The psychological profile of Benjamin Netanyahu using behavior analysis

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Shaul Kimhi
Tel-Hai Academic College
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Chapter 9

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE

USING BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Shaul Kimhi

INTRODUCTION

The present paper describes the psychological profile (from a distance) of Israel's former prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu[i]. In constructing the profile, a qualitative method called behavior analysis is employed (Kimhi, 1999). The method developed as a result of an attempt to create psychological profiles that are both clinically derived and politically pragmatic. Although qualitative profiles based upon personality theory have their own advantages and unique utility, the present intention was to produce a method built upon available empirical data rather than general presumptions driven by developmental personality theories. A parallel intent was to enhance the predictive ability of profiles that have been somewhat constricted by the use of limited psychological theories (e.g., theoretical psychology does not generally include dimensions that relate directly to political behavior and leadership style). Quantitative methods also have their advantages, however results often focus upon narrower areas of interest selected from the larger personality. The behavior analysis method observes specific behaviors that evolve into repeated patterns of behavior and synthesizes these tangible indicators into a global personality type. Much as the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM IV) lists behaviors and provides a diagnostic personality type, the current method identifies behaviors in political leaders and then suggests a global personality type with precise reference to unique political behavior.

METHOD: BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

This method comprises three steps: collection (of any possible information on the leader's behavior), classification (into content categories), and analysis (construction of the psychological profile). Behavior analysis is based on behaviors described and reported publicly; the method utilizes measures of thoughts, feelings, and actions that have continuity over time and between situations. Moreover, it makes a clear distinction between psychological hypotheses and findings based on gathered data.

Data Collection: Sources

The sources for the present study are: (a) books written by Benjamin Netanyahu (Netanyahu, 1995; 1996); (b) volumes whose subject is Netanyahu (Vardi, 1997; Kaspit & Kfir, 1997); and (c) a large quantity of articles concerning Netanyahu that were published in Israeli newspapers from 1985 to December 1997, including interviews he granted to the press. Among the 170 magazine and newspaper articles, 132 were classified into one or more content categories[ii]. The other 42 articles were deemed to be too general (a commentator's evaluation, for example, on Netanyahu's chances of winning the election), as they did not illustrate any of the behaviors included in content categories.

Each written text that includes a relevant aspect of Netanyahu's behavior was marked as a unit of information, that is, a description of a leader's behavior in a defined situation at a certain time. Such a description could entail one paragraph, a few, or even a full chapter. Every unit of information was entered into the computer, with key words emphasizing both the general behavior (e.g., a tendency to mistreat his workers) and the specific behavior (e.g., tardiness at a given meeting) described.

Classification and Analysis

The units of information were classified according to two dimensions, namely, content category and type of information. The classification into content categories was

accomplished in three stages: First, two researchers each independently proposed a list of categories for the analysis, each category representing a psychological dimension (e.g., suspicion). Then they discussed their respective lists and agreed upon a final list of 22 content categories (see table 1). In the second stage, the two researchers independently classified all units of information into these categories. Each unit was assigned one (the most suitable) category. Classification comparisons revealed a high degree of congruity (r= .85). Non-congruent classifications were discussed and agreed upon. In the third stage, each of the earlier categories were grouped into four major categories: distinguishing traits, functional characteristics, leadership style, and family and development. There was no disagreement on the classification of content categories into major categories.

Information came from three types of sources: primary sources, secondary sources, and commentary and evaluations.

1. Primary sources are those based on direct observation of behavior, including interviews with the leader, or books authored by him or her.

2. Secondary sources included books written about leaders and their background (such as biographies); articles describing leaders behavior and characteristics (e.g., descriptions of meetings or a specific decision-making process); and written and verbal testimonies by people who had been close to leaders, and could describe their behavior during differing situations and over periods of time.

3. Commentary and evaluations of the leader can be very diverse, ranging from political to psychological analyses of motives and personality. Unlike secondary sources, commentary and evaluation seldom consider specific behaviors in specific situations.

