

Idiosyncrasies in Foreign Policy: A Case Study of Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin, 1974-1995

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Abstract

This study examined how individual idiosyncrasies affect the foreign policy of states using Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin as a case study. It explored the personality, backgrounds, and experiences of leaders and the roles they play in determining the type of foreign policy they formulate and pursue while in the office. It is based on the premise that the personal histories and psychological characteristics of political leaders have a huge impact on global politics. While backing up our claims with evidence from works on foreign policy analysis, theoretical ideas were presented that highlight the role that individual decision-makers play in influencing state actions and international relations. For easy understanding, terminologies like idiosyncrasy and foreign policy were defined in the literature review. Through the definition of these terms, the study highlighted the internal aspects that often go unnoticed when determining foreign policy, like a leader's personality and views. The study used a diachronic comparison approach and historical research methodology to compare their actions and policies. It argued that understanding the character traits of political figures is crucial for predicting and analyzing foreign policy outcomes in the global system. The findings provide empirical proof of the significant influence of individual quirks on international relations, advancing the field of foreign policy analysis.

Keywords

Israel, Idiosyncrasies, Foreign Policy, Yitzhak Rabin, Menachem Begin, Diachronic Comparison

1. Introduction

If the general public has an idea of the way in which foreign policy is created, one

of the things that will come to their notice is the fact that leaders who are charged with the responsibility of setting and implementing foreign policy have the ability to make a powerful personal mark on world politics. There seems to be a general belief that many of the actions and decisions taken by leaders that have resulted in shaping the world into what it is today could have turned out very differently if different people had been setting policies during critical periods (Crichlow, 2001).

Individual decision-makers highly influence world politics. As noted by Neustadt & May (1986), if we want to understand why decision-makers pursue a particular set of policies and order the type of actions that the states and organizations they lead carry out, we should investigate the variations in the personal characteristics of political leaders in power. This is because, according to Synder, Bruck, and Sapin (1969: p. 202), the behaviour of states in the international system is highly influenced by the psychological attributes of key individuals in world politics. They further argued that since “state action is the action taken by those acting on behalf of the state, therefore, one can satisfactorily say that the state is one with its decision-makers”.

This affirms the words that a nation’s foreign policy cannot be successfully separated from its decision-makers because decision-makers do not respond to the actual event but rather to their own view of it (de Rivera, 1969).

The study focused on leaders’ idiosyncrasies and how they affect and shape foreign policies of states using Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin, former Israeli Prime Ministers, as a case study. This paper is organized into four sections: introduction, literature review, results and discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Terms and Conceptual Framework

Definition of Idiosyncrasy

Idiosyncrasy is simply a mode of behaviour or way of thought peculiar to an individual (Oxford Languages, n.d.). Cambridge Dictionary defines idiosyncrasy as a strange or unusual habit, way of behaving, or feature that someone or something has (Cambridge University Press, 2008). Merriam-Webster (2021) defined idiosyncrasy as a peculiarity of constitution or temperament, that is, an individualizing characteristic or quality. An unusual way in which a particular person behaves or thinks. It can also be defined as a peculiarity of physical or mental constitution or temperament.

Also, idiosyncrasy, according to Dictionary.com (2021), is a characteristic, habit, mannerism, or the like that is peculiar to an individual. It can also be said to be a structural or behavioral trait peculiar to an individual or a group that is a physiological or temperamental peculiarity.

Definition of Foreign Policy

The term foreign policy has been defined in different ways; however, in this study, it will be limited to the definitions that are most relevant to the topic under study. In his book, *Introduction to Diplomacy*, Obuah (2019: p. 56) defined foreign

policy as a goal-directed set of actions that a state takes in its efforts to achieve its foreign policy objectives. According to him, foreign policy is the output of a state's foreign policy process. Furthermore, [Light \(1999\)](#) defined foreign policy as the official relations that take place between the units of the international system. Again, foreign policy consists of those discrete official actions of the authoritative decision-makers of a nation's government or their agents which are intended by the decision-makers to influence the behavior of international actors to their own policy. Policy, as used here, refers to not actions based on some grand design but as a continual process of pragmatic adjustment to the actions of others in the international environment.

