

Chapter 10

THE 1992 MEDIA CAMPAIGN: TOWARD THE AMERICANIZATION OF ISRAELI ELECTIONS?

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Introduction

The conventional wisdom in Israel is that the country's election campaigns have undergone a process of "Americanization" over time. If that is indeed the case, it should not be altogether surprising considering the Israeli penchant for adopting American products, culture, and even jargon. In addition, the last five Israeli Knesset elections have taken place synchronously with American presidential campaigns. In 1977 and 1981 Israel's elections were conducted a mere half year after those of the U.S., while in 1984, 1988, and 1992 they were held right in the middle of the long American campaign. Nevertheless, Americanization need not be a matter of blind transferral of American campaign methods and style, for each country has distinctive social and cultural patterns, and one would expect such "borrowing" to be adapted to the receiving political framework in a fashion fitting to that system.

The parallelism between the 1992 Israeli election campaign and American-style electioneering is not solely a function of Israeli mimicry. True, outright copying of certain aspects of the U.S. style was in evidence in the 1977-1984 campaigns when American media advisers were literally imported to help design the campaigns of the Likud and Labor.¹ Their relative lack of success cleared the way for

local advertising and other media professionals (conversant with the American approach) to adapt such a style to the exigencies of the indigenous situation. And it is these exigencies — involving several new factors — which are behind the intensification of “Americanized” Israeli media campaigning.

For example, the introduction of legal cable television into Israel in 1991, and the ongoing preparations for full-fledged commercial TV on the part of several investment groups (e.g., establishment of state-of-the-art production studios), meant that the 1992 campaign managers had at their disposal the means to produce campaign ads, etc., of the highest technical standard. Moreover, the rapid Americanization of Israel’s entire commercial advertising industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s paved the way for application of such an advertising style in the electoral realm as well.

This is not to suggest that the two countries have become identical in their media campaigns. Israel’s multi-party system ensures a different overall election framework, as well as diverse and divergent approaches on the tactical level. In addition, the statutory environment regarding campaign broadcasting differs markedly between Israel and the U.S., with the former far more restrictive regarding radio and television broadcasting time and content. Thus, several American election elements discussed below are not fully in evidence in Israel. Therefore, while the 1992 elections saw Israel take a giant stride toward campaign Americanization,² some important differences remain.³

Elements of Campaign Americanization

While most of the central elements of campaign Americanization have been around for several elections, a few have appeared on the scene in the U.S. only recently. They include:

1) *Party Primaries*: Internal party elections in advance of the nominating convention have existed in the United States since the days of Andrew Jackson early in the nineteenth century. However, over time these were taken over by the party machine, i.e., party bureaucrats and/or local machine leaders (e.g., Boss Tweed in the nineteenth century, Mayor Daley in the twentieth). It was only in the early 1970s that real reform leading to internal party democratization came into effect, almost totally undercutting the party leader-

ship’s ability to decide on the party’s presidential standard-bearer. In the last two decades the American people (at least those willing to go to the polls in the spring) have truly been the dominant factor in deciding the ultimate candidates.

2) *Personalization*: The United States has a presidential system of government, and thus the quadrennial elections focus to a very large extent on the personality of the president, despite hundreds of other candidates running for office at the federal and state levels. Such personalization comes at the expense of other aspects that were emphasized in the past: party, platform, ideology. Linked to this, although theoretically not a necessary extension of such personalization, is privatization.

3) *Privacization*: The American campaign involves not merely the obvious trappings of the presidential candidate’s personality, but also (at times, especially) his or her sexual, psychological, and historical private life. This has reached such proportions in the U.S. that candidates (e.g., Gary Hart in the 1988 primaries, vice presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton in 1972) have been forced to quit the race due to revelations about their private life. The 1992 Bush campaign reportedly staffed an entire team to investigate Bill Clinton’s life, and this after a Democratic primary campaign which focussed almost exclusively on his personal past! The result of all this leads to another element — negativization.

4) *Negativization*: American campaigns throughout the 1980s have focused on the other side’s negatives, at times to the virtual exclusion of one’s own constructive message or platform. Beyond personal skeletons in the closet, each side has emphasized the opponents’ policies and programmatic blunders and dangers — real or imagined. Even were a candidate to be a saint, the incessant conservative attacks against “liberal spending,” “tax raising,” “big government support,” “baby killing” (i.e., abortion), etc., and liberal attacks against “racism,” “lack of care for the little man,” “moral policing” (i.e., anti-abortion), etc., leave little room for any substantive campaign discussion of policy.

5) *Sloganeering*: Instead of policy specifics, American presidential candidates have taken to employing amorphous generalities as a way of both avoiding the perception of harming certain constituencies’ interests as well as giving the impression that the candidacy does indeed stand for something. Television journalism merely accentuates this phenomenon in its coverage of the campaign.⁴ Such

sloganeering is, however, overwhelmingly platitudinous, which is in large part due to the lack of any real gulf in ideology or policies between the two parties. As a result, at least in part, American campaigns have increasingly led to campaign apathy.

6) *Campaign Apathy*: Over the years, the American electorate has become increasingly apathetic to the media campaigns of the candidates, due to the lack of substance and perhaps also to propaganda overkill as a result of the increased use of the media by the candidates. However, this does not necessarily mean that the public has grown more apathetic to the elections qua elections. Although low by world democratic standards, voting percentages have not changed substantially over the past decades.

7) *Personal Canvassing*: The party organizations in the U.S. place great emphasis on human contact — of neighbors, friends, family, who call on potential supporters for their vote. To be sure, the candidates themselves try to “press the flesh” as much as possible (Clinton’s bus campaign through the Midwest, harking back to Truman’s famous 1948 train campaign, is a good example), but given the size of the country and its huge population, such an approach needs to be complemented by tens of thousands of active supporters personally canvassing their local bailiwick for added votes.

8) *Direct Communications*: As a result of the perceived bias and/or nonsubstantiveness of the media, the 1992 American campaign was witness for the first time to a different approach that bypassed the traditional media. H. Ross Perot’s major contribution to the 1992 campaign was his ability to circumvent the mass media through what he called “electronic town meetings” and other forms of direct access to potential voters without the aid of press intermediation. Nor did he invent this. Bypassing the national media (and the Washington press corps) through direct satellite feeds to local TV stations has become a widespread phenomenon in the U.S. in recent years.⁵ The Perot candidacy’s ultimate failure was not directly related to the utility of this new form of electioneering which may well change the face of media campaigning in future elections.⁶

9) *Media Self-Reflection*: With little of substance to report on in American presidential elections, the media have taken to reporting on themselves as reporters of the campaign! This self-indulgence, as if the election will be decided not by the voters but by the way the press handles election campaign coverage, had become virtually all-consuming in 1992. Hundreds of columns have been printed regard-

ing the lack of (or over-) aggressiveness of the media; the extent to which they should be prying into the candidates’ private lives; the “sound bite” quality of election news coverage; the overextent of “horse race journalism” (who’s leading and by how much?); etc.⁷ While such self-examination by the press is not necessarily bad, its huge scope and frequency further diverts attention from the substance of the campaign at hand.