The predetermined criteria for including a content category in the data analysis was a combination of a minimum of three units of information of types 1 and 2. As table 1 illustrates, most of our content categories easily met that criterion.

The theoretical approach underlying the present study follows Maddi's (1989: 9) perception of personality as "a stable set of tendencies and characteristics that determine those commonalties and differences in people's psychological behavior (thoughts,

feelings, and actions) that have continuity in time and that may not be easily understood as the sole result of the social and biological pressures of the moment." Maddi (1989) contends that any personality theory should deal with three points of reference: core of personality (the things that are common to all people); periphery of personality; and development of personality. For the purpose of psychological profiling of leaders, the second and third elements were determined to be most relevant.

Periphery of personality is generally learned rather than inherent, and has a relatively circumscribed influence on behavior. It is used in the theories mainly to explain differences among people. The periphery includes three levels of statements, which are arranged hierarchically: (a) behavioral data--thoughts, feelings, and actions that have regularity in an individual; (b) peripheral characteristics, or traits--patterns of behavior that tend to be consistent (for example, stubbornness, cleanliness) and may explain much behavioral data; and (c) type--lifestyles or general orientations. The type is the combination of several dominant traits that appear together.

Development of personality explains how the leader's traits and typology evolved. The information about a leader's development is based on the testimony of others (i.e., biographical data); therefore, this point of reference should be considered as a hypothesis about development.

Table 1: Classification of units of information: content category and type of information sources

General Content Areas	Content Category	Type of information sources			
		Primary	Secondary	Others' Evaluations	Overall
A Distinguishing traits	**1** - Egocentricity	3	11	14	28 (12)
	2- Ambition and determination	3	8	11	22(4)
	3 - Aggression and manipulation	5	25	13	43(6)
	4 - Credibility	2	18	11	31(1)
	5- Interpersonal relationship	1	10	6	17(6)
	6 - Suspicion	1	9	10	20(1)
B Functional characteristics	**1** - Behavior under stress	2	15	10	27(4)
	2 - Cognitive functioning	1	5	2	8(2)
	3- Appearance & rhetorical abilities	1	17	3	21(5)
	4 - leisure life	-	10	4	14(4)
	5 - Relationship within a couple	-	4	2	6
C Leadership style	**1** administrational style	1	11	6	18(3)
	2 - Working style	-	7	12	19(1)
	3 - Undemocratic nature	1	12	3	16
	4 - Relation with the media	4	11	11	26(4)
	5 - Political world view	8	7	4	19(1)
	6 - Political strategy	3	2	3	8
	7- Religiosity	-	5	1	6(3)
D Family, development & youth	**1** - Family, childhood, youth	2	5	2	9(4)
	2 - Military service	-	5	-	5(2)
	3 - Studies in the USA	-	3	-	3(2)
	4 - Death of his brother	-	4	-	4(2)

¹ The number in parentheses denotes the units of information extracted from books; the rest are

DATA ANALYSIS: DISTINGUISHING TRAITS

Egocentricity

A number of Netanyahu's behavioral patterns represent the dimension of egocentricity:

1. Personal success is more important to him than ideology and he constantly strives for it. This pattern is demonstrated by his acceptance of help from US contributors who held extreme views very different from his own (Kim, 1996a). He doesn't hesitate to exploit other people, including colleagues, in order to succeed. Journalist Yoel Markus describes Netanyahu: "he is charismatic, driven, from an extremely ambitious family, egocentric, a lone wolf, the kind of person you might say has no God" (Markus, 1996).

2. Netanyahu sees himself as more perceptive than others. Thus, those who disagree with him don't understand historical/political processes correctly. According to the testimony of a journalist who interviewed him, Netanyahu is convinced that he discerns the historical processes that others do not, and believes that it is his heroic task to rescue his homeland (Shavit, 1996)

3. His attitude toward people who work with him closely is self-centered. Some behaviors betray self-involvement to the point that others receive no consideration. This trait is also manifested in Netanyahu's manipulation of colleagues (Kim, 1997a).

