Media and Communication
2025 • Volume 13 • Article 10335
https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.10335

cogitatio

ARTICLE

Open Access Journal

Online Emotional Landscape of Government and Parliament Communication in Times of Crisis

Aya Yadlin [1], Gal Yavetz [2], and Jenny Bronstein [2]

[1] School of Communication, Bar-Ilan University, Israel
[2] Department of Information Science, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Correspondence: Aya Yadlin (aya.yadlin@biu.ac.il)

Submitted: 15 March 2025 **Accepted:** 12 June 2025 **Published:** 13 August 2025

Issue: This article is part of the issue "Government Communication on Social Media: Balancing Platforms, Propaganda, and Public Service" edited by Maud Reveilhac (LUT University) and Nic DePaula (SUNY Polytechnic Institute), fully open access at https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.i496

Abstract

This study examines how social media users emotionally respond to Israeli politicians' messages during crises based on political alignment and crisis type. With Israel's frequent civic and military crises, the case study in this article aims to offer unique insights to scholars, practitioners, and the public invested in the intersection of online media, emotions, and crisis. To this end, we built a dataset of Facebook posts ($N = 25{,}000$) published by all active right, left, and center members of the Israeli parliament and government over a period of one year (November 2022–November 2023). We ensured that the dataset includes both routine and crisis periods, particularly the judicial reform unrest (civic crisis) and the Hamas–Israel war following the October 7 attack (military crisis). Our statistical analysis indicated two major trends in the dataset: (a) during the military crisis, emotional markers that were previously considered to correlate and cluster (sad and angry) are not merely different, as they stand in opposition to one another; (b) crisis periods, especially military, invite use of "edge" reactions, and see a significant increase in negative emotions, whereas routine times prompt more neutral or positive reactions. Reading the findings through the combination of affordances theory, mediatization theory, and the "template for emotions" concept, we suggest that social media may amplify negative reactions beyond politicians' influence, as the limited emotional spectrum offered on platforms might steer users to certain emotive responses, affecting risk management in crises. These insights call for decision-makers to consider the implications of emotional appeals and incentives on social media, especially during crises, to foster safer democratic public discourse.

Keywords

affordances; audience reactions; crisis; emotions and politics; Facebook; judicial reform; political communication

1. Introduction

"You are more than welcome to be angry about it, I am angry too" (Lapid, 2024). This opening quotation is taken from Yair Lapid's Facebook post addressing the failure of the Israeli parliamentary opposition, led by him, to overthrow the government. The post refers to efforts made during the 2023 civic protest that took place across Israel in response to the government's push for judicial reform. In essence, political messages such as this represent the myriad ways emotions are infused into politicians' online communicative appeals to convey a political stance, legitimize negative or positive valence amongst the public, and mobilize civic participation through identification and affect. Considering the valuable work carried out by social and political scientists, the scarcity of studies on the unique intersection of emotions, online political communication, and crisis becomes evident, where less attention has been paid to the online emotional reactions of citizens to politicians' persuasion. This rare combination is at the heart of our study, as global political polarization, national and international crises, and ever-growing use in online media platforms all highlight the urgency to inquire into this formulation.

In the past two decades, political figures' use of social media has become a worldwide norm (Hofmann, 2019; Marland, 2018). While effective political communication in times of crisis has long been a sign of responsible leadership (Lay, 2002), a growing body of knowledge highlights new and disturbingly unprecedented threats to democratic societies in terms of technology and rhetoric. According to scholars in the field, much of the political discourse presented online nowadays propels negative emotional reactions in citizens (Bobba, 2019), allows for polarization and radicalization of society (Aslan, 2021; Tsuria & Yadlin-Segal, 2021), legitimizes rejection and exclusion of minorities and disenfranchised communities (Jost et al., 2020), and minimizes affective responses to crises (Kušen & Strembeck, 2021; Morosanu, 2020).

At the same time, the valuable knowledge regarding social media's impact on political communication and emotional political appeals mainly focuses on synchronous exploration of leaders rather than their followers (Ben-Ghiat, 2020). That is, studying the same crisis, at the same time, across the globe. Thus, diachronic scholarly knowledge about online political messaging and reactions is incomplete at best. That is, in one locality, through different crises over time. Specifically, it is unclear whether and how political alignment (right, center, and left) and crisis periods correlate with audience emotional reactions online. In this study, we aim to bridge this gap by examining the use of emotive political messages online in military crisis and civic crisis in one locality, Israel, over a period of one year.

2. Literature Review

To explore the relationship between online political messaging and emotional reactions in times of crisis, we first present a literature review pertinent to the meeting place of the three areas. The first section traces the scholarly discussions about the role of emotions in politics overall, explaining the evolving nature of the field from political expressions to public reactions. The second section narrows down the discussion and situates it in the field of political communication and, within it, the specific context of online communication platforms. Finally, the third section reviews the literature on emotional political appeals online, specifically in times of crisis. Throughout these three sections, we identify the scholarly gaps that must be met by a well-informed empirical exploration and establish this study's rationale, objectives, and significance.

2.1. The Role of Emotions in Politics and Political Communication

The status of emotions in political research is ambivalent. As reviewed in this section below, emotions are perceived as internally inconsistent, holding multiple, even contradicting, uses and meanings. Given that emotive messages play a critical role in various facets of the political landscape, their significance as drivers of public engagement, mobilization, and opinion-shaping requires ongoing exploration in empirical studies (Wolak & Sokhey, 2022). Historically, the study of emotions in political communication prioritized semi-objective elements, such as rhetorical structures and logical persuasion techniques, over the impact of emotion and the reception patterns of different audiences (Demertzis, 2006). Thus, Frevert and Pahl (2022, p. 3) argue that political scientists "have tended to neglect the intense and varied entanglement of politics and emotions."

Gustafsson and Hall (2021, p. 974) defined emotions as socially pronounced patterns where recognizable signifiers of feelings, such as anger and sadness, are communicated. Each emotion possesses a "logic" dictating "when, why, and how" it is felt and expressed, with associated implications and meanings. The expression of an emotion carries certain consequences or effects—influencing behavior, decision-making, or social interactions—that are shaped by the emotion's context and how it is understood and reacted to by others (Gustafsson & Hall, 2021). Thus, emotions are understood both as tools for conveying messages and as reactions to said messages, a system of intentions and meaning-making processes that is always relational, context-dependent, and in flux (Rosenwein, 2002, 2006). As Kotliar (2016) shows, emotions play a significant role in the pursuit and exercise of political power, attachment, and opposition. Being a complex system of social indicators, emotions are understood as internal and external to the individual, deep and shallow, somatic and cognitive, of mind and matter, simultaneously experienced individually and publicly mobilizing (Ahmed, 2004/2014; Denzin, 2017; Reddy, 2001; Yadlin-Segal, 2018; Zhang, 2022).

Hence, exploring emotions becomes a challenging task requiring time and place contextualization. Popular examples of the varying nature of emotive messages in politics range chronologically and geographically. From the use of pride and shame to affect citizens' anger and aggression in Adolf Hitler's speeches (Scheff & Retzinger, 1991); through communicating Chinese sentiments of enthusiasm towards change and revolution under Mao's leadership (Perry, 2002); confidence and hope in Roosevelt's *Fireside Chats* on the radio and fear in Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 television *Daisy* advertisement in the US (Amico, 2022; Ryfe, 2001); and all the way to blame in Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's online messages to his electoral base (Mordechay & Yadlin, 2024). To situate emotions as an operationalizable variable, we explore two accepted principles within political communication.

First, one of the most well-accepted divisions in political science and communication, both online and offline, separates how politicians express emotions and how the public receives, feels, and ultimately acts upon them (Marcus, 2000; Selva, 2020). Second, researchers agree that while emotions can be fine-tuned differently in different contexts, all emotions necessitate collective, publicly expressed guidelines to be understood and mobilized. Frevert and Pahl (2022) name these guidelines "templates for emotions" that provide societies with a toolkit for feeling and navigating emotions in politics. Since collective understandings require the public sharing of these templates, media and communication outlets became crucial arenas for unpacking the interconnectedness of emotions and politics. Hence, data-driven projects,

such as the one presented here, must focus on the appeals and reactions in online-mediated political messages as a means for defining such templates.

The study of emotions in politics began to gain traction through the early works of Lazarsfeld et al. (1944), who emphasized how politicians aim to appeal to voters' emotions publicly to secure electoral success. This period marked a shift from viewing political communication as purely rational to recognizing emotions' powerful role in shaping voter behavior, attachments, and information diffusion. Thus, media content and communication style helped facilitate such "templates for emotions" over the years through publicly shared messages from politicians and political figures. As a whole, literature in political communication focuses on the strategic use of emotions to mobilize public support (De Castella et al., 2009; Gadarian & Brader, 2023; Reveilhac, 2023). Political messages using emotional appeals can motivate audience participation, activate existing loyalties, and facilitate persuasion (Brader, 2005, 2011). For example, when citizens feel enthusiastic, they are more likely to engage in political activities such as voting and reinforcing existing loyalties. Contrarily, politically mediated messages that induce fear increase vigilance and make citizens more likely to reevaluate their political choices (Weber, 2013).

