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The social marketing of peace: grassroots movements, US foreign policy and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict

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This article draws on research from social marketing, psychology, and public opinion to suggest a strategic communications planning process appropriate to this context. It is organized around a case study of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, an American Jewish organization that successfully built a grassroots movement in support of a negotiated two-state solution. Consistent with a social marketing approach, the case study illustrates how (a) an audience (in this case the American Jewish community) can be described in terms of political opinion segments, (b) how an organization can select one or more of these segments to focus on, and (c) how a tool called the five-box positioning statement can be used to craft a core message for the organization. Part (a) of this case study includes a description of opinion segments within the American Jewish community. This description is based on polling data combined with seven years of semi-formal ethnographic research by the author. Finally, the implications of this case study for the Minds of Peace Experiment are explored.

Keywords: Israeli–Palestinian conflict; social marketing; political persuasion

The case context: Brit Tzedek v'Shalom

This article draws on my personal experience with Brit Tzedek v'Shalom – the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace. I became a member of Brit Tzedek's national Board of Directors a few months after its founding. Because of my background as a marketing professor with an interest in Social Marketing,¹ I was actively involved in crafting public messages that would honestly express our views, appeal to our target audience, and help us achieve our political goals. I will start with a brief history of that group and then describe the logic and process of developing a political message strategy using Brit Tzedek as an illustration. In keeping with the primary goals of this article, the case will be organized to illustrate the logic and process of developing a communications strategy rather than presenting the history of this particular organization.

Brit Tzedek was founded in 2001 by Jewish activists who were deeply concerned by Israel's inability to reach a negotiated two-state solution with the Palestinians. As an American Jewish organization, Brit Tzedek had the primary

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objective of influencing American foreign policy to be more proactively and constructively engaged in bringing about a lasting peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours. In practice this meant (a) increasing the priority of achieving a negotiated solution as a US foreign policy objective, (b) increasing the credibility of the United States as an honest broker on this issue, and (c) recognizing that American influence must be strongly exerted with all relevant parties – the Palestinians, the Arab states, and their supporters; as well as with Israel and its supporters – if these parties are going to make the politically difficult compromises required to reach an agreement. Point (c) in particular represented a significant shift from the position advocated by many other American pro-Israel organizations, which held that the United States should apply pressure only to the Arab side in the conflict. Brit Tzedek recognized that advocating for pressuring only the Arab side to compromise may be tactically advantageous to Israel in the short term; but this continual focus on short-term political advantage for Israel did not facilitate a lasting peace agreement, and hence left Israel in a perpetually unstable diplomatic, political, and economic position.

Brit Tzedek advocated what could be called a *Geneva Accord style two-state solution*. This means we did not advocate the Geneva Accords in every detail, but did support this type of solution in its general outlines. Specifically, this meant all of Gaza and most of the West Bank would become a sovereign Palestinian state. Israel would keep the large settlement blocs close to the green line and compensate the Palestinians on a one-for-one basis with land from the Israeli side of the green line. Palestinian refugees would have the ‘right of return’ only to the future Palestinian state, not to Israel. Israel would keep the Jewish neighbourhoods in Jerusalem but would make far-reaching compromises, including having Arab East Jerusalem serve as the capital of the future Palestinian state.²

Brit Tzedek was remarkably successful, growing from around 200 initial organizers to over 50,000 supporters and 50 local chapters across the United States, before merging into J Street in 2010. Among our supporters we counted more than 1500 American Rabbis and Cantors who participated through our Rabbinic Cabinet. This Rabbinic Cabinet motivated, assisted and defended these rabbis and cantors as they took a more visible leadership role in support of an activist pro-Israel pro-peace US foreign policy. This was the first successful large-scale grassroots mobilization of the American Jewish community in support of the policies needed to reach a negotiated two-state solution.