4. A related, and equally clear trait is Netanyahu's difficulty in appreciating perspectives other than his own (Benziman, 1993). Netanyahu's books and speeches presented no examples of attempts to understand or present perspectives other than his own.

5. Netanyahu has difficulty distinguishing between personal and public or political dimensions of his life. For example, at a meeting of senior Likud members after the Bar-On affair (a scandal in which high government officials were accused of trying to tamper with justice), he commented, "I receive a lot of support from all areas of the nation. They tell me to be strong and steadfast. 'We are with you; don't let them. Stand

strong; truth will win.' Because this is what the success of the Jewish people, the success of the State of Israel, depends on, and they will never be defeated" (Verter, 1997).

6. Netanyahu is chronically tardy for meetings even with heads of state, interpreted by foreign leaders, politicians, and others as offensive, insulting, and even degrading (Benziman, 1997e). One can safely assume that the Prime Minister is aware of these reactions (some of them have been published in the press), but these reports have not influenced his behavior.

Ambition and Determination

Ambition and determination are perhaps Netanyahu's most prominent character traits. Ambition is expressed in his desire to be the very best, to be first, to triumph over others, to reach the top (Horowitz, 1992: 6). He sets high goals is not satisfied with partial successes. Netanyahu almost never despairs and never gives up. This stubbornness was demonstrated when as Israel's ambassador to the UN, he uncompromisingly struggled against the UN Secretary General and representatives, eventually winning in the decision to open UN files on Nazi crimes (Argaman,

1987: 46). He has displayed tremendous determination against all odds, reflecting strong will power and a high degree of control. Professor Groesser at MIT, stated that Netanyahu was the most ambitious and focused man he had ever seen, with amazing willingness to work hard in order to achieve goals (Yediot Aharonot, 1996: 7).

Aggression and Manipulation

Netanyahu sees the game of politics as governed by the "laws of the jungle," where the strong survive and the weak fall by the wayside. To him, achievement of the goal justifies any political means (Sheory, 1985). This approach is manifested in both Netanyahu's behavior and his statements. In most cases, he does not act out of aggression, malice, or cruelty. His dominance and manipulation stem from cold, rational calculation, directed solely at achieving goals at any cost. For example, when he was putting together his cabinet, senior members of the Likud remarked that he was

systematically settling accounts, humiliating and dominating party leaders. Individuals posing a threat to him were crushed (Verter, 1996b).

Several distinct, recurring behavioral patterns have been identified since Netanyahu's emergence into politics: (a) he preemptively attacks anyone perceived as an opponent or a rival. The attack may be direct or indirect (Golan, 1995); (b) he aims to shrink and diminish, and, if necessary, dismiss those allies who might threaten him in the future. This is expressed in evasion, and derision of prospective rivals, or even allies who may threaten his future standing (Verter, 1997); (c) he utilizes assistants and colleagues to perform "deeds" that may arouse anger or dissent. Then, depending on results, he either supports them or denies any personal involvement (Kim, 1997a); (d) he forms and breaks pacts, drawing people closer or distancing himself from them, depending on current political needs or considerations. Today's ally may be tomorrow's rival, and vice versa (Markus, 1997b). He uses people for immediate needs, with no long-term loyalty or obligation.

Credibility

The testimony of politicians, journalists, leaders, and public figures portray Netanyahu as someone who makes, and even signs promises that he does not keep. As a result, he is considered untrustworthy (Benziman, 1997b). Several leaders (e.g., President Mubarak, President Clinton) have accused Netanyahu of promising them things and then denying ever doing so. Journalist Benziman (1997d) reported that Clinton and his advisors were infuriated by Netanyahu's failure to fulfill promises they claimed he made during his earlier visits to Washington (also see Benziman, 1997a).

