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AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FACTORS BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-TRUTH PHENOMENON IN POLITICS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

INTRODUCTION

First of all, in order to analyse the topic, it is necessary to briefly discuss the genesis of the post-truth phenomenon. Steve Tesich was a Serbian-American playwright who applied the concept of 'post-truth' for the first time (Brahms 2019)[2]. Steve Tesich used the 'post-truth' notion in January 1992 in an essay published by *The Nation* (Kreitner 2016)[3]. The concept of post-truth gained popularity in 2016 due to two distinct election campaigns: the Brexit Referendum in the United Kingdom and the Presidential Campaign in the United States. Moreover, in 2016, the word 'post-truth' rose by 2,000% in comparison with 2015. The post-truth term became increasingly widespread during the course of the aforementioned political events (Lukasik 2020, pp. 80-81)[4]. The Oxford Dictionaries announced the concept of 'post-truth' as 'the

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[2]   Brahms, Yael, 2019. *Philosophy of Post-Truth*. Tel Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies (Tel-Aviv University).

[3]   Kreitner, Richard, 2016. 'Post-Truth and Its Consequences: What a 25-year-Old Essay Tells Us About the Current Moment'. *The Nation*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/post-truth-and-its-consequences-what-a-25-year-old-essay-tells-us-about-the-current-moment/>.

[4]   Lukasik, Przemyslaw, 2020. 'Between Digital Elections and the Information War: Post-truth, New Media and Politics in the 21st Century'. *Historia i Polityka*, vol. 34, no. 41, pp. 80-81.

Word of the Year' in 2016 (Brahms 2019)[5]. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the 'post-truth' notion exerted a strong influence on the consciousness of people across the world (Oxford University Press 2016)[6].

   It is worth mentioning that post-truth has a profound impact on global politics. In essence, rationality and facts are less relevant than opinions and emotions for the electorate, particularly due to the emergence of social media (Laybats and Tredinnick 2016, pp. 204-206)[7]. It is vital to recognise that there is a difference between lies and post-truth. The concept of post-truth indicates that truth is neglected and treated as insignificant. It should be emphasised that post-truth is considered to be more dangerous than lies and deception (Urtizberea 2020)[8]. Lies and manipulation have been applied in politics in a consistent manner. Nevertheless, it is essential to keep in mind that the speed of lies dissemination has accelerated over recent years, especially due to technological progress (Gescinska 2020)[9]. The concept of post-truth is much more dangerous than simple lies. The truth is no longer important in post-truth politics. In addition, post-truth involves a variety of emotional elements (Berckemeyer 2017)[10]. Post-truth also includes polarisation (Ashton and Cruft 2021, p. 601)[11]. As a matter of fact, there are many divisions in the public sphere (Ashton and Cruft 2021, pp. 598-605)[12]. Currently, the political landscape is seen as deeply divided. Newman also claims that: 'The idea of the singular truth has now become fragmented into a series

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[5]   Brahms, Yael, 2019. *Philosophy of Post-Truth*. Tel Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies (Tel-Aviv University).

[6]   Oxford University Press, 2016. 'Word of the Year 2016'. *Oxford University Press*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016/>.

[7]   Laybats, Claire, Tredinnick, Luke, 2016. 'Post-truth, information, and emotion'. *Business Information Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 204-206.

[8]   Urtizberea, Augustin, 2020. 'Post-truth is more dangerous than lies'. *World.edu*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://world.edu/post-truth-is-more-dangerous-than-lies/>.

[9]   Gescinska, Alicja, 2020. 'Post-truth, lies, and disinformation: what we need is more truthfulness, not truth'. *The Brussels Times*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://www.brusselstimes.com/news/art-culture/123271/post-truth-lies-and-disinformation-what-we-need-is-more-truthfulness-not-truth/>.

[10]   Berckemeyer, Fernando, 2017. *The post-truth lie*. Tauranga: UNO Magazine.

[11]   Ashton, Natalie, Cruft, Rowan, 2021. 'Rethinking the Post-Truth Polarisation Narrative: Social Rules and Hinge Commitments in the Plural Public Sphere'. *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 92, no. 4, p. 601.