Brit Tzedek’s influence was felt in Congress as we brought increasingly greater grassroots support for our agenda through our DC office, and through frequent visits from our activists with their Congressional representatives. We also played a major role in legitimizing our political position within the local Jewish communities across the country. Polls (analysed in detail below) showed that large numbers of Jews as individuals supported our positions both in favour of a two-state solution, and in favour of the United States influencing all sides in the Israeli–Arab conflict towards greater compromise. But despite their numerical prevalence, Jewish supporters of our positions often erroneously saw

themselves as marginal misfits within the Jewish community. Furthermore, their political views were often seen as inappropriate for public distribution both within the American Jewish community and in public communications from the American Jewish community to the wider population. Brit Tzedek changed that quite significantly by giving collective voice and legitimacy to these views.

Jeremy Ben-Ami, J Street's founder and a veteran of the Clinton White House, provided advice to Brit Tzedek in our organization's early days. I remember walking with Mr. Ben-Ami, and encouraging him to become more formally involved with us. He replied that he found our grassroots-based leadership model a little too cumbersome for his taste, but that he was considering creating a PAC to work on these issues which would have a more centralized leadership, and thus quickly be able to 'say what needed to be said and do what needed to be done'. Several years later he followed through with this idea by founding J Street as a web-based PAC. Due to J Street's success at fundraising and web-based communications, it quickly gained visibility and developed a strong base in Washington. Although the political positions taken by J Street and Brit Tzedek were almost identical, the two organizations had different strengths and strategies. Brit Tzedek grew through the social networks of its most active members, which tended to include other political activists, but few people capable of giving over \$10,000 per year. Hence, while we raised around \$1,000,000 per year, we never succeeded in attracting enough large-scale gifts to fully professionalize our operations. J Street, in contrast, had much better access to major donors and a more effective approach when dealing with those donors, which gave them the funding necessary to create a professionally run organization from the outset. But while J Street could get a lot of people to give them their email address, it was not able to secure the *engaged* support of politically active progressive Jews around the country. Over time, J Street came to more fully appreciate the limits of a wholly web-based organizing model and the importance of having committed activists on the ground in Congress people's home districts. After a series of discussions between Brit Tzedek and J Street, in 2010 Brit Tzedek merged into J Street to become J Street Local, thus combining the complementary strengths of each organization.

The need for a message strategy

To be maximally effective, political groups should develop and follow a clear strategy. Strategies define fairly broad goals and objectives whereas tactics describe the best practices for achieving those goals. At the broadest level, a strategy should inform all of an organization's major decisions such as who one hires, how the organization makes decisions, how the organization will raise and spend its money, what the organization's core political message will be, etc. This overarching 'corporate' strategy is then used as the basis for developing more function-specific strategies such as a personnel strategy, a strategy for creating alliances with other groups, or, of particular interest to us here, a message strategy.

Not all organizations have or even want a message strategy. Many non-profit organizations have a *self-expressive* rather than a *strategic* approach to communications. Organizations with a self-expressive approach often see themselves as ‘speaking truth to power’. They formulate messages that they feel express what they want to say, and what they feel the audience ‘needs to hear’. These organizations are often modern descendants of the ancient prophetic traditions, and their messages frequently contain an element of lecturing the audience about society’s moral failings. Moral sermons can be energizing to audiences who identify with the speaker, rather than the people in need of correction (i.e. ‘we’ are in danger from ‘their’ moral failings). But, as many ancient prophets learned, this type of rhetoric is terribly off-putting to the people whose behaviour is being criticized. Thus a self-expressive approach is usually ineffective at helping the organization grow or have influence beyond its current base.

This ineffectiveness is often frustrating for participants in self-expressive organizations, but it is difficult for them to adopt a more strategic approach for three reasons. First, leaders in self-expressive organizations often see a strategic approach – in which communications are developed based on how the audience will respond to them – as pandering at best and dishonest at worst. Second, the self-expressive approach can be emotionally cathartic because it allows the organization’s supporters to ‘get it off their chests’ when the organization uses impassioned and morally framed rhetoric. People are often reluctant to give up the emotional rewards of getting to fully speak their mind. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, using a strategic approach requires one to truly understand one’s audience. Often this means understanding why some parts of your audience disagree with you, which in turn can lead one to gain some sympathy for the opposing point of view. For many people, their sense of identity is built around the conviction that they are morally superior to those they disagree with. And really understanding opposing perspectives can threaten the absoluteness of this perceived moral superiority. It is often much more emotionally comfortable to forgo an ability to communicate with one’s audience, but maintain one’s conviction in the fundamental superiority of one’s own group.

