

## The Links between Political Campaigning and Post-Truth

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### ABSTRACT

*The paper investigates the links between political campaigning and post-truth. The research argues that there are five main factors that make a successful post-truth political campaign. The first is marinating a goal of achieving a practical outcome. The second is the success to control public agenda. The third is providing a different definition of truth. fourth factor is the use of claims based on emotional beliefs. And the fifth is the success to trigger a response from the opposing party. Based on this theoretical approach, the research examines information published in the Israeli election campaign of April 2019 by the leading Likud party and its leader, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, against their main rivals – Blue and White party and its leader, Benny Gantz - former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff. The issue examined is the post-truth campaign involving the cell phone hacking of Gantz. The examination looks at the campaign according to the main factors that make a successful post-truth political campaign, as described earlier. It aims to examine the way that these factors were implemented by the Likud campaign – and conclude if using these factors was properly done in this post-truth campaign.*

### KEYWORDS

*Post-truth; fake news; political campaigning; public agenda; practical outcome*

### INTRODUCTION

We live in the “post-truth age,” which means that information is based on beliefs, emotions and opinions, with less importance given to facts. The occurrence of Post-truth politics raises questions regarding the role of truth in addressing political issues and its potential long-term effects on the post-truth era. But although post-truth is considered a new phenomenon which developed with the rise of social media, research shows that the term has always been a part of politics in the form of spin, propaganda, rhetoric and public relations. Questions about truth, error, belief and expertise, have always been on the political agenda, but according to Giddens (1990), a fundamental feature of modernity is that Social practices are constantly being examined in the light of information because trust has always been a part, respect for experts, technical knowledge and institutions are certainly more or less confused. with skepticism or fear. As George Orwell criticized the political process in his essay "Politics and the English Language" (1946), political discourse and composing are generally the defense of the shaky. He explained that many political words are similarly abused, which means that political language is regularly planned to form lies sound honest, such as the words vote based system, communism, flexibility, energetic, practical and equity – which have distinctive implications that cannot be accommodated with one another. In her exposition ‘Truth and Politics’, initially distributed within The New Yorker on 25 February 1967, Hannah Arendt emphasized the

strife between truth and legislative issues. She clarified that lies have continuously been respected as reasonable apparatuses of lawmakers and thus legislative issues and truth don't mix. As clarified by Higgins (2016), post-truth could be a fashion of 'doing politics' by lawmakers in which 'blatant lies' gotten to be 'routine over the society'. Concurring to Lynch (2017), post-truth legislative issues is utilized to depict a mode of legislative issues that works more through requests to feeling and individual conviction than to unquestionable actualities.

Although unreliable or partial information has always determined human behavior, the concept of post-truth politics has become extremely popular in the media and academia in recent years. The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2013 warned of the threat of a digitalized and globalized media space being used to deliberately spread disinformation. . Three years later, "fake news" has shaped the US election and redefined the relationship between politics, media, and truth. Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election and the UK's decision to leave the European Union led to the term "post-truth" being chosen by the Oxford English Dictionary as the word of the year 2016. According to them, post-truth politics is defined circumstances in which objective facts have less influence on the formation of public opinion than do appeal to personal feelings and beliefs (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). The OECD definition is looking at the subjective nature of post-truth in contrast to the objective nature of truth, with the result that we are faced with the uncomfortable reality that facts and facts are losing importance in democratic decision-making and choices (OECD Forum, 2017). Gabriela Ramos, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the OECD, explains (2020) that the values of openness, mutual assistance and international integration on which the OECD was founded will be questioned, because if they are We said "the truth and nothing but the truth", we didn't say "the whole truth".