[12]   Ashton, Natalie, Cruft, Rowan, 2021. 'Rethinking the Post-Truth Polarisation Narrative: Social Rules and Hinge Commitments in the Plural Public Sphere'. *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 92, no. 4, pp. 598-605.

of alternative perspectives and positions' (Newman 2019, pp. 91-99)[13]. There is a lack of respect for the truth and an increasing number of falsehoods (Ashton and Cruft 2021, pp. 598-605)[14]. The post-truth world is characterised by the emergence of the so-called parallel realities with fabricated and untrue information (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-141)[15].

There is a process of globalisation in modern times in the light of the concept of the global village. Even people living in less developed states have access to information in an instant manner (Hague and Harrop 2004, pp. 108-110)[16]. It is worth noting that technological progress is linked to the process of globalisation in many ways (Hrynyshyn 2002, pp. 101-102)[17]. The authors maintain that: 'The post-truth world emerged as a result of societal mega-trends such as a decline in social capital, growing economic inequality, increased polarization, declining trust in science, and an increasingly fractionated media landscape' (Cook, Ecker, and Lewandowsky 2017, pp. 2-4)[18]. The rise of the post-truth in the area of politics is a consequence of various international trends. The article includes an analysis of both Polish and foreign sources in print and literature. All in all, the objective of the work is to identify and provide an overview of the substantial factors that have led to the development of the post-truth concept. The article concludes with the presentation of findings.

Factor one: technological progress and social media

The emergence of social media is regarded as the primary factor behind the development of post-truth. Social media can be widely used as an instrument to exert an influence on society in a substantial manner. Social media might considerably affect

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[13] Newman, Saul, 2019. 'Post-truth and the crisis of the political'. *Soft Power Journal. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 91-99.

[14] Ashton, Natalie, Cruft, Rowan, 2021. 'Rethinking the Post-Truth Polarisation Narrative: Social Rules and Hinge Commitments in the Plural Public Sphere'. *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 92, no. 4, pp. 598-605.

[15] Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-141.

[16] Hague, Rod, Harrop, Martin, 2004. *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 108-110.

[17] Hrynyshyn, Derek, 2002. 'Technology and Globalization'. *Studies in Political Economy*, vol. 67, no. 1, pp. 101-102.

[18] Cook, John, Ecker, Ullrich, Stephan, Lewandowsky, 2017. 'Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the "Post-Truth" Era'. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 2-4.

political conditions. It should be noted that the relationship between time and space is shaped by technological advancement. In a way, the rise of the Internet and the developments during the digital era led to the flooding of information (Nasucha and Turpyn 2019, pp. 389-391)[19]. The next key element behind the development of post-truth refers to the concept of digitalisation. People have experienced the digital transformation process as a result of technical progress throughout recent years (Gooch 2017)[20]. There is a digital revolution that aims to spread fabricated and inaccurate information. Social media gain more and more popularity as opposed to mainstream media (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-141)[21].

The attention should be drawn to the fact that the Internet accelerated the growth of post-truth. One of the principal reasons is that disinformation and the occurrence of various conspiracy theories are much more common and widespread on social media. It is increasingly difficult to spot inaccurate information on social media due to the information chaos (McIntyre 2020)[22]. Furthermore, social media enable people to spread and popularise a large amount of information. It is essential to remember that people are exposed to disinformation on social media in a consistent manner. There is no doubt that fake news might refer to emotions as well as personal views. Many events including the COVID-19 pandemic are characterised by the emergence of fake information (Da San Martino and Nakov 2020, pp. 7-9)[23]. It is evident that emotion-based arguments are often deeply rooted in the feeling of fear (Laybats and Tredinnick 2016, p. 204)[24]. The authors claim that: 'Various dynamics of political life and society in the post-truth era illustrate that the emotional appeal is in fact more influential in forming opinions in the public, compared with the actual facts' (Nasucha and Turpyn 2019, pp. 389-395)[25]. There is an emergence of media platforms such

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[19]   Nasucha, Muchammad, Turpyn, Juan, 2019. 'Democracy in Post-Truth Era: The Public Sphere Practice in Indonesian Presidential Election'. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities*, vol. 510, pp. 389-391.

[20]   Gooch, Anthony, 2017. *Bridging divides in a post-truth world*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

[21]   Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-141.

[22]   McIntyre, Lee, 2020. *Post-truth and the danger of disbelief*. Digital Future Society.

[23]   Da San Martino, Giovanni, Nakov, Preslav, 2020. *Fact-Checking, Fake News, Propaganda, and Media Bias: Truth Seeking in the Post-Truth Era*. Stroudsburg: Association for Computational Linguistics, pp. 7-9.