Almost all major political organizations use a strategic rather than a self-expressive approach to communications, which is how they became *major* political organizations. Rather than ‘speaking truth to power’, strategic groups aim to *speak truth effectively*, and follow the slogan ‘it’s not what you say, but what they hear that matters’. More specifically, strategically oriented groups figure out who their target audience is and what they want their target audience to do. Then they determine what that audience needs to hear in order for them to perform the desired action. Finally, they determine what they can honestly say which will be heard by the audience in the intended way.

Prior to the creation of Brit Tzedek, many local American Jewish communities had at least one small-scale local grassroots political organization which took a progressive stand on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. These local groups usually had a self-expressive orientation with regard to their

communications. From the outset, Brit Tzedek distinguished itself from these local organizations by (a) formulating policies at the national level which were then advanced locally through the chapters, and (b) using a truthful strategic approach to communications.

Audience/market segmentation³

The essence of a strategic approach to communications is that the message must effectively influence the behaviour of the target audience. *Because people differ from each other, there is no one message which will be effective with everyone.* Therefore, the first step in developing a message strategy is to break the total population into relatively homogenous segments so that the people within any given segment are similar enough to each other that an effective message can be created for that segment as a whole. In social marketing this target population is called the target market, but I will use the term target audience here as some readers find it more felicitous.

When segmenting an audience or market, one needs to decide the basis for segmentation and the number of segments to create. In determining the basis for segmentation for a message strategy, it is a very common mistake to group people by obvious demographic variables such as age or gender. One should bear in mind that the objective of this segmentation is to produce groups which will respond in a similar manner to your communications. It is true, for example, that Jews with more years of formal secular education tend to be more dovish, and therefore are more likely to respond positively to a dovish message. However, from this example we can see that we only care about 'years of education' because it correlates with an underlying set of dovish political opinions. Therefore, segmenting the audience into subgroups based directly on their opinions is much more effective than demographic segmentation, which is only loosely correlated with these opinions, for creating audience segments where the members of each group will respond in a similar way to particular message.⁴

How many segments should be created? The answer to this question depends both on the population being segmented, and the competitive strategy of the organization doing the segmenting. Having fewer, and therefore larger, segments allows the organization to target a larger potential audience with a single message strategy. However, having more, and therefore smaller, segments creates more homogeneity of opinion within the segments, which in turn makes it easier to create messages which speak directly to the feelings and concerns of any given segment.

Larger organizations can sometimes run multiple simultaneous programmes each aimed at different audience segments. For example, an organization promoting organic foods might have one communications initiative targeting consumers who are primarily concerned with their health, and a second communications initiative targeting consumers who see purchasing organic foods as a way of helping the environment. In this example, it is possible for a single

organization to communicate these two different messages about organic foods without seeming dishonest because the messages do not contradict each other. However, organizations which wish to have more than one message at a time need to be cautious about confusing their audiences and appearing dishonest if the messages appear to the public to be in conflict.⁵ Furthermore, the organization must have the capacity to fully fund each of these separate communications campaigns. It is much better to run a single communications campaign well, than to run multiple communications campaigns poorly.

Smaller organizations frequently do not have the resources to run more than one communications campaign at a time. Therefore, if a small organization is competing for an audience's attention and commitment with larger, similar organizations, it often makes sense for them to use a niche marketing strategy. This means segmenting the market into a fairly large number of highly homogeneous segments and picking one segment to focus on. Whereas prior to the creation of Brit Tzedek more hawkish supporters of Israel had a large number of successful organizations representing their viewpoint, more dovish supporters of Israel had to choose between (a) organizations like Americans for Peace Now and the Israel Policy Forum, which were Washington-centric and not highly active on a grassroots level, (b) organizations like Meretz and Ameinu, which were active in some Jewish communities around the country but were multi-issue groups directly or indirectly affiliated with Israeli organizations, or (c) organizations which were associated with the audience segment I will call below 'Palestinian Solidarity Advocates'. Because Brit Tzedek faced little direct competition for activists' support and funding from similar organizations, it made sense for it to break up the total population into relatively few, and fairly large, segments, so as to maximize its potential membership base. As you will see, Brit Tzedek ended up targeting 40% + of the total population, which is a large segment strategy, as opposed to a niche strategy.

