, alternative narratives of conflict may be better suited to capture the complexity of a particular conflict and its consequences, and therefore, promises to provide a more comprehensive perspective on conflict narratives and their effects on conflict. In particular, complementing the research conducted by Bar-Tal and others in this way can deepen the discussion about the consequences of conflict narratives on conflict resolution, prevention, and peace (see also Cohrs et al., 2015).

Based on these insights, we argue here that in most conflict societies, next to the dominant narrative based in the ethos of conflict there are alternative conflict narratives. Due to not being endorsed by a majority of society, these alternative narratives are less prevalent than the dominant narrative. In this sense, while majority group members may be aware of alternative narratives, these narratives get less attention and thus are less visible in society than the dominant narrative (anonymized for review). Yet, due to their potential to increase openness to compromise and perhaps even pave the way for conflict resolution, alternative narratives may be as impactful for the course of the conflict as dominant narratives, and therefore equally important. We believe majority group members tend to less endorse these alternative narratives as they are more likely to worry that these narratives will pose a threat to national continuity (van Leeuwen & Mashuri, 2013) due to being endorsed more by minority group members or “radical” majority members.
Dominant conflict narratives present the conflict in black and white terms. They produce mistrust, hostility, a sense of threat between the conflict parties and reduce support for compromise (Canetti et al., 2017). As dominant narratives influence individuals to interpret situations in ways that contribute to the perpetuation or even escalation of the conflict (Cohrs et al., 2015), we argue that alternative narratives may help majority group members see the conflict in a new light. The identification of such alternative voices may contribute to a more differentiated conflict analysis and these alternative voices may, in turn, contribute to more effective approaches to conflict resolution and reconciliation (Coleman, 2003; Shmueli, 2003). These alternative narratives can help to diversify the social realities that circulate and are considered in society. They may help to develop strategies of change (Grabe & Dutt, 2015) and can have greater potential for social change in conflict contexts (Elcheroth, Doise, & Reicher, 2011; see also Subašić, Reynolds, & Turner, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, majority group members are not inclined to endorse minority groups’ conflict narratives (e.g., independence struggles). We tested this hypothesis in the context of the Turkish-Kurdish and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict among majority group members by investigating whether minority groups’ conflict narratives would predict more support for non-violent conflict resolution and less support for aggressive policies, whereas dominant conflict narratives based on the ethos of conflict would predict more support for violent conflict resolution and aggressive policies (e.g., Canetti et al., 2017).

Dominant and alternative narratives in conflict contexts. Related to our core hypothesis, previous research in the context of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict highlighted two opposing conflict narratives among lay people: (a) a terrorism narrative that describes the problem as stemming mainly from the armed wing of the Kurdish national movement, PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan), and (b) an independence narrative that describes the problem as a need for independence for Kurds (anonymized for review). These two conflict narratives
were created representing the core of these two viewpoints based on the findings of a Q methodology study (a mixed qualitative-quantitative method; Watts & Stenner, 2012). In this research, it has been shown that both the terrorism narrative and the independence narrative may predict the advantaged group’s attitudes (i.e., Turks’ attitudes) towards reconciliation and the peace process in Turkey (anonymized for review). This research was conducted during the peace process between 2013 and 2015. However, the peace process ended abruptly in 2015 and the attacks from both sides have been continuing.

By building on previous research on conflict narratives (anonymized for review) and competitive victimhood (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012; Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe, & Rothschild, 2012) and taking the political developments in Turkey into account (e.g., escalation of the conflict within the country and the Syrian conflict in the region), we decided to focus on conflict-related outcomes such as support for stopping violence and support for aggressive policies as well as peace-related outcomes such as support for non-violent conflict resolution and forgiveness. We hypothesized that the terrorism narrative (as the dominant narrative of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict endorsed most strongly by the majority of ethnic Turks; anonymized for review) would predict more conflict-related outcomes (e.g., support for aggressive policies), whereas the independence narrative (as an important alternative narrative endorsed by a minority of ethnic Turks; anonymized for review) would predict more peace-related outcomes (e.g., support for non-violent conflict resolution; forgiveness). This attempt at a psychological understanding of the terrorism narrative, in particular, can help explain why even powerful conflict parties such as Jewish Israelis or Turks can consider themselves to be the main victim in the conflict and therefore at times act more aggressively than seems necessary or justifiable from a third-party’s perspective.
Competitive victimhood. Besides our prediction that different conflict narratives will have different conflict- and peace-related outcomes, we also hypothesized that these conflict narratives would predict important process variables such as competitive victimhood (i.e., people’s belief that their group has suffered more than the adversarial group; Noor et al., 2012; Sullivan et al., 2012). In other words, we predicted that competitive victimhood will mediate the relationship between conflict narrative and conflict- and peace-related outcomes.