In examining modern post-truth campaigns, Research argues that manipulation of information has always existed and that post-truth has always dominated politics, even though it is controlled by politicians and the mainstream media (Waisbord, 2018). New media platforms are often discussed in relation to post-truth politics because they change the traditional way media works. They have also changed the old definition of truth, with the result that the conventional concepts of information and truth are more difficult to achieve. What has changed in the new era of the global political environment is the advent of social media and digital media, allowing individuals and organizations to send information free and unlimited - no like the era of mass media, when politicians and mainstream media had full and undivided access. control the information provided to the public. The alternative news outlets are constantly developing and getting more credible, since political issues are matters of interpretation. D'Acona (2017) explains that the enormous alter is the public's eagerness to acknowledge 'alternative facts' in the event that they concur with their claim sees and sentiments. As he clarifies, open sentiments and feelings are the most driving constrain behind post-truth. This development is seen as contributing to a diverse public debate, since a characterizing characteristic of social media is exchange, which empowers individuals to share, comment on, and talk about a wide assortment of themes, grounded on an intelligently community (Theohary, 2015). But on the drawback, data within the post-truth period is harder to believe, since news got to be more approximately excitement than data and shoppers see to the media to have their see strengthened and not challenged (Barton, 2019).

The research examines the use of post-truth campaign conducted by the largest party in Israeli politics – the Likud, against their main rival – Blue and White party, in the election held in Israel in April 2019. It was a close election which ended up with no clear vote and

created a political mess which was subject to extreme debate on mainstream and social media. This election caused a turmoil in Israeli politics, with inability to form a coalition government. The election results particularly emphasize the importance of the post-truth campaign, since – although we would never know for sure – it damaged Gantz politically and prevented him from winning the election. The political instability continued with a second round of election in the same year (September), again with no definite outcome. A third round of election took place in March 2020, after which a unity government was formed under joint leadership of Netanyahu and Gantz. However, the government was politically unstable, and a fourth round of election was held in March 2021. Another government that was formed after the fourth election also did not last long, and a fifth round was in November 2022 – five election campaigns in less than four years. The examination considers the impact of post-truth on the election results, the political atmosphere and the resulting political crisis in Israel throughout that time.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**The first is marinating a goal of achieving a practical outcome: the idea that the esteem of the truth is decided agreeing to commonsense results, and thus a post-true campaign needs to be planned and executed according to the initial goals of the party that initiates the campaign.**

Starting with formulating the first factor of marinating a goal of achieving a practical outcome, the research argues that a successful post-truth campaign must be planned and organized with a clear purpose of achieving a practical outcome. This conclusion is based on the down to earth hypothesis of truth, which keeps up that the key to truth is utility. Which means that concurring to logic, the esteem of the truth in a recommendation is decided agreeing to its down to earth results and the utility that it gives. William James (1842-1910), who is maybe the foremost broadly known of the authors of practicality, characterized in his measure (1907) truth in terms of value and acknowledgment. In his see, truth is found by going to to the commonsense results of thoughts. His more than a century work described the first factor of a modern post-truth campaign: the need to achieve a goal that is useful to the party that launched the campaign. He concluded that beliefs are genuine in case and as it were they are valuable and can be essentially connected. As he clarified: "... the extreme test for us of what a truth implies is the conduct it manages or inspires." He encourage clarified that down to earth individuals start to squabble as it were after the address is raised as to what may absolutely be implied by the term "agreement," and what by the term "reality," when reality is taken as something for our thoughts to concur with.

**The second factor is the success to control public agenda: the idea that the fulfillment of the goals of the campaign are determined by media response, and thus success of post-truth campaign should be looked at according to its influence on public debate.**

In examining the factor of the success to control public agenda, the research maintains that the fulfillment of the goals of the campaign should be looked at according to influence on public debate. This conclusion is based on the agenda setting theory, according to which the media can determine public agenda and politicians can influence open supposition, intentioned or inadvertently (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Reese, 1991). The hypothesis alludes to the way that the media affect political behavior amid decisions. It was presented by McCombs and Shaw (1972), which found that the media affected those who were driven with excitement in taking after up with the 1968 US presidential campaign's data. Taking after this inquire about, thinks about concentrated on the relationships between the

media motivation and the open motivation (Golan & Wanta, 2001), and analysts found that motivation setting can be set up by lawmakers and open relations specialists as well as governments (Walgrave and Aelst, 2006. McCombs (2004) shows that one of the critical criteria to assess a political pioneer is his or her impact in setting the plan. Although the theory was developed in the era of traditional media, the impact of agenda setting is even more relevant with new media. Thus, as information sources increased dramatically and became more fragmented, social media is influencing public agenda, and the use of both mainstream and social media to control public agenda is a crucial factor in the conduct of a successful post-truth campaign.