The four major American Jewish opinion segments

The following segment descriptions⁶ were developed through a combination of polling data analysis and hundreds of informal interviews which I conducted between 2002 and 2010. My work with Brit Tzedek allowed me to speak with a wide variety of Jewish audiences around the US, and have lengthy conversations about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a diverse array of people. As a professional qualitative researcher, I consciously used these opportunities to collect qualitative data to refine my understanding of why people hold the views they do on this issue. The polling data was used primarily to measure the size of each opinion segment, and the qualitative interviews were used to gain psychological insight into the people who make up each segment.

Figure 1 presents my synthesis of data from four polls of American Jewish opinion⁷ conducted between 2002 and 2005, the years during which this communications strategy was being formulated and revised. The size of the

P S A	The Broad Center														Settler Solidarity Advocates				
	Pro-Israel Peace Advocates							Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates											
	1	2		3		4		5		6		7		8					
1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	66-70	71-75	76-80	81-85	86-90	91-95	96-100
Percentile of American Jewish opinion																			
Most supportive of compromise by Israel														Least supportive of compromise by Israel					
(PSA = Palestinian Solidarity Advocates)																			

Figure 1. American Jewish political opinion segments.

segments I am about to describe has no doubt shifted slightly over time, but the basic psychological orientations of the segments is likely to have remained largely intact. The reader is encouraged to bear in mind that this segmentation analysis applies specifically to the American Jewish community rather than Israelis.

Figure 1 arranges American Jewish opinion on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict along a single dimension which might be termed left vs. right or dove vs. hawk, but I define principally around support for compromise by Israel. The US Jewish population is arranged by percentile such that as the percentiles increase, the people become more right-wing, more hawkish, and less supportive of compromise by Israel. Numbers are rounded off to the nearest 5% so as not to create an exaggerated sense of precision about the estimates, but this may make the Palestinian Solidarity Advocates (who are probably less than 5%) appear slightly more populous than they actually are.

Figure 2 presents the same eight segments positioned in a two-dimensional space. The placement of the segments in Figure 2 is based on the author's judgement developed through qualitative interviews. The horizontal axis indicates the importance each segment places on retaining land captured by Israel in the 1967 war. The vertical axis indicates the extent to which each segment sees the conflict through the lens of 'us-and-them psychology',⁸ which is the typical set of concerns and biases that people exhibit in conflict situations. Us-and-them psychology includes what Salinas calls 'a culpability orientation' in which focusing on who is to blame takes up so much energy and generates so much hostility that the conflicting parties are unable to resolve their problems.⁹ The us-and-them psychology also includes a whole host of in-group vs. out-group psychological biases such as the tendency to see violence by one's in-group as a regrettable but inevitable response to external circumstances created by the out-group, but to see violence by the out-group as a reflection of their intrinsically or culturally violent nature.¹⁰

Before discussing the specifics of each segment, it is important to understand the difference between peace and solidarity activists as the terms are used here.¹¹ Peace activists strive to bring all sides of the conflict closer to an agreement by urging mutual understanding and compromise. Peace advocates tend to be less



Figure 2. American Jewish political opinion segments position in a two-dimensional space.

influenced by us-and-them thinking (see Figure 2). To promote compromise, they tend to avoid the culpability orientation and stress even-handed rhetoric and pragmatic solutions. In contrast, solidarity activists strive to achieve the most advantageous position for their chosen side, often by helping their side hold out against pressure to compromise. In terms of political messaging, peace activists attempt to recognize the legitimate concerns of all parties and to criticize the bad behaviour of all parties, whereas solidarity activists generally attempt to rally support for whatever positions are taken by their side.