10) *Domestic Issues*: Most elections in almost all democratic countries focus on local, domestic issues: the economy, crime, social welfare, etc. American elections — even more than others — despite the country’s world power status since at least World War II, have almost never been won or lost on foreign policy and national security issues.⁸ The 1992 election was a classic example of this: despite George Bush’s diplomatic skill in forging a successful international alliance against Saddam Hussein, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, his popularity actually suffered because he was perceived as spending too much time on foreign policy.

An American Mirror? Israel’s 1992 Campaign

While no precise mirror image exists of these American elements in Israel’s election campaign, even a somewhat distorted mirror image can tell us much about Israeli campaign development, and perhaps even reflect upon the direction of Israeli society as a whole. Let us look again at these ten American campaign elements in the 1992 Israeli context, taking care to highlight not only the similarities but the differences in emphasis and style as well.

1) *Party Primaries*: The most palpable and talked about “new” element in the 1992 campaign was the Labor party’s two primaries to choose both the leader who would stand at the head of the list, and the rest of the candidates on that list. To be sure, this was not a novum for Israeli society — primaries had been conducted as early as 1977 by the (soon thereafter defunct) Democratic Movement for Change. But a double primary race whereby all party members could make their wishes felt — within the formerly ossified Labor party — was an electoral event of historic proportions, and clearly one influenced by the American system. (Throughout the campaign, the English word “primaries” was widely heard in the media, and not its Hebrew translation “*be’khirot muk’damot*”). Indeed, the positive results of

Labor's primaries (many new faces were selected), and the reverse image debacle within the Likud (public recriminations by several of the party's leaders) may have caused the latter to lose the election even before it officially started.

While not stretching the length of the race to American dimensions (February to November), the 1992 primaries did lengthen the election campaign and may have contributed to several American phenomena, such as increased public apathy to the campaign, greater personalization, and more widespread public canvassing. In any case, while internal party reform trends were already in evidence from the early 1980s,⁹ the 1992 campaign marked a major turning point in electoral democratization akin to what the Democratic party underwent in the Jacksonian Revolution (which also occurred during America's fifth decade of existence), or during the 1972 McGovern campaign.

Labor's party primaries were still far from being the long, dragged-out affair which their American counterpart had become. On the other hand, the turnout of over two-thirds of the Labor party membership (close to 110,000 out of 160,000 voted in its primaries for the Knesset list) far surpassed anything found in the United States.

2) *Personalization*:¹⁰ After four successive defeats with Shimon Peres leading the party, Labor opted for Yitzhak Rabin in the party's first-ever general membership primaries.¹¹ The results of this primary, plus the ensuing primary election for the party's Knesset list, resulted in a split image. While Rabin himself was perceived by the public as a moderate hawk, and thus somewhere in the center of overall Israeli public opinion, the rest of Labor's list was overrepresented by young, attractive, but quite dovish, candidates — rather far from the center where the real electoral battle would be waged against the Likud.

As a result, Rabin made a conscious decision to personalize the campaign, in order to focus attention on himself which would supposedly enable Likud voters (disappointed with the Likud) to vote Labor — something they would be loath to do should the dovish list be highlighted. To be sure, the principle of personalization was not altogether new; Shimon Peres had started along this path in the previous campaign, without much success.¹² But in Rabin's case, the actual ballot slip was marked "Labor headed by Rabin" (*Avodah be'rashut Rabin*) while the official slogan of the campaign came to

be "the nation awaits Rabin" (*Ha'am me'khakeh le'Rabin*). Not even in the heady days of Ben-Gurion had such blatant personalization been in evidence in the Mapai campaigns.

Rabin's justification for such an approach took advantage of a new circumstance on the Israeli election scene: recently passed legislation had divorced the election of the prime minister from that of the Knesset, with the former to be *directly* elected commencing in the elections for the 14th Knesset (scheduled for 1996, but possibly earlier). Rabin argued that the public was already attuned to such a campaign approach (indeed, the public wanted it for 1992, but Likud political considerations decided otherwise).

To use Hannah Herzog's terminology, Rabin was employing a new approach to the traditional three-step "liminal stage" of elections whereby the campaign brings the public through a transitional phase between the previous *communitas* (governing environment) and the new one under the newly elected leadership.¹³ However, this new *communitas* normally entails merely a new personnel and policy environment, whereas the *governing* structure is expected to remain the same. What Rabin was attempting in the 1992 campaign was to informally change the post-election constitutional structure through a "presidentialization" of the race. It should have come as no surprise, therefore (although it surprised virtually everyone), that Rabin's forceful victory speech emphasized the theme that "I am now in charge," with the public quite willing to go along (perhaps as a result of longtime Likud governance drift due to serious internal ministerial infighting).

On the other side of the fence, the Likud consciously decided not to emphasize its candidate for prime minister due to Yitzhak Shamir's lackluster image and performance. Indeed, he was perceived as being more hawkish and inflexible than the general public, while the Likud, too, had several young and attractive candidates who were not only seen to be more moderate but would also present a better image to a public becoming increasingly tired of a party in power for fifteen years. Thus, Shamir did not appear any more often than several of the Likud's other leading lights (e.g., Benny Begin), and when newspaper election ads were accompanied by photographs, Shamir invariably was but one of four or nine Likud candidates presented.

Was the Israeli public open to Labor's campaign personalization in what was still a proportional-list election? One cannot claim that

Rabin's approach was the sole cause of Labor's victory or that hiding Shamir led to the Likud's defeat, though the former is probably closer to the truth. One other party mimicked the Rabin campaign to a large extent, and here the personalization of the party was undoubtedly the key to the biggest success and surprise of the 1992 elections, involving Raphael Eitan (Raful) as the leader of Tzomet.

With only two seats in the previous Knesset, and with its former number two MK (Yoash Tsiddon) leaving in a huff due to internal party machinations, Raful's list had virtual unknowns on the ticket. Therefore, the vast majority of its ads and broadcasts (quite understandably) highlighted the party leader. Tzomet's achievement in garnering eight seats (a 400 percent increase) was due solely to Raful's persona and message. To a more limited extent, the Moledet party's success in increasing its strength by one seat (a 50 percent rise) was due as well to the predominant personality of Rehavam Ze'evi ("Gandhi") at its head.

Conversely, the disappearance of Tehiya from the political map can also be partly explained by its lack of leadership emphasis — a result, in fact, of serious strains between Yuval Neeman and Geula Cohen for primacy within the party. One can also note that of the two major haredi parties, the one with a strong and popular personality at its head (Rabbi Ovadia Yosef as the titular leader of Shas) slightly strengthened its position, whereas Yahadut HaTorah, internally split among various factions and with at least two strong personalities at its head (Rabbis A. Shapira and Y. Peretz), lost ground. The Communist party, too, without a dominant leader at the fore, lost one Knesset seat.¹⁴

Overall, personalization became a legitimate style of campaigning in Israel for perhaps the first time, and may even have had some impact on the election results.¹⁵ Given the changed nature of the 1996 elections, there is no doubt that such personalization will take on increasing importance in future Israeli elections.¹⁶

3) *Privacization*: Israeli elections have traditionally been extremely circumspect about any delving into candidates' private lives. Indeed, most Israelis do not even know what their leaders' respective spouses look like. Only when a spouse transgresses the law on rare occasions has the press parted the family curtain, as in the famous case of Leah Rabin's Washington bank account which led her husband to resign the prime ministership in the middle of the

1977 campaign. Certainly, a candidate's private life has hardly ever been an issue in the campaign itself.¹⁷

As *Ha'aretz* political reporter Ilan Shkchori has noted, this was surprisingly no longer the case in the 1992 campaign: "In the past, political party journalism did not deal with the personal side of the politicians or gossip.... Today, the situation has changed completely."¹⁸ In part, that was a function of Rabin's decision to personalize his candidacy. The Likud argued that if Israelis were now being asked to vote for a person and not the party list, then the personal (and not just professional) qualifications of that prime ministerial candidate were a legitimate subject for campaign scrutiny.

