

## Leadership Trait Analysis of Benjamin Netanyahu: Understanding the Gaza War

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### Abstract

This article aims to analyze the leadership style of Benjamin Netanyahu by using the leadership trait analysis (LTA) approach to relate these traits to the dynamics of the Gaza war, which flared up in October 2023. It fills a significant gap in the existing literature on the leadership style of Benjamin Netanyahu in the context of Israeli foreign policy, especially regarding the current Gaza crisis. Although Netanyahu's actions have had a significant impact on the region, little research has been conducted using the Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) framework to assess his decision-making processes. Qualitative method research with a content analysis approach is conducted. The LTA model, developed by Margareth Hermann, was applied to six speeches by Netanyahu, aided by ProfilerPlus software to analyze the data. The examination centers on seven specific leadership attributes: belief in controlling events, need for power, conceptual complexity, self-confidence, focus on tasks, in-group bias, and distrust. These traits clarify Netanyahu's responses to constraints, openness to information, and incentives in international relations, whether they are more task-oriented or relationship-driven. The results suggest that Netanyahu exhibits an expansionist leadership style, emphasizing power and influence. His traits suggest a tendency to contest constraints openly, but with less strategic maneuvering. He shows little openness to new information, sticking strictly to his ideals and ideology. Netanyahu's foreign policy is largely goal-driven, but contextual factors influence his international relations strategy. This article presents a novel contribution to the association between personal leadership traits and conflict dynamics, increasing understanding of decision-making in the Middle East.

**Keywords:** Gaza war, Netanyahu, Leadership Trait Analysis, expansionistic.

### تحليل السمات القيادية لبنيامين نتنياهو: فهم حرب غزة

#### الملخص

تهدف هذه المقالة إلى تحليل الأسلوب القيادي لبنيامين نتنياهو باستخدام منهج تحليل السمات القيادية (LTA) لربط هذه السمات بديناميات الحرب على غزة التي اندلعت في تشرين الأول/أكتوبر ٢٠٢٣. تسد هذه الورقة البحثية فجوة كبيرة في الأدبيات الحالية حول أسلوب قيادة بنيامين نتنياهو في سياق السياسة الخارجية الإسرائيلية، لا سيما فيما يتعلق بأزمة غزة الحالية. وعلى الرغم من أن تصرفات نتنياهو كان لها تأثير كبير على المنطقة، إلا أنه لم يُجر سوى القليل من الأبحاث التي تستخدم إطار تحليل السمات القيادية لتقييم عمليات صنع القرار التي يقوم بها. وقد أُجري بحث باستخدام المنهج الكيفي مع نهج تحليل المضمون. تم تطبيق نموذج تحليل السمات القيادية، الذي طوره مارغريت هيرمان، على ستة خطابات لنتنياهو، بمساعدة برنامج ProfilerPlus لتحليل البيانات. ويرتكز الفحص على سبع سمات قيادية محددة: الإيمان بالسيطرة على الأحداث، والحاجة إلى السلطة، والتعقيد المفاهيمي، والثقة بالنفس، والتركيز على المهام، والتحيز داخل المجموعة، وانعدام الثقة. توضح هذه السمات استجابات نتياهو للقيود والانفتاح على المعلومات والجوافز في العلاقات الدولية - سواء كانت موجهة نحو المهام أو مدفوعة بالعلاقات. تشير النتائج إلى أن نتياهو يُظهر أسلوبًا قياديًا توسعيًا يركز على القوة والنفوذ. وتشير سماته إلى ميله إلى تحدي القيود بشكل علني، ولكن مع قدر أقل من المناورة الاستراتيجية. فهو لا يظهر انفتاحًا كبيرًا على المعلومات الجديدة، ويتمسك بصرامة بمثله وأيديولوجيته. إن سياسة نتياهو الخارجية مدفوعة إلى حد كبير بالأهداف، لكن العوامل السياقية تؤثر على استراتيجيته في العلاقات الدولية. يقدم هذا المقال مساهمة جديدة في الربط بين سمات القيادة الشخصية وديناميكيات الصراع، ما يزيد من فهم عملية صنع القرار في الشرق الأوسط.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** حرب غزة، نتنياهو، تحليل السمات القيادية، الاستعمار التوسعي.