Determinants of Foreign Policy

Determinants of foreign policy are the major internal or external factors that influence a state's foreign policy. Here, we are going to focus on those important but widely ignored determinants of foreign policy that play a huge role in determining the type of foreign policy objective a country pursues. These determinants include the personality of the leaders, background, religion, and global events.

According to [Crichlow \(2001\)](#), if the public has an idea of the way in which foreign policy is created, surely one of the things that will come to their notice is the fact that top-level decision-makers who are charged with the responsibility of setting and implementing foreign policy can make a powerful personal mark on world politics. [Maoz \(1990\)](#) seems to agree with this by further highlighting the fact that in some cases, the actions advocated by leading government officials, including men who largely guided national policies during periods of international upheaval, seemed so unique from those pursued by their contemporaries. However, their actions appeared to be closely tied to their personal characteristics. One is left wondering how history might have developed differently if other individuals had been in charge of setting policy.

[Jensen \(1982\)](#) is of the opinion that for personality to have a specific impact on foreign policy decisions, the leader must exhibit a high level of interest in foreign affairs. The leader must also possess high decisional freedom, and the situation must not be routine, and the information regarding the situation should be vague. [Neustadt and May \(1986\)](#) added to this by saying that individual decision-makers highly influence world politics. They equally suggested that if we want to understand why decision-makers pursue a particular set of policies and order the specific actions that the states and organizations they lead carry out, one should investigate the variations in the personal characteristics of political leaders.

For instance, [Rowland \(1985: p. 164\)](#) explained Begin's behavior with regard to the Accords, especially the part addressing the "Palestinian problem", with reference to ideological factors. He argued that it was Begin's ideological conviction that the Jews inhabit all of Eretz Yisrael, which led to his refusal to relinquish Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza. By examining the type of people who hold high official positions, their backgrounds, beliefs, their perception of other political actors, and other similar characteristics, we can better understand

and predict the behavior of foreign policy decision-makers.

According to [de Rivera \(1969: p. 31\)](#), since decision makers never really respond to the actual event or situation, but rather to their own view of it, it is very important to study who they are and how they see the world if we wish to understand why they act the way they do. For example, in his book titled *Yitzhak Rabin, 1922-1995: Short Biography*, [Braha \(2014\)](#) quoted that Rabin said that “the inspiring figures of his parents; the inspiration at home; a home where the sense of mission prevailed at all times, were decisive in shaping his path” ([Braha, 2014: p. 3](#)). This sense of mission was what dominated most of the foreign policy decisions he made while in power.

According to [Caitlin \(2012: p. 1\)](#), in the realm of foreign policy analysis, the impact of personality on decision-making is perhaps the most contentious. The role of personality in foreign policies includes logical processes, background, personal characteristics, motives, and beliefs, and the assumption that decision-making is the result of individual “human agency”. That is, eventually, it is individuals who make decisions, not states.

For [Synder, Bruck, and Sapin \(1969: p. 202\)](#), international behavior may be greatly influenced by the psychological attributes of key individuals in world politics. It is, therefore, not wrong to say that state action is the action taken by those acting in the name of the state; hence, the state is one with its decision-makers. [Rosati \(1995\)](#) argued that it is wrong to assume that sound explanations of crucial decisions and policies can be made without reference to the decision maker’s beliefs and perception of the world and their images of others.

Also, Schulze, cited in [Caitlin \(2012: p. 1\)](#), noted that scholars investigating why leaders in power behave the way they did in different circumstances and issues have found evidence that their behavior was mainly influenced by the historical analogies they relied upon to try and better understand the situations they faced. Seeing an event like the one in the past can influence their preferences and actions, which are also influenced by the lessons each learned from that past event. [Byman and Pollack \(2001\)](#) are of the opinion that individual personalities and backgrounds should be taken into account when conducting research in the field of international relations. Although structural causes, of course, play an important role in shaping international politics, the influence of the personality, experiences, and background of an individual should be considered also. [Hermann and Hagan \(1998\)](#) seemed to agree with the idea of Byman & Pollack by saying that during an international crisis, when there is little or no time for decision-making, the final decision and authority will be vested in the leaders in power and the people will look up to them to make the right decision by formulating policies that would be in the interest of the state.