Thus, while emotional appeals in political campaigns have been shown to elicit behavioral effects on citizens (van der Velden & Rebasso, 2021), studying the formation and impact of these templates of emotions can be a complex task as a whole, and in political communication in particular. Feelings are deeply subjective, and they can fluctuate instinctively. For this reason, studies have focused on the cognitive and public dimensions of political communication, namely, language and emotive elements conveyed through it (Szabó & Szabó, 2022). Our study aims to expand this notion by mapping out the statistical relationship of complex variables (such as the type of emotional cluster and political alignment) as expressed during crisis.

Moreover, as scholarly literature shows, public templates of emotions are no longer the sole property of political figures and institutions. Online platforms, as we further discuss in the following section on political communication online, offer ready-made emotional reactions to shared messages. These are platform features, i.e., possibilities that platforms present to their users for participation and engagement online, which should be understood through the prism of the "affordance theory" (Gibson, 1979; Noy, 2021) as discussed in the following section.

2.2. Emotions in Political Communication Online

Scholars have focused on online media to show how online platforms have become crucial arenas in political life over the last two and a half decades. These platforms both enable politicians to communicate directly with their followers and reach broader audiences (Vaccari et al., 2015) and enhance citizens' abilities to produce feedback through interactions with politicians and content sharing online (Yadlin-Segal, 2018). Thus, a new wave of studies has joined existing literature on political messages through speech, radio, television, and cinema (to name a few), focusing on emerging media technologies online, concerning both politicians and their active, engaged audiences (Gekker, 2019; Ilan, 2024; Yavetz, 2024). As mentioned above, this can be done through analysis of the varying interaction, engagement, and participation possibilities afforded by a given environment or object to an actor, clustered under "affordance theory."

Within media and communication studies, the theory serves as a conceptual framework for analyzing the evolving relationship between audiences and the media outlets/contents with which they engage. In digital media research specifically, scholars apply affordance theory to investigate how online platforms correlate with user participation. In the context of online platform research, the application of the affordance theory is built on several empirically established core assumptions: (a) emotional content, particularly hyperpartisan political posts, elicits heightened attention and reactions (Sturm Wilkerson et al., 2021); (b) affordances simultaneously enable and constrain these reactions (Bakshy et al., 2015; Eslami et al., 2015); and (c) emotional reactions are varied through the effort a user is required to invest in an affordance, where low-effort affordances (thumbs up or down for example) might worsen polarization and widen ideological divides online (Wang & Sundar, 2022).

Affordance theory is especially apt for studying emotional reactions to political messaging on Facebook, as it draws attention to how platform-specific features affect, enhance, regulate, and sometimes limit users' emotional expressions online (Bossetta, 2018; Steinert & Dennis, 2022; Sturm Wilkerson et al., 2021). Adopting an affordance perspective, we argue that social media platforms may independently magnify emotional reactions, beyond the intended influence of political actors, as the limited emotional spectrum offered on platforms might steer users to certain emotive responses, affecting risk management in crises.

This relationship between technological affordances and society is often also understood within the context of mediatization theory, which is used to unpack societal developments through a technological lens. Here, media technologies are approached as agents of social, political, and cultural impact alongside human actors (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014; Hepp et al., 2015). Mediatization, according to Hjarvard (2013), "generally refers to the process through which core elements of a social or cultural activity (e.g., politics, religion, and education) become influenced by and dependent on the media" (p. 30). Thus, looking at technological impact on society, non-media social actors (such as politicians and their audiences) adapt to new media technologies' rationale, rules, and affordances. Audience members, or online media users, become more and more active online through participatory features (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014; Yadlin-Segal, 2017), highlighting the central place that online mediated platforms play in political interactions. This approach, in essence, complements the affordances framework as presented above. Together, mediatization theory and affordances theory allow us a holistic approach to the relationship between online features and users' utilization in the political realm.

We utilize the mediatization theory alongside the affordances theory as an overarching framework to understand the political realm as influenced by both the human component (political actors and their online active audience) and technological affordances on social media. The study of these affordances is still underdeveloped in the intersection of the political realm and emotions (such as in the case of hope, sadness, fear, despair, anger, and frustration as politically constructed public emotions; Noy, 2016, 2021) and specifically, in the platform we seek to study: Facebook (Navon & Noy, 2021).

Facebook is particularly significant in the context of political communication, both globally and in Israel. It remains one of the most popular online communication platforms for the adult population (ages 18+) in Israel during 2024 (Bezeq, 2025). The platform is widely used for political discussions, politicians' communication with citizens, and public engagement (Steinfeld & Lev-On, 2024). In fact, in the Israeli case, following the October 7 Hamas attack and the Israel–Hamas war, Facebook's importance has only grown,

becoming one of the primary platforms for political discussion, maintaining its role in shaping public opinion during crises (Yavetz, 2024). This joins the overall trend of migration of Israeli users across online media platforms and their abandonment of X (formerly Twitter) by approximately 20% of users following its purchase by Elon Musk (Goicman, 2024).

With these contextual and theoretical frameworks in mind, much of the renewed interest in online-mediated emotional appeals appears to focus on populist parties, politicians, and language rather than on a broad spectrum of political traditions and alignments. In the context of emotions and online media affordances, this is not surprising. Maier and Nai (2020) suggest that politicians who use emotional messages, especially negative ones, receive much more attention than their peers, both in traditional and social media. When it comes to audiences' reactions to political messaging, populist political content benefits social media platforms. As negatively inclined content amplifies social media use and traffic, online media platforms tend to artificially emphasize it in the click-through and attention economy, seeking to amplify users' engagement with political content. Jost et al. (2020) found that exclusivist populist messages mediated online, such as anti-elitism and the scapegoating of minority groups, increase the number of angry responses made by followers towards these communities. Populist political content, which generates more buzz, thus became a potent instrument for politicians (Aslan, 2021; Park, 2015). In contrast, inclusive populism and positive portrayal of ordinary citizens lead to a higher number of love responses online and reduce the number of angry responses. This corresponds with citizens' ongoing cognitive and emotional needs to feel part of a greater national collective and activate members' appeal towards a cause greater than themselves (Wolak & Sokhey, 2022).

This analytical focus has become a pressing task as the past two decades have seen mediated political communication become a fertile ground for the rise of illiberal democracies, or at the very least, a hostile and polarized political atmosphere worldwide (Mordechay & Yadlin, 2024; Polyák, 2019). In short, while mediated populist emotional appeals gain popularity, their intersection with online platforms is framed as an agent of disruptive change. Social media serve as polarizing platforms by encouraging selective exposure of users to congenial views, creating fragmented online communities, and escalating hostile sentiments toward opposing groups (Yarchi et al., 2020; Zeeuw & Gekker, 2023). This is especially evident in politically divided environments like Israel, where sharp ideological rifts often make users more cautious about sharing political views on social media, fearing potential backlash from openly expressing partisan affiliations against the often aggressive and polarized online environment (Ziv & Yavetz, 2025).

Populist core ideas and communication style have diffused into the appeals and manifestos of traditionally non-populist mainstream parties, making it a propelling force within political arenas today, both globally and specifically in Israel (Tzelgov & Wilson, 2024). This requires attention in any exploration of politics and emotions. Considering these trends, the scarcity of studies on non-populist political communication becomes evident as a scholarly gap in knowledge. Thus, our aim in this research project is not only to contribute to the growing body of studies on populist emotional political appeals but also to holistically continue to include reactions to non-populist online political communication, holistically studying the political online mediascape. If we take seriously the role of academia in promoting fair and constructive knowledge to better society, understanding the reactions of users online, active audience members, to these trends is a crucial step in this direction. This is done here by paying attention to these trends in times of crisis.

2.3. Emotional Political Responses Online in Times of Crisis

As mentioned above, any study of emotions must provide a clear context and operationalization to produce effective results. The context in which we ask to study emotive political communication is that of a local crisis. Literature on emotions and politics suggests that during global and local crises, politicians, backed by mainstream news media, often prompt fear through provocative language beyond what is deemed appropriate (Ihekweazu, 2017; Windsor et al., 2015; Yadlin & Marciano, 2021).

State-level, or national crises—be it global health pandemics, natural disasters, war, terrorism, famine, poverty, or major economic disruptions—are understood as emergencies that require immediate and coordinated communication strategies from state-level officials (Boin et al., 2017; Christensen & Lægreid, 2020). Ideally, in these time periods, leaders' communicative choices in addressing the public bear particular importance, playing an essential role in fostering affective responses and compliance with emergency regulations (Evensen & Clarke, 2012; Pan & Meng, 2016; Rhodes-Purdy et al., 2021). However, in reality, discussions regarding crisis management are often used to capture political capital and worthiness in the eyes of potential audiences (Boin et al., 2017). Recent scholarship has shown how government communication on social media is susceptible to such politicization, with shifts in speech acts, sentiment, and engagement patterns reflecting the ideological alignment between agency leadership and institutional missions (DePaula & Hansson, 2025). Nowhere is the relationship between emotive language and political messaging more pronounced than in times of crisis, transforming and propelling the construction of national and transnational identities (Hutchison, 2016).