## Introduction

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu played a key role in the ongoing Gaza War (Rababah & Hamdan, 2019; Zanotti & Sharp, 2023). However, to our knowledge, no research has analyzed his leadership trait as a decision-maker in his foreign policy toward Palestine. Analysis using leadership trait analysis (LTA) categorizes leaders based on a few specific characteristics that are very useful for creating a profile of the leader and can predict how a leader will react to other international situations (Al Malla, 2021; Kesgin & Wehner, 2022). So, this study uses the LTA framework to analyze Netanyahu's leadership style in the context of the Israeli Palestinian war.

The Gaza war, which heated up again on October 7, 2023, has had an extraordinary impact on the area. More than 55,000 Palestinians have been killed, 70% of whom are women and children (Associated Press, 2025). The blockade imposed by Israel has created scarcity of food, water, medical equipment as well as adequate electricity resources. About 75% of the people of Gaza has moved repeatedly during this conflict (Aljazeera, 2023b; Rescue.org, 2023). This situation is getting worse every day; 91% of the population is still experiencing a food and water shortage crisis, even called man-made "apocalypse" (Wealth Hunger Hilfe (WHH), 2024).

Several efforts have been made to end this protracted war; various international mediators have stepped in to end the standoff between Israel and the Palestinian resistance lead by Hamas. On November 24-30, 2023, Qatar mediated a temporary ceasefire between the two sides (Lodhi, 2023; Massoud & Rose, 2023). On December 1, 2023, this ceasefire ended because, according to Hamas, Israel rejected the previously agreed hostage exchange agreement, and Hamas launched rockets into Israel, which Israel responded with another attack (Reuters, 2023). The conflict has heated up again; various negotiation efforts through mediators have been made by the United States, Qatar, and Egypt, (Aboualouf & Khalil, 2024; Aljazeera, 2024).

Prime Minister Netanyahu showed dominant behavior in the negotiation process by openly rejecting the ceasefire proposal. He considered that the Israeli military has achieved a total victory in Gaza in early months and that Hamas' demand for a ceasefire is delusional and unlikely to be fulfilled by Israel (Doucet, 2024; Reuters, 2024; Starcevic, 2024). Here are Netanyahu's statements: "*There is no other solution but a complete and final victory*" (Doucet, 2024), "*There is no alternative to the military collapse [of Hamas]; unless Hamas is destroyed, the evil axis of Iran and its affiliates will continue unhindered its campaign of killing and aggression*" (Reuters, 2024). The statement indicated a strong rejection of the cease-fire effort.

The decision of the Netanyahu government to reject the ceasefire received a negative reaction from the Israeli public. Based on the results of a survey from Israel's Channel 12, it was found that 60% of Israelis believe that the ceasefire proposal that returns some Israeli prisoners from Gaza is far more important than continuing the war (Khalil, 2024). Most Israelis do not like Netanyahu's leadership. Some people even blamed Netanyahu for the Hamas attack that occurred on October 7 as a form of Netanyahu's incompetence (Perliger, 2024). Based on data from the Pew Research Center, it was found that about 74% of Israelis who are Arabs consider this Israeli action to be excessive, but for Israeli Jews only 4% think the same (Silver & Smerkovich, 2024).

Negative calls against Netanyahu and the Gaza war have also emerged from the international community. In December 2024, Amnesty International declared Israel the perpetrator of genocide against the Palestinian community in Gaza (Amnesty International, 2024). The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued an arrest warrant against Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu for war crimes and humanitarian violations (Amnesty International, 2024). Countries such as South Africa, Norway and several countries in the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Latin America have publicly condemned Israel's actions as a violation of International Law (Aljazeera, 2023a). Several articles have examined Israel's foreign policy with Netanyahu as an individual unit of analysis, but no one has analyzed Netanyahu's foreign policy using the leadership trait analysis

(LTA) framework. The following four articles suggest that Netanyahu is a strategic leader who combines a historical, ideological, populist, and pragmatist approach to domestic politics and the manoeuvres of global diplomacy in his foreign policy (Leslie, 2017; Michael & Wertman, 2023; Spyer, 2010; Strovsky & Schleifer, 2021). The first research, *The Last Mapainik and The Iron Wall*, describes Netanyahu's personality as a successor to the practical Zionist tradition of Mapai, which focuses on strengthening the state with the Iron Wall principle (Michael & Wertman, 2023). The second article, *Netanyahu Populism: An Overlooked Explanation for Israeli Foreign Policy*, examines how Netanyahu uses populist tactics to shift Israeli politics that influence Israeli foreign policy (Leslie, 2017). The next article is *The Netanyahu Government at its Halfway Point*, which aims to evaluate Netanyahu's successes and failures in dealing with the Iranian nuclear challenge (Spyer, 2010). Meanwhile, the fourth article, *Leaders, Politics and Media Policy*, analyzes Prime Minister Netanyahu's image in the Russian media and how Netanyahu's policies are received abroad (Strovsky & Schleifer, 2021).