In different intergroup contexts, it has been observed that members of advantaged groups are also motivated to see themselves as victims or relatively deprived such as having suffered personal or identity-based hardship (e.g., Phillips & Lowery, 2015; Sullivan et al., 2012; see also Killian, 1985). As groups tend to have a general motivation to maintain a positive in-group identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), advantaged group members also tend to see their in-group as the victim and their outgroup as the perpetrator. However, advantaged groups can experience suffering and engage in competitive victimhood, especially when they are faced with the threat of radical institutional reforms that lead to significant material redistributions (Noor et al., 2012). For example, it has been shown that even though the political Left was the target of most of the physical violence inflicted by the military regime during the Pinochet rule in Chile, the political Right still often highlights its physical suffering caused by leftist guerrilla attacks and assassinations (Roniger & Sznajder, 1999). It is argued that the claim of victimhood by the political Right is a result of radical reforms by Allende’s leftist government in Chile (Perez de Arce, 2008).

Competitive victimhood affects people’s attitudes toward forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict in both conflict and post-conflict settings (e.g., Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008). For example, it may lead to reduced empathy and less willingness to reconcile with the adversary (Vollhardt, Bilewicz, & Olechowski, 2015), and to more negative attitudes toward the other conflict party and toward resolving the conflict in various
NARRATIVES, VICTIMHOOD, CONFLICT AND PEACE

contexts (Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017). It also predicts less willingness to acknowledge ingroup harm-doing during war (Čehajić & Brown, 2010), less forgiveness (Noor et al., 2008), and more support for aggressive policies (Adelman et al., 2016).

As we mentioned earlier, conflict narratives may shape people’s attitudes toward conflict and peace, and people’s beliefs regarding the ingroup’s victimization play a central role in stirring and sustaining intractable conflict (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Vollhardt, 2012). Importantly, however, the two narratives should predict competitive victimhood differently. Viewing the outgroup’s actions as acts of terrorism and making an essentialist attribution such as “they are evil” should leave little room to see the suffering and victimization of the outgroup, and emphasize the suffering and victimization of the ingroup. On the other hand, viewing the outgroup’s actions in the conflict as a consequence of legitimate grievances such as a lack of independence should lead to the realization that both the ingroup and the outgroup suffered as victims of the conflict. Thus, the terrorism narrative should strengthen people’s belief that the ingroup has suffered more than the outgroup, whereas the independence narrative should, if anything, weaken that belief. These differential effects of the type of narrative on competitive victimhood should then lead to differential effects in terms of conflict- and peace-related outcomes.

The current studies sought to test several important questions regarding the role of conflict narratives in intractable conflicts. First, in order to test the generalizability of the role of conflict narratives, we conducted parallel studies in the context of Turkish-Kurdish relations (Study 1) and Israeli-Palestinian relations (Study 2), as both conflicts are seen as intractable and asymmetric. Testing the role of conflict narratives as well as competitive victimhood in asymmetric conflicts is particularly important because it helps us understand how groups who differ markedly in power (do not) support different conflict- and peace-related outcomes. In each case, we examined the perspective of majority/dominant group
NARRATIVES, VICTIMHOOD, CONFLICT AND PEACE

members (i.e., Turks and Jewish Israelis, respectively) towards the outgroup (i.e., Kurds and Palestinians, respectively). Second, we examined the extent to which endorsing independence and terrorism narratives independently predict conflict- and peace-related outcomes such as willingness to forgive the outgroup, support for non-violent conflict resolution, aggressive policies and stopping violence. Third, we also investigated a potential process variable that transmits the effects of conflict narratives on outcome variables: competitive victimhood. We hypothesized that stronger endorsement of the independence narrative would predict less competitive victimhood, whereas stronger endorsement of the terrorism narrative would predict more competitive victimhood. We also hypothesized that greater competitive victimhood would predict less support for non-violent conflict resolution, less forgiveness, less support for stopping violence, and more support for aggressive policies (see Figure 1 for the theoretical model).

Study 1

In Study 1, we examined the perspectives of the majority group in Turkey (i.e., Turks) in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict context. We investigated how the endorsement of the independence narrative and terrorism narrative would predict the conflict- and peace-related outcomes through the pathway of competitive victimhood.

Method

Participants and Procedure

A total of 110 self-identified Turkish participants completed the survey online (see Table 1 for demographic information). We distributed the link to the survey on a variety of Facebook groups and blogs. Respondents were informed in the consent form that the goal of this research was to examine attitudes toward the issue that is variously defined as the...
“Kurdish problem,” “terrorism problem,” “ethnic identity problem,” “Southeastern problem,” or “independence problem.” We used various labels for the issue to prevent possible perceptions of research(er) bias (see anonymized for review for a similar approach). Each survey participant read both narratives. Then, they reported their endorsement of each narrative, their competitive victimhood, support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, and support for aggressive policies and support for stopping violence, as well as several demographic questions such as gender and level of education.

Materials

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 SDs are reported in Table 2.