Netanyahu's behavior indicates an attitude that duplicity is an agreed upon and accepted standard in politics. According to Barnea (1997), ministers often explain that their prime minister's amazing ability to survive is based on Netanyahu's introduction of a new political code, in which "bluffing" has become an acceptable form of deceit. This is not to say that he is a pathological liar (i.e., one who cannot discern between truth and lies), but rather a person who is convinced that in politics, any means are acceptable

(Vardi, 1997: 225). Consequently, telling different people different things is accompanied by no psychological difficulty, sense of guilt, or pangs of conscience. In fact, more than once Netanyahu seemed surprised when accused of being untrustworthy. The result: even when he tells the truth, he sounds unconvincing.

Interpersonal Relationships

Netanyahu's interpersonal relationships tend to be instrumental. He is not a good social mixer, nor is he a man who forms deep bonds with people. In general, he is closed and withdrawn, with very limited ability to empathize. Most of the people with whom he has social relationships are those he needs or who assist him (Galili, 1995). When these people cease to be of use to him, he terminates the relationship with them with relative ease (Verter, 1996a). This is not to say that he doesn't have friends with whom he stays in touch. However, interpersonal ties are not intimate and do not seem to involve emotional exchanges (Benziman, 1997c). This inability to empathize influences Netanyahu's interpersonal relationships with work colleagues: he tends to become entangled in conflicts and must constantly right relationships that have gone awry. Many of his relationships are more clearly based on mutual exploitation than friendship (Kim, 1996b).

Suspicion

Another of Netanyahu's distinguishing traits is his suspicious nature (Benziman, 1997a). This suspicion that "the entire world is against him" is accompanied by feelings of victimization. His primary opponents are representatives of the former government, as well as the elite factions (the "princes") of his own party. From his behavior and speeches, it seems that it is precisely when he is under attack that he feels most at home. Apparently, feelings of victimization mobilize his inner resources enabling him to fight and win in an effort to "show them" (Kim, 1997b).

Netanyahu's response to the "cassette affair" provides another example of this characteristic. After his wife received an anonymous phone call threatening that taped evidence of Netanyahu's betrayal of her would be publicized, he made a public

statement, charging that "an unprecedented crime in the history of the state and the democracy has been committed" (Rozenblum, 1993).

Since Netanyahu's entry into political life, his levels of suspicion have increased. This tendency intensifies during crises, when he feels his position threatened. Individuals who are not members of his close staff are often automatically suspected of disloyalty and conspiring against him. The threat, as he sees it, is primarily personal.

FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Behavior Under Stress

Benjamin Netanyahu's behavior under stress varies situationally. If stress can be anticipated and its source is known, Netanyahu feels in control, is unlikely to improvise, and ensures backup for alternate plans. He remains calm during such crises and deals directly with problems, concentrating on the central issue. He remains optimistic even in difficult moments and recovers quickly from surprise punches. In television interviews he has demonstrated an excellent ability to handle difficult questions and to direct discussions.

When the crisis is unanticipated and Netanyahu does not feel in control, he reacts in a pressured, frightened, and confused manner, and may even lose his composure. For example, people who were close to Netanyahu at the time of the "cassette affair" mentioned above, testify that he acted out of panic, "lost his cool" and failed to think things through (Galili, 1993). In such situations, he is willing to promise anything, sign any document (Markus, 1997a). He concedes to whoever puts pressure on him. When exposed to blackmail or extortion, he strenuously resists, but will also concede dramatically. Israel Harel, a leader of the West Bank settlers, said in an interview after the Mashaal incident, that Netanyahu had lost his senses, panicked, and given the Jordanians an outrageously exorbitant price (Harel, 1997). Military analyst Amir Oren's report stated that Netanyahu was so alarmed by the arrest of two Mossad agents in Amman that he himself proposed Ahmed Yassin's release to King Hussein, an offer that could not be

retracted. In the end, it provided Yassin with the option of deciding for himself (Oren, 1997).

People who have worked closely with Netanyahu also report somatic reactions during stress: he will often withdraw during a crisis with a stomachache (Goren & Berkowitz, 1996: 87). This type of somatic reaction is indicative of a coping mechanism stimulated by feelings that Netanyahu is unwilling to either admit or express.