To avoid confusion, it should be noted that not everyone who self-identifies as a 'peace activist' meets the definition of a 'peace advocate' being used in this paper. Due to the American political landscape, many Palestinian Solidarity Advocates (be they Jewish, Arab, or neither) see themselves as peace activists and are often accepted as such by the American left. But their actual rhetoric and worldview is better described as the mirror image of the Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates, only these Palestinian Solidarity Advocates espouse solidarity with the opposite side of the conflict. In contrast, there are also people whose primary identification or sympathy is with the Palestinians and who should be considered Palestinian Peace Advocates as the term is used here. The organization American Task Force for Palestine is a prominent public voice for this point of view. In my experience, the American left has made insufficient effort to recognize the difference between Pro-Palestinian Peace Advocates and Palestinian Solidarity Advocates, which makes a regrettable contribution to the tensions between the American left and Pro-Israel Peace Advocates around these issues.

With this background in place, we are ready to review each American Jewish audience segment in more detail.

Settler Solidarity Advocates

Settler Solidarity Advocates (segment 8) strongly oppose the creation of a Palestinian state and dependably tell pollsters they reject any initiatives that might involve territorial compromise. Because of their religious or nationalistic commitment to permanently maintaining greater Israel, they support settlement expansion. Even in conflicts between the Israeli government and the settlers, these American Jews often identify with the settlers. Settler Solidarity Advocates come disproportionately from the Orthodox community (although by no means only from that community) and are represented by religious pro-settler organizations, and by secular groups like the Zionist Organization of America.

This segment is outside of the broad centre of American Jewish political opinion. The key issue which places this segment outside of the mainstream is their ideological, as opposed to pragmatic, resistance to giving up territory in the West Bank. Whereas many American Jews are reluctant to create a Palestinian state due primarily to their fears that it will threaten Israel's security, the Settler Solidarity Advocates go further and do not support the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to statehood even when it is paired with the recognition of the right of the Jewish people to statehood.¹²

Palestinian Solidarity Advocates

The Palestinian Solidarity Advocates (segment 1) see the conflict primarily in moral terms, with the Palestinians as the heroes and Israel as the villain. Because Palestinian Solidarity Advocates are such a small minority of American Jewish opinion, most surveys do not include questions which would allow us to understand this segment in detail, so relevant polling data is scarce. However, The National Survey of American Jews (JA) 2002 did ask American Jews a relevant question about whether they supported 'the Palestinians' drive for national liberation'. To be clear, having some sympathy with the Palestinians' desire for a state of their own is fairly widespread in the American Jewish community and does not, in and of itself, place a person among the Palestinian Solidarity Advocates. For instance, JA 2002 also found American Jews up to the 44th percentile in Figure 1 either agreed, or at least did not disagree, with that same statement about support for Palestinian 'national liberation' (this is one of the reasons why I placed the break between segments 4 and 5 at the 45th percentile). In my conversations with American Jews I have often found that people I would place in segment 5 or segment 6 can voice a personal sympathy for the plight of Palestinians and their desire for a state. Furthermore, I believe that the specific phrasing of that polling question in terms of 'national liberation' – with its vaguely Marxist and/or anti-colonialist overtones – reduced the number of American Jews who agreed with it; although most Palestinian Solidarity Advocates would *not* have been turned off by that particular question wording (see below). But while sympathy for the Palestinians' desire for a state does not make one a Palestinian Solidarity Advocate, Palestinian Solidarity Advocates would almost certainly strongly agree

with that question. The fact that only 2% of American Jews strongly agreed with that statement suggests that the Palestinian Solidarity Advocates are a very small opinion segment. And, as noted above, the convention used here of placing breaks between segments at five-point intervals probably overstates the popularity of the Palestinian Solidarity Activists' views in the American Jewish Community.