Conflict narratives. We used two conflict narratives identified by previous research with lay people (anonymized for review): (a) a terrorism narrative and (b) an independence narrative. Q methodology, a mixed qualitative-quantitative method, was used in that previous research to identify socially shared perspectives in relation to contentious issues (e.g., Watts & Stenner, 2012). Based on the findings of the previous research, we created short narratives that represent the core of these two viewpoints. These narratives have been established and used by people in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict context (anonymized for review). Participants were asked to indicate their endorsement of each of the two narratives:

Endorsement of the independence narrative. The following one-item measure assessed participants’ endorsement of the independence narrative: “In my opinion, the Kurdish problem is an independence problem for Kurds because the status of Kurds living in Turkey is like a colony under the Republic of Turkey. Therefore, to solve this problem, an
independent Kurdistan should be established, and its imprisoned leader, Abdullah Öcalan, should be released.”

**Endorsement of the terrorism narrative.** The following one-item measure assessed participants’ endorsement of the terrorism narrative: “In my opinion, this problem is a problem created by the PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*). The causes of this problem are PKK and the instigation of foreign powers. To solve this problem, PKK should give away their weapons and TSK (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri-Turkish Armed Forces*) should fight and end terror by active counter-terrorism policies. No matter what happens, the unitary state structure of Turkey should not be changed.”

**Competitive victimhood.** Competitive victimhood was measured with three items adapted from Noor et al. (2008): “Throughout the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, Turks suffered more than Kurds,” “Turkish victims need more protection than Kurdish victims,” and “In general, the trauma of the events in the 80s and 90s has been more severe for Turks than for the Kurds.”

**Support for non-violent conflict resolution.** Two items assessed participants’ support for non-violent conflict resolution in Turkey (anonymized for review): “In general, I support the peace process in Turkey” and “The İmralı talks should restart.”

**Forgiveness.** Four items adapted from Noor et al. (2008) assessed intergroup forgiveness: “I feel resentment toward Kurdish people for the misdeeds that they committed in the past” (reverse coded), “I hold ill thoughts about Kurdish people for the misdeeds that they committed in the past” (reverse coded), “I draw the conclusion that I am prepared to forgive Kurdish people for the misdeeds that they committed in the past,” and “I am able to forgive Kurdish people for the misdeeds that they committed in the past.”
Support for stopping violence. Two items assessed participants’ attitudes toward TSK’s actions related to stopping violence: “TSK should stop their attacks against PKK immediately” and “Both PKK and TSK should stop their attacks simultaneously.”

Support for aggressive policies. We developed these three items by taking regional developments such as the Syrian conflict into account. We also incorporated different parties of the conflict such as the U.S., YPG and IS into the items we developed. Three items assessed participants’ attitudes toward supporting aggressive policies: “TSK’s actions against YPG (e.g., bombing their military bases) in Syria are justifiable”, “The U.S. should support TSK’s actions (e.g., bombing their military bases) in Syria in their fight against YPG”, and “The U.S. should support YPG’s actions (e.g., bombing their military bases) in Syria in their fight against IS” (reverse coded).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses examined relations between the variables. Bivariate correlations indicated that endorsement of the independence narrative correlated negatively with the endorsement of the terrorism narrative, competitive victimhood, and support for aggressive policies (see Table 2). At the same time, endorsement of the independence narrative correlated positively with support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, and support for stopping violence. Endorsement of the terrorism narrative also correlated with these other variables, but in the opposite direction. Competitive victimhood correlated negatively with support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, and support for stopping violence, and positively with support for aggressive policies.
In testing our core hypotheses through path modeling, we first specified only the hypothesized paths. To ensure that significant hypothesized relationships remain significant even when accounting for additional relationships, in a second step we then entered additional paths and kept them in the model if they were significant. While our resulting models, therefore, have additional paths, this way they present a more rigorous test of our hypotheses.

**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 four outcome variables (support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, support for stopping violence, and support for aggressive policies), using 1) endorsement of the independence and terrorism narrative as exogenous variables, 2) competitive victimhood as endogenous mediating variable, and 3) support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, support for stopping violence, and support for aggressive policies as endogenous outcome variables. The hypothesized model showed an acceptable fit, $\chi^2(8) = 47.77, p < .001$, $SRMR = .10$, $NFI = .90$, $CFI = .91$, $AIC = 87.77$. After we added additional paths from exogenous variables (e.g., endorsement of the terrorism narrative) to endogenous outcome variables (e.g., support for aggressive policies), the modified model had a better fit, $\chi^2(10) = 25.14, p = .005$, $SRMR = .06$, $NFI = .95$, $CFI = .97$, $AIC = 63.02$ (see Figure 2 for the path coefficients). A comparison of the hypothesized and modified models by means of chi-square difference tests showed that the modified model fit the data better than the hypothesized model, $\chi^2\Delta(df = 2) = 22.63, p < .001$.