The number of subject areas raised by the Likud were impressive given traditional reticence in this sphere. Rumors of Rabin's "drinking problem" had been circulating for decades, and it was highlighted by the Likud to the extent that Rabin was forced to address the question and deny the allegation.¹⁹ More serious were innuendoes regarding an alleged "collapse" (temporary nervous breakdown) before the Six-Day War, and other instances of freezing in times of stress. In addition, his wife's bank account transgression was raised again, probably to neutralize serious allegations of corruption within the Likud as noted in the State Comptroller's Report which appeared at the start of the campaign. Finally, other attempts were made to have members of the extended Rabin family divulge aspects of Rabin's personality ("closed," "unsocial," etc.) in order to undercut his popularity.²⁰

Labor's counterattack was less comprehensive, but still went beyond the usual bounds of campaign discourse. The most notable point involved Shamir as a liar, as someone who could not be trusted by friend and foe alike. Other articles, most probably planted by Labor itself or at least written by journalists highly supportive of Labor, probed Shamir's "secret" past as Mossad operative and even farther back as a leader of the Lehi underground movement. Compared to most such profiles, these painted an unattractive picture of a secretive, mono-dimensional figure, oblivious to anything beyond the narrow confines of national security.

If the two central parties' campaigns began to take on the air of American candidate voyeurism, the same could not be said of the Israeli public's reaction to such hints, innuendoes, and outright accusations. Overall, they fell on deaf ears as the public seemed more interested in what the candidates had to say about the future

than in what they may or may not have done in the past. In that sense, campaign privatization in Israel in no way reflects the American situation where the public was concurrently all abuzz over Clinton's infidelities and marijuana inhalations, not to mention speculation regarding Bush's trysts in the 1980s. Given the Israelis' seeming lack of interest in such matters (at least regarding their own candidates), the 1992 campaign privatization tendency may not be repeated in the future, marking one element of significant difference between the Israeli and American approach.

4) *Negativization*: Since the early 1980s, little has separated Labor socio-economic policy from that of the Likud. With Yitzhak Rabin at the helm, it became increasingly difficult to see any really substantial differences between the two parties on the peace question, although the tone and perceived flexibility of the two sides were dissimilar. Thus, as the ideological gap closed, each side found itself with little constructive to distinguish it from its chief rival. Blackening the reputation of one's opponents is the preferred approach in such a situation.²¹

Labor had the easier job of it, given the inevitable corruption and internal bickering to be found in any party in power for fifteen years as was the case with the Likud. Indeed, Labor's second most popular slogan (after "the nation awaits Rabin" was: *Likud Nim'astem* ("fed up with the Likud"). Neutral ammunition for such a campaign was provided by the State Comptroller's Report which highlighted the increasing politicization of the civil service as well as several high profile cases of alleged misappropriation of public funds.

In addition, the continued infighting among the Likud's top candidates, even after the primaries settled the party list, was used by Labor to support their accusations of non-governance, tying this to Shamir's perceived inaction on a host of policy fronts. Extremely high levels of unemployment as a result of the massive immigration from the ex-Soviet Union added further fodder to Labor's campaign of highlighting its rival's negatives. The overall campaign impression which Labor sought to convey (somewhat successfully) was one of the Likud in disarray, in contempt of the public purse, and incapable of leading.

On the other hand, while Labor's political platform was rather detailed regarding a host of subjects, its campaign propaganda mentioned almost no details — either substantively or personnel-wise. Indeed, here, too, Rabin chose the American presidential

approach of not divulging who would serve in what capacity within his government, a "regression" of sorts from 1981 when Shimon Peres did present his government during the campaign. Thus, Rabin's bottom line message was "trust me" — to bring in the best people, and to promulgate the correct policies.

The Likud, having previously successfully portrayed Labor standardbearer Shimon Peres as an ultra-dove and not someone to be trusted, found itself with a more difficult task, for Rabin was patently no dove, nor a political opportunist. The line of attack, therefore, was twofold: to impugn Rabin on a personal level (as noted above) and to dredge up the history of Labor malfeasance — the mid-1970s — when Rabin had been the prime minister.²² In fact, the Likud went so far as to widely distribute an eight-page color brochure which included numerous newspaper articles on the alleged corrupt practices of the Labor party and specific candidates.²³ The Bush-Clinton parallel is a remarkable one in this context: a president who failed domestically and whose administration was tainted with corruption, attacking his rival personally as well as reminding the public of the fiasco engendered by the most recent Democratic administration (under Carter).

Needless to say, the Likud had little to say about constructive policies for the future. As all incumbents do, it tried to emphasize some of its accomplishments, but the great emphasis on negative attacks by both sides simply overwhelmed the possibility of any positive message getting across.²⁴

This is not to suggest that the Israeli public was interested only in negative messages. It is far from coincidental that the biggest winner in the elections, Tzomet, had a concrete plan packaged in an upbeat campaign — emphasizing what could be done in education and immigrant absorption. Moreover, even the National Religious Party (NRP), which found after the elections that it had allied itself with the losing camp, still managed to increase its strength in part due to its positive message of establishing and maintaining religious educational institutions. Shas, too, foreswore negative campaigning and maintained its Knesset position (despite serious corruption problems). Once again, this reflects another 1992 American campaign phenomenon: the public's flight from Bush and Clinton to H. Ross Perot, whose message was "can do."

5) *Sloganeering*: As noted earlier, the parties' slogans were invariably general and without even a hint of substantive content.²⁵

Labor's "the nation awaits Rabin" may have had an electoral purpose, but it said nothing about what Rabin might actually do. Similarly, "The Likud — that's correct" was hardly more informative. Other parties used comparably amorphous slogans. For example, the NRP's "*Hamafdal Le'yeminkha*" (The NRP at your right hand) placed that party squarely in the Right camp (as well as being a double entendre) but that did not suggest much other than its commitment to join a coalition only with the Likud. In short, as David Tamir (a leading political advertising executive) noted: "The two [Labor and Likud] slogans gave the impression that in this election campaign the large parties dealt all the time with packaging and not substance.... I don't remember an election campaign [as this one] in which an organized and substantive presentation of the parties' platforms was not offered even once."²⁶

This is not to say that those who thought up these slogans were mistaken. Indeed, given the ideological confusion and policy vacuum in most of the parties, and especially the conscious attempt by the two dominant parties to move toward the center in order to capture the widest possible vote, a non-specific slogan may have been tactically the smartest choice. The NRP's slogan was surely clever; Labor's slogan may well have been electorally wise; the Likud's slogan may have been the lesser of all evils.²⁷ But from a topical standpoint, the best that can be said about them is that they accurately reflected the vacuity of the overall campaign propaganda.