2.2. Methodology

The study adopted historical research design and diachronic comparative methods. The paper compared the prime ministerial tenures of Yitzhak Rabin and

Menachem Begin. Historical research design describes the character of the people and events under study without comparing the events in terms of measurement or amount. Although it might be repetitive in nature, it interprets events according to their meanings. It attempts to preserve and analyze the specific form, content, and experiences of social events instead of subjecting them to mathematical or any other formal transformations (Ihejirika & Omego, 2011). While the diachronic comparative method focuses on a particular political structure or behavior and examines it from a comparative perspective. It may examine two or more case studies put together. It may be compared in one setting, but it can be compared across time (Mahler, 2013).

3. Results and Discussion

Idiosyncrasy is the characteristics, traits, and mannerisms peculiar to a particular individual or group, linking it to the subject matter under discussion. One can say that idiosyncrasy is the way and manner individuals act, behave, think, and react to things and situations around them. This chapter focused on how the idiosyncrasies of Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin affected the type of foreign policies they pursued and formulated during their tenures as Israeli Prime Ministers. Yitzhak Rabin was born in Jerusalem on March 1, 1922, to Rosa Cohen and Nehemiah Rabin. He was a Sabra Jew, the first Prime Minister of Israel to be born on Israeli soil. Having served in the Israeli Military most of his life, became the Prime Minister of Israel in 1974.

Although Rabin was never a member of the Labor Party, he was affiliated with the labor movement from an early age. Its values inspired his upbringing and actions. He became a party member at the conclusion of his term as ambassador (Braha, 2014). Initially, he followed a hardline foreign policy stance and refused to recognize the Palestinian Liberation Organization as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In fact, he tried as much as possible to stay away from anything that had to do with the Palestinian Question. He was of the view that the Palestinian rebels should be crushed without mercy.

To fully understand how his background affected him, let us look at the activities of his parents. His father, Nehemiah, emigrated from the United States as a Jewish Legion Soldier. He was a member of the Haganah Council and joined in defense of the Jewish quarter in Jerusalem when it was attacked by Palestinian Arabs in 1920. Yitzhak Rabin once said that “the inspiring figures of his parents, the inspiration at home, a home where the sense of mission prevailed at all times; were decisive in shaping his path”. Yitzhak’s mother was nicknamed “Red Rosa” because of her concerns and social activities for the urban poor and her uncompromising attitude. Rabin also said, “In his childhood home, he absorbed a value system that guided him throughout his life.” (Braha, 2014: p. 4) This statement Rabin showed that decision-makers never really respond to the actual event or situation, but rather to their own view of it. Therefore, it is very important to study who they are and how they see the world if we wish to understand why they act

the way they do. There are many examples supporting the axiom that in order to understand foreign affairs, we must first of all understand the individuals in power who are in charge of decision-making (de Rivera, 1969).

One of the first policies of Rabin, as he assumed the office of the Prime Minister of Israel in 1974, was an interim accord known as 'the Sinai II agreement' signed with Egypt, the most persistent external threat to Israel and also the most powerful Arab state than on September 4 1975, in Geneva. He agreed to sign this agreement with Egypt to ensure the security and survival of the state of Israel in a hostile environment and because he thought that other Arab nations would follow suit because Egypt was viewed as the head of the Arab world (Ahron, 2003). During his second Premiership between 1992 and 1995, he started the Peace Process having seen that all the wars they had been fighting all these years had not yielded the desired fruit it was expected to yield, decided to make a deal with the Palestinians (Alan, Toby, & Lorin, 2015).

The key to understanding why he agreed to Oslo is another aspect of Rabin's personality: his capacity to see the bigger picture. Even as Prime Minister in the 1970s, according to the account of then-Foreign Ministry's Director General Shlomo Avineri, Rabin recognized even then the need to separate from the Palestinians to preserve Israel's character as a Jewish and democratic state. However, in the immediate wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, he did not feel that the time was right. Come the 1990s, Rabin saw an imperative to move forward and an opportunity. The context was the end of the Cold War, the decline of the Soviet enemy, and the rise of the new threats of Islamic extremism, which called for Israel to build alliances with moderate states on its borders. Rabin also feared a decline in national resilience and sense of purpose within Israel, amplified by the destructive effects of the First Intifada (Alan, Toby, & Lorin, 2015).