**The third factor is providing a different definition of truth: the idea that there can be multiple versions of truth that can be applied to the same argument, and thus post-truth campaign is based on partial information which may be adopted for different topics of discourse.**

In examining the factor of providing a different definition of truth, the research looks at the information that identifies a post-truth campaign based on pluralist theories of truth. In examining modern media campaigns, the research looks at the conclusion of the pluralistic approach to truth, that not all issues in all domains are true in exactly the same way and therefore there is more than one way of being truth. This type of campaign provides partial information, as explained by the pluralistic approach to truth, which keeps up that there's no one key to the truth, because it may be a work that will be showed in a few ways. According to William James, the moment of pragmatism sees genuine thoughts as those that we will acclimatize, approve, prove and confirm, whereas wrong thoughts are those that we cannot. He looked at the goal of the argument and not only the facts of it and says that to say that truth is simple understanding of thoughts with things of truth is deficient, since truth is in no sense absolute. In looking at his work in modern perspective, modern post-truth campaign can be defined as "The truth but not the whole truth". As explained by James, to say that truth is captured by coherence isn't to recognize it from a steady lie since we construct truth within the handle of effective living within the world. Accordingly, convictions are truth on the off chance that and as it were in the event that they are valuable and can be for all intents and purposes connected, since for each sign of truth there's a diverse definition of the criteria of truth which may be embraced for diverse themes of discourse. Edwards (2012) looks at the thought behind the view of truth and conclude that pluralist theories of truth argue that truth may require distinctive medications for distinctive sorts of subject matter. Agreeing to this approach, there are numerous concepts of truth which bridge the holes in real truth, serve the goals that choice creators need to realize, and impact the way by which they pass on truthful truths.

**The fourth factor is the use of claims based on emotional beliefs: the idea that objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion, and thus post-true campaign should be based on emotional rather than rational ideas that determine the way that people judge information.**

In examining the fourth factor of using claims based on emotional and personal beliefs, the research maintains that the digital age provides advantages to attack campaigns based on partial truth that is based on emotional rather than factional information. The concept of post-truth, where facts are less important than beliefs, is defined by D'Acona (2017) is "relating to or specifying situations in which objective facts have less effect on the formation of public opinion than do appeal to personal feelings and beliefs". As pluralistic theories explain, truth is only a vehicle for our thinking, just as "law" is only a means to

our behaviour. Thus, according to William James, real ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. As Marshall and Drieschova (2020) explain, growing distrust of democratic institutions, political elites, expertise, and the gatekeepers of the mainstream media leads to a loss of trust in established expertise, making people willing to rely on information from dubious sources. On the other hand, in examining modern post-truth politics, the research maintains that social media provide easy and accessible means to launch a post-truth campaign. Social media allow a wide variety of forces to deliver information to the public – over and above the heads of the traditional sources of information. It bypasses the traditional media and reach directly to younger people and new voters, who are stronger users of alternative means (Gibson and McAllister, 2014). This conclusion benefits new media, which tend to relate between people that belong to the same political camp or hold the same political views. The information that is distributed on social media is pivotal in forming political talk and changing the appointive field, permitting individuals to connected with each other by sharing and devouring data (Nations, 2019).

The result is that social media trigger post-truth campaign, since politicians can say anything that their supporters agree with or whatever they believe to be in their own interest and repeat these claims regardless of lack of evidence to support the claims. This is since the aim of modern campaigns is to emotive response of voters through alternative facts and alternative media, particularly social media, which operate as systems in which relevant voices have been omitted through active manipulation. The availability of social media allows users to provide people who belong to the same social groups content that reinforces rather than challenge their beliefs (Pettman, 2016). Thus, social media is changing the ways people encounter information, which is based primarily on emotions and belonging to a social group, rather than credible information supported by facts, with the result that the growing prevalence of lies and deception seems an unavoidable consequence (MacKenzie and Bhatt, 2018).