## Research Problem

Although there have been several studies on Israeli foreign policy, it is still rare to find research that systematically explores Benjamin Netanyahu's level using the leadership trait analysis (LTA) framework. This study aims to analyze Netanyahu's leadership style and relate it to foreign policy in the context of the Gaza War. Although this study adopts a micro psychological level approach through LTA, it still acknowledges that the behavior of leaders can also be influenced by ideological orientations, party coalitions, and military strategy doctrines in Israel that shape how this leadership style emerges in practice. Although these elements are not analyzed in depth in this study, their influence will be briefly reflected in the discussion section to provide a coherent understanding. The research question in this research is: How is Netanyahu's leadership style in his foreign policy regarding the Gaza War?

## Research Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a content analysis approach to verbal statements from individual leaders. Qualitative content analysis is a systematic research method that is used to interpret and categorize textual data to find the patterns, themes, and meanings behind it (Elo *et al.*, 2014; Krippendorff, 2018). This method was chosen by the researchers because the purpose of the study, not only describes Netanyahu's leadership style but also explains the phenomenon of the Gaza war that is currently taking place.

The ideas of Margaret Hermann, as outlined in her work titled "Assessing Leadership Style: A Trait Analysis," there are 7 traits can explain the leadership style of policymakers, namely 1) Belief in controlling events (BACE), 2) the need for power (PWR), 3) conceptual complexity (CC), 4) self-confidence (SC), 5) Problem-solving vs relationship, 6) Distrust (DIST), 7) In-group bias (IGB). These seven traits will help us understand three things about the analyzed leader: first, how he faces challenges; second, how he processes information; and finally, what motivates him to take action (Hermann, 1999). By understanding these three things, it shall be found what kind of leadership style the individual leader who is analyzed possesses. Here are eight leadership styles put forward by Margareth Hermann.

In the initial stage, coding was performed on 6 Netanyahu speeches from internet sources. This coding process uses the ProfilerPlus application to help with leadership trait analysis. Then, in the next step, the score results showed Netanyahu's leadership style related to responding to constraints, openness to information, problem-solving, and orientation put forward by Margareth Hermann. The results of the score were then compared with the average score of world leaders to find the leadership style of PM Netanyahu. Below is the benchmark score value referred to from the results of Margareth Hermann's research based on the scores of 87 heads of state in the world.

Responsiveness to Constraints	Openness to Information	Motivation	
		Problem Focus	Relationship Focus
Challenges Constraints	Closed to Information	<b>Expansionistic</b> (Focus is on expanding one's power and influence)	<b>Evangelistic</b> (Focus is on persuading others to accept one's message and join one's cause)
Challenges Constraints	Open to Information	<b>Incremental</b> (Focus is on maintaining one's manoeuvrability and flexibility while avoiding the obstacles that continually try to limit both)	<b>Charismatic</b> (Focus is on achieving one's agenda by engaging others in the process and persuading them to act)
Respects Constraints	Closed to Information	<b>Directive</b> (Focus is on personally guiding policy along paths consistent with one's own views while still working within the norms and rules of one's position)	<b>Consultative</b> (Focus is on monitoring that important others will support, or not actively oppose, what one wants to do in a particular situation)
Respects Constraints	Open to Information	<b>Reactive</b> (Focus is on assessing what is possible in the current situation given the nature of the problem and considering what important constituencies will allow)	<b>Accommodative</b> (Focus is on reconciling differences and building consensus, empowering others and sharing accountability in the process)

Table 1: Leadership Style based on response to obstacles, openness to information and motivation. Source: (Hermann, 1999).

NO	Personality Trait	Mean	Low	High
1	BACE	0,44	<0,3	>0,58
2	PWR	0,5	<0,37	>0,62
3	SC	0,62	<0,44	>0,81
4	CC	0,44	<0,32	>0,56
5	Task	0,56	<0,46	>0,71
6	IGB	0,42	<0,32	>0,53
7	DIST	0,41	<0,25	>0,56

Table 2: Comparison Reference. Source: (Hermann, 1999).