In the field of international politics, the focus is often on structural causes. International politics is, according to many scholars, shaped by institutional dynamics, the anarchic system, and domestic politics. The role that individuals play in international politics or events is often marginalized or is not even considered at all. However, individual leaders can play an important role in shaping state intentions, and state intentions are critical factors in international relations (Byman & Pollack, 2001). There are political leaders who are insensitive to information unless it might help to spread their own views. There are leaders who look at their environment to decide what to do, and thus, they are open to information. Other leaders use a more strategic approach. They know what they want, but they take incremental steps and check whether the timing is right (Hermann & Hagan, 1998).

Yitzhak Rabin is a good example of the important role political leaders can play in international relations. In his second term as prime minister of Israel from 1992-1995, he played a major role in the realization of the Oslo Accords and, consequently, in the first big step towards peace between Israel and Palestine. Rabin initiated the peace negotiations that led to the Oslo I accord, which was an interim

agreement created to make the real peace negotiations possible (de Ruig, 2018).

However, this would have been unthinkable during his first term as Israeli prime minister in 1974-1977. Rabin has spent most of his life serving Israeli defense forces. When he was a teen, he served the Palmach, which were the shock troops of the Haganah, which served as defense forces to protect the Jewish community in Palestine before the creation of the Israeli state. Later, he served in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) as a general. He played a huge role in the Six-Day War as general of the IDF, and he also fought in the War of Independence. Therefore, he personally had a deep commitment to national security. This was visible in his political career with his call for more arms and his commitment to national security and strength. He was seen as a hardliner. This is illustrated by the fact that as a defense minister, he had to react to the eruption of the first Intifada and applied the strategy of “breaking bones” to young stone throwers. For Rabin, Israeli national security seemed more important than peace (de Ruig, 2018).

To Uri Dromi, the former Press Spokesman to Yitzhak Rabin cited in (Alan, Toby, & Lorin, 2015: p. 8), Rabin was “Mr. Security”, whose determination to deal with terrorism was beyond doubt. Indeed, his uncompromising attitude to terrorists made life difficult for me as his spokesman to the foreign media. The most notable event in the early period of Rabin’s term was his decision to expel 400 Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives to Lebanon. When the Lebanese refused to admit them, they were left stranded on the border, leaving us with a public relations disaster. In December 1992, he convened his staff to consider whether doctors from the Red Cross should be allowed to visit them.

Thinking of the international media, I urged him to agree, but he was not impressed. “Will this bring to an end the Intifada?” he barked. It was a revealing moment for me. I understood he was only really interested in what was right for Israel’s security, and how things looked to the rest of the world was a much lower priority. But I also understood how concerned he was by Intifada and the need to bring it to an end. Watching this leader for whom Israel’s security was everything to make the transition from reluctantly accepting negotiations with the PLO at the urging of Shimon Peres to becoming sold on the Oslo Accords was fascinating (Alan, Toby, & Lorin, 2015).

Although these structural factors may have had an influence on Rabin’s choice to initiate the peace negotiations, his personality and leadership style probably played a role as well. In Rabin’s earlier years and his first term as a prime minister, he believed that time was on Israel’s side. However, in the last years of his life, he started to believe that Israel no longer had much time at its disposal. He started advocating for peace, and he felt an urgency to use the window of opportunity to reach agreements between Israel and its enemies before the window would close (Inbar, 1997). This is in line with what Post (2004) said that a leader’s personality might change over time. According to him, a leader goes through different stages of life and transitions in which his personality possibly changes, and every stage and transition has different characteristics. For example, leaders in middle adulthood

are more likely to make major life decisions, and leaders in late adulthood will probably feel a sense of urgency because of the limited time they have left. These changes seem to have occurred regarding Rabin, which suggests a change in his leadership style and policies (Post, 2004). This illustrates why individual personalities should be considered when conducting research in the field of international relations. Although structural causes, of course, play an important role in shaping international politics, the influence of the individual should be considered as well (Byman & Pollack, 2001).