**The fifth factor is the success to trigger a response from the opposing party: the idea that in the new order of competitive media environment post-true campaign enables to spread the message and use the response to unveil not the whole truth or provide an alternative description of truth.**

In examining this factor, the research claims that the success of post-truth campaign is subject to the response of the opposing party and its handling of the attack. As defined by D'Acona (2017): 'it isn't about the lie, it is how we respond to it. It isn't about them. It is about us.' Duncombe (2018) claims that in the partition between tall and moo legislative issues the line between fiction and reality has ended up on a very basic level obscured since new media enable to spread the message while post-truth campaign can unveil not the whole truth or provide an alternative description of truth. While post-truth has a long tradition of political lies, exaggeration and spin, what changed is the ability of unused innovations and social media to control, polarize and settle in supposition. The result is, according to D'Ancona (2017), that although digital technology has been the principal driver of post-truth, with the advent of polarized opinions fake news significantly affect people's trust in online news (Chen and Cheng, 2019). Social systems have gotten to be progressively well known for sharing news and as a result too permit a prolific ground for the spread of fake news (Duffy, Tandoc and Ling, 2019).

The research argues that modern data legislative issues are stamped by a control battle among competing bunches(Carlson, 2018), and the issue examined here is how can the opposing party respond to post-truth in today's global and digital environment? The



difficulty here is that post-truth is campaign is difficult to combat, since research shows that there are as many explanations as there are attitudes towards the issue. The difficulty in assessing and responding to these claims is that they might be partially right, although incorrect and inconclusive. The other difficulty is that these claims are distributed through social media without checks on the accuracy of the claims. Lewandowsky, Ecker and Cook (2017) suggest that response to misinformation must involve technological solutions based on emotional principles. As explained by Spector (2020), post-truth includes a settlement between claims producer and expecting group of onlookers whereas anticipating the gathering of people to put aside that recognized mistake in bolster of a conviction in a few shared objective, and in this way dependence on post-truth claims powers these claims and makes a difference political pioneers posturing as populists.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

Based on this theoretical approach, the research examines information published in the Israeli election campaign of April 2019 by the leading Likud party and its leader, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, against their main rivals – Blue and White party and its leader, Benny Gantz - former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The research examines information published in the Israeli election campaign of April 2019 by the leading Likud party and its leader, who served at that time as Prime Minister - Benjamin Netanyahu, against their main rivals – Blue and White party and its leader, Benny Gantz - former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff. The issue examined here is the post-truth campaign involving the cell phone hacking of Gantz. The examination looks at the campaign according to the five main factors that make a successful post-truth political campaign, as described earlier. It aims to examine the way that these factors were implemented by the Likud campaign – and to conclude if using these factors was properly done in this post-truth campaign. The research is based information gathered in real time from Israeli news media sources.

### ***The First Factor of the Post-Truth Campaign***

The first category examined is the goal of the campaign, based on the conclusion that a post-truth campaign needs to be planned and executed according to the initial goals of the party that initiates the campaign. The Likud campaign had the goals of promoting the fight of Netanyahu against Iran's nuclear policy and to show that Gantz is a weak leader that would not be able to act against Iran. This goal was achieved through the success of Netanyahu to brand himself as the most effective opponent of the U.S. agreement with Iran during the Obama administration and a good ally with President Trump, who backed away from the nuclear agreement. Netanyahu is recognized for his opposition to the deal, arguing that the economic sanctions against Iran should strengthened. Netanyahu used social media to campaign against the deal and even addressed the U.S. Congress despite White House opposition. The success of Netanyahu in dealing with the Iranian issue was evident when President Trump pulled back the Joined together States from the bargain, claiming that it fizzled to abridge Iran's rocket program and territorial impact.

The post-truth campaign used the Iranian issue and was based on supporting facts, since Iran ignored the limitations on its nuclear program and was sanctioned by the United States. Three months before the election it was detailed that Iranians have been utilizing hundreds of fake accounts on Israeli social media pages to sow social division and impact

the decision. Netanyahu used this report to warn of Iranian cyber-attacks carried out against Israel "on a daily basis" (Rubinstein, 2019). As can be concluded from his campaign, he used this information to launch the post-truth campaign that emphasized his leadership and diminish the credibility of his competitor. A study found that while most statements made by Israeli politicians in the election were either totally or mostly wrong, the political arguments that got the most press coverage and exposures on regular and social media outlets belonged to Netanyahu who made allegations against Iran's nuclear program. In support of the validity of Netanyahu's post-truth campaign using the Iranian nuclear program, the study found that news that were broadcast on national media granted a higher degree of credibility and Netanyahu's remarks on Iran were considered as credible by 88% of readers and viewers (Yifat, 2018).