Palestinian Solidarity Advocates tend to be culturally rather than religiously affiliated with the Jewish community, and to have strong left-wing views on other political issues. Consistent with their general left-wing political orientation, Palestinian Solidarity Advocates see the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as an example of a Western imperialist power (Israel, backed by the US) oppressing an indigenous population (the Palestinians). But their critique goes beyond Israel's conduct, to question its fundamental legitimacy. For instance, JA 2002 also found that 2% of American Jews strongly agree that there 'is something racist in the idea of a "Jewish State" of Israel'. Consistent with this de-legitimization of Israel as a Jewish state, many advocates for a one-state solution also come from this opinion segment. This segment is outside of the broad centre of American Jewish political opinion in that they question the fundamental legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish homeland and see Israel as overwhelmingly at fault in the conflict. These Jews are represented in America by organizations like the Jewish Voice for Peace.

The broad centre: Pro-Israel Peace Advocates and Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates

The broad centre of the American Jewish community is made up of Pro-Israel Peace Advocates (segments 2–4) and Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates (segments 5–7). Pro-Israel Peace Advocates and Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates have significant similarities. Both segments see the creation of modern Israel as legitimate, would like to see a negotiated peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, recognize that such an agreement would require the creation of some type of Palestinian state, and tend to see territorial issues in pragmatic rather than ideological terms (Jerusalem is an important exception to this pragmatic approach for most Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates).

As their names imply, the most significant difference between Pro-Israel Peace Advocates and Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates is how they see their role vis-à-vis the Israeli government. Pro-Israel Peace Advocates see their fundamental job as helping Israel achieve peace with the Palestinians and other Arab or Muslim states, which sometimes requires them to publicly disagree with the Israeli government. In contrast, Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates see their job as supporting whatever policies are enacted by the Israeli government by advocating those policies to the American public and the American government. Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates frequently disagree with various Israeli government policies, yet publicly defend these policies and only voice any

disagreements they might have with them in private conversation. There are three other issues which demarcate the line between these two main factions of the broad centre: (a) the future of Jerusalem, (b) beliefs about Israeli security, and (c) the influence of us-and-them psychology in their thinking.

The issue of dividing Jerusalem also divides Pro-Israel Peace Advocates from Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates. The dividing line between these two segments was placed at the 45th percentile in part because APN 2004 indicates that 47% of American Jews support 'having Jerusalem serve as the capital of both a future Palestinian state and the State of Israel, with the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem being recognized as the Palestinian capital and the Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem being recognized as the Israeli capital'. This type of proposed compromise on Jerusalem is the issue on which a Geneva Accord style two-state solution had the weakest support among American Jews. Approximately 45% of American Jews could be seen as supporting all of the compromises which, in Brit Tzedek's analysis, were needed to reach an agreement. In terms of a communications strategy, Jews up to the 45th percentile already shared Brit Tzedek's vision of an acceptable agreement and needed no further convincing on these issues. In contrast, Jews between the 46th and 85th percentile's accepted the possibility of a Palestinian state in principle, but would need to be persuaded to change their views on one or more of the final status issues before they could unreservedly support the type of agreement advocated by Brit Tzedek.

With regard to security, Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates see the creation of a Palestinian state as a serious security risk for Israel and are deeply concerned that Palestinian promises of peace are disingenuous. At an emotional level, their deeply felt sense of anxiety about the creation of a Palestinian state colours much of their political analysis – hence I called this segment 'Worried Jews' in a previous publication.¹³ The combination of their desire for peace with their fears that a peace agreement might be dangerous for Israel leads Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates to be ambivalent about the peace process. In contrast, Pro-Israel Peace Advocates frequently see the concern that a Palestinian state would threaten Israel's security as unrealistic given Israel's strong military (hence I called this segment 'Realist').¹⁴

Who is to blame for the continuation of the conflict? With the exception of the Palestinian Solidarity Advocates, all of these opinion segments see the Palestinians as significantly responsible for the conflict. However, Pro-Israel Peace Advocates are more likely to see Israel as also sharing a significant amount of the blame. The view of many Pro-Israel Peace Advocates that both sides have committed serious practical and moral blunders is consistent with their reluctance to frame the issue in moral terms and their preference to simply look for a pragmatic solution. In contrast, Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates are more likely to put most or all of the blame on the Palestinians. Hence Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates can often be heard to complain when the media and/or Pro-Israel Peace Advocates create what they see as a 'false equivalence' between Israeli and Palestinian motives and actions. This difference in the moral framing of

the conflict has an enormous impact on the style of messages each segment will relate to. For example, Alan Dershowitz is widely considered to be very hawkish on Israeli–Palestinian issues, when in fact his actual recommendations regarding policy are largely the same as those advocated by Brit Tzedek. However, Dershowitz has become a hero to the Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates because he expresses his views in a style which is consistent with their us-and-them psychology.