6) *Public Apathy*: For the first time in Israel's election campaign history, the issue of public apathy itself became an election issue. The traditional Israeli standard for campaign interest — percent of TV viewers tuning into the parties' own campaign propaganda during the last three weeks — reached new lows. For example, overall only 20 percent of the public watched the propaganda on a steady basis,²⁸ down from 77.5 percent at its height at the start. Even the supporters of the winning parties were turned off. On a randomly selected evening it was found that only 20 percent of Labor and Meretz supporters had watched the broadcasts, down from 60 percent on the first night.²⁹

Moreover, whereas in most previous Israeli elections one could feel the campaign in the street, this campaign was very quiet. Not only did some of the parties (Labor, Likud, and Yahadut HaTorah) decide to cancel their large-scale outdoor election rallies for fear of

small audience attendance, but the level of election violence dropped to American lows, as noted by Israel's chief of police.³⁰

There were several reasons for this ostensible "apathy." First, the non-specificity of the media campaign, the banal sloganeering, obviously meant that the public was not going to learn much from viewing party propaganda or hearing it first hand at large rallies. Second, Rabin's very dullness as a candidate, as well as his ideological centrism, made him a weak source for energizing the troops within his camp, as well as a weak target for rallying the other side. Demonification, portraying the opposition as evil incarnate, was part of the standard Israeli campaign arsenal from the time of Ben-Gurion vs. Begin and it continued through Peres vs. Shamir. In 1992, though, it was no longer viable. The campaign, insofar as it had any real theme, was over the question of leadership ability and professional competence — not a theme designed to get the troops overly spirited. Once again, we may see similarities in the U.S. campaign ("incompetent" Bush vs. "inexperienced" Clinton). At best, then, the Israeli parties could indulge in "negativization" as noted above, but this was far from the "us" vs. "them" demonification campaigns of the past which were guaranteed to set the electorate's political heart pounding.

Third, and perhaps most important, another "American" element found on the Israeli scene for the first time was cable television.³¹ Once the public got the drift of the television campaign ads, they had for the first time a viewing alternative on cable TV. As one journalist noted: "In the 1992 elections the nation just disappeared from this performance; it went over to cable TV."³² Here, indeed, Israel received its first taste of the American communications environment during a campaign: the candidates and parties forced to compete with other entertainment media for the attention of the citizenry.

Parenthetically, one can add a positive element to this emerging Israeli phenomenon. As in the U.S., public apathy during the campaign also means a certain level of mutual tolerance regarding the stand of other citizens. While Israel has never suffered from really serious campaign violence, "verbal violence," violence to property, and general intolerance were invariably a feature of the election process. The modern American election campaign, with all its many faults, does not suffer from these specific ills (as compared to India, South Africa, Lebanon, Pakistan, and other democracies), and Israel

circa 1992 may have reached the point of highly civil elections as found in its major ally.³³

The more significant question is whether public apathy towards the campaign was translated into apathy at the voting booth. Despite many fears, Israel's voter turnout is still far from America's low percentages. Indeed, despite a slight drop in the officially reported voting rate — from 79 percent in 1988 to 77.4 percent in 1992 — Israel's *actual* voting percentage is among the highest in the Western world: well over 90 percent. The reason for the discrepancy between the reported and actual voting rates is that according to Israeli law only those citizens who are physically in Israel on election day are allowed to vote (with only minor exceptions such as diplomats and sailors). Yet, 370,000 Israelis live permanently overseas (11 percent of all registered voters),³⁴ while another 15-20,000 Israelis are in hospital and cannot get to the voting booth.³⁵ Moreover, approximately 50,000 resident Israelis are overseas on vacation and business on any given day. Altogether, then, of those who can *physically* reach the polls on voting day, 90 percent or more do vote.

This fairly closely matches the result of a nationwide poll conducted during the 1992 campaign, wherein 92 percent responded that they intended to vote in the June elections, whereas only 77.4 percent actually did.³⁶ However, since the poll was conducted only among residents physically within the country, the 92 percent result was indeed a fairly accurate reflection of these residents' intention.

As we see, therefore, Israelis definitely exhibited apathy towards the campaign as it unfolded, but were in no way apathetic regarding their role as ultimate electoral arbiters. The parties (and mass media?) may have turned off the public from the campaign but not from their sense of civic duty.

7) *Personal Canvassing*: Candidates going into the street, marketplace, and other public arenas to press the flesh is not a new phenomenon in Israel. Indeed, a significant part of Labor's strategy in 1988 was for Shimon Peres to attempt to shake one million hands during the campaign in order to change his image of aloofness and over-intellectuality (at best, he only partly succeeded). The 1992 campaign, however, was witness to much more sophisticated attempts at personal campaign communication.

Both the Likud and Labor devoted great effort and time in organizing thousands of activists to visit potential supporters at home. According to newspaper reports (and taking into account

some element of exaggeration), by election day 700,000 such possible voters were either visited at home or approached in small campaign get-togethers by the 160,000 Labor party members — this in addition to 100,000 campaign volunteers who worked on election day itself to get out the vote, a record number by all accounts.³⁷ The Likud and Meretz had similar programs in effect: 75,000 and 10,000 volunteers, respectively, working on election day.³⁸

Whether this massive personal/organizational effort had any real electoral effect is impossible to determine at this stage, but it may well have had an effect on the nature of the campaign itself. As noted earlier, the 1992 race was a quiet one. Yitzhak Rabin himself noted the connection between these two elements: "This time the public environment surrounding the elections is much more peaceful... There isn't the inclination to hold large campaign rallies, whereas the brunt of the work is in home visitations and personal contact."³⁹ Thus, an optical illusion may have been at play here regarding "public apathy" — the intensity of campaign activity may have been no less than in the past, but it had moved away from the eyes of the media and into the private domain of the voters' homes. The media, of course, accustomed to measuring matters on the basis of obvious public activity, assumed that a diminution of public exertions meant a low-key campaign and an apathetic public. What may be needed, rather, is a change in conception as to what constitutes campaign activity and voter involvement.

8) *Direct Communications*: Given the small size of Israel, plus its underdeveloped (albeit fast improving) mass communications system, new American media technologies and approaches, such as direct satellite feeds to localities and even Perot-style electronic town meetings, are somewhat unnecessary and in any case technologically some years away. Nevertheless, the principle underlying all these approaches is one of reaching a target audience through point-to-point communication through a computerized system for contacting a large number of specific voters — a system which Israel did have.