The credibility of Netanyahu in the Iranian issue is the result of the meaningful diplomatic wins he scored as Prime Minister, demonstrating his experience and leadership as well as a proven standing in global politics. A wide agreement wins in Israel on arrangements that address the challenges postured by Iran, Syria and Hezbollah, and the campaign of the Likud emphasized the relationships of Netanyahu with world leaders, including the American and Russian presidents, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin. Trump even appeared alongside Netanyahu on a large billboard that tens of thousands of drivers can see during rush hour on the Tel Aviv highway. The poster shows the two leaders shaking hands with the caption "Netanyahu, in another league," with "Likud" at the bottom. The announcement referred to Netanyahu's close relationship with the former president, who kept his election promise and moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and ensured the United States recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 war. These moves were widely praised by the Jewish parties and widely supported by the Israeli public, despite Israel's partisan political spectrum.

### ***The Second Factor of the Post-Truth Campaign***

The second factor of post-truth campaign examined here – the success to control public agenda, was achieved through a message based on leadership capabilities - which emphasized the strong leadership of the Prime Minister against the political inexperience of his main opponent. Stern (2019) explains that it is difficult to assume a more political issue than characterizing who will be the prime minister and the degree of his reasonableness for the work. He clarifies that Netanyahu's survival technique has continuously been approximately personalizing legislative issues by emphasizing the address of the correct pioneer that ought to head Israel. The election involved a personal character which can be defined as a national referendum on Netanyahu's leadership and his personal integrity, following three indictments charges of fraud, bribery and breach of trust that he was facing. Thus, the Likud leader has gained a reputation as a successful political survivor, presenting himself as the only qualified candidate to protect Israel's security and shape its international relations. He described Israel as facing a range of external threats, including Iran, the Lebanese Shiite Muslim movement Hezbollah and the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip. As former U.S. President Barack Obama explained in his book *The Promised Land*, "Netanyahu's vision of himself as the Jewish people's primary defender of calamity allowed him to justify almost any which will keep him in power."

On the other hand of the campaign, the goal was to control public agenda by diminishing the ability of his main competitor - former Chief of Staff of the Israeli military Benny Gantz, who could rival Netanyahu on security - one of the election's key issues. For

that reason, the Likud campaign aimed to hurt Gantz's reputation as a political leader that is weak and lacking political experience. To achieve this goal, the Likud's campaign used global platforms and the friendship of Netanyahu with the Trump administration. Two weeks before the election Netanyahu called for Israeli-Arab action against the government in Tehran that was translated by his office as urging "war with Iran." He used the U.S.-organized summit in Warsaw and the 40th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution to rally the world against Iran and keep the Iranian issue high on the election's public agenda. In a video released by Netanyahu, which was aimed at global leaders and the Israeli public, and on his social networks' accounts, he emphasized the significance of Israeli and Arab Gulf states cooperation and used the word "war" against Iran. Following criticism of world leaders, the tone was changed, and the phrase "war with Iran" was replaced to "combating Iran". However, the original video of Netanyahu's remarks was not removed from his Hebrew-language Twitter and Facebook accounts, while the Israeli government posted the Hebrew-language video on the Prime Minister's social media accounts. A day before the election Netanyahu thanked President Trump for his decision to designate the Iranian Islamic revolutionary guards as a terrorist organization. The decision, which marked the first time that the U.S. branded a foreign government entity a terrorist group and placed economic pressure on the government of Iran. Netanyahu wrote on Twitter in Hebrew: "Thank you, my dear friend, President Donald Trump, for having decided to announce Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization. Thank you for the reply to another imperative ask that serves the interface of our nation and the locale. We'll proceed to act together in any way against the Iranian administration that undermines the state of Israel, the Joined together States and the Peace of the world."