[24]   Laybats, Claire, Tredinnick, Luke, 2016. 'Post-truth, information, and emotion'. *Business Information Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, p. 204.

[25]   Nasucha, Muchammad, Turpyn, Juan, 2019. 'Democracy in Post-Truth Era: The Public Sphere Practice in Indonesian Presidential Election'. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities*, vol. 510, 389-395.

as Facebook that can lead to a large amount of fake news and misinformation in the online sphere (Gooch 2017)[26]. Information might resonate from completely unreliable sources (Nasucha and Turpyn 2019, pp. 389-395)[27].

There is also a narcissistic part of social media that is manifested by the growth of filter bubbles. Some people tend to focus on the filter bubbles on the basis of personalised algorithmic processes. They attempt to see content that intensifies their existing beliefs and opinions on certain issues (Laybats and Tredinnick 2016, pp. 204-206)[28]. This is caused largely by unregulated social media, which led to the spread of misinformation and the growth of echo chamber effects. The popularity of traditional media outlets is declining. Social media platforms are more and more prevalent in today's world (Ashton and Cruft 2021, pp. 598-605)[29]. Social media gain popularity over mainstream media as a source of information. People witness new communication instruments that give rise to considerable information overload in the public sphere (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-141)[30]. In principle, as previously mentioned, individuals through the application of social media have access to information that intensifies their existing opinions and beliefs on the basis of the filter bubble concept (Laybats and Tredinnick 2016, pp. 204-206)[31]. It should be stressed that people tend to focus on information that confirms their attitudes and opinions (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-141)[32].

Social media enable people to spread information in a consistent manner. However, it is significant to bear in mind that people are exposed to disinformation on social media websites on a regular basis. Furthermore, many important political events such as the United States Presidential Election in 2016 are substantially influenced by the development of fake information that refers to emotions and personal

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[26] Gooch, Anthony, 2017. *Bridging divides in a post-truth world*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

[27] Nasucha, Muchammad, Turpyn, Juan, 2019. 'Democracy in Post-Truth Era: The Public Sphere Practice in Indonesian Presidential Election'. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities*, vol. 510, pp. 389-395.

[28] Laybats, Claire, Tredinnick, Luke, 2016. 'Post-truth, information, and emotion'. *Business Information Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 204-206.

[29] Ashton, Natalie, Cruft, Rowan, 2021. 'Rethinking the Post-Truth Polarisation Narrative: Social Rules and Hinge Commitments in the Plural Public Sphere'. *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 92, no. 4, pp. 598-605.

[30] Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-141.

[31] Laybats, Claire, Tredinnick, Luke, 2016. 'Post-truth, information, and emotion'. *Business Information Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 204-206.

[32] Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-141.

views. The rise of fake news, as well as the growth of the Internet and social media, has a significant impact on the process of interference in politics by various foreign states and powers (Da San Martino and Nakov 2020, pp. 7-9)[33]. Chacon maintains that: 'Unlike traditional media, most social media platforms were not built with democratic public deliberation in mind' (Chacon 2018, p. 604)[34]. Social media led to the creation of conspiracy theories, alternative information, echo chambers, and algorithms in an attempt to affect people and popularise fake information in the field of politics (Newman 2019, pp. 91-99)[35]. It can be argued that the political discourse is characterised by the falling role of facts in the present times. Truth and objective facts are not respected (Chacon 2018, pp. 1-11)[36]. Social media made a huge contribution to highly emotive political discourse (Laybats and Tredinnick 2016, pp. 204-206)[37]. There are also cases when some people try to brainwash other individuals (Nasucha and Turpyn 2019, pp. 389-395)[38]. It is clear that the Internet modified the ways in which people communicate and search for information. It is difficult to find the truth due to technological progress. The development of post-truth indicates the fragility of international institutions and the vulnerability of the liberal world order. People might witness the denial of facts, the emergence of fake news, and the growth of rumours or groundless and unfounded allegations. Furthermore, many people use fake accounts to basically spread lies and inaccurate information in the online sphere (Al-Rodhan 2017)[39].

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[33] Da San Martino, Giovanni, Nakov, Preslav, 2020. *Fact-Checking, Fake News, Propaganda, and Media Bias: Truth Seeking in the Post-Truth Era*. Stroudsburg: Association for Computational Linguistics, pp. 7-9.

[34] Chacon, Rodrigo, 2018. 'Diagnosing the Fault Lines of Globalisation in a Post-Truth Era'. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 42, no. 2, p. 604.