In this model, taking into account endorsement of both narratives at the same time, stronger endorsement of the terrorism narrative predicted more competitive victimhood,
whereas stronger endorsement of the independence narrative was unrelated to competitive victimhood and most of the outcome variables (with the exception of support for non-violent conflict resolution). More competitive victimhood predicted less support for non-violent conflict resolution, less forgiveness, less support for stopping violence, and more support for aggressive policies. In addition to this indirect effect of endorsement of the terrorism narrative on the outcome variables through competitive victimhood (see Table 3 for indirect effects), endorsement of the terrorism narrative also had an additional positive direct effect on support for aggressive policies, and an additional negative direct effect on support for stopping violence. Thus, the effects of endorsement of the terrorism narrative on support for aggressive policies and support for stopping violence were partially transmitted by competitive victimhood, whereas the effects of endorsement of terrorism narrative on forgiveness and support for non-violent conflict resolution were fully transmitted by competitive victimhood. Importantly, these additional direct effects of the terrorism narrative were in line with our theoretical expectations regarding the indirect effects of the terrorism narrative.

We also tested an alternative model in which the two narratives mediated the relationship between competitive victimhood and conflict- and peace-related outcomes (for a similar strategy, see Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008). However, this alternative model was inferior to our hypothesized model as well as to our modified model (i.e., with additional paths from exogenous variables to endogenous outcome variables), $\chi^2(5) = 97.60, p < .001$, $SRMR = .14$, $NFI = .80$, $CFI = .80$, $AIC = 143.60$ (see Supplementary Materials for the alternative model).

Discussion
Study 1 found support for our hypothesis that endorsing the terrorism narrative would predict more support for aggressive policies, less support for stopping violence, less forgiveness and less support for non-violent conflict resolution through the pathway of more competitive victimhood. Study 1 also found support for our hypothesis that endorsing the independence narrative would predict more support for non-violent conflict resolution; however, we should also note that Study 1 did not find that the independence narrative predicted competitive victimhood. While this lack of an indirect pathway through competitive victimhood did not support our hypothesis, it is also important to note that the direct path from the independence narrative to support for peace that we found instead did not actively refute our hypothesis. Only if this path had been negative, would it have actively gone against our expectations. Instead, this path being positive was generally in line with our theoretical predictions.

Last, Study 1 found support for our hypothesis that more competitive victimhood would predict more support for aggressive policies and less support for non-violent conflict resolution, less support for forgiveness and less support for stopping violence. The results suggest that endorsement of the rather one-sided terrorism narrative increases competitive victimhood, and ultimately strengthens support for aggressive policies and weakens support for forgiveness, stopping violence, and nonviolent conflict resolution.

Study 1 had some limitations though. First, participants were recruited through snowball sampling on social media sites (e.g., Facebook). Relatedly, participants were mostly left on the political spectrum and not very religious. We addressed this issue in Study 2 by making a more concerted effort to get a more heterogeneous sample regarding these demographics. Second, we situated Study 2 in a different conflict context than Study 1 (the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), and consequently also targeted a different group for our sample.
(Jewish Israelis) to address the average level of competitive victimhood in Study 1 ($M = 2.71$).

Study 1 made use of conflict narratives that were identified in previous research in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict context (anonymized for review). However, it is unclear to what extent these narratives are applicable in other conflict contexts. Therefore, Study 2 tested the applicability and generalizability of these narratives in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The aim here was to show that the processes found in Study 1 are not unique to a specific conflict but replicate in other contexts that differ in many respects such as history, language, religion, and levels of violence.

**Study 2**

Study 2 aimed to replicate the findings of Study 1 in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Specifically, Study 2 examined whether endorsing a particular conflict narrative predicts conflict- and peace-related outcomes and whether the terrorism and independence narratives generalize to contexts other than the Turkish-Kurdish one. While doing so, Study 2 also improved on the recruitment strategy and sampling issues of Study 1, as well as on the average level of competitive victimhood in Study 1. As we aimed to get a representative sample in Israel, we also aimed to have more variance on the variables of interest that we did not have in the more left-leaning sample of Study 1.

**Method**

**Participants**

A total of 199 Jewish Israeli participants participated in our study (see Table 4 for demographic information). To obtain a more heterogeneous sample with respect to political orientation, we used a research company to recruit a representative sample (matched on 2015 voting patterns) of self-identified Jewish-Israeli participants (The Midgam Project Web Panel: www.midgam.com). Midgam is a company that specializes in providing infrastructure
services for internet research and allows for surveying samples representative of the Israeli population.

Materials

Participants completed a similar set of measures as in Study 1 (see Table 3 and Appendix; see Supplementary Materials for all the measures), most of them having a similar wording and content; only for the measures of support for nonviolent conflict resolution and support for aggressive policies, we adapted the items to fit the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We also dropped the measure of support for stopping violence in Study 2, to keep the model simple.\(^2\) All items used 7-point response scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

**Support for non-violent conflict resolution.** Two items assessed participants’ support for non-violent conflict resolution in Israel: “I support a peace agreement with the Palestinians on the basis of two states for two people” and “I support a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from territories in Judea and Samaria.”