Sub-segments within the Israeli government solidarity advocates

Each of these two large opinion segments, the Pro-Israel Peace Advocates and the Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates, are subdivided into three smaller sub-segments.

Segment 5 versus segment 6

Within the Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates, segment 5 shows signs of being possibly convertible into Brit Tzedek supporters. Two of Brit Tzedek's main initiatives are to push for a settlement freeze and for greater US involvement in trying to resolve the conflict. Segment 5 is broadly supportive of Brit Tzedek's goals on these two important points. Specifically, American Jews up to the 63rd percentile voice clear support for 'a freeze on all Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank and Gaza'.¹⁵ In a different poll 65% of American Jews supported dismantling some or all Israeli settlements as part of a final status agreement.¹⁶ About the same number of American Jews, 63%,¹⁷ also agreed that without American involvement in the peace process a solution would be impossible. In contrast to Segment 5, Segment 6 is opposed to the eventual dismantling of any settlements and 'unsure' rather than supportive of a settlement freeze.

Segment 6 versus segment 7

It frequently occurs that polls will get very different responses to similar questions based on wording differences and/or the order in which questions were asked. It is reasonable to conclude that when a respondent's opinion shifts based on question wording or question order, this indicates that their opinion is not strongly held. Questions about support for US involvement in resolving the Israeli Palestinian conflict seem particularly prone to these types of effects. The Ameinu 2005 poll found that 75% of American Jews agreed with the statement the 'U.S. should push both sides towards a peace agreement, even in the face of objections from Israel or the Palestinians'. However, other polls (discussed below) found less support among American Jews for this type of robust US involvement. Therefore, the division at the 75th percentile between segments 6 and 7 marks the transition from ambivalent support for active US involvement to solid opposition to this involvement. Furthermore, whereas segment 6 is unsure about a settlement freeze,

segment 7 strongly opposes this.¹⁸ Finally, segments 7 and 8 are the only segments which can truly be considered actively pro-settlement in that they are the only groups which would recommend¹⁹ to the Israeli government that it continue to expand 'housing in existing settlements on the West Bank to accommodate natural growth'.²⁰ Although segment 7 is pro-settlement expansion, it remains within the political mainstream in that its support for settlement expansion is primarily about retaining certain parts of the occupied territories (primarily in East Jerusalem) rather than necessarily retaining all of the occupied territories as segment 8 advocates.

Sub-segments within the Pro-Israel Peace Advocates

All three subgroups of the Pro-Israel Peace Advocates (segments 2, 3, and 4) believe in the legitimacy of the state of Israel, believe that the Palestinians share at least some of the blame for the conflict, and endorse a Geneva Accord style two-state solution (hence in Figure 2 they do not differ along the horizontal axis). The differences between them are primarily in terms of how influenced they are by us-and-them psychology, which manifests itself largely in how they believe American Jews should relate to Israel.

Segment 2 versus segment 3

As mentioned above, responses to questions about US government pressure on Israel tend to vary widely between polls. Whereas Ameinu 2005 found 75% support for the 'US push[ing] both sides towards a peace agreement', JA 2002 found only 25% of American Jews were willing to respond "no" to the diametrically opposed view that 'the US should avoid all forms of pressure on the Israeli government'.²¹ This suggests that about 25% of American Jews are solidly supportive of the US pressure on Israel and another 25% solidly oppose this pressure; whereas a full 50% of American Jews do not have a solidly held opinion on this issue. This is consistent with the JA 2002 question mentioned just above, which found that 39% of American Jews were 'unsure' about how they felt regarding US government pressure on Israel to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Therefore, as we move from segment 2 to segment 3 and then to segment 4, support for American government pressure on Israel gets weaker and more qualified.