[35] Newman, Saul, 2019. 'Post-truth and the crisis of the political'. *Soft Power Journal. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 91-99.

[36] Chacon, Rodrigo, 2018. 'Diagnosing the Fault Lines of Globalisation in a Post-Truth Era'. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 1-11.

[37] Laybats, Claire, Tredinnick, Luke, 2016. 'Post-truth, information, and emotion'. *Business Information Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 204-206.

[38] Nasucha, Muchammad, Turpyn, Juan, 2019. 'Democracy in Post-Truth Era: The Public Sphere Practice in Indonesian Presidential Election'. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities*, vol. 510, pp. 389-395.

[39] Al-Rodhan, Nayef, 2017. 'Post-Truth Politics, the Fifth Estate and the Securitization of Fake News'. *Global Policy (Durham University)*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/humanities/beliefs/post-truth-politics-the-fifth-estate-and-the-securitization-of-fake-news/>.

Factor two: human nature and feeling of uncertainty

The condition of human nature is also one of the main factors that have contributed to the development of post-truth. Many people appear to focus largely on their emotions. Consequently, psychological determinants can lead to media bias. In essence, people want to have access to information that is in accordance with their own beliefs (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-147)[40]. Post-truth discourse seeks to construct a given narrative. The consequence of post-truth is the sense of agreement to form a kind of narrative and create an attachment to illusions instead of facts, science, rationality, and truth (Newman 2019, pp. 91-99)[41]. The next pivotal point that should be added is that the feeling of uncertainty can also be seen as an element that led to the post-truth phenomenon. The current world is strongly characterised by a lack of certainty. As a result, some people have difficulties in recognising stable facts (Chacon 2018, pp. 9-15)[42]. In general, post-truth discourse is closely connected with a lack of certainty, cognitive dissonance, and confusion about what is true or false (Newman 2019, pp. 91-99)[43]. A group of people is basically not able to clarify the reality and settle on what is true (Brahms 2019)[44]. The falling trust in science is thought to be one of the elements behind the development of the post-truth phenomenon. It is important to underline that the knowledge of experts has become less and less valuable in today's world (Cook, Ecker, and Lewandowsky 2017, pp. 1-7)[45]. There is hostility towards expert opinions in terms of post-truth discourse (Newman 2019,

[40]   Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-147.

[41]   Newman, Saul, 2019. 'Post-truth and the crisis of the political'. *Soft Power Journal. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 91-99.

[42]   Chacon, Rodrigo, 2018. 'Diagnosing the Fault Lines of Globalisation in a Post-Truth Era'. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 9-15.

[43]   Newman, Saul, 2019. 'Post-truth and the crisis of the political'. *Soft Power Journal. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 91-99.

[44]   Brahms, Yael, 2019. *Philosophy of Post-Truth*. Tel Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies (Tel-Aviv University).

[45]   Cook, John, Ecker, Ullrich, Stephan, Lewandowsky, 2017. 'Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the "Post-Truth" Era'. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 1-7.

pp. 91-99)[46]. However, it is critical to remember that facts and fact-based policies are important for human progress (Al-Rodhan 2017)[47].

Without a shadow of a doubt, the appeal to emotions can shape the public sphere and public opinion in a considerable manner in the post-truth era. The post-truth phenomenon and the falling importance of facts in many parts of the world are caused by a smaller role of rationality and intellect as well as technological advancements. Moreover, social media can facilitate the creation of emotional attractiveness that leads to the decreasing relevance of facts and truth (Nasucha and Turpyn 2019, pp. 389-395)[48]. The problems with skills such as critical thinking and digital literacy can generate the growth of misinformation (Laybats and Tredinnick 2016, pp. 204-206)[49]. Within the scope of this article, it is worth noting that rational reactions and facts became less important in comparison to emotions. People are frequently unable to concentrate on rational information and facts given the increasing role of emotions. Obviously, a rapid flow of information provided a foundation for the growth of fake news (Gooch 2017)[50]. The Internet facilitated communication between people who express the same views on certain issues. As a consequence, people might reinforce their existing opinions (Al-Rodhan 2017)[51]. In general, the post-truth phenomenon is largely caused by the feeling of uncertainty from social and economic perspectives at the international level (Chacon 2018, pp. 1-11)[52].

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[46]   Newman, Saul, 2019. 'Post-truth and the crisis of the political'. *Soft Power Journal. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 91-99.