The Covid-19 crisis is a recent example of this claim. Morosanu (2020), for example, argues that some leaders, like German Chancellor Angela Merkel, effectively used emotional appeals to invoke calmness and rationality. Merkel's speeches were transparent and included specific actions, which helped reduce public fear and instill collective calm. On the other end of the spectrum, Morosanu (2020) argues that populist leaders often invoked fear as part of their messaging, intentionally or inadvertently, which led to collective panic. Speeches made during the pandemic by populist political figures like Donald Trump often resulted in heightened anxiety. These speeches created confusion, ultimately leading to collective panic instead of reassurance. When it comes to the productive management of crises, this difference is crucial and can have far-reaching influences in improving mortality rates and implementing life-saving measures.

Similarly, studies attest that during a military crisis, politicians use emotive messages to gain support and reach larger audiences (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). This was found to be true worldwide in studies about the UK, Turkey, the Netherlands, and Russia, for example (Bil-Jaruzelska & Monzer, 2022; Crilley & Chatterje-Doody, 2020; Duncombe, 2019; Halperin & Gross, 2011). In these cases, emotive messages escalated tensions between countries, particularly through pathos. This went as far as manipulating audience perception, fostering affective support, and deepening polarization between global actors involved in the war.

Periods of crisis are regularly marked by emotional polarization and heightened political divisions, often through expressions of negative sentiment online. Within this mediated emotional landscape on Facebook, particular attention has been given to the "angry" and "sad" reactions. Although these responses are commonly detected together and have been found to reflect comparable emotional negativity (e.g., Anwar &

Giglietto, 2024; Freeman et al., 2019; Larsson, 2024), their interchangeable use remains a point of conceptual and empirical critique. Some scholars caution against conflating these two emotional reaction markers, arguing that despite their shared valence, "angry" and "sad" may convey distinct emotional and communicative intentions. Paolillo (2023), for instance, notes their tendency to co-occur in empirical datasets, yet stresses the need for more nuanced investigations into possible different functions as well as the different intentionality behind them. This highlights an additional significant gap in existing knowledge concerning the differentiated roles of negative emotional reactions during times of crisis.

If we ask to summarize the main focal points of these cases, it appears that indeed, in the information society, scholars have been focusing on the new ways in which politicians and audiences seek affective connections, communication, and communities in times of crisis. Against the backdrop of this important work, the gap in knowledge is thus clear. The scarcity of studies that specifically focus on audience reactions afforded by technology platforms becomes evident. We thus see the need to explore the relationship between emotive political communication, social media affordances provided to citizens, and crises in multiple modalities (e.g., civic and military crises) on a local level. This combination is rarely considered in scholarly literature on emotive political communication and affective publics in online contexts. Discussions about the need for holistic diachronic accounts that inform, prepare, and assist scholars studying emotive political use of online media in crises are limited. Less is known about handling multiple, different crises within the same country diachronically. We aim to use the case study of the crises in Israel to fill this notable knowledge gap.

In the following section we provide an in-depth description of the methodologies that enabled us to produce this often-over-looked arena. Through this exploration we seek to answer the main RQ.

3. Problem Statement and Research Questions

Per the scholarly review and knowledge gaps mentioned above, the main goal of this study is to understand how political alignment (right, center, and left) and crisis periods interact with users' emotional responses. Following common practice in Israeli political science, we categorized parties into right, center, and left blocs based on the Israeli Democracy Institute's classification. While these categories are not always clear-cut in a multiparty system (Yavetz, 2025), they offer a widely accepted framework for political analysis (Zur & Bakker, 2023). Moreover, our research strives to understand the role of Facebook in creating non-human, non-politically oriented "templates for emotions," focusing on the platform's specific technological affordances of emotional reactions. To approach this, we have formulated the following research questions:

> RQ1: How do political alignment (right, center, and left) and crisis periods (routine, civil crisis, military crisis) correlate with total interactions and emotional responses on political Facebook posts?
>
> > RQ1a: What is the relationship between political alignment, total interactions, and emotional responses online?
> >
> > RQ1b: What are the differences between routine times and times of crisis (e.g., civil crisis and military crisis) in terms of total interactions and emotional responses online?

4. Methodology

To answer the RQs, we collected data using CrowdTangle, a software for online data mining from public social media accounts. CrowdTangle collects and extracts information on all of Facebook's interaction affordances, such as likes, shares, reactions, and comments (Atad et al., 2023; Yavetz, 2024). The use of this tool for collecting and organizing data in the context of governmental and parliamentary discourses, as is the case with our study, is well-established in the literature (Atad et al., 2023; El Baradei et al., 2021; Punziano et al., 2021; Yavetz, 2024) and will connect our methodological approach to existing literature in the field (Eberl et al., 2020; El Baradei et al., 2021; Pascual-Ferrá et al., 2021; Toff & Mathews, 2024).

Our sampling process sought to extract data from all active Israeli members of the Knesset (Parliament) and members of the government following the inauguration of the 25th Knesset on November 15, 2022. The data collection period encompassed a whole year and concluded on November 15, 2023. We decided to cover an entire year of data to produce a holistic, well-grounded corpus that reflects a panoramic view of the year's events, specifically choosing a year with abundant crisis contexts (as elaborated in-depth in Section 4.1).

Out of all the parliament and government members ($N = 133$), we found 87 active members with official, verified, public Facebook pages from which data could be extracted. In doing so, we met the required ethical guidelines for using social media data, in this case, Facebook (Yadlin-Segal et al., 2020). Meta's policies are critical in ensuring that the collected data is accurate, reliable, and compliant with privacy regulations, and only publicly available content from verified pages was included in our data corpus.

Indeed, relying exclusively on Facebook, while performed ethically and comprehensively, can introduce several limitations that may affect the generalizability and depth of research findings. In terms of user reactions, certain demographics may prefer other platforms over Facebook. Younger audiences, for instance, are increasingly gravitating towards platforms such as YouTube and TikTok (Gottfried, 2024). Solely analyzing Facebook data might, therefore, overlook younger segments of the population. Second, when considering this empirical choice, Facebook is, of course, built on an exposure algorithm. The way information spreads on Facebook differs from platforms like X or TikTok, potentially leading to platform-specific biases in research outcomes. In this context, K. C. Yang et al. (2020), for example, illustrate how the architecture of Facebook facilitates different reactions to posts and different patterns of misinformation spread compared to X. These differences exemplify a glimpse into how platform mechanisms impact user engagement and how information is shared and received, suggesting that research findings based solely on one platform may not be generalizable to others (Q. Yang et al., 2022).

These cannot be fully controlled. However, we have aimed to limit these biases as much as possible by theorizing platform affordances as part of the research design. By focusing on the participatory act that is pushed by the platform itself, our dataset is not simply a harvested corpus from a preexisting online mediated socio-political reality. Rather, by treating our data as a product of platformed mediation, or platform-shaped body of knowledge, a meeting place of users and platforms, we inherently acknowledge these biases (Bakshy et al., 2015; Bossetta, 2018; Eslami et al., 2015; Steinert & Dennis, 2022; Sturm Wilkerson et al., 2021). As such, "it is safe to say that the phenomenon was analyzed as it organically occurred online and as Internet users engaged with it" (Yadlin & Klein-Shagrir, 2021, p. 2541) where holistically, algorithmic visibility is compiled with user behavior online (Bucher & Helmond, 2018).

4.1. Data Corpus

Our finalized dataset includes members from the following Israeli political parties, ordered by the number of representatives in our sample: $n = 29$ Likud (National Liberal Movement), $n = 16$ Yesh Atid (There is a Future), $n = 10$ HaMachane HaMamlachti (National Unity), $n = 9$ HaTzionut HaDatit (Religious Zionism), $n = 6$ Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home), $n = 5$ Hadash-Ta'al (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and Arab Movement for Renewal), $n = 4$ Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power), $n = 3$ HaAvoda (Labor), $n = 3$ Ra'am (United Arab List), $n = 2$ Shas (Association of Torah-Observant Sephardim), and no active pages of members of Noam or Yahadut Hatorah (United Torah Judaism), mostly, due to religious ideology of social media avoidance.