### ***The Third Factor of the Post-True Campaign***

To achieve the goals of the campaign, the third factor analyzed in this research - providing a different definition of truth – should be examined. The post-truth campaign of the Likud started three weeks before the election. It followed a report in the media that Gantz was educated that his individual cell phone was hacked by Iranian insights, getting get to to all its substance. As can be concluded from the outcome of the election campaign, this was the start of the post-truth campaign, which the Likud successfully took advantage of, through a media report. It should be explained that the report was initially transmitted on Channel 12, the leading television channel in Israel, by a prominent political reporter, Amit Segal, and the information provided was based on the intelligent security service of the Shabak – which is highly respectful in Israel. As can be seen from the events that transpired following the media report, the story - which escalated to a post-truth campaign, apparently was not started by the Likud but by the media – and that is what legitimized the campaign. Nevertheless, the Likud took advantage of the report to launch an attack campaign against the leader of their main political rival.

The cell phone affair involved the right ingredients to become a post-truth campaign: accusations that Iran hacked the phone, rumors about cyber-attacks and dark net hackers, and the positive image of Netanyahu in the fight against Iran against the reckless behavior of Gantz. Concurring to the media report, Gantz was drawn closer by two authorities from Israel's security benefit amid the race campaign. He was educated that his private gadget was breached which the Iranians have the substance of his phone. The media report kept up that the Shabak told him that this implied that Iran had get to to all sorts of data he may have put away on his phone, both individual and proficient.

The post-truth campaign escalated after Channel 12 featured a photograph on screen of Gantz with his wife Revital. The relevance to the story was quoted by unnamed security



sources, that apparently claimed that whereas there was no delicate security data on Gantz's phone, the occurrence was "a individual embarrassment" for him. The claim was then intensified and followed by rumors about details that were on the phone, claiming that the occurrence may compromise Gantz with extortion and makes him unfit to be prime minister. It should be explained that there was no evidence of blackmail or any sensitive information on the phone, but the argument was intensified by the fact that Gantz was the army's Chief of Staff and retired just four years earlier. The rumors were motivated on social media and in mainstream media reports, and it can be concluded that the follow-up campaign of Likud supporters to the report on the media was swift and effective. They used the story to emphasize that Gantz is irresponsible, claiming that anyone who cannot protect his phone cannot serve as prime minister. The Twitter and Facebook campaign spread an accusation that Gantz is mentally unstable and is taking psychiatric drugs. The digital campaign also asserted that Gantz's spouse may be a part of the left-wing MACHSOM Observe, a women's gather which screens the activities of IDF officers at checkpoints within the West Bank and movies affirmed human rights manhandle. This affirmation was based on the Channel 12 report that cited anonymous security sources saying that there was no touchy security data on Gantz's phone but that it was "a individual embarrassment" for him. The rumors were further intensified after a news website – News1 – reported that Gantz hid information from Shabak. The report claimed that this information was about embarrassing content on his phone and that some of the videos were intimate in nature and had been sent to a woman who lives in the U.S. and with whom Gantz had a close relationship for several years.

### ***The Forth Factor of the Post-Truth Campaign***

The campaign is best examined according to the fourth factor analyzed in this research: claims based on emotional belief. The implications of the story, as successfully presented by the post-truth campaign, were that the man who could become prime minister (if elected), proved helpless in the face of cyberattacks by Israel's dangerous adversaries. The question asked by Likud supporters on social media was how Gantz can be trusted with the leadership of the nation? Using the image of Netanyahu as a leading global politician in the fight against Iran, and since the Iranian nuclear issue was high on public agenda during the election, the Likud campaign was designed to damage Gantz positions himself by saying that Israel's enemies in Iran support him.

The success of the post-truth campaign was because it was linked emotionally to the image of the two contesting candidates. The report provided a great opportunity for a post-truth campaign based on emotional information attacking the alleged limitations that Gantz would face if he would be elected as prime minister. The emotional campaign was based on information provided by another media report, that claimed that Gantz was informed that the phone hacking served as a potential security risk. The argument was that Iran might unveil information that was found on his cellphone after the election, if he is to be elected, or tamper with the election process. As part of the pre-planned campaign, these allegations triggered the response of the Likud. In a video posted on Facebook, the party claimed that the Iranian regime openly support Gantz. This video used the benefits of social media, which was aimed at Likud supporters, delivering an emotional message against Gantz, with no evidence to prove the allegations. However, as explained earlier about the advantage of post-truth campaign that is triggered on social media, no proof was needed since the message was emotionally aimed at Likud supporters. In contrast, the information that was delivered by the Likud campaign to the general public included a

softer message, which claimed that Iran interfered in the upcoming election to ensure victory for the Blue and White party.