Cognitive Functioning

Netanyahu is a very talented and intelligent man. He is gifted with an extraordinary à some say phenomenal--capacity for learning and an excellent memory (according to Vardi, 1997: 217); he has the benefit of a broad education, and possesses a strong ability for analytic and visual thinking (Admon, 1987: 22). Netanyahu is very well read in a wide range of subjects (art, history, and business), loves to quote (usually accurately) from books he has read, and has a tendency to support his own views with those of outstanding historical figures (Vardi, 1997: 291).

Netanyahu is a person who needs constant stimulation. He seeks challenges that enable him to prove himself. He is a decisive person who hates routine work, prefers to set meaningful goals for himself, and is uneasy with free time. In an interview he said, "I enjoy the work load. I like periods of relief and calm, but not if they're too long. After a vacation of more than two days, I begin feeling uneasy, because time is passing without use" (Brezky, 1997: 44).

Appearance, Charisma, and Rhetoric Abilities

Benjamin Netanyahu is an attractive and impressive man. He exudes self-confidence and charisma. He has great rhetoric ability and explains his views logically (Admon, 1987: 22). Netanyahu developed a flair for debate, logic, and powers of persuasion in his youth, such that his peers found him difficult to contend with. Netanyahu knew better than other government spokespersons how to explain Israel's position to an American audience, in polished English (Argaman, 1987: 46). His appearance and rhetoric abilities

were part of his charm, and served him well during his race for head of the Likud and afterwards, for Prime Minister (Markus, 1992).

Leisure Life

Netanyahu loves the good life that status and power afford him (see, e.g., Benziman, 1996). He lives lavishly: luxurious hotels, high-class restaurants, fine food, connoisseur wine, high-quality cigars, tailored clothes, and personal hair styling before every public appearance or important meeting (Sheory, 1985). As part of this sense of entitlement, Netanyahu, after becoming prime minister, demanded considerable discounts or preferred treatment for himself and his family (cf., Goren & Berkowitz, 1996: 34).

Couple Relations

Netanyahu has been married three times and divorced twice. In all three cases, he married strong, dominant women. This pattern of a controlling woman who commits herself to her husband's career is familiar to Netanyahu from his family of origin. According to people who knew Netanyahu, his first two marriages began in love and ended with the wife's decision to end the relationship (Kaspit & Kfir, 1997: 22). Although he suffered from the separations, he recovered quickly and carried on. Netanyahu begins new relationships fairly easily, but does not maintain them for long (Barnea, 1997). His present marriage took place after Sara became pregnant. According to people who knew Netanyahu, he had doubts about marrying her. She has received much press coverage herself (Grayevski, et al., 1997). One journalist reports that Netanyahu never misses an opportunity to present himself as the perfect family man, devoted husband and father, dedicated to family values (Ashri, 1996).

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Administration and Work Style

Netanyahu is a centralist administrator who tends to work alone and to compartmentalize others. For example, according to the most senior state official's testimony on Netanyahu's work style: "He operates alone, he doesn't consult with experienced key advisors, and doesn't realize that one day he is going to need them" (Benziman, 1997e).

A journalist describes his administration style: he personally delegates tasks to his assistants, demands frequent reports on their activities, and rules with an iron hand. Staff must be loyal and disciplined (Aluf, 1996). His administrative style is aggressive. It is important for him to be at the top, to influence, to dominate. He loves to play commander in the "war room," drawing diagrams on a board (Vardi, 1997: 177). Netanyahu displays strong leadership ability and can successfully encourage people to follow him (Yediot Aharonot, 1996: 9). He works well with a small, intimate, intelligent, and loyal staff. He gives his staff a feeling of importance, camaraderie, and intimacy, a sense of being an "elite unit" (Kaspit & Kfir, 1997: 128).

Netanyahu's statements and behavior suggest an undemocratic character. This is acknowledged by his own ministers and cabinet members. He has been accused of using undemocratic manipulation to tilt the balance in the Likud party. One journalist reports that according to Likud supporters, Netanyahu's and Lieberman's soldiers are like front-line troops who will follow him to hell and back, who will relentlessly pursue traitors on the home front and will do anything Netanyahu demands of them--even call them the Hezballah (Kim, 1997c). He does not consult others (except for his personal advisors). He utilizes yes-men who work for him without his having to be directly involved; makes conflicting promises and uses behind-the-scene tactics that contradict his promises (cf., Gilat, 1997: 3).