The initial data extraction resulted in $N = 25{,}137$ posts. However, after sifting through the corpus, we removed posts that omitted critical analysis aspects, such as engagement rates or sentiment scores. Such omissions are acceptable in automated data collection and stem from various reasons, including incomplete metadata, technical errors, or privacy setting restrictions. Thus, the corpus was refined to include $N = 24{,}491$ posts published over the duration of the sampled year. To answer the RQs, this data corpus encompasses the following variables:

1. Political party: Ten political parties in the 25th Knesset whose members have active Facebook pages.
2. Political alignment: The traditional political alignment of right, left, and center (Israeli Democracy Institute, n.d.). This categorization is used instead of coalition vs. opposition, given that during the studied crises, politicians have moved between opposition and coalition several times. This categorization, while possibly somewhat reductive and not fully indicative of the nuances of Israel's political landscape, is still commonly accepted and utilized both for policy-making and empirical research scholarship (Katz, 2024).
3. Total number of posts: Number of posts per individual politician as included in the finalized data set.
4. Number of individual politicians: Eighty-seven politicians with verified public Facebook pages.
5. Average total interactions: The average number of interactions (likes, comments, shares, and reactions) per post, indicating the level of public engagement.
6. Average positive sentiment: Reactions indicating amiable sentiment in existing literature (like, love, hug, wow) per politician.
7. Average negative sentiment: Reactions indicating irate sentiment in existing literature (sad, angry) per politician.
8. Data period: Separate time slots within the year of data collection. NC (non-crisis routine): The first three months of government, from its inception on November 15, 2022, until January 4, 2023 (the starting point of the civil crisis). CC (civil crisis): The period following Yariv Levin, Israel's Minister of Justice, announcement of his plan for a judicial reform, resulting in unparalleled social unrest in Israel. This variable operationalizes the consecutive nine months between Levin's announcement, made on January 5, 2023, and October 6, 2023, the day before the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, which initiated the military crisis. MC (military crisis): The first month of the Hamas–Israel war, from October 7, 2023, until November 15, 2023.

Table 1 details the distribution of active Facebook pages across the Israeli political landscape, along with political alignment, total number of posts, individual politicians, and average engagement metrics such as total interactions, positive sentiment, and negative sentiment for each party (Eberl et al., 2020; Jost et al., 2020; Widmann, 2021).

Table 1. Facebook post statistics per political party.

Party	Political alignment	Total number of posts	Number of unique politicians	Average total interactions	Average positive sentiment	Average negative sentiment
Hadash-Ta'al	Left	1,103	5	1,124.7	860.12	35.42
Israel Beiteinu	Right	2,120	6	776.38	543.53	38.11
Jewish Power	Right	1,300	4	4,755.28	3,715.26	169.54
Labor	Left	2,038	3	757.76	459.48	56.61
Likud	Right	7,880	29	2,039.91	1,528.17	71.84
Noam	Right	0	0	–	–	–
Ra'am	Left	362	3	311.04	266.38	4.42
Religious Zionism	Right	2,701	9	936.95	685.83	20.82
Shas	Right	68	2	905.81	642.21	60.93
National Unity	Center	2,360	10	1,215.4	870.44	61.53
United Torah Judaism	Right	0	0	–	–	–
Yesh Atid	Center	4,559	16	1,059.71	708.37	62.25
Subtotal		24,491	87	13,882.94	10,279.79	580.47

5. Data Analysis

To answer the research questions, we conducted statistical analyses of the dataset. Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to determine whether followers and likes at posting should be included as covariates in further analyses. Descriptive statistics for total interactions and emotional responses were calculated, and mean ranking was applied to adjust for deviations from normality.

To examine differences across political alignment and crisis periods, two-way ANCOVA tests (3 × 3) were conducted. The independent variables are political alignment (right, center, left) and crisis period (NC, CC, MC), with total interactions and emotional responses as dependent variables. Covariates include the number of followers and likes at posting, where we have sought to study the emotional responses of the Israeli public to politicians' messaging online. To this end, we have utilized Facebook reactions, a series of fixed emotive emojis that Facebook users can use to react to a post. Facebook reactions are non-textual, click-based user interactions with shared Facebook content, presented on Facebook at the bottom of a post (Freeman et al., 2019). As of the data collection period, these reactions are presented by Facebook as the following 7-option based emotive spectrum: like, love, haha, care, wow, angry, and sad. We examined whether significant differences would be found in the total interactions and different emotional responses online according to political alignment. We have focused on two variables: political alignment—right, center, and left; and period—NC, CC, and MC—with distribution ($p < .05$).

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation, as well as the median of these measures. Shapiro-Wilk's analyses indicated that the distribution of the study measures, the number of different emotional responses online, and the number of followers and likes at posting, deviate significantly from normal.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the different emotional responses online and number of followers and likes at posting (N = 24,491).

	Descriptive statistics		
Emotional responses online	Mean	*SD*	Median
Total interactions	1,567.92	3,581.13	385
Likes	1,017.68	2,299.43	241
Comments	265.45	795.82	52
Shares	87.86	268.12	19
Love	95.55	353.86	13
Wow	5.12	50.26	0
Haha	18.91	113.15	1
Sad	46.59	385.59	1
Angry	16.35	99.17	1
Care	14.41	102.77	2
Followers at posting	190,926.65	524,006.41	25,926
Likes at posting	182,132.04	508,262.80	23,109

Here, the number of followers and likes at posting should be taken as covariate variables, given the considerable variation in the number of followers and likes among the different Facebook pages. Pearson correlation analyses between the number of followers and likes at posting and the different emotional responses online indicate significantly positive correlations. This implies that as the number of followers and likes at posting increases, the total interactions and the number of different emotional responses online also increase respectively. Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients.

Table 3. Pearson correlation coefficients between the number of followers and likes at posting and the different emotional responses online (N = 24,491).

	Pearson correlation coefficients	
Emotional responses online	Followers at posting	Likes at posting
Total interactions	.51***	.50***
Likes	.51***	.50***
Comments	.36***	.36***
Shares	.31***	.30***
Love	.46***	.45***
Wow	.05***	.05***
Haha	.17***	.17***
Sad	.12***	.12***
Angry	.15***	.15***
Care	.22***	.22***

Note: *** $p < .001$.

Finally, before examining the research question, we have conducted an exploratory factor analysis to explore the various factors of the seven emotional responses online among the Israeli population and determine if these factors of different emotions resemble those found in previous research: positive, negative, and neutral. Similarly to previous research, an exploratory factor analysis using varimax rotation based on an eigenvalue greater than one indicated that the three orthogonal factors are consistent with the seven different emotional responses on Facebook (like, love, haha, care, wow, angry, and sad). However, as we will elaborate, some factors (or emotional reactions) that cluster together in this current analysis do not resemble clustering patterns found in previous research. Table 4 presents the exploratory factor analysis results.

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis of the 7 emotional responses online (N = 24,491).

	Factor loadings		
Emotional responses online	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Love	.94	–	–
Likes	.89	–	–
Haha	.46	–	–
Sad	–	.91	–
Care	–	.81	–
Angry	–	–	.84
Wow	–	–	.53
Eigenvalues	2.42	1.26	1.02
% of explained variance	29.10%	21.88%	16.13%

As can be seen in Table 4, the number of care reactions (positive) is associated with the same factor as the number of sad reactions (negative), and the number of wow reactions is associated with the same factor as the number of angry reactions (negative). Finally, the number of haha reactions is associated with the same factor as the number of love and like reactions (positive). Since the factors of the seven emotional reactions online in the current study differ from those found in previous research, differences in online emotional reactions in relation to political alignment and period were examined separately for each emotional reaction.

As mentioned, in the current study we aimed to examine whether significant differences would be found in the total interactions and different emotional responses online according to political alignment and period. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation, as well as the median) of these measures according to political alignment and period.

After presenting the descriptive statistics of the total interactions and the seven emotional responses online according to political alignment and period, we mean ranked the data. Ranking data is considered more robust, especially when dealing with non-normally distributed data, and is less affected by outliers or extreme values compared to raw numerical data (Corder, 2014). After we ranked the total interactions and different emotional responses, two-way (3 × 3) ANCOVAs were conducted for the mean ranks of these measures. Using mean rank ANCOVA can be a valuable approach when dealing with non-normally distributed data, as it provides a flexible method for analyzing group differences while controlling the sample for covariates. The independent variables here, as with the above statistical tests, were political alignment and period. The dependent variables were the number of total interactions and different emotional responses online.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the mean, SD, and median of the total interactions and the seven emotional responses online according to political alignment and period (N = 24,491).

		Political alignment								
		Right (n = 14,069)			Center (n = 6,919)			Left (n = 3,503)		
	Period	*M*	*SD*	Median	*M*	*SD*	Median	*M*	*SD*	Median
Total interactions	NC	2,206.24	4,026.41	686.00	1,659.81	2,999.45	283.00	1,039.90	2,283.08	279.00
	CC	1,870.00	4,088.59	439.00	1,277.29	2,915.89	253.50	808.65	1,754.79	339.50
	MC	1,713.96	4,250.39	317.00	1,118.53	3,198.41	222.00	719.14	2,031.83	304.50
Likes	NC	2,930.68	2,930.68	496.00	944.64	1,711.55	177.50	708.80	1,681.78	164.00
	CC	2,713.60	2,713.60	290.00	751.32	1,667.46	158.00	517.60	1,105.63	206.50
	MC	2,428.43	2,428.43	171.50	585.12	1,648.03	116.50	306.28	1,037.30	133.00
Comments	NC	253.06	502.03	72.00	394.08	859.33	44.00	158.32	329.79	46.00
	CC	285.81	861.41	62.00	269.30	738.81	31.00	149.78	369.61	48.00
	MC	355.69	1,174.88	52.00	182.54	716.81	15.00	107.39	639.32	25.50
Shares	NC	78.61	146.11	24.00	117.18	262.26	18.50	40.30	148.19	9.00
	CC	89.10	221.97	21.00	101.21	333.75	15.00	44.11	184.70	13.00
	MC	94.71	260.68	17.00	111.10	350.34	15.00	105.56	697.86	17.00
Love	NC	170.99	503.55	22.00	74.35	211.06	13.00	64.23	269.18	9.00
	CC	122.18	406.48	16.00	54.47	175.03	6.00	40.60	234.18	10.00
	MC	119.44	432.40	10.00	70.88	432.58	8.50	33.02	73.65	12.00
Wow	NC	2.33	6.51	1.00	21.92	94.14	0.00	0.90	1.93	0.00
	CC	2.03	5.88	0.00	11.37	87.36	0.00	1.26	6.54	0.00
	MC	1.39	4.56	0.00	18.39	122.91	0.00	0.78	2.54	0.00

Table 5. (Cont.) Descriptive statistics of the mean, SD, and median of the total interactions and the seven emotional responses online according to political alignment and period (N = 24,491).