Leaders' perceptions and interpretations influence or determine, at least partly, government orientations and strategies (Hermann & Hagan, 1998). Their leadership styles determine the way leaders perceive and interpret situations and circumstances (Hermann, 2005). Who is in charge does matter. Before Rabin started his second term, Shamir was Israel's Prime Minister. The international community tried to move Israel, the Palestinians, and other Arab countries toward peace at the Madrid Conference of 1991. However, Shamir only participated reluctantly and admitted later that he had not been interested in making progress in this negotiation. This shows how political leaders can influence international relations. Shamir had not been interested in making the peace negotiations work, and therefore, he did not put much effort into it (Lieberfeld, 2008). However, Rabin, in his second term as prime minister, was determined to make progress and let the peace negotiations succeed. Thus, when a leader decides whether a certain issue is important and whether he should act on it, the outcome of this issue influences international relations. Although Rabin's political persona had not really changed since his first term as Prime Minister in the mid-1970s, he still combined toughness, pragmatism, impatience, and dedication to Israel's security. He was nevertheless more mature and experienced, and he was determined to make up for lost time. Unfortunately, this bold step he took cost him his life. He was assassinated by Yigal Allon, one among the many Jews who felt that he betrayed them by seeking a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians in November 1995. Menachem Begin, on the other hand, was born on August 16, 1913, in the Polish town of Brisk by Ze'ev Dov and Chasia or Hassia Begin (Gordis, 2014). What formed Menachem's childhood memories were the miseries of statelessness and war.

Rachel Halperin, Menachem's sister, said that their father instilled in them four values, which are respect for others, a love for Zion above all else, pride in being a Jew, confidence, hope, and faith in the future establishment of a Jewish state. This insistence on Jewish pride would virtually shape Menachem's life and the policies and decisions he made as a Prime Minister. He once said that his revolt against the British was all about re-instilling pride in the Jewish people (Gordis, 2014). This was clearly seen when Begin introduced his new government on June 20, 1977. In his speech to the Knesset, he declared that he was willing to work towards peace with Israel's enemies and, at the same time, made it clear that he was determined to settle Jews in all parts of biblical Eretz Israel, namely the West Bank or Judea and Samaria as he often referred to these occupied territories (Ahron, 2003).

The Begin household grafted nationalist longing into traditional Jewish life, and the Zionism that influenced Begin was richly influenced and formed by the renaissance of Polish national yearnings. The Jews, like the Poles, wanted their land back and vowed that no one would humble them. This formed the basis of Menachem's childhood aspirations and purpose and, by extension, that of his adult life (Gordis, 2014).

The foreign policy pattern of Begin was brought to the spotlight by his signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978 and his approval for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Begin's ideological conviction that the Jews inhabit all of Eretz Yisrael, that is, all the biblical land of Israel before the Jewish exile, made him refuse to release some of the conquered lands like the West Bank and the Gaza to the Palestinians in the name of peace (Rowland, 1985). Here, we see a clear picture of how his background, personality, and beliefs influenced his foreign policy objectives and goals.

His idiosyncrasy influenced the policies he made while in power. For instance, he ordered an Israeli freighter who had rescued 66 Vietnamese refugees, including children, to bring them to Israel for resettlement. They were saved off the coast of Vietnam after being found adrift in a small boat, having been refused help by other passing ships. On June 20, 1977, Begin spoke to the Knesset about the idea of appointing an international committee to deal with the issue. When President Carter commended Begin for his humane action in admitting the refugees to Israel, Begin replied: "We have not forgotten the sufferings of our own people" (Ofer, 2004: p. 245).