Relations with the Media

The media suits Netanyahu's character: a man of words, Netanyahu has all the makings of a television star: a pleasant appearance, self-confidence, a superb talent for rhetoric, excellent English, intelligence, and strong logical abilities, which enable him to contend with any interviewer or rival (Sheory, 1985). He knows how to make the most of subject matter on which it is easy to find consensus (such as terrorism or the Holocaust). He has a knack for turning issues around to that which he would like to discuss, and not necessarily what his interviewer or rival intended (Shalev et al., 1996: 2). His style: a simple message expressed briefly, clearly, and repeatedly (Galili, 1995). Supporters of a party rival, Ehud Olmert, say that Bibi lives in a completely imaginary reality. "From his point of view, the facts are only a marginal addition to what is publicized on TV and in the press" (Kaspit, 1997: 2). He knows how to use journalists to leak information when convenient, to pass messages to the media via others, and to manipulate the press to his advantage (e.g., to enter a convention hall exactly when the prime time newscasts begin). He admits treating the television studio as a battlefield, in which he must defeat his rival, in one interview stating that "For me, television is a boxing arena. You stand opposite someone who wants to attack what you represent, and you have to decide when, what, and how to respond" (Brezki, 1997: 42).

Political and Religious World View

His world view regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict (as expressed in his speeches, interviews, and books), is as follows: (a) from a historical perspective, there is nothing more just than the return of the Jews to their homeland (Netanyahu, 1995: 174); (b) although it is in the right, Israel has failed to disseminate this information effectively, while Arab propaganda has presented false evidence of the nature of the conflict in Israel and abroad (Netanyahu, 1995: 15); (c) the Arab countries around Israel are not democracies and therefore peace with them can only be based on a balance of fear, and on Israel's ability to defend itself--Arab hostility will not disappear during this generation

(Rozenblum, 1977); and, (d) only a mighty Israel that maintains its convictions will eventually be accepted by the Arabs (Netanyahu, 1995: 354).

A leader's religious beliefs are not necessarily central to his personality. However, in Israel, where religion and politics go hand in hand, the religious convictions of a leader can have great political and personal significance. Netanyahu's life throughout his political career indicates a completely secular lifestyle (Benziman, 1996). His bond with religion is expressed primarily in a strong sense of historical continuity of the Jewish nation and respect for tradition, which were central to his family of origin (Goren & Berkowitz, 1996: 35). Once, during the election campaign, while on a visit to a synagogue, he kissed the cover of a Torah scroll, as customary, and then winked surreptitiously at the newspaper reporter who eternalized the moment (Vardi, 1997: 305).

FAMILY AND DEVELOPMENT

Netanyahu's father, Ben-Zion, the eldest of the Milikovsky children, spent a large part of his life in the US, dedicated to his career as an historian. Like his own father, Ben-Zion failed to integrate into the political or academic establishment, and is described as embittered man, feeling discriminated against because of his political opinions (Goren, & Berkowitz, 1996: 35). Benjamin Netanyahu's mother, Celia, was born to elderly parents and was raised by her three older sisters. She grew up in Israel under difficult conditions during World War II. She was raised strictly and developed determinism and will power. Throughout her married life with Ben-Zion, she devoted herself totally to his work. She was the drive behind his career and the dominant family figure (Doek, 1997). Celia was described as a cold woman, who taught her children restraint, to hide their emotions and show strength. She also conveyed high expectations of success to her sons.