**Support for aggressive policies.** Four items assessed participants’ support for aggressive policies: “I support expelling Palestinians from the land of Israel,” “I support the continuation of the current situation,” “I support annexing some of the territories to Israel (such as Area C and Maale Adumim), and continued Israeli control of the rest of the territories” and “I support annexing the entire West Bank and instating Israeli Jurisdiction over the territories.”

Results

---

\(^2\) We dropped this measure as we have already had a similar outcome measure (i.e., support for non-violent conflict resolution) and therefore to keep the model simple, we decided to drop it.
As in Study 1, bivariate correlations indicated that endorsement of the independence narrative correlated negatively with the endorsement of the terrorism narrative, competitive victimhood, and support for aggressive policies, and positively with forgiveness and support for nonviolent conflict resolution (see Table 5). Endorsement of the terrorism narrative also correlated with these variables, but in the opposite direction. Competitive victimhood correlated negatively with forgiveness and support for non-violent conflict resolution, and positively with support for aggressive policies.

Path Analyses

A path analysis provided one simultaneous test of our hypothesis regarding the three outcome variables (support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, and support for aggressive policies), using 1) endorsement of the independence and terrorism narrative as exogenous variables, 2) competitive victimhood as endogenous mediating variable, and 3) support for non-violent conflict resolution, forgiveness, and support for aggressive policies as endogenous outcome variables. The hypothesized model did not show a good fit, $\chi^2(6) = 134.08, p < .001, SRMR = .16, NFI = .74, CFI = .75, AIC = 164.08$. After we added additional paths from exogenous variables (e.g., endorsement of the terrorism narrative) to endogenous outcome variables (e.g., support for aggressive policies) as in Study 1, the model fit the data well, $\chi^2(4) = 7.20, p = .126, SRMR = .03, NFI = .99, CFI = .99, AIC = 41.19$ (see Figure 3 for the path coefficients). A comparison of the hypothesized and modified models by means of chi-square difference tests showed that the modified model fit the data better than the hypothesized model, $\chi^2(\Delta df = 2) = 126.88, p < .001$. 

Insert Table 5

Insert Figure 3
Stronger endorsement of the terrorism narrative predicted more competitive victimhood, whereas stronger endorsement of the independence narrative predicted less competitive victimhood. More competitive victimhood predicted less support for non-violent conflict resolution and less forgiveness, and more support for aggressive policies. Lastly, endorsement of the independence narrative predicted more support for non-violent conflict resolution and less support for aggressive policies. Besides the predicted indirect effects of the narratives on the outcome variables through competitive victimhood (see Table 6 for indirect effects), again, as in Study 1, there were also additional direct effects.

As in Study 1, we also tested the alternative model: The two narratives mediated the relationship between competitive victimhood and conflict- and peace-related outcomes (for a similar strategy see Noor et al., 2008). This alternative model, $\chi^2(4) = 87.70, p < .001$, $SRMR = .12$, $NFI = .83$, $CFI = .84$, $AIC = 121.70$, was empirically superior to our hypothesized model but not empirically superior to our modified model. Yet, given that the purpose of Study 2 was to replicate and confirm the model of Study 1, we consider our modified model (i.e., with additional paths from exogenous variables to endogenous outcome variables) to be superior from a theoretical and confirmatory hypothesis testing perspective.

Discussion

Study 2 provided support for our hypothesis that endorsement of the terrorism narrative predicts more support for aggressive policies and less support for non-violent conflict resolution and forgiveness through the pathway of more competitive victimhood. Study 2 also found support for our hypothesis that endorsement of the independence narrative predicts more support for non-violent conflict resolution and less support for aggressive policies, but it did not predict more support for forgiveness. Finally, the results of Study 2
NARRATIVES, VICTIMHOOD, CONFLICT AND PEACE

provided evidence for our hypothesis that more competitive victimhood predicts more support
for aggressive policies and less support for non-violent conflict resolution and forgiveness.

Importantly, whereas Study 1 found no evidence for a significant relationship of the
independence narrative with less competitive victimhood, Study 2 found this relationship to
be significant in the expected direction. This finding is particularly noteworthy given that the
Jewish Israeli sample in Study 2 was overall more right-wing than the Turkish sample in
Study 1.