In the next stage, the researchers analyzed the results of the score with a descriptive analysis approach to look for correlations with the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. In this analysis process, the researchers looked for sources from the literature.

## **Israel's Foreign Policy Background**

To contextualize the psychological profile of Netanyahu, this section will explain the key doctrines in Israeli foreign policy that indirectly also shape a leader's leadership style in his foreign policy. The historical foundation of Israel's foreign policy cannot be separated from a series of conflicts with neighboring countries that arose immediately after Israel was established in 1948, so that security issues in the region have been the focus of Israel's foreign policy since its inception (Migdalovitz, 2010). Israel's foreign policy is heavily influenced by geostrategic challenges, especially the small size of the country and the lack of natural resources, which are drivers for Israel to focus on maintaining security and seeking alliances (Rubin, 2022).

Another important aspect of Israel's foreign policy is its close relationship with the United States. For many years, the United States has been key in Israel's foreign policy, characterized by strong economic relations and military support from the United States (Mousa, 2024; Migdalovitz, 2010). Although sometimes the United States' support for Israel is detrimental to the national interests of the United States, the United States' aid and support to Israel is consistently maintained (Mousa, 2024). Based on data from the Council on Foreign Relations in November 2024, Israel is the largest recipient of American foreign aid cumulatively, Israel receives around 310 billion dollars in total in the form of economic and military assistance. The American government has agreed on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to provide Israel with assistance of 3.8 billion dollars per year until 2028 (Masters & Merrow, 2024).

In recent years, there have been significant changes in Israel's foreign policy, especially under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu, who focused on the issue of Iran's nuclear threat and strengthened relations with unliberal global leaders (Rubin, 2022). The Netanyahu government views Iran's nuclear ambitions as an existential threat, prompting a commitment to take military action if necessary (Eilam, 2015). Prime Minister Netanyahu has actively sought support with several global leaders, such as European leaders, regional countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf states that share the same concerns about Iran's development of nuclear technology in recent years, especially through the Abraham Accords (Kaye & Efron, 2020).

## **Benjamin Netanyahu in Israeli Foreign Policy**

Benjamin Netanyahu is the longest-serving prime minister in Israel's history (Holmes, 2019). He served as Prime Minister of Israel three times, from 1996 to 1999, then from 2009 to 2021, and from 2022 to the present (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025). Netanyahu was born on October 21, 1949, in Tel Aviv. In 1963, he and his family moved to the United States, his father was a well-known historian in Israel. Netanyahu then returned to Israel and joined the military, he also participated in the Yom Kippur War in 1973 (Benjamin Netanyahu Official Site, n.d.).

Netanyahu earned an MBA (Master of Business Administration) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1976. During his political career, Netanyahu held several ambassador positions before being elected to the Israeli parliament (Knesset) from the Likud Party in 1988. In 1989 he was elected deputy foreign minister and as deputy minister in Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's coalition cabinet in 1991. Furthermore, in 1993 he obtained a position as leader of the Likud Party (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025). His educational background, military experience, and several previous positions provided the foundation for Netanyahu's subsequent political career as Israel's prime minister.

In Netanyahu's first term as Prime Minister from 1996 to 1999, Israel was marked by various challenges. At that time Netanyahu was the youngest Prime Minister and was considered inexperienced. Netanyahu faced some complex peace negotiations with the Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat (Lochery, 2000). The Wye Memorandum between Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat, which placed as much as 40 percent of the West Bank under Palestinian control, brought a massive response from



Israel's domestic government. Some factions in Netanyahu's ruling coalition decided to end the coalition. So, in 1998, the Knesset dissolved the first term of Netanyahu's government (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025).

In Netanyahu's second term as Prime Minister, Israel faced the challenge of the Iranian nuclear threat. This became the main focus of Netanyahu's foreign policy in this period (Spyer, 2010). Netanyahu personally perceived Iran as an Existential Threat to the existence of the state of Israel due to Iran's nuclear capabilities (David, 2019). Netanyahu's strategy in dealing with Iran's nuclear program was to securitize Iran as a dangerous threat to Israeli society, he framed this issue by emphasizing the need for urgent action (Leslie, 2023). At the international level, Netanyahu showed dominant resistance and criticism of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in a speech to the United States Congress in March 2015, Netanyahu stated that the JCPOA was a bad deal that would not deter Iran and threaten Israel's security (The Times of Israel, 2015). Netanyahu's policy choices have been inseparable from criticism from within his allies, with some arguing that Netanyahu's hardline stance limited diplomatic options and tended to escalate regional tensions (Kaye, 2022).