In the 1992 Israeli campaign, all three of the largest parties inaugurated relatively sophisticated systems for reaching voters by phone through computerized programs which could pinpoint potential supporters.⁴⁰ Indeed, one such system involved a set of CD-ROM discs which included the entire country's election register roll (3.5 million voters), public data on each (e.g., full name, address, polling

booth location), plus the capability for each party to make notations for each voter (e.g., "supporter," "undecided," etc.).⁴¹

As a result, each of the main parties was able to focus its telephone campaign in the most cost- and time-efficient fashion, and reach precisely those citizens who might support that party. For instance, Meretz's telephone campaign reached 200,000 homes,⁴² while the Likud reached 1,000,000 households — 80 percent of the entire country!⁴³ Indeed, behind in the polls, and perceiving the media as not being supportive of the party in any case, the Likud made the extraordinary effort of having all its ministers and members of Knesset take part in a telephone campaign to reach 42,000 disappointed former supporters in a last-ditch effort to turn the tide.⁴⁴

Overall, then, while receiving far less attention than Perot's maverick campaign approach, Israel's behind-the-scenes telecommunications election campaign was no less intensive, and in at least one respect, even more advanced than that found in the U.S. Given the post-industrial world's increasing use of "narrowcasting" and "audience targeting," there can be little doubt that in the future Israel will continue to develop this special form of demassified media campaigning.⁴⁵

9) *Media Self-Reflection*: When journalists have little substantive to report on, they take to writing about themselves and each other. This was true of the Western allies' reporters during the 1991 Persian Gulf War when they found themselves far from the actual battlefield (as well as during the presidential campaign, as noted earlier), and it was no less true for the 1992 Knesset elections when little of substance was being said or happening during the race.

This is not to suggest that the substance of what the press was writing about in the two countries was similar. The internal media debate in the U.S. revolved around relatively heavy questions of ethics, political manipulation, etc. The Israeli media campaign's self-reportage was of a less-substantive nature.

A few representative examples: *Ha'ir*, Tel Aviv's popular local weekly, devoting on average a page each issue just to the goings-on behind the party advertising scene;⁴⁶ advertising executives giving scores to the various parties' TV ad campaigns;⁴⁷ and even serious articles from learned analysts regarding the nature and influence of the campaign TV and radio jingles!⁴⁸

Nor were the media alone in this. The politicians themselves were heavily involved in details and strategizing, especially regarding the television ads. Every evening the leaders of the Likud and Labor sat in their respective headquarters during the broadcasts to collectively view the concentrated half-hour or so of party advertisements, and then immediately "leaked" their reactions to the press regarding their own brilliant ads and the opposition's failed ones.⁴⁹

The great emphasis placed on these televised ads reached absurd proportions when Labor began investigating whether it had a "mole" in its ranks, due to the fact that the Likud's nightly ads seemed to know in advance what Labor was going to present each evening. Indeed, the felt need to respond by the next evening's TV ads to accusations or information of the previous day became all-consuming, paralleling the 1992 American campaign of "fax machines... churning out rebuttals — including a two-page reply to Bush's acceptance speech before he had even finished delivering it."⁵⁰ This led to an almost pointillist campaign without any consistent strategic line of propaganda over an extended period of time. As a result of all this, both camps had security guards placed full-time around their own television studios to guard against video spying.

As one reporter of the election scene argued, there was "an obsessive involvement on the part of the parties regarding their own campaign ads."⁵¹ In sum, as Yoel Marcus (*Ha'aretz's* premier political commentator) noted towards the end of the 1992 campaign: "There isn't another country in the world in which the preparations for the TV and newspaper political ads, and what is happening behind the media scenes, captures such a central place and accompanying headlines in the news."⁵²

10) *Domestic Issues*: Ever since the Six-Day War, national security issues have been in the forefront of all Israeli election campaigns to the Knesset, setting the country apart from almost all the world's democracies. The 1992 campaign was measurably different, as domestic economic and social issues came to the forefront: immigrant absorption, political corruption, the stagnant economy, troubled education, the unavailability of inexpensive housing, and revamping the religion and state "status quo." Even when the inevitable security issues were raised, especially regarding continued Jewish settlement in the territories, Labor and Meretz successfully portrayed this question as being intrinsically socio-economic: the

Likud's huge settlement expenditures were allegedly the root cause of the above socio-economic ills.

Such a domesticization of the campaign, of course, is not a matter of Americanization but rather of normalization. It does, though, in part explain the outcome of the elections, for the Likud has always been strongest when national security issues become most salient.⁵³ It is hardly coincidental that a significant percentage of former Likud supporters voted for Tzomet, which surprisingly (for an ultra-hawkish party) harped on domestic issues such as education and religion and state — to its great electoral benefit (Tzomet scored the greatest gain of all the parties). In any case, should the present peace talks lead to a substantial reduction in international tensions between Israel and its neighbors (admittedly, a big if), one could expect future elections to continue the more internationally normal 1992 pattern of domestic issue dominance.

Conclusions

The above list of Israel-American (or Western) parallels is an impressive one. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the 1992 Israeli campaign was an accurate mirror image of that found in the United States. The reason is that several key elements do not exist in Israel or exist in very different fashion.

First, and perhaps most important, the statutory restrictions on Israeli electronic media coverage of the campaign during the final month are so draconian as to neutralize one of the central aspects of democratic campaigning. Israel TV and radio are not allowed to show a picture or broadcast the voice of any candidate outside the statutory time set aside for party broadcasts.⁵⁴ This not only restricts the ability of the government to manipulate the news, but also of the public to see and hear what the candidates are doing and saying during the actual campaign. What is left for the voters is to *read* about the campaign, thereby pushing Israeli campaigns back to the pre-radio era from the standpoint of candidate coverage, and giving the printed press an enormous advantage over its newer mass media competitors. This state of affairs may also account for the parties' "obsession" with their television propaganda broadcasts, which afford the only opportunity during the campaign to literally present the party's face to the public.⁵⁵

Second, whereas at first glance Israel has imitated the American penchant for televised debates between the two major contenders for prime minister (which is done by the two parties together committing a significant part of their allotted air time for this purpose), the *format* of these debates is somewhat dissimilar. Instead of the relatively free-flowing give and take found in the American format,⁵⁶ "in the Israeli debates, 'the rules of the game' are rather strict, and the confrontation between the contenders is highly structured."⁵⁷

Third, while Israeli electronic campaign advertising (TV and radio) has become quite professional, it still does not suffer from some of the more egregious superficialities found in contemporary American political TV ads. Indeed, here the Israeli situation is akin to that of America in the late 1970s and early 1980s: strong visuals and upbeat background music. However, not to be found in Israel as yet is the "sound bite" syndrome, whereby the average length of time in which the candidates were given to present their case dropped from 43 seconds in 1968 to under 9 seconds in 1988!⁵⁸

The main reason that this has not yet occurred in Israel, as noted above, is that television and radio reporters are restricted by law from even covering any of the candidates' campaign activities. The candidates' appearances on radio and TV are produced solely by their respective parties who have an obvious interest in ensuring that the full message be delivered. In short, Israel's 1992 media campaign advertising style was certainly professional, colorful, and enthusiastic (with far fewer "talking heads" than in the past), but it was still far from the frenetically edited and paced superficial circus which many have accused the American media campaign of becoming.