**General discussion**

Our results highlighted the relationship between endorsing conflict narratives and
conflict- and peace-related outcomes such as forgiveness, support for non-violent conflict
resolution and support for aggressive policies. In addition, competitive victimhood was shown
to be an important mediator of the relationship between conflict narratives and these conflict-
and peace-related outcomes. The results of Study 1 indicated that endorsing the terrorism
narrative predicts more support for aggressive policies, less support for stopping violence, less
forgiveness and less support for non-violent conflict resolution through the pathway of more
competitive victimhood. Study 1 also found support for our hypothesis that more competitive
victimhood predicts more support for aggressive policies and less support for non-violent
conflict resolution, less support for forgiveness and less support for stopping violence. Study
2 conceptually replicated the results of Study 1 with respect to the effects of the terrorism
narrative. Further, Study 2 also found effects of the independence narrative on predicting
competitive victimhood and support for aggressive policies negatively and support for non-
violent conflict resolution positively, as expected in the opposite direction of the terrorism
narrative. Finally, it is noteworthy we found these findings not only among our left-leaning
sample in Turkey but also among our representative sample in Israel.
Our findings further our understanding of how a culturally dominant conflict narrative increases competitive victimhood. Perceiving one’s group to be a victim may lead to the perception that such aggressive steps are necessary for the group’s security in spite of the fact that the in-group is more powerful, to begin with. In this way, the research presented here helps to understand the actions of groups in intractable conflicts, and why these actions (e.g., aggression or coercion) seem rational to those groups, while other groups (e.g., third parties or allies of the other side in the conflict), especially from an outside perspective, view these actions as irrational. However, this research also suggests that there is diversity in the conflict narratives at play in conflicts, and these alternative conflict narratives (e.g., independence narrative) that are usually embraced by the minority or low-power group in a conflict can also play an important role in the majority or high-power group embracing more constructive orientations to the conflict and its resolution. The results show that if majority group members think violence is the result of frustrated national aspirations, they may try to find a way to satisfy these aspirations. If they think violence is characteristic of the out-group, they may want to fight back and eliminate the threat. In a similar vein, our results indicate that the independence narrative can have positive outcomes even for majority groups, among which this narrative is not the dominant narrative.

The finding that the effects of conflict narratives (especially the terrorism narrative) largely replicated in two different conflicts with different groups and histories also supports the notion that although every conflict has unique characteristics (Yıldız, 2014), there are also important commonalities that different conflicts share (see also Aktaş, 2014). Specifically, our results indicate that the terrorism and the independence narrative, which were originally derived from the context of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict (anonymized for review), also play important roles in other conflicts characterized by a struggle between asymmetrical powers that can either be seen as a struggle for independence or as terrorism. Thus, the independence
narrative and its peace-related outcomes can have important implications for conflict resolution and intervention more generally (rather than only in one specific conflict).

Overall, our results contribute to the works of literature on conflict narratives and competitive victimhood in particular and on peace and conflict in general by highlighting the crucial link between endorsement of conflict narratives, competitive victimhood, and conflict- and peace-related outcomes such as forgiveness, support for non-violent conflict resolution and support for aggressive policies. In addition, the results highlight the importance of acknowledging the diversity of conflict narratives in a society, including narratives that are less visible than the dominant narrative born out of the ethos of conflict. As dominant narratives present the conflict in black and white terms and produce mistrust, hostility, a sense of threat between the conflict parties, reduce support for compromise, and influence individuals to interpret situations in ways that contribute to the perpetuation or even escalation of the conflict (Cohrs et al., 2015), alternative narratives may help majority group members see the conflict in a new light. The identification of such alternative voices may contribute to a more differentiated conflict analysis and in turn more effective approaches to conflict resolution and reconciliation (Coleman, 2003; Shmueli, 2003). This argument is connected to the concept of “counter-narratives” (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004) and the notion that identifying counter-narratives can help to diversify the social realities that circulate and are considered in society, which in turn may help develop strategies of change (Grabe & Dutt, 2015). As minority views sometimes have greater potential for social change (Elcheroth et al., 2011; see also Subašić et al., 2008), we argue that incorporating the majority/dominant narrative of the adversary group (e.g., independence narrative) into the perspective of one’s own group may thus open up some new opportunities for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

**Limitations and Future Directions**
Our research has a few specific limitations. First, even though our results show that the conflict narratives and their outcomes generalize to different conflict contexts, we should highlight that there are some differences between the two studies. For example, the correlation between the two narratives is considerably higher in Study 1 than in Study 2; the competitive victimhood mean is considerably higher in Study 2 than in Study 1; and the terrorism narrative mean is higher in Study 2 than in Study 1. We wonder to what extent these differences may be related to the left- vs. right-leaning tendencies of the samples in both studies, but not to the nature of the conflict. Even though there are some differences between the two studies, we should highlight again that we found the findings among our left-leaning sample in Turkey are generalizable to our more right-leaning sample in Israel and some fundamental processes are highly similar.