		Political alignment								
		Right (n = 14,069)			Center (n = 6,919)			Left (n = 3,503)		
	Period	*M*	*SD*	Median	*M*	*SD*	Median	*M*	*SD*	Median
Haha	NC	16.16	83.34	1.00	40.12	156.23	1.00	26.27	100.32	2.00
	CC	16.18	107.32	1.00	18.19	63.59	1.00	19.19	86.52	2.00
	MC	36.75	242.68	2.00	4.61	59.29	0.00	9.08	44.83	2.00
Sad	NC	56.34	385.15	0.00	38.61	183.37	1.00	28.811	185.67	1.00
	CC	49.15	496.15	0.00	38.84	272.13	1.00	17.76	91.38	1.00
	MC	48.62	258.76	1.00	102.04	390.46	3.00	123.48	342.84	4.00
Angry	NC	12.73	63.82	1.00	17.66	81.16	1.00	6.51	16.32	1.00
	CC	15.37	91.98	1.00	21.10	136.47	1.00	21.10	72.79	1.00
	MC	23.21	111.13	1.00	9.06	53.71	0.00	7.44	61.43	1.00
Care	NC	13.64	38.86	3.00	11.26	55.60	2.00	5.76	19.85	1.00
	CC	15.06	107.25	2.00	11.50	111.37	1.00	4.99	19.17	2.00
	MC	23.35	138.29	2.00	34.79	166.02	4.00	26.12	82.19	7.00

The covariate variables were the number of followers and likes at posting. The total mean of the mean ranks, the mean estimated after controlling for the number of followers and likes at posting, and the *F*-values of the interaction effects are presented in Table 6. Only the interaction effects are presented, not the main effects, since the main effects do not provide additional meaningful information beyond what is already explained by the interaction effects. Gelman and Hill (2007) emphasize the need for interpretation of interaction effects to provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between variables, particularly when main effects may not fully capture the complexity of the relationship. Therefore, we focus on presenting the results of the significant interactions found in all measures and their interpretation, rather than the main effects, to avoid redundancy and ensure clarity in interpreting the results.

Table 6. Mean and mean estimated of the mean rank ANCOVAs for the total interactions and the seven emotional responses online according to period and political alignment while controlling for the number of followers and likes at posting (N = 24,491).

		Political alignment							Political alignment differences in each period		
		Right (1)		Center (2)		Left (3)					
	Period	*M*	Mean Estimated	*M*	Mean Estimated	*M*	Mean Estimated	Interaction	NC	CC	MC
Total interactions	NC	14,613.43	14,012.19	12,533.10	13,446.09	11,634.78	10,328.08				
	CC	13,041.40	12,736.07	10,837.60	11,954.48	11,739.56	10,768.00	14.26***	1 > 2 > 3	1 > 2 > 3	Non significant
	MC	11,766.09	11,643.52	10,103.25	11,151.40	11,277.12	11,260.23				
Likes	NC	14,964.50	14,368.90	12,252.31	13,174.70	11,599.86	10,244.32				
	CC	13,248.66	12,950.57	10,733.32	11,859.50	11,796.78	10,783.44	11.14***	1 > 2 > 3	1 > 2 > 3	1 = 2 > 3
	MC	11,278.58	11,150.94	9,879.17	10,536.93	9,879.17	9,836.31				
Comments	NC	13,651.38	13,072.66	13,097.31	13,949.40	11,983.27	10,816.33				
	CC	13,000.79	12,700.42	11,164.20	12,209.85	11,857.14	10,997.62	22.20***	2 > 1 > 3	1 > 2 > 3	1 > 2 = 3
	MC	12289.82	12181.09	8,845.86	9,824.16	9,797.88	9,820.47				
Shares	NC	13,310.77	12,700.18	13,048.71	13,745.90	9,759.70	9,005.58				
	CC	12,800.72	12,496.13	11,769.35	12,637.37	10,771.78	10,248.73	27.02***	2 > 1 > 3	1 = 2 > 3	Non significant
	MC	12,096.13	12,028.76	11,665.80	12,466.49	12,429.49	12,594.27				
Love	NC	14,669.25	14,142.45	12,561.87	13,336.73	10,925.40	9,865.84				
	CC	13,230.36	12,956.74	10,662.73	11,613.71	10,973.21	10,193.05	31.28***	1 > 2 > 3	1 > 2 > 3	Non significant
	MC	11,710.66	11,611.95	11,140.78	12,030.41	11,826.89	11,848.61				
Wow	NC	13,612.01	13,146.40	12,975.21	13,576.90	11,120.53	10,466.99				
	CC	12,650.23	12,388.18	12,139.41	12,888.34	11,481.53	11,027.68	6.13***	1 = 2 > 3	2 > 1 > 3	2 > 1 = 3
	MC	11,232.25	11,173.82	10,985.05	11,676.04	10,404.24	10,544.45				

Table 6. (Cont.) Mean and mean estimated of the mean rank ANCOVAs for the total interactions and the seven emotional responses online according to period and political alignment while controlling for the number of followers and likes at posting (N = 24,491).

		Political alignment									
		Right (1)		Center (2)		Left (3)			Political alignment differences in each period		
	Period	*M*	Mean Estimated	*M*	Mean Estimated	*M*	Mean Estimated	Interaction	NC	CC	MC
Haha	NC	12,271.32	11,779.29	12,760.28	13,317.84	1,351.13	13,089.72				
	CC	12,503.30	12,207.36	11,382.19	12,087.43	13,128.63	12,870.80	39.99***	2 = 3 > 1	3 > 1 = 2	3 > 1 = 2
	MC	12,815.76	12,781.12	9,140.51	9,781.04	12,518.32	12,780.35				
Sad	NC	11,924.62	11,599.41	13,472.31	13,849.36	12,326.92	12,051.41				
	CC	11,333.84	11,137.87	12,821.31	13,285.82	12,877.80	12,711.56	16.84***	2 > 1 = 3	2 > 3 > 1	3 = 2 > 1
	MC	12,403.64	12,381.25	15,082.15	15,503.82	16,226.37	16,401.70				
Angry	NC	12,065.89	11,620.65	12,548.51	13,059.81	12,483.48	12,076.43				
	CC	12,086.91	11,820.75	12,348.07	12,993.70	12,830.97	12,578.50	44.43***	2 = 3 > 1	2 = 3 > 1	1 > 2 = 3
	MC	13,175.57	13,141.88	10,177.43	10,764.80	11,593.70	11,820.97				
Care	NC	13,830.47	13,283.57	11,739.91	12,508.62	10,706.83	9,728.32				
	CC	12,427.09	12,134.35	10,984.82	11,932.76	11,587.49	10,878.76	73.92***	1 > 2 > 3	1 = 2 > 3	3 > 2 > 1
	MC	13,028.16	12,938.06	14,283.76	15,166.41	16,483.36	16,557.86				

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The first prominent finding shows that politicians with higher numbers of followers and likes tend to receive afforded reactions with "stronger" emotional stances such as anger, love, or sadness. This is an overall indication of the type of feelings that dominate users' emotive-political reactions to politicians. This relationship reveals that in terms of popularity, those politicians who receive more attention and exposure to a broader audience online set the overall tone online to be emotionally more charged, reflecting an online political landscape of negative valence. As mentioned earlier, such a negative tone both reflects, perpetuates, and even escalates a hostile political environment characterized by fragmented communities and adverse sentiments toward opposing groups (Yarchi et al., 2020). The designed set of emotional affordances analyzed by us requires low-effort participation on the user end and might worsen polarization and widen ideological divides online (Wang & Sundar, 2022). In these terms, our data corpus joins a discussion about crisis and socio-political instability where social media affordances contribute to the rise of a hostile and polarized, even illiberal, political atmosphere worldwide (Mordechay & Yadlin, 2024; Polyák, 2019; Yarchi et al., 2020).