Begin's different way of thinking became clear as soon as he presented his cabinet to the Knesset on June 20, 1977. "Israel would not ask any nation to recognize its right to exist," he declared. This statement clearly shows that he was not going to negotiate over Israel's right to exist like the Labor-led government had done (Ofer, 2004: p. 246). He was able to identify with the plight of Vietnamese refugees because of his background and experience as a holocaust survivor who was so helpless in the face of the murders of the Jews whom the international community did nothing to help. He was not prepared to allow other people in distress to go through the ordeal the Jews passed through before the international community could decide whether to help. This affirms what de Rivera (1969) said that decision-makers never really respond to the actual event or situation, but rather to their own view of it. Therefore, it is very important to study who they are and how they see the world if we wish to understand why they act the way they do. There are many examples supporting the axiom that to understand foreign affairs, we must, first of all, understand the individuals in power who are in charge of decision-making.

The peace talks between Israel and Egypt during Begin's tenure as Prime Minister were met with a series of setbacks, but the most remarkable of them was between the winter of 1977-1978, and it was Israel's provocative policy of settlement in the disputed land. As we can recall, it was Begin's ideological conviction that the Jews

inhabited all the biblical land of Israel, and Begin's government was determined to turn the West Bank into a settled land to prevent any future attempt to return it to the Arabs. Also, it built settlements in the Sinai to use these later as a trade-off for air bases, which Israel insisted on keeping. When Sadat learned that the Sinai Committee approved a plan to establish settlements in the Sinai and was channeling funds for this project, he was enraged. It was not only Sadat that was upset by the government's hardline approach. Some segments of the Israeli population who were so happy by Sadat's historic visit but so disappointed with the lack of subsequent progress in the peace process decided to press the government and make it pursue the road for peace by forming a protest group known as "Peace Now Movement" (Ahron, 2003). This illustrates why individual personalities should be considered when conducting research in the field of international relations. This is because during international crises when there is little or no time for decision-making, authority concentrates among the people or groups that are responsible for keeping the government in power (Hermann & Hagan, 1998).

Israel's reaction to terrorism has always been harsh, but during Begin's regime, it was harsher. In March 1978, a PLO commando group hijacked a bus north of Tel Aviv. 28 Israelis were killed and 78 injured. Begin ordered the army on March 14 to invade Lebanon in retaliation and termed the invasion "Operation Litani," named after a river Israel reached during the invasion. And in the Knesset, he declared: "Gone forever are the days when Jewish blood could be shed with impunity" (Ofer, 2004: pp. 280-281). Here again, his idiosyncrasies affected the type of foreign policy decisions he made. His statement on every given occasion shows that he took almost all the things happening around him personally, linking it to his previous experiences. His father and brother were killed in July 1941, and his ailing mother was pulled from her hospital bed by the Nazis and killed. He said that learning of his family's fate was the most terrible moment in his life. But the Holocaust for Menachem was much more than the murder of his immediate family. His description of his Holocaust experience is a vivid depiction of the unfinished and complicated grieving that accompanied him throughout his life and influenced the foreign policy decisions he made (Ofer, 2004). This is in line with the argument of de Rivera (1969) that decision-makers never really respond to the actual event or situation, but rather to their own view of it.

Also, during the Camp David Accord, Prime Minister Begin took the initiative of sketching out his peace plan, which was in line with an old plan originated by the revisionist Zionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky to grant minorities inside Israel autonomy. Begin had elaborated on it throughout the years and was now offering the Palestinians an opportunity to run their own lives independently without having national rights. Israel would also retain security control and the right to settle in those territories. Labor's line of development, in contrast, was to give up more land in response to more pressure during negotiations. Begin was an existential negotiator and not in it to haggle over land. In fact, he had never bargained over land and rejected the "Land for Peace" formula because of his ideology

(Ofer, 2004).

Another scenario where he allowed his background, experiences, and personality to influence his foreign policy decision was the bombing of the Iraqi Osiraq Nuclear Reactor in 1981. He sanctioned the bombing of the reactor despite warnings from Peres, the leader of the opposition party, of the possible isolation of Israel by the international community if he bombed the Nuclear Reactor. He ignored him and bombed the reactor. Israel was isolated, but he did not care because he believed that the presence of that Nuclear Reactor was a threat to the existence, survival, and security of the Jewish state of Israel, which he vowed to always protect.