Ben-Zion Netanyahu's children were in awe of their father, who was distant from them. While he closed himself up in his study for hours, their mother enforced strict silence upon the children. The father pushed his children to succeed in school and kept them under Spartan rule. The entire family was dedicated to the father's work (Goren, &

Berkowitz, 1996: 35). The family was socially isolated (Kaspit & Kfir, 1997: 36). They had few friends and a limited social life, and saw themselves as a closed unit facing a hostile world. There was an atmosphere of suspicion, bitterness, and a feeling of injustice (despite their successes) (Vardi, 1997: 50). The parents's message to their children: succeed at any cost, dedicate everything to your goal. Benjamin was described as a serious, exceptionally industrious, quiet, and withdrawn child. He was a very good, disciplined student, and a voracious reader (Goren & Berkowitz, 1996: 36).

As a teenager, Benjamin Netanyahu was separated from Israel when the family moved back to the US (one of many changes of location). During this time period, he demonstrated strong will, independence, and maturity. He dedicated all his time to studies, achieving honors with extraordinary self-discipline (Kaspit & Kfir, 1997, p. 40). Netanyahu had excellent prospects: he was handsome, tall, athletic, and strong. Nevertheless, he was lonely and alienated, unfriendly, and unlikely to engage in heart-to-heart talks. He also displayed a strong desire to compete and win.

When he was 18, Netanyahu returned to Israel to serve his army duty. He was a good soldier: highly motivated, serious, ambitious, and totally obedient. He was described as a man of action, not of creativity, originality, or vision (Yediot Aharonot, 1996: 6). Netanyahu was a good officer, however not outstanding in comparison with other commanders in their elite unit. He was described as strict, but fair (Bashan, 1995: 10). In the army, Netanyahu did not make social contacts beyond those necessary in the line of duty. He was withdrawn and closed, although ready to help when needed (Horowitz, 1992: 6) .

Benjamin Netanyahu's brother, Yoni, was three years older than he was. He was the talented and beloved son, who "carried the family torch" and was earmarked from an early age to be a star, the hope of the family (Goren & Berkowitz, 1996: 35). Yoni often served as a father substitute to his younger brothers and was a central role model for them. He was the object of Benjamin's love and admiration and a model for emulation (Horowitz, 1992: 6). However, Yoni Netanyahu died in action during the Entebbe operation. For Benjamin Netanyahu, who was studying in the US, this was the greatest

blow he had ever suffered. True to the developed character of the family, that reacted with emotional restraint. Feelings of grief and sorrow were channeled in a practical direction: in a relatively short time, the family dedicated itself to an unprecedented memorial to their son (Goren & Berkowitz, 1996: 36). The project became the center of Benjamin Netanyahu's life and served as a springboard to becoming a noted and international expert on terrorism. There is no doubt that Benjamin Netanyahu deeply grieved for his brother, but it is also impossible to ignore his exploitation of the memorial for his own self-advancement.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Benjamin Netanyahu's behavior reveals many of the characteristics of a narcissistic personality including: a tendency to megalomania (linking his personal fate to the national one); powerful ambition; total devotion to his goal (success at any price); failure to admit weakness and refusal to take the blame; manipulative relationships; using other people to attain his goals; taking from people; dishonesty in politics; a lack of personal and political ethics; great sensitivity to criticism; keen awareness of his appearance (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

Netanyahu's suspiciousness displayed itself from an early age. Netanyahu notes conspiracy everywhere--whoever disagrees with him is by definition wrong and against him--the enemy. He has viewed the world as a cruel place, with no room for altruism, philanthropy, or true friendship, a continuous Darwinist struggle for survival. Netanyahu sees himself, like his father, as an outsider to the establishment, alienated and discriminated against. He has perceived all political colleagues as rivals and has taken revenge on those caught opposing him.

Netanyahu also possesses some of the characteristics of the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al., 1950; Stone et al., 1993): he tends to deny his weaknesses and to blame others (e.g., the media) for his failures; his relationships with people are manipulative and based to some extent on domination; he sees events and people in terms of power, for which he has very great passion; he is an aggressive leader.

Netanyahu evaluates the world in stark contrasts. His politics of opposition is conservative and rigid. His primary platform is accentuated nationalism. He plucks the heartstrings of his public supporters, fans the fires of their instincts, promises to institute new social and government structures, and calls on his faithful public to rebel against the existing social order.