Second, as we have shown above, times of crisis inevitably invite emotional polarity and political schisms that are characterized by negative sentiment. When focusing on these negative reactions, namely angry and sad, scholars highlight the need for further empirical exploration in times of crisis. It was shown that angry and sad tend to be co-presented in a similar manner (see, for example, Larsson, 2024) and specifically express similar negative emotional sentiment (Anwar & Giglietto, 2024; Freeman et al., 2019). Some scholars are cautious in interpreting similar findings, suggesting that even when negative in nature, these two reactions do not necessarily hold the same meaning. Nevertheless, they do indeed tend to cluster and appear together (Paolillo, 2023). Our findings reveal a different case. When comparing the reactions angry and sad in our data corpus, we see that during MC, these two emotional markers are not merely different; they stand in opposition to one another. In times of MC, the sad reaction was used least on right-aligning politicians' posts, while usage in reaction to center and left-leaning politicians was similar. In contrast, the angry reaction was used the most in reaction to right-aligning politicians' posts during MC, peaking in complete opposite to sad, again with comparable levels among the center and the left.

As such, in our data, the crisis that elicited the most extreme emotional reactions also produced the greatest disparity between these two types of reactions that commonly correlate in usage. This finding is highly significant and helps fill a notable gap in the literature: The angry and sad reactions on Facebook do not converge during the MC. Thus, our study offers empirical evidence that these two emotional markers behave in quantitatively opposite ways. Evidence of this conflicting behavior in previous studies is scarce.

A third and final finding shows a relationship between the period in which the post was published (NC, CC, MC) and the position of the emotional reactions received along the emotional spectrum. In our dataset, on the scale of emotions afforded by Facebook, users utilize the "edges" of the spectrum as time progresses, moving further into the more extreme reactions along the changes in crisis. During periods of crisis, especially military crises, there was a significant increase in responses such as anger and sadness, while during routine periods, there were more neutral or positive responses. Previous studies (Atad et al., 2023; Eberl et al., 2020) have shown that emotions like anger and sadness might be heightened during crises and contingencies. Our study supports these findings and offers new insights into how crises intensify emotional reactions and how these patterns shift compared to routine periods. While previous studies often treat crisis as a uniform trigger of

emotional responses, our findings differentiate between crisis types: military vs. civic and show that each elicits distinct emotional patterns. This finding required further theoretical anchoring.

As mentioned above, mediatization theory entails that societal developments should be read through a technological lens as a possible explanation of social, cultural, and political change. In this vein, media technologies are approached and studied as agents of social, political, and cultural impact alongside human actors (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014; Hepp et al., 2015). These platforms limit emotional expression to several fixed reactions, as highlighted by Eberl et al. (2020). This is highly relevant in political contexts, where complex emotional responses might be provoked outside this spectrum. Hence, we ask to combine the mediatization notion of media with Frevert and Pahl's (2022) concept of a "template for emotions," as reviewed above. As our findings reveal, online affordances such as Facebook's emotive reactions offer ready-made emotional reactions for online engagement.

We suggest these play a crucial role in steering the emotional political landscape. Considering the heightened negative emotive reaction, we suggest that social media might be driving the harsher reaction rather than, or perhaps alongside, politicians themselves. The limited emotional affordances, that is, the spectrum of emotions afforded on platforms like Facebook, could influence the formation of a shared, collective emotional expression, potentially amplifying certain emotions while underrepresenting others in times of crisis. This interplay positions social media platforms as a crucial player in the dissemination and formation of the emotional reactive landscape to trauma and crisis.

In this study, we have tested the dataset using two complementary statistical approaches. First, we applied Pearson correlation analyses to examine the relationships between follower count, likes, and emotional responses. This allowed us to control these variables in subsequent analyses. Next, we conducted a two-way ANCOVA to assess how political leanings and crisis periods jointly influenced emotional responses, thereby mapping the interaction between these factors in shaping online political discourse. These tests have yielded the above three main findings. These three findings suggest that the intersection of politics, crisis, emotions, and affordances is important to understand through a combination of criteria, among them the emotive reactions online social platforms provide and the ways users utilize them. A heightened emotional stimulus may prevent the ability to safely manage risks at times of crisis, further promoting disagreement between opposing political camps. Such findings should serve as an alarm for decision-makers regarding the management of the crisis and the safer management of emotional appeals and reactions in the public.

These findings align with previous studies by Brader (2005) and Gadarian and Brader (2023), which highlight the strategic use of emotions to engage political audiences. By accounting for these factors, we gained clearer insights into the interplay between political context and emotional expression on social media platforms (Papacharissi, 2014; Widmann, 2021). Given these initial important findings, we see a need to produce an analysis of the dataset based on alternative modelling strategies. Such future analysis, hopefully our own, would provide in-depth reflection on the frequent shift from government to opposition experienced by some parties in Israel, as well as on additional dimensions such as party size, sender seniority. This will be achieved through multilevel modelling and network analysis, and will provide data-driven hierarchical mapping of the political network and leading players within it. Yet, one article can do just so much, and given the limited scope and length, we present here initial findings that hopefully in the future will be further explored as described above.

However, this study is still not without its limitations. First, the tool used for data collection, CrowdTangle, is not entirely free from errors and constraints. Certain politicians' Facebook pages could not be included in our dataset due to their pages being unverified or failing to meet Meta's ethical data extraction policies. Furthermore, some politicians, particularly those with specific religious ideologies, may avoid publicly engaging in online political discourse, leading to their exclusion from this dataset and others.

In addition, it is important to stress that we do not evaluate ideological content or label parties as inherently "right" or "left" in essence, but rather only refer to political alignment classifications as used in previous studies and public discourse. In the same vein, Israel has experienced multiple significant crises within a relatively short period of only under one year. Together, these dynamics might make it challenging to generalize our findings to other countries, such as Western democracies, with different political spectra and crisis frequencies.

Still, some insights may resonate beyond this specific case. In particular, the role of emotional affordances on social media and their interaction with crisis typologies, such as military versus civic emergencies, may help explain online emotional dynamics in other polarized or high-stakes political environments. Given these limitations, we recommend future research to perhaps explore similar cases in different geopolitical contexts to assess the generalizability of our findings. Future research should also consider experimental research designs that will help operationalize causal policy-forward insights for politicians and other policymakers in terms of the use and affect of specific discourses and affordances on social media. As Theisen et al. (2025) show, such indicators could be an important form of early warning signal to political crises and should be further studied. Finally, combining different methods, such as interviews or content analysis, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of emotional responses in political communication online.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Dr. Shlomit Shnitzer-Meirovich for her invaluable statistical consultation and her insightful feedback throughout the analysis process.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

LLMs Disclosure

ChatGPT was used for light vocabulary and sentence structure editing of the final version of this article.

References

Ahmed, S. (2014). The cultural politics of emotion. In U. Frevert, K. M. Pahl, F. Buscemi, P. Nielsen, A. Arndt, M. J. Amico, K. Lichau, H. Malone, J. Wambach, J. Brauer, & C. Moine (Eds.), *Feeling political: Emotions and institutions since 1789* (pp. 159–187). Springer. (Original work published 2004)

Amico, M. (2022). Feeling political through the radio: President Roosevelt's fireside chats, 1933–1944. In U. Frevert, K. M. Pahl, F. Buscemi, P. Nielsen, A. Arndt, M. J. Amico, K. Lichau, H. Malone, J. Wambach, J. Brauer, & C. Moine (Eds.), *Feeling Political: Emotions and Institutions since 1789* (pp. 159–187). Springer.

Anwar, S., & Giglietto, F. (2024). Facebook reactions in the context of politics and social issues: a systematic literature review. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *9*, Article 1379265. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2024.1379265

Aslan, S. (2021). Public tears: Populism and the politics of emotion in AKP's Turkey. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *53*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743820000859

Atad, E., Lev-On, A., & Yavetz, G. (2023). Diplomacy under fire: Engagement with governmental versus non-governmental messages on social media during armed conflicts. *Government Information Quarterly*, *40*(3), Article 101835. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2023.101835

Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. A. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, *348*(6239), 1130–1132. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaa1160

Ben-Ghiat, R. (2020). *Strongmen: Mussolini to the present*. W. W. Norton.

Bezeq. (2025). *Duach hainternet hashnati: Sikum hachaim hadigitalim*. https://www.bezeq.co.il/internetandphone/internetreport

Bil-Jaruzelska, A., & Monzer, C. (2022). All about feelings? Emotional appeals as drivers of user engagement with Facebook posts. *Politics and Governance*, *10*(1), 172–184. http://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v10i1.4758

Bobba, G. (2019). Social media populism: Features and 'likeability' of Lega Nord communication on Facebook. *European Political Science*, *18*(1), 11–23. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-017-0141-8

Boin, A., Hart, P., Stern, E., & Sundelius, B. (2017). *The politics of crisis management: Public leadership under pressure* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Bossetta, M. (2018). The digital architectures of social media: Comparing political campaigning on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat in the 2016 US election. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *95*(2), 471–496. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699018763307

Brader, T. (2005). Striking a responsive chord: How political ads motivate and persuade voters by appealing to emotions. *American Journal of Political Science*, *49*(2), 388–405. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2005.00130.x

Brader, T. (2011). The political relevance of emotions: "Reassessing" revisited. *Political Psychology*, *32*(2), 337–346. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41262899

Bucher, T., & Helmond, A. (2018). The affordances of social media platforms. In J. Burgess, A. Marwick, & T. Poell (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of social media* (pp. 233–253). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473984066.n14

Christensen, T., & Lægreid, P. (2020). The coronavirus crisis—Crisis communication, meaning-making, and reputation management. *International Public Management Journal*, *23*(5), 713–729. https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2020.1812455

Corder, G. W. (2014). *Nonparametric statistics for non-statisticians: A step-by-step approach*. Wiley.