Fourth, the general ambience of the Israeli election race is still far removed from the colorfully populist style of campaigning found in the United States. What Peri noted regarding the 1973 race is still relevant for 1992 (on both sides of the ocean): "Politics — and this includes election campaigns — is a 'serious' matter in the Israeli political culture. Here, even the most daring public-relations man would not risk conducting an election drive as in America, with parades, bands, balloons, etc."⁵⁹ It may well be that the heightened trivialization of the Israeli media campaign in 1992 (sloganeering, jingles, obsession with behind-the-scenes media and general campaign machinations, etc.) is one of the root causes for the Israeli

public's increasingly apathetic attitude toward the campaign, although not to the actual election itself.

Despite the important differences just outlined, one can indeed maintain that the parties and media professionals have made serious attempts to Americanize the Israeli campaign. This should not be surprising since, to a limited extent, this is a trend taking place throughout the Western world. In addition, Israel's general dependency on the United States, both politically and economically, renders adaptation of the dominant partner's system almost natural. Furthermore, as a result of the close links between the two countries, almost all Israeli leaders have visited the United States at least once, while many have done so quite often and are well aware of how campaign politics is conducted in the U.S. Among them, Yitzhak Rabin is one of the most conversant, having served in the early 1970s as Israel's ambassador to the U.S. Thus, as the prime force behind Labor's 1992 campaign, it is little wonder that the tone of the election campaign as a whole was American.⁶⁰ (MK Bibi Netanyahu, who was Israel's Ambassador to the UN, is another political figure highly conversant with American-style campaigning and ran such a campaign successfully for the leadership of the Likud immediately after his party's election debacle.)

On the other hand, from the perspective of the electorate, very significant differences remain between the political behavior of the American and Israeli publics during their respective campaigns. Voter turnout is far higher in Israel, whereas attendance at public rallies has become much smaller than in the U.S. Whether Americans are as turned off by the media campaign as their Israeli counterparts is a question still to be researched; however, it can be said that the Israeli voter has largely switched off the media campaign, whereas the American public is still far more exposed to election advertising due to the looser regulatory environment in the U.S. (short spots appearing anytime on TV and radio, in contrast to the concentrated TV and radio broadcasts of Israeli political ads).

Israeli professionals heavily involved in the media campaign admit that their work is of marginal influence. Haim Assa, Labor's campaign strategist, summed up the 1992 campaign thus: "I think that sociological processes within the nation brought the victory [to Labor], not strategists such as myself, and surely not advertising professionals."⁶¹ Adds David Tamir: "Don't rely on advertising as

the wonder key to success. [Political] advertising can contribute at the margins, and then only if it is done correctly."⁶²

A major reason for increasing campaign trivialization, generalization, personalization, and negativization is the attempt by the Likud and Labor to become umbrella parties incorporating many disparate groups with their own interests, demands, and needs.⁶³ This catch-all tendency will most surely continue in the future, but the development of mass communications technology will also enable each umbrella party to send different discrete messages to their variegated constituencies.

Cable television, regional radio, and local newspapers will undoubtedly assume a greater role on the Israeli media and political scene, and through such localized and/or focused media the campaign professionals will be able to selectively target different audiences, each receiving a distinct message.⁶⁴ Moreover, it does not entail a great leap of imagination to suggest that through CD-Rom-based directories and automatic phone canvassing (not to mention direct electronic mail and other future forms of personal computer communications), each party might soon be able to send a specific *personal* message to each and every voter!⁶⁵

Notes

1. Judith N. Elizur, "The Role of the Media in the 1981 Knesset Elections," in Howard R. Penniman and Daniel J. Elazar, eds., *Israel at the Polls: The Knesset Elections of 1981* (Bloomington, Ind.: American Enterprise Institute and Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 206-207.
2. The term "Americanization" is used here generically. It is obvious that several elements are to be found in many Western democracies, although each with a different mix. The American-style campaign combines virtually all of them.
3. Indeed, not all students of the subject even agree with the thesis. Prof. Elihu Katz, for one, argued that "Israel is not similar to the United States, except regarding advertising imagery and the election eve newscast...but Americanization does not exist in connection with the election propaganda subjects and the way such propaganda is covered....The party ads on television are broadcast in the old British

- format of an election magazine." (Interview by Ido Nevo, "Propaganda as Calling Card," *Demokratiah* [Special supplement of *Ma'ariv*], Summer 1992, p. 6.) I shall show that regarding 1992, at least, he is incorrect insofar as campaign subjects are concerned and only partly correct regarding the way the media reflexively covered the parties' media campaign. The magazine format argument is completely valid for the statutory reasons mentioned above.
4. See, for example, Thomas E. Patterson, "More Style Than Substance: Television News in U.S. National Elections," *Political Communication and Persuasion*, vol. 8, no.2 (1992):145-161.
 5. Carol Matlack, "Target Television," *National Journal* (1 February 1992):263-266.
 6. He quit the race when it became obvious — after a significant decline in the polls — that he had no chance of actually winning the election. However, one cannot dismiss the possibility that the mass media, who were extremely solicitous of his candidacy in the early stages (indeed, the snowball started rolling due to his appearances on regular television talk shows), began to turn against Perot when they realized how much his "electronic campaign" potentially threatened their traditional electioneering hegemony. This is a point which has been little noted, and bears analysis in the future.
 7. For an excellent survey of this self-flagellation and self-examination, see Ronald Goben, "The Media's Role: Debate Continues," *Special Features Service 093, #2F*, United States Information Service (1992).
 8. The best example of this was the 1968 campaign. Despite the country being in the midst of an unpopular war, Nixon won the election mainly due to his "law and order" campaign (not to mention Wallace's racist platform), plus his anti-New Deal program (a harbinger of Reaganomics). A representative Harris poll conducted in 1970 found American voters ranking the issues in the following order of descending importance: economic policy, civil order, social welfare, resources, labor, foreign policy, government, agriculture, and in last place — defense (again, during the Vietnam War!). Thomas A. Bowers, "Newspaper Political Advertising and the Agenda-Setting Function," *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 50 (1973):555.
 9. Giora Goldberg and Stephen Hoffman, "Nominations in Israel: The Politics of Institutionalization," *The Elections in Israel — 1981*, Asher Arian, ed. (Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing, 1983), pp. 61-87.
 10. For a broader discussion of the Rabin personalization strategy, see Yehudit Auerbach's article in this volume.
 11. Technically, Peres "won" in 1984 as the Labor Alignment received 48 seats to the Likud's 47. However, he could not form a government with allied left-wing parties alone, and thus was forced to share power on a rotational basis. This was considered a defeat, especially in light of the fact that the Likud had brought the country to triple-digit inflation and a stock market crash during the previous few years.
 12. Actually, a beginning along these lines was first noted in the 1981 campaign, but, as Elizur found, only 10 percent of Labor's ads were designed to build up Peres' image back then (15 percent of the Likud's ads were devoted to improving Begin's image) — a far cry from Labor's intense image-making efforts during the 1992 campaign. Elizur, "The Role of the Media...," *op. cit.* Dan Caspi and Chaim Eyal are even more categorical regarding the 1981 campaign, in which they tested for "visualization" and "personalization" of the race: "The visualization hypothesis was supported; the other, concerned with personalization, was not." See their "Professionalization Trends in Israeli Election Propaganda, 1973-1981," in *The Elections in Israel — 1981*, Asher Arian, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 255.
 13. See Hannah Herzog's two articles: "The Election Campaign as a Liminal Stage — Negotiations over Meanings," *Sociological Review*, vol. 35, no.3 (1987):568; and "Was It on the Agenda? The Hidden Agenda of the 1988 Campaign," in *The Elections in Israel — 1988*, A. Arian and M. Shamir, eds. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), p. 38.
 14. Altogether, only one established party went against the grain: the NRP increased its Knesset total from five to six seats, despite being riven by internal rivalry between Zevulun Hammer and Avner Shaki. While it is true that Meretz enjoyed electoral success despite its having three strong leaders (Aloni, Rubinstein, and Tzaban), such a triad was a function of the three parties merging into one, with remarkably little infighting between them.
 15. The argument could be made that Menachem Begin at the head of Herut and later Gahal and the Likud ran a personalized campaign. While there is no denying that he was the dominant personality and most important vote-getter, in fact the campaigns run under his auspices usually tried to moderate his central role, whereas it was the opposition which tried to personalize Begin as the be all and end all of his party due to the "extremist" image which he had, at least in the