Psychological Hypothesis

From a psychological point of view, it seems that the foundation for Netanyahu's conception of politics is based on several of his personality traits: (a) his inability to take perspectives other than his own into account; (b) the early familial environment in which the history of Zionism was seen as both a direct continuation of the path of ancestors who settled in the land of Israel, and a means to right the historic injustice of the exile of the Jews from their land à in this context, Netanyahu identified deeply with the historical notion of a Greater Israel, which belongs to the Jews. (c) the central message of Netanyahu's upbringing that "nothing should stand in the way of determination" leading to a feeling of omnipotence, when accompanied by a knowledge of goals and convictions. (d) Netanyahu's ego-centrism, as clearly illustrated in his ability to sacrifice ideology for personal success.

Another hypothesis about the Netanyahu's family concerns the place each child has in the family: there is some evidence that Netanyahu lived in the shadow of his older brother Yoni. Furthermore, Yoni's death altered Netanyahu's life. In the process of Yoni's commemoration, he revealed himself to the political world and became a well-known media figure.

Conclusions

Benjamin Netanyahu is not likely to change dramatically. A narcissistic personality, like other personality types, is stable and unlikely to alter. Therefore, changes in leadership style are not expected. It is more likely that some of his character traits - suspicion; aggression in politics; megalomaniac perception of himself as savior of the nation from tragic mistakes; interpersonal relationship style; and lack of credibility--will

be heightened while in a position of leadership. It seems that a good portion of Netanyahu's failures and mishaps in office were the product of his character, rather than lack of experience.

Many wonder at his meteoric rise to power on the one hand, and his failure as a prime minister, on the other. His personality, as described here, provides a possible explanation. His character traits--ambition, determination, excellent media skills, superb rhetoric, and personal charm--were highly suited to the achievement of top political office. However, these traits are not sufficient for an effective administrator. Furthermore, additional traits that did not hinder his rise to the top--lack of credibility, impaired ability for interpersonal relationships, megalomania,

aggression, suspicion, and egocentricity--represent a serious obstacle for a successful

prime minister. Thus, the fascinating election campaign in 1996, which fueled the expectations of many, was followed by a flawed administration.

The use of behavior analysis to evaluate Netanyahu has allowed for the emergence of a unique and comprehensive psychological profile, based upon a content analysis of units of information categorized and compared by multiple researchers, tested for reliability, and based upon a large sample from a variety of sources. The method is somewhat limited since it is qualitative by nature and as such does not permit comparison between various leaders according to quantitative criteria (there are no standard scores to be compared).

Additionally, this method requires that a variety of secondary sources be utilized to control for the possibility of bias in the individual journalist. Nevertheless, the advantages of the behavior analysis seem to warrant its application in the construction of psychological profiles of political leaders.

Epilogue

When this profile was prepared, Benjamin Netanyahu was Israel's prime minister. At that time, no one knew that he would be defeated a year later in the May 1999 election. The current analysis was not intended to serve as the basis for predicting whether

Netanyahu would continue to occupy his position of power in the long run (as this is influenced by many factors, in addition to the leader's personality).

However, based on Netanyahu's personality traits, as described here, it was possible to predict fairly confidently that his term in office would continue to be plagued by serious problems. These problems--poor team work; communication difficulties and problematic relationships with other important figures; hasty decision making (such as opening the tunnel in Jerusalem) or, alternatively, difficulty in making important decisions (concessions to the Palestinians in order to reach a peace accord); were reflective of his administration. While it is clear that Netanyahu's personality traits contributed substantially to his fall, under certain conditions those same traits might induce him to return to the political arena.

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NOTES

[i] It should be noted that the analysis was conducted before the May 1999 elections were announced, that is, when Netanyahu was prime minister. No major changes have been made since then.

[ii] Due to space limitation, the long list of 132 magazine and newspaper articles (with coded categories and type of information) is not presented in this chapter. Readers who would like the list, should contact the author by e-mail: shaul@shamir.org.il