Crilley, R., & Chatterje-Doody, P. N. (2020). Emotions and war on YouTube: Affective investments in RT's visual narratives of the conflict in Syria. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, *33*(5), 713–733. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2020.1719038

Deacon, D., & Stanyer, J. (2014). Mediatization: Key concept or conceptual bandwagon. *Media, Culture & Society*, *36*(7), 1032–1044. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443714542218

De Castella, K., McGarty, C., & Musgrove, L. (2009). Fear appeals in political rhetoric about terrorism: An analysis of speeches by Australian Prime Minister Howard. *Political Psychology*, *30*(1), 1–26.

Demertzis, N. (2006). Emotions and populism. In S. Clarke, P. Hoggett, & S. Thompson (Eds.), *Emotion, politics and society* (pp. 103–122). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230627895_7

Denzin, N. K. (2017). *On understanding emotion*. Routledge.

DePaula, N., & Hansson, S. (2025). Politicization of government social media communication: A linguistic framework and case study. *Social Media + Society*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051251333486

Duncombe, C. (2019). The politics of Twitter: Emotions and the power of social media. *International Political Sociology*, *13*(4), 409–429. https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olz013

Eberl, J.-M., Tolochko, P., Jost, P., Heidenreich, T., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2020). What's in a post? How

sentiment and issue salience affect users' emotional reactions on Facebook. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, *17*(1), 48–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2019.1710318

El Baradei, L., Kadry, M., & Ahmed, G. (2021). Governmental social media communication strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic: The case of Egypt. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 44(11/12), 907–919. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1915729

Eslami, M., Rickman, A., Vaccaro, K., Aleyasen, A., Vuong, A., Karahalios, K., Hamilton, K., & Sandvig, C. (2015). "I always assumed that I wasn't really that close to [her]": Reasoning about Invisible Algorithms in News Feeds. In B. Begole & J. Kim (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 153–162). ACM. https://doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702556

Evensen, D. T., & Clarke, C. E. (2012). Efficacy information in media coverage of infectious disease risks: An ill predicament? *Science Communication*, *34*(3), 392–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547011421020

Freeman, C., Roy, M. K., Fattoruso, M., & Alhoori, H. (2019). Shared feelings: Understanding Facebook reactions to scholarly articles. In *2019 ACM/IEEE Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL)* (pp. 301–304). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/JCDL.2019.00050

Frevert, U., & Pahl, K. M. (2022). Introducing political feelings: Participatory politics, institutions, and emotional templates. In U. Frevert, K. M. Pahl, F. Buscemi, P. Nielsen, A. Arndt, M. J. Amico, K. Lichau, H. Malone, J. Wambach, J. Brauer, & C. Moine (Eds.), *Feeling political: Emotions and institutions since 1789* (pp. 1–26). Palgrave MacMillan.

Gadarian, S. K., & Brader, T. (2023). *Emotion and political psychology*. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, J. S. Levy, & J. Jerit (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political psychology* (pp. 191–247). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197541302.013.5

Gekker, A. (2019). Playing with power: Casual politicking as a new frame for analysis. In G. René, S. Lammes, M. de Lange, J. Raessens, & I. de Vries (Eds.), *The playful citizen: Civic engagement in a mediatized culture* (pp. 387–419). Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.5117/9789462984523

Gelman, A., & Hill, J. (2007). *Data analysis using regression and multilevel/hierarchical models*. Cambridge University Press.

Gibson, J. J. (1979). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Houghton Mifflin.

Goicman, R. (2024, October 8). Twitter lost more than its name: Fifth of Israeli users have left the platform over the past year. *The Marker*. https://www.themarker.com/captain-internet/2024-10-08/ty-article/.premium/00000192-6c25-d5fa-abbe-7f7fe1d20000?gift=144ec3b9d6dd48b29f8ea91f1107ef2a

Gottfried, J. (2024). *Americans' social media use: YouTube and Facebook are by far the most used online platforms among U.S. adults; TikTok's user base has grown since 2021*. Pew Research Center. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep63512

Gustafsson, K., & Hall, T. H. (2021). The politics of emotions in international relations: Who gets to feel what, whose emotions matter, and the "history problem" in Sino-Japanese relations. *International Studies Quarterly*, *65*(4), 973–984. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqab071

Halperin, E., & Gross, J. J. (2011). Emotion regulation in violent conflict: Reappraisal, hope, and support for humanitarian aid to the opponent in wartime. *Cognition & Emotion*, *25*(7), 1228–1236. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2010.536081

Hepp, A., Hjarvard, S., & Lundby, K. (2015). Mediatization: Theorizing the interplay between media, culture and society. *Media, Culture & Society*, *37*(2), 314–322. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715573835

Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The mediatization of culture and society*. Routledge.

Hofmann, J. (2019). Mediated democracy—Linking digital technology to political agency. *Internet Policy Review*, *8*(2), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.14763/2019.2.1416

Hutchison, E. (2016). *Affective communities in world politics: Collective emotions after trauma*. Cambridge University Press.

Ihekweazu, C. (2017). Ebola in prime time: A content analysis of sensationalism and efficacy information in U.S. nightly news coverage of the Ebola outbreak. *Health Communication*, *32*(6), 741–748. https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2016.1172287

Ilan, J. (2024). News production and the people of silence: Pseudo-professional WhatsApp news groups in the era of news mobility. *Journalism Studies*, *25*(6), 643–661. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2024.2326633

Israeli Democracy Institute. (n.d.). *Elections for the 25th Knesset*. https://en.idi.org.il/israeli-elections-and-parties/elections/2022-1

Jost, P., Maurer, M., & Hassler, J. (2020). Populism fuels love and anger: The impact of message features on users' reactions on Facebook. *International Journal of Communication*, *14*, 2081–2102.

Katz, Y. (2024). Can religious pluralism influence governance and societal cohesion? *Journalism and Mass Communication*, *14*(3), 155–165. https://doi.org/10.17265/2160-6579/2024.03.001

Kotliar, D. M. (2016). Emotional oppositions: The political struggle over citizens' emotions. *Qualitative Sociology*, *39*(3), 267–286. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-016-9334-7

Kušen, E., & Strembeck, M. (2021). Building blocks of communication networks in times of crises: Emotion-exchange motifs. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *123*, Article 106883. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.106883

Lapid, Y. (2024, August 6). *Haopozitsia kan, nilchemet vetsricha mikem ezra*. [Status update]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/YairLapid/posts/pfbid07dYSvNhNdrmMtyWJvP83w8XhfSxgkW2Rdwe81SD85s3vKpCWkfVBR7NMJTfF57Bel

Larsson, A. O. (2024). Angry sharing: Exploring the influence of Facebook reactions on political post sharing. *First Monday*, *29*(6). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v29i6.13215

Lay, S. (2002). *British social realism from documentary to brit-grit*. Wallflower Press.

Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1944). *The people's choice*. Columbia University Press.

Maier, J., & Nai, A. (2020). Roaring candidates in the spotlight: Campaign negativity, emotions, and media coverage in 107 national elections. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *25*(4), 576–606. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161220919093

Marcus, G. E. (2000). Emotions in politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *3*(1), 221–250. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.221

Marland, A. (2018). The brand image of Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau in international context. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, *24*(2), 139–144. https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2018.1461665

Mordechay, N., & Yadlin, A. (2024). Accountability design in new media: Netanyahu and plausible deniability statism. *Frameworks*, *26*, 188–201. https://doi.org/10.57583/MF.2024.26.10064

Morosanu, I. (2020). The appeal to collective pathos in times of pandemic. *Cross-Cultural Management Journal*, *22*(2), 93–103. http://seaopenresearch.eu/Journals/articles/CMJ2020_I2_2.pdf

Navon, S., & Noy, C. (2021). Conceptualizing social media sub-platforms: The case of mourning and memorialization practices on Facebook. *New Media & Society*, *25*(11), 2898–2917. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211035769

Noy, C. (2016). Participatory media new and old: Semiotics and affordances of museum media. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *33*(4), 308–323. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2016.1227865

Noy, C. (2021). Narrative affordances: Audience participation in museum narration in two history museums. *Narrative Inquiry*, *31*(2), 287–310.