Second, we conducted these studies in different phases of the respective conflicts. Turkish data collection occurred during the escalation of the conflict after the breakdown of the Turkish-Kurdish peace process, whereas Israeli data collection occurred during a relatively calmer period of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Previous research has indicated that people’s understanding of conflict can shift during periods of conflict escalation (Bilali, Çelik, & Ok, 2014; Uluğ, Odağ, Cohrs, & Holtz, 2017). This difference might explain why we were not able to detect the differential effects of the two narratives as easily in the Turkish study as in the Israeli study. Second, we focused on competitive victimhood rather than distinguishing between inclusive (i.e., perceiving other groups’ suffering as similar to one’s own group) and exclusive victim beliefs (i.e., the perceived distinctiveness of ingroup victimization; see Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015). Previous research suggests that victim beliefs do not always lead to violence (Vollhardt, 2009). If people endorse victim beliefs that recognize similarities of experiences between the conflict parties, this may help them empathize with the other side of
the conflict (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). Future studies should, therefore, examine whether different conflict narratives may lead people to engage in inclusive vs. exclusive victimhood.

Third, one may question why the endorsement of narratives is assessed with a single item and argue that these items may have the potential to be multi-barreled and therefore multi-dimensional. However, we chose this approach because these narratives have been developed based on empirical studies (anonymized for review), used in previous research and it was well established that these narratives may predict peace-related attitudes such as reconciliation (anonymized for review). Future studies may consider using shorter narratives to avoid multi-dimensionality. In addition to the specific alternative narratives we have used (i.e., independence narrative) in this research, future research may also look at yet other alternative narratives, for instance, the ones found in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict: a) economic narrative, b) democracy and Islam narrative, and c) democracy and rights narrative (anonymized for review). Many people may also endorse different narratives to some extent. This ambivalence may have an epistemic basis (trying to understand why violence happens) and/or a motivational basis (each narrative has both costs and benefits for the in-group). Therefore, future studies may also look to what extent people endorse more than one narrative at the same time and how the endorsement of both different narratives may help to find common grounds across these narratives.

Fourth, in both studies, we tested an alternative model in which the two narratives mediated the relationship between competitive victimhood and conflict- and peace-related outcomes (see, e.g., Noor et al., 2008). In Study 1, this alternative model was inferior to our hypothesized model as well as to our modified model. In Study 2, even though this alternative model was empirically superior to our hypothesized model it was not empirically superior to our modified model. As the purpose of Study 2 was to replicate and confirm the model of Study 1, we consider our modified model to be superior from a theoretical and confirmatory
NARRATIVES, VICTIMHOOD, CONFLICT AND PEACE

hypothesis testing perspective. One can argue that it may be equally plausible for competitive victimhood to motivate particular narratives and both models are equally likely. Adelman et al. (2016) showed how different conflict narratives (inclusive vs. exclusive) may affect competitive victimhood in experimental studies. Therefore, we believe that it is conflict narratives that may motivate people to engage in competitive victimhood. However, future studies should also test the sequence of these processes with larger samples and experimental studies.

Given that the two conflicts we focused on are asymmetrical and protracted conflicts, our data cannot speak to whether our findings are generalizable to 1) symmetrical and/or non-protracted conflicts and 2) the minority or the less powerful party in the conflict. While our focus on one particular (and particularly important) type of conflict had the advantage of examining the extent to which our findings were reproducible across different countries, future studies may also examine the extent to which these results can be reproduced in other types of conflicts (e.g., the relatively more symmetrical conflict in Northern Ireland). In this sense, our results speak to the generalizability across countries but stay silent on generalizability across types of conflicts. Also, in each conflict setting, due to the asymmetrical nature of the conflict (see Elcheroth & Spini, 2015), these parties are the stronger parties compared to their opponents. However, we do not know what happens if the minority or the less powerful party in the conflict endorses the narrative held by the majority of the other, stronger party. Previous research indicated that when Palestinians show empathy for the Holocaust, it leads to reciprocal empathy between Palestinians and Israelis (Gubler, Halperin, & Hirschberger, 2015). Future research should also focus on whether endorsement of the more powerful group’s narrative in an ongoing conflict increases competitive victimhood among the less powerful group, or not. To more fully understand the link between conflict narratives, competitive victimhood, and conflict- and peace-related outcomes, the
phenomena and processes we have shown here should also be investigated from the perspective of the less powerful party to the conflict.

Finally, future studies may focus on intervention strategies to change competitive victimhood via conflict narratives. Vollhardt and Bilali (2015) argue that hearing stories about others’ suffering, which are similar to one’s ingroup experiences, through intergroup contact may increase inclusive victimhood. We argue that even hearing the way in which the other side understands the conflict as well as the reasons for the other side’s actions through intergroup contact may be helpful to lower competitive victimhood (see also Bruneau & Saxe, 2012). Future studies may also look for intervention strategies on how to change competitive victimhood by exposing people to others’ conflict narratives, which may pave the way for conflict resolution (see also Adelman et al., 2016). For example, interventions should focus on how to increase perspective-taking or empathy since both studies indicate that the problem is a one-sided view of the conflict that does not acknowledge the legitimacy of the other. The paradox is that the one-sided view is psychologically more satisfying (e.g., we are good, they are evil) but leaves less hope for improvement (e.g., if they are evil in essence, there is little to do but fight them). The independence narrative may be seen as undermining the group and even treacherous, but it offers hope for change by indicating if we address the grievances, hostilities between groups may decrease.
References