- first two decades. Thus, this example actually proves the point that the Israeli public did not take well to "personalities without a party." See Judith Elizur and Elihu Katz, "The Media in the Israeli Elections of 1977," *Israel at the Polls: The Knesset Elections of 1977*, Howard R. Penniman, ed. (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1979), p. 242: "part of Likud's image-building strategy was to keep Begin invisible until late in the campaign." For an interesting discussion of the evolution of leader image-making in Israel through the 1970s and 1980s, see Nurit Gertz, "The Propaganda Style of Election Ads From 1977 to 1984," *The Elections in Israel — 1984*, Asher Arian, ed. (Tel Aviv: Ramot Publishing, 1984), pp. 215-219.
16. Subsequently, Binyamin Netanyahu won an outright majority in the Likud's internal primary elections for party leader, due to the party membership's perception that he would make the most attractive candidate in the upcoming presidential-style direct elections for prime minister in 1996.
 17. The most famous example of all proves the rule: Moshe Dayan's many infidelities were hinted at by the press, but never became an issue regarding his fitness for office.
 18. Ilan Shkhor, "The Elections 1992: The Work of a Journalist," *Yearbook of Journalists, 1992* (Tel Aviv: Association of Tel Aviv Journalists, 1992), p. 14 (Hebrew). The author goes on to analyze several reasons for this new trend, almost all of which are indigenous: the changing self-image of journalists, the success of local newspapers, the appearance of the quasi-sensationalist newspaper *Hadashot* in the mid-1980s, the more populist approach of the afternoon newspapers, the younger age of journalists covering the party beat, and the fact that Israeli politics itself has become more personalized and less ideological or institutional.
 19. For instance, election stickers were circulated by the Likud which read: "*Tzarikh rosh ha'memshalah shafui, lo shatui*" — "We need a sane prime minister, not a drunk." Labor's most infamous gimmick was even more below the belt (literally): a condom which had written on it "*Tezaharu May'hakatan*" — "Watch out for the little one" (An unsubtle reference to very short Yitzhak Shamir). See Yoel Marcus, "Good Evening, Stupid Ones," *Ha'aretz* (5 June 1992), p. B1 (Hebrew).
 20. Yerakh Tal, "The Likud Drafted the ex-Daughter-in-law of Rabin to Tell About Yitzhak and Leah," *Ha'aretz* (10 June 1992), p. A3 (Hebrew).
 21. The situation regarding socio-economic policy was even worse from the Labor and Likud perspective, as their ostensible positions for awhile have been diametrically opposed to the interests of their respective constituents! Quasi-socialist Labor was heavily supported by the middle class, while the supposedly capitalist Likud's main supporters came from the lower class. For a fuller discussion of this point, see this author's "Jihad in the Holy Land?" *Forum*, 46/47 (Fall/Winter 1982):187-200.
 22. In another striking parallel to the 1992 American campaign of the party in power, the Likud hired an investigative team to spend several months delving into all aspects of Rabin's past, and ferret out everything written on him — just as the Republicans did regarding Clinton, as noted earlier. See Yerakh Tal, "In the Campaign Broadcasts of the Likud Public Officials will Talk about Rabin's Deficiencies," *Ha'aretz* (21 May 1992), p. A4 (Hebrew).
 23. "Zeh Nakhon" ["That's Correct"], June 1992 Likud campaign brochure.
 24. Unintentionally, the author was dragged into the margins of the campaign. When the State Comptroller's Report was issued in April, an article appeared in all the main newspapers that research in progress which I was carrying out (with graduate students) had found corruption in most government ministries to be worse in the 1950s than it is today. The reasons had nothing to do with party politics or the specific party in power, but rather were intrinsic to a society in the process of social, legal and bureaucratic development. Nevertheless, the Likud used those headlines in its campaign brochure (*ibid.*) as if to justify the current corruption with the excuse that "things were worse in the past under Labor"!
 25. Gertz, "Propaganda Style..." *op. cit.*, notes that as far back as 1981 the Labor campaign was characterized by "abstract generalizations on the nature of true Zionism, an ideal society, peace and security. In 1984 even these weak generalizations were robbed of meaning when combined with views close to the Likud's" (p. 214).
 26. David Tamir, "The Client is Not an Idiot, He's your Wife," *Demokratiah* (Special election supplement), *Ma'ariv* (Summer 1992), p. 7 (Hebrew).
 27. Indeed, it is this author's impression that the Likud's slogan too could be understood in two different ways. On the face of it, it was a straightforward statement that the Likud was the correct party. On a

- deeper level, there were many former Likud supporters who were considering other choices. To them, the slogan may have appeared: "The Likud? [As if: are you kidding?] That's (still) the correct choice."
28. Avi Genauer, "Gentlemen, Back to Proportions" (Interview with David Tamir), *Ha'aretz* (24 June 1992), p. B8 (Hebrew).
 29. Lili Galilee, "20 Percent among Labor and Meretz Voters Watch the Campaign Broadcasts," *Ha'aretz* (12 June 1992), p. A3 (Hebrew).
 30. Reuven Shapira, "Turner: 'The Elections are being Conducted with Relative Calm; There's Less Violence in Comparison to Previous Campaigns'," *Ha'aretz* (16 June 1992), p. A4 (Hebrew).
 31. Pirate cable TV had been widespread in Israel since at least the mid-1980s, but this offered by and large one movie channel. Legal cable television, which commenced operation in 1991, offered a few dozen channels from around the world — very substantial fare by traditional Israeli standards.
 32. Lili Galilee, "A Nation Moving Over to Cable," *Ha'aretz* (11 June 1992), p. B1 (Hebrew).
 33. See *ibid.* for a fuller discussion of this point.
 34. Gideon Alon, "The Central Bureau of Statistics: 370 Thousand Emigrants are Included on the Voting Rolls," *Ha'aretz* (22 June 1992), p. A3 (Hebrew).
 35. Gideon Alon, "Restricted from Voting," *Ha'aretz* (22 June 1992), p. B2 (Hebrew).
 36. Yitzchak Galnoor and Yochanan Peres, "Whoever Votes, Influences," *Demokratiah* (Special election supplement), *Ma'ariv* (Summer 1992), p. 29 (Hebrew).
 37. "Wanted: Voters," *Ma'ariv* (23 June 1992), p. 16 (Hebrew). These numbers do not exactly fit a report published a week earlier, in which 60,000 workers were to be deployed for election day. That report also stated that 500,000 voters had been visited in their homes, a number which does fit the later report as it is certainly possible that 200,000 additional potential voters were visited during the last week of the campaign.