Pan, P. L., & Meng, J. (2016). Media frames across stages of health crisis: A crisis management approach to news coverage of flu pandemic. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, *24*(2), 95–106. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12105

Paolillo, J. C. (2023). The awkward semantics of Facebook reactions. *First Monday*, *28*(8). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v28i8.13157

Papacharissi, Z. (2014). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. Oxford University Press.

Park, C. S. (2015). Applying "negativity bias" to Twitter: Negative news on Twitter, emotions, and political learning. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, *12*(4), 342–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2015.1100225

Pascual-Ferrá, P., Alperstein, N., Barnett, D. J., & Rimal, R. N. (2021). Toxicity and verbal aggression on social media: Polarized discourse on wearing face masks during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Big Data & Society*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211023533

Perry, E. (2002). Moving the masses: Emotion work in the Chinese revolution. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, *7*(2), 111–128. https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.7.2.70rg70l202524uw6

Polyák, G. (2019). Media in Hungary: Three pillars of an illiberal democracy. In E. Polonska & C. Beckett (Eds.), *Public service broadcasting and media systems in troubled European democracies* (pp. 279–304). Palgrave Macmillan.

Punziano, G., Marrazzo, F., & Acampa, S. (2021). An application of content analysis to CrowdTangle data: The 2020 constitutional referendum campaign on Facebook. *Current Politics & Economics of Europe*, *32*(4).

Reddy, W. M. (2001). *The navigation of feeling: A framework for the history of emotions*. Cambridge University Press.

Reveilhac, M. (2023). The influences of political strategies and communication styles on political candidates' online and offline visibility. *Journal of Political Marketing*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/15377857.2023.2254709

Rhodes-Purdy, M., Navarre, R., & Utych, S. M. (2021). Populist psychology: economics, culture, and emotions. *The Journal of Politics*, *83*(4), 1559–1572. https://doi.org/10.1086/715168

Rosenwein, B. H. (2002). Worrying about emotions in history. *The American Historical Review*, *107*(3), 821–845. https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/107.3.821

Rosenwein, B. H. (2006). *Emotional communities in the early middle ages*. Cornell University Press.

Ryfe, D. M. (2001). From media audience to media public: A study of letters written in reaction to FDR's fireside chats. *Media, Culture & Society*, *23*(6), 767–781. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344301023006005

Scheff, T. J., & Retzinger, S. M. (1991). *Emotions and violence: Shame and rage in destructive conflicts*. Lexington Books.

Selva, D. (2020). Leaders and emotions in post-representative democracies. In F. Saccà (Ed.), *Changing democracies in an unequal world* (pp. 67–87). Franco Angeli.

Steinert, S., & Dennis, M. J. (2022). Emotions and digital well-being: On social media's emotional affordances. *Philosophy & Technology*, *35*(2), Article 36. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-022-00530-6

Steinfeld, N., & Lev-On, A. (2024). A big-data analysis of the communication patterns of parliament members with the public on Facebook: Top-down, non-inclusive and non-egalitarian. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, *76*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-07-2022-0324

Stieglitz, S., & Dang-Xuan, L. (2013). Emotions and information diffusion in social media—Sentiment of microblogs and sharing behavior. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *29*(4), 217–248. https://doi.org/10.2753/MIS0742-1222290408

Sturm Wilkerson, H., Riedl, M. J., & Whipple, K. N. (2021). Affective affordances: Exploring Facebook reactions

as emotional responses to hyperpartisan political news. *Digital Journalism*, *9*(8), 1040–1061. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1899011

Szabó, L. P., & Szabó, G. (2022). Attack of the critics: Metaphorical delegitimisation in Viktor Orbán's discourse during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *21*(2), 255–276.

Theisen, W., Yankoski, M., Hook, K., Verdeja, E., Scheirer, W., & Weninger, T. (2025). Visual narratives and political instability: A case study of visual media prior to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. *Information, Communication & Society*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2025.2492577

Toff, B., & Mathews, N. (2024). Is social media killing local news? An examination of engagement and ownership patterns in US Community news on Facebook. *Digital Journalism*, *12*(9), 1397–1416. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1977668

Tsuria, R., & Yadlin-Segal, A. (2021). Digital religion and global media: Flows, communities, and radicalizations. In S. J. Ward (Ed.), *Handbook of global media ethics* (pp. 157–175). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-32103-5_10

Tzelgov, E., & Wilson, S. L. (2024). The political Twittersphere as a breeding ground for populist ideas: the case of Israel. *Social Media + Society*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241265863

Vaccari, C., Valeriani, A., Barberá, P., Bonneau, R., Jost, J. T., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2015). Political expression and action on social media: Exploring the relationship between lower-and higher-threshold political activities among Twitter users in Italy. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *20*(2), 221–239. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12108

van der Velden, M. A., & Rebasso, I. (2021). Media, politics, and affect. In K. Döveling & E. A. Konijn (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of emotions and media* (pp. 267–282). Routledge.

Wang, J., & Sundar, S. S. (2022). Liking versus commenting on online news: Effects of expression affordances on political attitudes. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *27*(6), Article zmac018. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmac018

Weber, C. (2013). Emotions, campaigns, and political participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, *66*(2), 414–428. https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912912449697

Widmann, T. (2021). How emotional are populists really? Factors explaining emotional appeals in the communication of political parties. *Political Psychology*, *42*(1), 163–181. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12693

Windsor, L. C., Dowell, N., & Graesser, A. (2015). The language of autocrats: Leaders' language in natural disaster crises. *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, *5*(4), 446–464. https://doi.org/10.1002/rhc3.12068

Wolak, J., & Sokhey, A. E. (2022). Enraged and engaged? Emotions as motives for discussing politics. *American Politics Research*, *50*(2), 186–198. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X211042288

Yadlin, A., & Klein-Shagrir, O. (2021). "One big fake news": Misinformation at the intersection of user-based and legacy media. *International Journal of Communication*, *15*, 2528–2546.

Yadlin, A., & Marciano, A. (2021). Covid-19 surveillance in Israeli press: Spatiality, mobility, and control. *Mobile Media & Communication*, *10*(3), 421–447 https://doi.org/10.1177/20501579211068269

Yadlin-Segal, A. (2017). Constructing national identity online: The case study of# IranJeans on Twitter. *International Journal of Communication*, *11*, 2760–2783. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/5780

Yadlin-Segal, A. (2018). What's in a smile? Politicizing disability through selfies and affect. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *24*(1), 36–50. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy023

Yadlin-Segal, A., Tsuria, R., & Bellar, W. (2020). The ethics of studying digital contexts: Reflections from three empirical case studies. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, *2*(2), 168–178. https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.183

Yang, K. C., Pierri, F., Hui, P. M., Axelrod, D., Torres-Lugo, C., Bryden, J., & Menczer, F. (2020). *The Covid-19 Infodemic: Twitter versus Facebook*. arXiv. https://arxiv.org/abs/2012.09353

Yang, Q., Farseev, A., Nikolenko, S., & Filchenkov, A. (2022). Do we behave differently on Twitter and Facebook: Multi-view social network user personality profiling for content recommendation. *Frontiers in Big Data*, *5*, Article 931206. https://doi.org/10.3389/fdata.2022.931206

Yarchi, M., Baden, C., & Kligler-Vilenchik, N. (2020). Political polarization on the digital sphere: A cross-platform, over-time analysis of interactional, positional, and affective polarization on social media. *Political Communication*, 38(1/2), 98–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1785067

Yavetz, G. (2024). Political familiarity vs. journalism background: Insights from three Israeli prime ministers on social media. *Online Information Review*, *48*(7), 1350–1367. https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-08-2023-0402

Yavetz, G. (2025). Populist rhetoric and digital politics: a case study from a Facebook campaign in Israel's 2022 elections. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *11*(1), Article 2476048. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2476048

Zeeuw, D. D., & Gekker, A. (2023). A god-tier LARP? QAnon as conspiracy fictioning. *Social Media + Society*, *9*(1), https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231157300

Zhang, C. (2022). Contested disaster nationalism in the digital age: Emotional registers and geopolitical imaginaries in Covid-19 narratives on Chinese social media. *Review of International Studies*, *48*(2), 219–242. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210522000018

Ziv, L., & Yavetz, G. (2025). Navigating the political minefield: strategies for online participation in a polarized society. *Frontiers in Communication*, *10*, Article 1528169. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1528169

Zur, R., & Bakker, R. (2023). The Israeli parties' positions in comparative perspective. *Party Politics*, *31*(2), 323–334. https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688231218917

About the Authors

Aya Yadlin (PhD) is a senior lecturer in the School of Communication at Bar-Ilan University. Her scholarly work explores everyday uses of popular new media platforms for processes of political and cultural negotiations in a globalized mediascape.

Gal Yavetz (PhD) is a lecturer in the Department of Information Science at Bar-Ilan University. He specializes in digital government and political communication, with a focus on mixed-methods research. His work centers on governmental information management and emerging technologies for public needs, especially during crises.

Jenny Bronstein (PhD) is an associate professor in the Department of Information Science at Bar-Ilan University. Her work explores the intersection of information behavior, media logic, and political expression, offering insights into how people produce, share, and respond to political content online.