The third term of Netanyahu's administration was marked by a series of foreign policies. The first was related to the normalization of relations with several Arab countries, the second was the strong focus on the threat of Iran, and the last was a coercive approach towards Palestine which until now has resulted in the Gaza War. The Abraham Accords normalized relations between Israel and several Arab countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco (Sevilla, 2024; Singer, 2021; Zisser, 2022). Although Israel's relations with several countries in the Middle East improved, relations with Iran are still heated. Iran is still considered a serious threat to Israel (Kaye, 2022). Regarding Palestine, Netanyahu still maintains a firm stance against the establishment of a Palestinian state and rejects the right of return for Palestinian refugees. This tough stance can be seen from Netanyahu's attitude in handling the Gaza war until now (Mednicoff, 2019).

Several previous studies have examined Netanyahu's foreign policy from the point of view of the ideological and military strategy taken by Netanyahu. The ideological roots of Netanyahu's thought were influenced by the views of Revisionist Zionism, especially Vladimir Jabotinsky's Iron Wall doctrine (Zakariah, 2024). This doctrine believes that a conflict between Israel and the Arab population in Palestine is inevitable. The Arabs' opposition to Israel can only be ended by the military and political domination of the state of Israel (Shlaim, 2012). This is related to Netanyahu's military view that emphasizes the need for military force and deterrence. It has consistently been believed that the most important thing for Israel is to survive, utilizing increasing Israel's military power through the development of powerful nuclear deterrent technology (Csepregi, 2024). But some other studies suggest the opposite, that Netanyahu's foreign policy is sometimes uninfluenced by ideological views and military strategy alone. Netanyahu's policies were considered opportunistic and depended on the political conditions that occurred at that time (Benjamin Netanyahu: Battling the World, 2014). This indicates the complexity of understanding Israel's foreign policy under the Netanyahu regime.

### **Netanyahu's leadership style**

Based on the results of the leadership trait analysis through ProfilerPlus developed by Nick Levine and Michael D Young in their article entitled *Leadership Trait Analysis and Threat Assessment with ProfilerPlus* in 2014 (Levine & Young, 2014), the following results were obtained:

No	Filename	DIS	TASK	BACE	IGB	SC	CC	PWR
1	27 Sept 24	0,3871	0,6667	0,35	0,0732	0,2727	0,48	0,2857
2	25 Oct 23	0,3403	0,4065	0,463	0,1386	0,4091	0,5385	0,3962
3	17 Oct 23	0,425	0,4103	0,5405	0,2222	0,4091	0,4545	0,3243
4	28 Oct 23	0,5581	0,5455	0,4054	0,1636	0,3	0,4824	0,4324
5	5 Nov 24	0,125	0,2857	0,375	0,6667	0,4444	0,2941	0,5
6	30 Oct 23	0,3269	0,5938	0,375	0,1111	1	0,4483	0,375
Mean		<b>0,3604</b>	<b>0,48475</b>	<b>0,41815</b>	<b>0,22923</b>	<b>0,47255</b>	<b>0,44963</b>	<b>0,3856</b>

Table 3: Results of the Analysis of Netanyahu's Leadership Style from ProfilerPlus.

Source: Processed by researchers using ProfilerPlus.

The data above illustrates seven traits (distrust, task orientation, belief in control event, in group bias, self confidence, conceptual complexity and need for power) of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu which was analyzed from 6 Netanyahu speeches. The following is a list of speeches -related to the ongoing Gaza war- that are used as the unit of analysis of this study:

- 1.Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the UN General Assembly in New York on 27 September 2024 (United Nations, 2024).
- 2.Press Release of Statement by PM Netanyahu 25 Oct 2023 (Prime Minister's Office, 2023).
- 3.Statement of Benjamin Netanyahu 17 October 2024 (Staff, 2024a).
- 4.Statement by PM Netanyahu, 28 Oct 2023 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023a).
- 5.Statement of Netanyahu after firing the defense minister on November 5, 2024, (Staff, 2024b).
- 6.Statement by PM Netanyahu to the foreign media 30 Oct 2023 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023b).