The success of the campaign was also helped by the emotional trigger provided by Gantz himself, which insisted that there was no touchy security data on his phone. However, he refused to comment on the incident, claiming that he is not responding to information about his personal life. This response triggered another claim – that Gantz betrayed his wife by conducting extramarital affairs with subordinates in the army. This allegation was promoted by the Likud party as part of its campaign that Gantz is not fit to serve as prime minister. It appeared on social networks and then became a legitimate argument when it was reported on the mainstream media. The claim was denied by Gantz and Blue and White, although it was already on public agenda.

In examining the emotional campaign of the Likud, we can see that they were quick and effective in escalating the initial media report into a big campaign issue. This was a response that was intended to emotionally encourage Likud supporters, emphasizing the fight of the Prime Minister against the nuclear plan of Iran and the contrast scenario that Gantz would not be able to handle to issue properly. These statements have been used repeatedly by Netanyahu's Likud party in an attempt to label the former IDF leader weak on security issues and possibly vulnerable to blackmail. Netanyahu was quick to use the incident to his advantage, saying that his opponents are vulnerable to Iranian blackmail and blackmail, and are therefore unfit to be prime minister. Netanyahu even went as far as to say that Gantz was Iran's preferred candidate in the election. Similarly, Likud posted a video on social media claiming that "the Iranian regime openly supports Gantz." The influential success of this emotional allegation was since it was followed by Iran's remarks. The response of Iran gave legitimacy to the claim, even though it did not approve the Likud's campaign, providing "the truth but not the whole truth". Answering a question about the report, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi said that "the (Israeli) regime's officials are long used to spreading lies," according to the state news agency IRNA. Thus, according to the characteristics of post-truth, the response of Iran was correct, but had no relevant connection to the Likud's post-truth campaign. Yet, the Iranian response was beneficial to escalate the campaign as it triggered emotional response of its social media followers and further debate on national news outlets.

### ***The Fifth Factor of the Post-Truth Campaign***

In examining the fifth factor of a post-truth campaign - the success to trigger a response from the opposing party, the research examines the response of the opposing political faction to the report, in order to examine what trumpeted the campaign. The examination is based on the idea that the use of social media allowed to spread the messages of the campaign and trigger political and public response. As can be concluded from the outcome, the campaign was based on the idea that in the new order of the digital age, post-truth campaign needs to be based on factual facts, which enable to spread the message, even though it unveils not the whole truth or providing an alternative description of truth.

The response of Blue and White to the campaign was practical and not emotional, and this response could only escalate the claims. The response triggered the campaign rather than diminishing it, claiming that Netanyahu was behind the media report and that he was disseminating misinformation to hurt his political rival. Gantz himself responded by accusing the Likud for leaking the story and spreading fake news. Other members of his party confirmed the report, saying that the hacking took place which Gantz told his party authority colleagues approximately it after the Shabak drawn nearer him with the news. They too affirmed that Iran was capable but said that Iranian hacking endeavors were

persistent and that Gantz took all necessary security precautions throughout his military service and had nothing of sensitivity on his phone. Another response claimed that Iran was not behind the hack of Gantz's phone, while accusing Netanyahu of leaking the story to the media. They did not explicitly say who they believed to have hacked into the phone, but hinted that Mr. Netanyahu was involved: "The Iranians were not behind the hack, they were not the ones attacking the Prime Minister's opponents. Someone has degraded the political system and is ready to sacrifice all values for political survival."

It is important to see the damages caused by the response of Blue and White party, Gantz and other party members to the allegations. Their response to the story served as proof to the success of the fifth factor of a post-truth campaign - to trigger a response from the opposing party. In examining the response of Blue and White to the report, we can see that it attempted to contrast the media report, but in fact did the opposite in escalating the campaign.