NARRATIVES, VICTIMHOOD, CONFLICT AND PEACE


NARRATIVES, VICTIMHOOD, CONFLICT AND PEACE


NARRATIVES, VICTIMHOOD, CONFLICT AND PEACE


4. Yıldız, K. (2014). Çözüm ve dönüşüm süreçlerine ilişkin teorik ve pratik yaklaşımlar [Theoretical and practical approaches to the resolution and transformation processes]. In M. Aktaş (Ed.), *Çatışma çözümleri ve barış* [Conflict resolutions and peace] (pp. 269-307). İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
Table 1

Demographic information for Study 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency/Mean/SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-school degree</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary-school degree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political orientation</strong></td>
<td>M = 3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD = 1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 1 (left) – 9 (right)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religiosity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M = 2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD = 2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Range = 1 (not religious at all) – 9 (very religious)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables in Study 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Independence narrative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>(1.94)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Terrorism narrative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>(2.37)</td>
<td>-.73***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Competitive victimhood</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>(1.48)</td>
<td>-.53***</td>
<td>.69***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support for non-violent conflict resolution</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>(1.81)</td>
<td>.57***</td>
<td>-.62***</td>
<td>-.60***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Forgiveness</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>(1.25)</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.48***</td>
<td>.45***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Support for stopping violence</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>(1.86)</td>
<td>.55***</td>
<td>-.68***</td>
<td>-.78***</td>
<td>.68***</td>
<td>.51***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Support for aggressive policies</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>(1.72)</td>
<td>-.63***</td>
<td>.73***</td>
<td>.71***</td>
<td>-.58***</td>
<td>-.49***</td>
<td>-.74***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Note. ***p < .001, **p < .01
**Table 3**

*Standardized indirect effects (Study 1).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI lower</th>
<th>95% CI upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence narrative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for non-violent conflict resolution</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for stopping violence</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for aggressive policies</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>-.254</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terrorism narrative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for non-violent conflict resolution</td>
<td>-.405</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>-5.434</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>-.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>-.323</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>-4.549</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>-.46</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for stopping violence</td>
<td>-.513</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>-6.313</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>-.67</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for aggressive policies</td>
<td>.467</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>5.977</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Although endorsement of the independence narrative was not a significant predictor of competitive victimhood in the model (see Figure 2), to be consistent across the two independent variables, we tested (and showed) non-significant indirect effects of endorsement of the independence narrative on the dependent variables.
Table 4

Demographic information for Study 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency/Mean/SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic professional training</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed a Full Baccalaureate exam</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-school degree</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary-school degree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M = 6.01)</td>
<td>(SD = 2.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range = 1 (left) – 9 (right)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religiosity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M = 3.81)</td>
<td>(SD = 2.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range = 1 (not religious at all) – 9 (very religious)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables in Study 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>( \alpha )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>((SD))</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Independence narrative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>(1.99)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Terrorism narrative</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>(2.09)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.46***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Competitive victimhood</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>(1.73)</td>
<td>-.39***</td>
<td>.53***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support for non-violent conflict resolution</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>(2.27)</td>
<td>.66***</td>
<td>-.53***</td>
<td>-.48***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Forgiveness</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>(1.61)</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>-.49***</td>
<td>-.60***</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Support for aggressive policies</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>(1.97)</td>
<td>-.50***</td>
<td>.63***</td>
<td>.60***</td>
<td>-.53***</td>
<td>-.50***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ***\( p < .001 \)
Table 6

Standardized indirect effects (Study 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI lower</th>
<th>95% CI upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence narrative</td>
<td>Support for non-violent conflict resolution</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>2.637</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>2.708</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for aggressive policies</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>-2.711</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism narrative</td>
<td>Support for non-violent conflict resolution</td>
<td>-.214</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>-5.383</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>-.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>-.267</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>-6.094</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>-.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for aggressive policies</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>6.122</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Path diagram of the theoretical model.
Figure 2. Path model for Study 1

Note. Dashed lines indicate non-significant paths; ***p < .001, **p < .01.
Figure 3. Path model for Study 2

Notes. ***p < .001, **p < .01.
Appendix

Conflict narratives in Israel

Independence narrative. In my opinion, the Palestinian problem is an independence problem for Palestinians and that once Palestinians gain independence, they will no longer be motivated to continue the conflict. Therefore, an independent Palestine should be established alongside Israel if we want to resolve this problem.

Terrorism narrative. In my opinion, the Palestinian problem is a problem created by Palestinian terrorism. If we want to solve this problem, Israel needs to deal with terrorism, and the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) should put an end to terror by active counter-terrorism operations. Such a solution to the Palestinian problem would also make it unnecessary to divide the Land of Israel and create a Palestinian state on this land.