38. "Emergency Mobilization," *ibid.* (Hebrew); "To Demonstrate Presence," *ibid.* (Hebrew).
39. Ilan Shkhori, "15 Leaders in Labor See Themselves as Candidates for Ministerial Positions; Rabin is Wary of Obligating Himself," *Ha'aretz* (10 June 1992), p. A4 (Hebrew).
40. The Likud attempted a prototype campaign in the 1988 and 1989 elections for the Knesset and the municipalities respectively, in Israel's three largest cities. On the basis of that experience and the lessons learned, it expanded the telephone campaign to the entire country for 1992. (Telephone interview with Tzur Etzion, Head of the Likud's Computer Department which employed "tens" of workers for several months.)
41. Ilan Shkhori, "Computerized Voter Roll and Telephone Book will Provide the Parties with Much Information on the Citizenry," *Ha'aretz* (21 April 1992), p. A4 (Hebrew).
42. Lili Galilee, "3.5% Undecided, Most Young, Between Meretz and Tzomet," *Ha'aretz* (8 June 1992), p. A4 (Hebrew). Based on the lessons of Labor's smaller 1988 telephone campaign, Meretz used only party volunteers (greater enthusiasm) instead of hired help, and covered those areas with the highest concentration of former Labor supporters. Lili Galilee, "Mass Telephone Campaign of Meretz will Find Tens of Thousands of Undecideds between It and Labor," *Ha'aretz* (26 May 1992), p. A4 (Hebrew).
43. Interview with Tzur Etzion, *op. cit.* In this case, the press actually underreported the numbers. For instance, Yerakh Tal reported on 500,000 families reached in the Likud phone campaign: "The Likud is Convinced that Revakh's Appearance in the TV Ad Will Influence Floating Voters," *Ha'aretz* (22 June 1992), p. A3 (Hebrew).
44. Yerakh Tal, "Likud Ministers and Knesset Members are Starting a Telephone Campaign to Convince Disappointed Supporters of the Party," *Ha'aretz* (12 June 1992), p. A3 (Hebrew).
45. Mr. Etzion predicted that in 1996 Israeli parties may well be utilizing automatic dialing and perhaps even computerized voice conversations (in which the computer dials and carries on the conversation freely and automatically with the potential voter).
46. Ron Resnick, "The World of Advertising in the Elections," *Ha'ir* (25 May 1992), pp. 18-19 (Hebrew).

47. Ron Resnick, "The Advertising World in the Elections," *Ha'ir* (5 June 1992), p. 17 (Hebrew).
48. Noam Ben-Ze'ev, "Disco Beat as Democratic Choice," *Ha'aretz* (26 May 1992), p. 2 (Hebrew). This author, too, was asked to appear on the radio, being asked questions such as "which of the jingles were best?" (as the radio and TV campaigns were regulated, all the ads appeared at the same date for each medium); "how do they influence the listener?"; etc. My protestations to the effect that they had virtually zero effect passed unnoticed by the interviewer.
49. Urit Galilee, "All the Accoutrements of Government," *Ha'aretz* (8 June 1992), p. A3 (Hebrew).
50. Stanley W. Cloud, "Here Come the Big Guns," *Time International* (31 August 1992), p. 32.
51. Lili Galilee, "The Nation Moves Over to Cable," *op. cit.*
52. Yoel Marcus, "Good Evening, Stupid Ones," *op. cit.*
53. Another example of this was the 1984 campaign in which the staggering economy accompanied by hyperinflation reduced the salience of national security issues despite the Israel army's continued massive presence in Lebanon. As a result of the increased importance of domestic economic issues, Labor managed to pass the Likud in number of Knesset seats garnered, although it still could not form a coalition without the Likud.
54. For a review of the relevant laws, see Elizur and Katz, "The Media in the Israeli Elections of 1977," *op. cit.*, pp. 228-230.
55. One constructive outcome from this is the absence in Israel of "sound bites" — the few seconds given the candidates to present a message. The TV ads as well as newspaper coverage afford a more extended treatment of what the parties and specific candidates have to offer, assuming that they indeed do have something substantive to say.
56. The American debate format has had several variations. Sometimes it is very structured, while other times it allows for a more free-flowing give-and-take between the candidates. The three U.S. presidential debates in October 1992 were an example of this variety within one series.

57. Raphael Nir, "Electoral Rhetoric in Israel — The Televised Debates: A Study in Political Discourse," *Language Learning*, vol. 38, no. 2 (1988):207. See, too, his more detailed analysis of the differences between the American and Israeli format, pp. 190-191. Virtually nothing has changed since 1984 in this regard.
58. Daniel C. Hallin, "Sound Bite News: Television Coverage of Elections, 1968-1988," *Journal of Communication*, vol. 42, no. 2 (Spring 1992):5-24. See also Kiku Addato, *Sound Bite Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, 1990).
59. Yoram Peri, "Television in the 1973 Election Campaign," in *The Elections in Israel — 1973*, Asher Arian, ed. (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1975), p. 112.
60. A curious and little commented upon fact is that 1992 was the first election campaign which Rabin actually headed. In 1974 he was chosen by Labor to take the place of Prime Minister Golda Meir four months after the elections were over. In 1977, he resigned as candidate for prime minister in the middle of the campaign (due to his wife's holding an illegal overseas bank account). Thus, the first time he led Labor in a national election campaign was 1992!
61. Gadi Bloom, "The Head of the Next Prime Minister," *Ha'ir* (26 June 1992), p. 41 (Hebrew).
62. Genauer, "Gentlemen, Back to Proportions," *op. cit.*
63. Labor, at least, has always strived to be an umbrella party, but from a socio-economic standpoint Israel was far less heterogeneous in the early years of the state than it is in the contemporary era. Thus, despite ongoing *ethnic* homogenization in Israel (the recent massive Russian Jewish immigration has even slowed that process down temporarily), the major parties have to work harder today to bring many groups within their tent than they did in the past.
64. In one respect, this already occurred in 1992: both parties placed a not inconsiderable number of ads in the Russian-language newspapers — ads which had messages geared to that large population group's specific problems.
65. By far the most successful young politician in Labor's primary elections was Avraham Burg who made it to number three on the list (after Rabin and Peres). It is hardly coincidental that Burg has a

complete computer file (on his home PC) of every individual with whom he has come into political contact, enabling him to target potential supporters with discrete messages geared specifically to each and every one. In light of his astonishing achievement (it was unheard of for someone 37 years of age to make it so far and so fast within Labor), many other candidates will undoubtedly take to employing computer-aided tactics in their personal — and ultimately party — campaigns.