Their response was confused and unorganized. Blue and White first inquired the Lawyer Common to conduct "a quick, comprehensive, and determined" request to find the source of the spill, and to arrange Netanyahu to dodge making individual and political utilize of offices beneath his domain or insights set some time recently him. At that point they affirmed the report in an official explanation that perused: "We do not comment on issues that are at the heart of state security. It is vital that this occurrence happened four a long time after Gantz wrapped up his residency as Chief of Staff, that raises numerous questions with respect to the timing of the report's distribution." Following this, the party issued its own election ad in which its top candidates listed their military achievements and told Netanyahu: "You will not teach us what leadership is, and certainly not what national responsibility is either." Finally, Gantz himself did not respond directly to the allegations, and instead attacked the report. He questioned the timing of the publication, as the story was leaked to Channel 12 less than a month before election day. Gantz also maintained that it was aimed to hurt his chances to be elected as prime minister and insisted that the phone is not an issue that is relevant to the election. He expelled a address approximately whether there was any humiliating substance on the phone, saying that he would not elevate such "ethical nosiness" with a reaction. He also denied claims that the phone contained a sex tape or fabric relating to any relationship with a lady that may well be utilized to blackmail him.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research establishes a theoretical approach to examine modern post-truth political campaign. The framework of a post-truth campaign examined here is based on five main factors – which must all be achieved in order for the desired outcome to be achieved.

The first factor is marinating a goal of achieving a practical outcome of the campaign. This means that the campaign needs to be pre-planned and executed according to the initial goals of the party that initiates the campaign. The research argues that the value of the truth and the use of information should be determined according to practical outcomes which can be achieved. It is also argued that the outcomes of the campaign are determined based on the success to control public agenda. This is the second factor discussed, based on the idea that the fulfillment of the goals of the campaign are determined according to media response, and thus success of post-truth campaign should be looked at according to its influence on public debate. To achieve the goal of dominating public agenda, the third factor examined here is the need to prove the validity of the arguments of the campaign. To do so, the campaign needs to provide a different definition of truth, based on the idea there can be multiple versions of truth that can be applied to the same argument and the fact that

post-true campaign is based on partial information that is aimed at emotional rather than rational conclusions. The domination of public agenda is also achieved through the fourth factor examined here - the use of claims based on emotional beliefs.

The research claims that in modern political campaigns objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion, and thus post-truth campaign should be based on ideas that determine the way that people judge information according to the social group they belong to. This claim brings the research to conclude that modern political campaigns are founded on competition between rival social groups which build their agenda based on emotional claims, and these claims can be manipulated by post-truth and alternative arguments which are distributed on different platforms, including mainstream and social media. But as determined by the research, in order to succeed in maintaining a competing dialogue between rival social groups, the fifth factor should be achieved. This factor is the success to trigger a response from the opposing party, based on the idea that the new order of the digital age means that post-truth campaign needs to be based on actual and alternative facts which enable to spread the message, even though the information shared by the campaign unveils not the whole truth or provides an alternative description of truth. This factor determines the success of the campaign to force the opposing camp to respond and thereby control public agenda and the validity to the claims of the campaign.

This paper focuses on the post-truth campaign of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against his main political rival, Benny Gantz, in the election held in April 2019. The research found that the campaign achieved all five factors and was a main instrument in the political agenda of the Likud party. It argues that we can identify aspects of alternative truth and partial facts in the campaign, which were based on emotions more than content. The success of the campaign can be judged according to the response of the opposing party and the success to dominate public agenda. Although the opponents of the Likud party rejected the claims and considered them as lies, significant portions of the media and the public found them acceptable.

This conclusion is supported by the main goal of a post-truth campaign examined in this paper: maintaining a practical goal based on alternative truth and on emotions rather than facts which could appeal to his electoral base. The research shows that supporters of Netanyahu believed the alternative truth of the campaign, which was based on partial information and emotional claims. The success to win the support of the mainstream media and the domination of public agenda prove that the alternative truth delivered by the campaign became the practical truth of the election. This conclusion can be a lesson for Western nations too, since post-truth has identified campaigning in many countries in recent years, turning the political world upside down across the globe.

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