The data can answer three things about Netanyahu: How Netanyahu faces challenges in taking foreign policy, whether Netanyahu is open to information, and what motivates Netanyahu to issue foreign policy. From these three aspects, it is found that the leadership style of Benjamin Netanyahu is an expansionist one whose focus is on expanding power and influence. The following is an explanation of each of these aspects.

## Netanyahu's Response to Constraint

The response to constraint is determined by two traits, namely belief in controlling event (BACE) and also the need for power (PWR). Based on the results of the analysis of Netanyahu's speech data through ProfilerPlus, it was found that the average BACE score was 0.41815 while the PWR was 0.3856. According to Margareth Hermann, there are two types of responses to obstacles, namely respect and challenge. Netanyahu's score shows the value of belief in controlling events in the average range and the need for power in the low range. This indicates that based on Netanyahu's six speeches analyzed, the way Netanyahu responds to constraints in foreign policy is with the challenge to constraint. However, because his PWR traits are relatively low, Netanyahu is considered the type of leader who, although trying to challenge obstacles, the results of the efforts are considered less effective because the approach taken is too blatant and open. Leaders with this type tend to be less skilled at understanding how to manipulate people and situations. Several cases show the compatability of this attitude with Benjamin Netanyahu's behavior. The first evidence case is the dismissal of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on November 5, 2024, amid the ongoing Gaza war. Netanyahu stated that his surprise decision was caused by a crisis of trust and a significant collaboration gap between the two (Al Jazeera, 2024; Mednicoff, 2019). This policy sparked protests from the Israeli public, who showed significant support for Gallant and dissatisfaction with the dismissal decision. The opposition also considered that the step taken by Netanyahu would be detrimental to Israel's national security (Al Jazeera, 2024; Donnison & Wright, 2024). But Netanyahu remained unfazed by a series of protests directed at him.

Another evidence case is that Prime Minister Netanyahu has openly supported the construction of Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories despite criticism from many international parties (Moniz Bandeira, 2019; Sachs, 2015; Slater, 2020). His actions were considered to be against international UN Security Council resolution 2334, which prohibits Israeli settlement activities (Slater, 2020). There are two priority settlement developments, namely West Bank settlements and the Golan Heights. The expansion of settlements in the West Bank is Netanyahu's commitment to development as part of an agreement with a coalition of far-right allies that emphasizes that it is in Israel's national interest (Zion, 2022). Furthermore, Netanyahu announced plans to increase the population in the Golan Heights by allocating large funds to development projects (Sarkar, 2024). Netanyahu's action has generated a series of criticism from the international community, even the United States, a close ally of Israel, has also expressed criticism of the action, and several humanitarian organizations have also warned Israel about the implications of this policy (Brown, 2024).

These two examples show clearly that Prime Minister Netanyahu decided to continue his foreign policy even though he was confronted with challenges in his foreign policy, both within and outside the country. He replied to these challenges by challenging them once more. Additionally, the choice of method that was made is regarded as being excessively open and public.

### **Netanyahu's Openness to Information**

To explain a leader's openness to information, it is determined by two traits, self confidence (SC) and conceptual complexity (CC). Confidence describes an individual's sense of self-importance and his ability to cope with objects and people around him. This trait regulates the extent to which an individual survives under conditions that occur during the processing of new information (Ziller, 2013). Conceptual complexity is the ability of leaders to process and integrate disparate and conflicting information to make policies (Siniver & Featherstone, 2020). Based on the results of Netanyahu's score, the SC score was 0.47255 while the CC score was 0.44963. The results of the SC's higher score than the CC show that Netanyahu is a person who tends to be secretive about information.

Leaders like this tend to be closed to new ideas and information, they are people who hold principles and ideologies firmly. They are also leaders who are considered to be less sensitive to their environment, tending to interpret situations according to their worldview rather than following the input of the existing environment. Leaders with this type always try to ensure that their views are accepted even though they have to use coercive and manipulative tactics.

Benjamin Netanyahu is often closed to inputs from other parties that are not in line with his beliefs. Netanyahu has rejected suggestions from U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan advising Israel to involve the Palestinian Authority in post-Hamas planning in Gaza (Backmann, 2024). Netanyahu also rejected previous ceasefire proposals with Hamas in Gaza, despite international and domestic pressure. He still emphasized that he would continue his military action (Sambaraju & McVittie, 2014). Netanyahu also did not receive input from Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara regarding the establishment of an independent commission to evaluate Israel's actions during the war, which caused a lot of criticism and protests, instead he chose to involve only politicians to address the issue (Barnae, 2024).