Once again, Prime Minister Begin allowed his background and personality to influence the type of foreign policy he pursued. His background as a holocaust survivor and the former head of what was regarded as a terrorist group, Irgun, and his character of not trusting people made him sanction this operation to bomb the nuclear reactor of the Iraqis despite reassurance by France's Charge d' Affaires, Jean-Pierre Chauvet that the nuclear weapon will not be used against Israel. In his speeches, he always made it clear that he would not hesitate to act against anybody or nation perceived to be a threat to the security and survival of the Israelis, saying that no Jewish blood will be shed without cause like it was done during the holocaust (Ofer, 2004).

His ideology and emotions affected the foreign policy decision he took and made him sanction the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, thereby playing into the hands of Ariel Sharon, who was looking for an opportunity to invade Lebanon and destroy the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) facilities there. Sharon spent his time planning how to enter Lebanon to eliminate the PLO and hit the Syrians. In order to do this, he tried to get closer to Bashir Gemayel, the head of the Maronite Christians and their Phalange forces.

Before now, two schools of thought dominated Israel's policies towards the Maronites in Lebanon. The first school of thought, which was mainly held by Israel's Military Intelligence Services, is of the opinion that the Christian Maronites should not be trusted and given support. While the other school of thought led by Mossad, Israel's Secret Service, believes that working with the Maronites will provide Israel with a window into the Arab world (Ahron, 2003).

As to be expected, Prime Minister Begin supported the second school of thought during his years in office, regarding the Maronites in Lebanon as a persecuted minority group like the Jews and believed that it was Israel's moral duty to protect them against those who wish to exterminate them from the face of the world, especially the Arabs. The Prime Minister's moral line, coupled with the activities of the Mossad, produced an ever-growing cooperation with the Maronites, which reached an unprecedented peak during Sharon's tenure as the defense minister.

Looking at these conditions, it is immediately clear that the personal whims and desires of Ariel Sharon and Menachem Begin during the Israeli incursion in Lebanon in 1982 had a significant impact on the decisions made by these leaders. In

terms of the environment surrounding the Israeli invasion, the situation was very unclear, and the plan for invasion indicated a developing crisis, but the most important factors allowing for the projection of personal ambitions involved the personalities and backgrounds of Sharon and Begin themselves (Jensen, 1982).

Prime Minister Menachem Begin's general outlook, the basic principles of the policies for which he strove throughout his life, rested upon principles of natural right or historical right, which are totally beyond proof. This can be seen in his clear reference to the West Bank by its Biblical names of 'Judea and Samaria' even when that territory was discussed in a strictly non-ideological setting. The invasion of Lebanon, or "Operation Peace for Galilee" as Begin called it, indirectly marked the beginning of the "First Lebanon War," and this worsened the already strained relationship between the two neighboring states. The outcome of this action of Begin to invade Lebanon confirms the assertion that "state action is the action taken by those acting on behalf of the state" (Synder, Bruck, & Sapin, 1969: p. 202).

4. Conclusion

This study established that personalities, backgrounds, experiences, and global events play a huge role in shaping or affecting the type of foreign policies leaders in power pursue. After all, the state is one with its policymakers (Synder, Bruck, & Sapin, 1969).

Furthermore, the study highlighted the fact that leaders' peculiarities influence the type of foreign policy path they choose to follow. It is clear from analysis of the beliefs, histories, experiences, and personalities of Israeli Prime Ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin that these personal traits have significant influences on their foreign policy choices. While Begin's intellectual commitments and moral views greatly influenced his policy towards Lebanon and the wider Middle East. Rabin's military background and early harsh position, although contrasted with his subsequent efforts in the peace process and his eventual foreign policy shift from a hardliner to a peacemaker, were greatly influenced by his personal experiences coupled with the then global events. By analyzing the activities of these two leaders while in power, the study was able to confirm that the idiosyncrasies of leaders in power play a big role in influencing and affecting the type of foreign policy, they pursue and formulate. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the personal characteristics of political leaders in order to understand the foreign policy decisions made by their different states. This is because decision-makers never really respond to the actual event or situation, but rather to their own view of it (de Rivera, 1969).

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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