[47]   Al-Rodhan, Nayef, 2017. 'Post-Truth Politics, the Fifth Estate and the Securitization of Fake News'. *Global Policy (Durham University)*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://www.bbvaopen-mind.com/en/humanities/beliefs/post-truth-politics-the-fifth-estate-and-the-securitization-of-fake-news/>.

[48]   Nasucha, Muchammad, Turpyn, Juan, 2019. 'Democracy in Post-Truth Era: The Public Sphere Practice in Indonesian Presidential Election'. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities*, vol. 510, pp. 389-395.

[49]   Laybats, Claire, Tredinnick, Luke, 2016. 'Post-truth, information, and emotion'. *Business Information Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 204-206.

[50]   Gooch, Anthony, 2017. *Bridging divides in a post-truth world*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

[51]   Al-Rodhan, Nayef, 2017. 'Post-Truth Politics, the Fifth Estate and the Securitization of Fake News'. *Global Policy (Durham University)*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://www.bbvaopen-mind.com/en/humanities/beliefs/post-truth-politics-the-fifth-estate-and-the-securitization-of-fake-news/>.

[52]   Chacon, Rodrigo, 2018. 'Diagnosing the Fault Lines of Globalisation in a Post-Truth Era'. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 1-11.

Factor three: relativism and postmodernism

Post-truth has its roots in relativism and postmodernism in the late 20th century. In a way, postmodernism can provide a framework for the growth of populism. Postmodernist thought and relativism led to a case where alternative facts are seen as legitimate on the grounds that everyone has their own truth (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-141)[53]. Furthermore, Gilchrist claims that: 'anyone's opinions and beliefs are valid as anybody's else' under postmodernism (Gilchrist 2018, p. 14)[54]. One should bear in mind that postmodernism laid a foundation for the growth of populist politicians and leaders such as Donald Trump (Hussain 2019, pp. 158-161)[55]. As it was previously mentioned, postmodernism provided the base for the development of post-truth. Calcutt notices that the postmodernist approach illustrates that: 'there is no position outside our own particulars from which to establish universal truth' (Calcutt 2016)[56]. It is essential to point out that postmodern thought delineates that truth can be challenged or undermined (Brahms 2019)[57].

Additionally, relativism is recognised to be an underlying force behind the emergence of the post-truth concept. Relativism is perceived to be strongly connected with postmodernism as a school of thought. There has been the development of postmodernist thought and relativism since the late 20th century. More and more people lose their faith in objectivism and truth due to relativism. There are numerous alternative opinions on certain issues. The authors also state that: 'We are now more likely to hold contradictory views about the world and adopt relativistic opinions, in part due to increased contact with people from different cultures who hold vastly different views from our own' (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-149)[58]. Many people aim to have their own truth. As a consequence, people tend to exclude other people's opinions and views, especially in the context of relativism (Newman 2019,

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[53] Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-141.

[54] Gilchrist, Alan, 2018. 'Post-truth: an outline review of the issues and what is being done to combat it'. *IBERSID*, vol. 12, no. 2, p. 14.

[55] Hussain, Amina, 2019. 'Theorising Post-Truth: A Post Modern Phenomenon'. *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 158-161.

[56] Calcutt, Andrew, 2016. 'The Truth About Post-Truth Politics'. *Newsweek*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/truth-post-truth-politics-donald-trump-liberals-tony-blair-523198>.

[57] Brahms, Yael, 2019. *Philosophy of Post-Truth*. Tel Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies (Tel-Aviv University).

[58] Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-149.

pp. 91-99)[59]. Overall, many politicians are not concerned if they tell the truth or not in a post-truth world. It is possible to acknowledge a number of driving factors that made a significant contribution to the emergence of post-truth including technological advancements and the growth of globalisation process. At present, many people are unable to draw a line between truth and falsehood, chiefly because of both postmodernism and relativism (Pomerantsev 2016)[60].

Factor four: populism

It is essential to touch upon the notion of populism. Populism is another critical factor that led to the emergence of post-truth. Mannion and Speed note that: 'Populism is one of the most contested concepts in the social sciences, is riddled with paradox and fraught with rival interpretations'. Populism is a broad concept, which can be interpreted in various ways. Populism is also regarded as a strategy that has gained importance over the course of years. In principle, even stable democracies have witnessed the growth of populism. The victory of Donald Trump during the Presidential Election in the United States in 2016 can be related to the rising role of populism (Mannion and Speed 2017, pp. 249-251)[61]. Populism is a complex term, which can be seen as a movement, a technique, or an ideology. Riedel also states that: 'populism is a set of ideas or an argumentation that is catchy and attractive based on emotional and irrational grounds, the longing for simple solutions to complicated problems, and a direct connection to the will of majority' (Riedel 2017, pp. 287-292)[62].