### **Netanyahu's Motivation in Foreign Policy**

There are two motivations for foreign policy-making leaders: focusing on solving problems or the desire to build relationships. The TASK trait determines this. There are three levels of TASK, namely low, high, and moderate, based on the results of the ProfilerPlus score. Netanyahu had a score of 0.48475, which was in the moderate range. These results indicate Netanyahu's focus on TASK and building relationships depending on the context. This can be seen from the normalization efforts that he has established with several Arab countries in the Middle East.

The leader's motivation is also influenced by the leader's worldview, which is determined by two traits, namely, In-group bias and distrust. These two things show whether the leader acts because he sees the world as a place that threatens his existence or whether he acts with the sole



purpose of caring for the interests of his group. The scoring results show that in Netanyahu's six speeches, his in-group bias was relatively low, namely 0.229. Contrary to the researchers' initial belief that Netanyahu would be highly biased towards the Jewish nation and the state of Israel, the choice of words he spoke indicated a different outcome. As for distrust, it was at a score of 0.36, which was at the average level. The distrust often expressed by Netanyahu is aimed at Hamas and Iran.

Based on his speech on October 25, 2023, Netanyahu associated Hamas with ISIS, and that ISIS being Hamas. In his speech, Netanyahu expressed his distrust of Hamas and his desire to destroy it (Prime Minister's Office, 2023). Likewise, in his speech on September 27, 2024, at the UN General Assembly in New York, Netanyahu repeatedly referred to Hamas as a terrorist and stated that Hamas was backed by Iran (United Nations, 2024). Hamas and Iran are the two actors most often cited as threats by Netanyahu in his speeches and official statements, he mentioned that "[i]n fighting Hamas and the Iranian axis of terror, Israel is fighting the enemies of civilization itself" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023b).

However, it turned out that Netanyahu obtained a relatively low score of in-group bias and average DIS score, which means that Netanyahu is a leader focused on taking advantage of opportunities and building relationships while remaining vigilant against threats. Although Netanyahu seeks to improve relations through the Abraham Accords with Arab countries in the Middle East, Netanyahu still makes the Iranian and Hamas threat a focus and is also wary of the existence of Hamas. Thus, it can be concluded that in deciding his foreign policy, Netanyahu was motivated more by his distrust of Iran and Hamas as a threat and by a desire to solve the problem rather than by focusing on group interests and building relationships. The relationship he built was only an instrument to deal with threats that he thought were more urgent and significant.

## Conclusion

This article analyzed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership style in the context of the 2023 Gaza conflict, using a Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) approach. By analyzing six of Netanyahu's speeches using the ProfilerPlus software, the study evaluated seven leadership attributes, such as trust in event control, need for power, conceptual complexity, and bias within the group. The results showed that Netanyahu has an expansionist leadership style, which emphasizes the expansion of power and influence, and tends to challenge obstacles with an open and assertive approach, albeit less strategic. Netanyahu is not open to new information, maintains solid principles and ideologies, and is more motivated by problem-solving than building relationships. His attitude towards Hamas and Iran is based on deep distrust, which is reflected in his speeches. His foreign policy decisions show a tendency to challenge constraints, maintain ideological rigidity, and to rely on military strength over a diplomatic approach. Although Netanyahu has shown flexibility in building relationships through efforts such as the Abraham Accords, his focus remains on confronting threats from Hamas and Iran. This research makes a significant contribution to understanding the relationship between personal leadership character and conflict dynamics, especially in the context of Israel's foreign policy in the Middle East. Based on the findings above, the policy recommendations that can be offered are for international mediators related to this conflict to consider Netanyahu's leadership style, which tends to reject normative arguments and favors practical solutions rather than prioritizing humanitarian values and diplomatic efforts in their negotiating strategies with Netanyahu. Although the LTA provides a crucial understanding of Netanyahu's leadership style, the study recognizes analytical limitations. Combining the psychological profile with structural analysis, especially elite dynamics, shall provide a more holistic understanding by integrating these perspectives into future research to enrich the explanation of Israel's foreign policy.

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