There is a relationship between populism and post-truth. Prior claims that: 'populism has become a prominent theme in the contemporary political scene'. In addition, populist communication seeks to involve various elements closely linked to anti-establishment. Populism might be highly associated with divisions within societies. The phenomenon of populism can pose a threat to the functioning of democracy and liberal institutions. Prior maintains that: 'post-truth has become a visible political strategy in many electoral campaigns of populist leaders'. Populism is also strictly

[59]   Newman, Saul, 2019. 'Post-truth and the crisis of the political'. *Soft Power Journal. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 91-99.

[60]   Pomerantsev, Peter, 2016. 'Why We're Post-Fact'. *Granta*, accessed on 28 July 2022, <https://granta.com/why-were-post-fact/>.

[61]   Mannion, Russell, Speed, Ewen, 2017. 'The Rise of Post-Truth Populism in Pluralist Liberal Democracies: Challenges for Health Policy'. *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, vol. 6, no. 5, pp. 249-251.

[62]   Riedel, Rafal, 2017. 'Populism and Its Democratic, Non-Democratic, and Anti-Democratic Potential'. *Polish Sociological Review*, vol. 199, no. 3, pp. 287-292.

related to a plethora of problems such as distorted information, fraud, and fake news, which frequently refer to emotions (Prior 2021, pp. 49-62)[63]. Moreover, post-truth appears to be caused by the loss of faith in science and the establishment (Newman 2019, pp. 91-99)[64].

The next significant point is that there is a falling confidence in the system as well as institutions in the current world order. The post-truth is heavily intensified by the fact that many people attempt to question the ruling elites. People are frequently unable to focus on facts given the increasing role of emotions and a rapid flow of information on social media. In essence, many people do not trust institutions due to a lack of transparency of media platforms and the growth in fake news in a post-truth world (Gooch 2017)[65]. There is a common belief that knowledge is elitist in present times. Moreover, experts are often regarded as untrustworthy and unreliable (Cook, Ecker, and Lewandowsky 2017, p. 5)[66]. The concept of populism indicates that many people strive to challenge the political establishment and modify the existing conditions across the globe. The populist sentiments are strengthened by a declining confidence in media outlets and institutions (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-139)[67].

It should be highlighted that social media became a significant instrument used by populist figures to establish communication with people. In general, populism exerts a negative influence on the condition of liberal democracy. The notion of populism is seen as a broad phenomenon that is closely linked to providing easy answers to very difficult and complex problems. Populism is used in an effort to solve a given crisis or conflict. Populism arises from the fact that it is common that the establishment or popular political party is actually unable to cope with certain problems (Gultchin and Kyle 2018, pp. 1-25)[68]. Various governments attempt to have a vast influence on media coverage, largely in established democracies. Media can have an agenda-setting role for the broad public opinion in democracies with tradition (Hague and Harrop

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[63]   Prior, Helder, 2021. 'Digital populism and disinformation in post-truth times'. *Communication & Society*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 49-62.

[64]   Newman, Saul, 2019. 'Post-truth and the crisis of the political'. *Soft Power Journal. Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 91-99.

[65]   Gooch, Anthony, 2017. *Bridging divides in a post-truth world*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

[66]   Cook, John, Ecker, Ullrich, Stephan, Lewandowsky, 2017. 'Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the "Post-Truth" Era'. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 5.

[67]   Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-139.

[68]   Gultchin, Limor, Kyle, Jordan, 2018. *Populists in Power Around the World*. London: Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, pp. 1-25.

2004, pp. 112-116)[69]. The wellbeing of the general public is highly affected by populist figures and their policies. The concept of populism indicates that some people strive to bring establishment institutions into question (Mannion and Speed 2017, pp. 249-251)[70]. Many politicians try to create information or manipulate broader audiences across the world (Fotaki, Foroughi, and Gabriel 2019, pp. 135-141)[71]. The stress should be placed on the fact that an exchange of information is needed for the conduct of politics. Leaders and politicians strive to have a considerable impact on communication to obtain power or affect certain changes (Hague and Harrop 2004, p. 105)[72].

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this work demonstrates a number of factors such as technological development and the emergence of social media outlets, which gave rise to the growth of the post-truth phenomenon in the 21st century. The presented factors behind the post-truth have substantially contributed to the case where the truth loses its value in the field of politics. Post-truth is regarded to be a cross-boundary challenge that can pose a serious risk to politics in present times. The year 2016 is commonly perceived as a milestone when it comes to the development of post-truth on the basis of the victory of Donald Trump during the Presidential Election in the United States and Brexit in the United Kingdom.

The article clearly indicates that the elements that led to post-truth can have negative consequences for the functioning of societies around the world. Generally, the development of post-truth is a dangerous phenomenon that might lead to a decreasing belief in freedom and pluralism of the media or the rise of the alleged interference practices during elections, even in democracies with well-established elections. Another crucial point that needs to be added is that the deeply-rooted fear of expert or scientific knowledge can challenge the foundations of liberal democracies in the years to come.

[69]   Hague, Rod, Harrop, Martin, 2004. *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 112-116.

[70]   Mannion, Russell, Speed, Ewen, 2017. 'The Rise of Post-Truth Populism in Pluralist Liberal Democracies: Challenges for Health Policy'. *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, vol. 6, no. 5, pp. 249-251.

[71]   Fotaki, Marianna, Foroughi, Hamid, Yiannis, Gabriel, 2019. 'Leadership in a post-truth era: A new narrative disorder?' *Leadership Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 135-141.

[72]   Hague, Rod, Harrop, Martin, 2004. *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 105.

In principle, social media websites are strongly associated with many threats such as the emergence of alternative realities and the growth of fake news, which may shape political events in a highly globalised world. There are both pros and cons of social media. Social media websites can be used as instruments to influence the voters. Politicians may use social media applications to achieve a range of goals linked to politics, even in democracies with long traditions. The voters should bear in mind that the development of post-truth and scientific breakthroughs can substantially influence the electoral processes. In addition, one can expect that the rise of social media applications and the emergence of post-truth might undermine honesty and weaken the integrity of elections in different parts of the globe. As discussed, it is explicit that post-truth continues to be a pressing issue at the international level.

Based on the above analysis, it is possible to distinguish various conditions that have led to the development of the post-truth phenomenon over recent years. It should be emphasised that firm and decisive measures have to be undertaken to raise awareness of the negative consequences of post-truth for political discussion, notably in the online sphere. People need to be well aware of the factors associated with post-truth that may lead to the declining importance of facts and rationality in the area of politics in the contemporary world.

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AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FACTORS BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-TRUTH PHENOMENON IN POLITICS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Abstract

This article aims to present key factors that can substantially influence the development of the post-truth phenomenon in politics. The work illustrates a number of reasons for the falling importance of truth and facts in politics in contemporary times. Moreover, this text shines a spotlight on the significant role of social media websites in terms of political events in the post-truth era. The analysis outlines various factors that have considerably contributed to the growth of the post-truth phenomenon in politics in the 21st century. The article addresses issues strongly related to the media theory and political communication. It should be noted that post-truth continues to be a burning and dangerous problem, which can shape the media landscape and affect the political realities around the world.

Key words: post-truth phenomenon, social media, media theory, political communication

Analiza wybranych czynników wpływających na rozwój zjawiska post-prawdy w polityce we współczesnym świecie

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł ma za zadanie przedstawić kluczowe czynniki, które znacząco wpływają na rozwój zjawiska post-prawdy w polityce. Praca ilustruje szereg przyczyn zmniejszającego się znaczenia prawdy i faktów w polityce w obecnych czasach. Co więcej, artykuł rzuca światło na znaczącą rolę mediów społecznościowych, jeśli chodzi o polityczne wydarzenia w erze post-prawdy. Analiza ukazuje również czynniki, które wyraźnie przyczyniły się do pojawienia się zjawiska post-prawdy w obszarze polityki w XXI wieku. Tekst porusza zagadnienia ściśle związane z teorią mediów i komunikacją polityczną. Należy zaznaczyć, że post-prawda pozostaje palącym i niebezpiecznym problemem, który może kształtować rynek medialny oraz wpływać na realia polityczne na całym świecie.

Słowa kluczowe: zjawisko post-prawdy, media społecznościowe, teoria mediów, komunikacja polityczna