Segment 3 versus segment 4

While just 25% of American Jews solidly supported US government pressure on Israel, a somewhat higher number (36%²²) supported the idea that individual American Jews should voice their opposition to Israeli government policies. The division between segments 3 and 4 is therefore set at 35% to reflect this change in attitude about Jewish Americans speaking out when they disagree with Israeli government policy.

In sum, while segments 2, 3, and 4 all support a Geneva Accord style two-state solution, they differ significantly in the extent to which they are influenced by us-and-them psychology. Segment 4 tends to retain a moderately strong culpability orientation, leading them to respond much more positively to messages that begin by clearly blaming the Palestinians for the conflict before moving on to advocate compromise by Israel. In contrast, segment 2 often sees both sides as equally to blame or even sees Israel as *more* than 50% to blame (although still recognizing shared Palestinian responsibility), but is very often so tired of the 'blame game' that they do not want to hear about who is to blame at all. Because segment 4 (and to some extent segment 3 as well) believes the Palestinians are the source of all the trouble, they do not support any outside pressure on Israel to change its behaviour. This is even true when US influence is applied to both Israeli and Palestinian actions. Segment 2, on the other hand, tends to believe that there is a pressing need to resolve the conflict, and only extensive outside influence can achieve this goal.

Targeting

The next step in developing a communication strategy is to select one or more of these eight opinion segments to target. All else being equal, it is advantageous to target larger segments and/or multiple segments as this gives a larger potential membership base. However, the advantage of targeting one, or just a few, opinion segments is that it is easier to craft powerful and persuasive messages when targeting a more narrowly defined group. Balancing these two principles, we see that the basic goal is to target as many segments as possible but stop short of the point where targeting additional segments would mean diluting one's message until it becomes bland and un-motivating.

In politics, targeting of opinion segments usually follows a two-stage approach. In the first stage, organizations generally target segments which already agree with their positions because these people are 'low-hanging fruit', i.e. easy to recruit. Only after this low-hanging fruit has been plucked will an organization move on to stage 2 where it tries to convert people who do not fully agree with its way of thinking. Brit Tzedek followed this basic two-stage approach, but in practice defining who the people are who 'already agree with us' for stage 1 can be a complex task. Brit Tzedek's basic strategy was to organize the American Jewish grassroots so that they would put political pressure on the American government to increase the prioritization placed on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Increasing the priority that the American government places on Middle East peace would mean many things, but among them it would certainly include increasing both the carrots and sticks the US uses to move all parties in a more conciliatory direction. Influencing 'all parties' would of course include influencing Israel. So this peace advocate strategy broke directly with the previous informal consensus among major pro-Israel organizations to adopt a solidarity stance vis-à-vis the Israeli government, i.e. help the Israeli government resist any outside pressure to

compromise. Who then, from the Brit Tzedek's perspective, were the audience segments which already agreed with it?

As mentioned above, polls of the American Jewish community found 85% support in for a two-state solution²³ and found 75% support for an activist US foreign policy which would 'push both sides towards a peace agreement, even in the face of objections from Israel or the Palestinians'.²⁴ Based on this data, Brit Tzedek could honestly claim that about 75% of the American Jewish community supported its primary objectives. However, only segment 2 strongly agreed with Brit Tzedek on all the details of a final status agreement and also unequivocally agreed with its strategy for reaching that agreement. Therefore, segment 2 was the obvious starting point as the core target audience for Brit Tzedek. But how far should Brit Tzedek try to expand beyond the segment 2? And should it expand towards segment 1, segments 3 + , or both?

One reason for Brit Tzedek's success was the early decision to create a boundary both on the left and on the right of the organization. Palestinian Solidarity Advocates (segment 1) often had a lot of activist zeal, which is a valuable resource. But people in segments 3 + would generally boycott any organization which they associated with Palestinian Solidarity Advocates. Therefore, Brit Tzedek's messages were designed to emphasize our real political differences with segment 1 and thus distinguish us from this group. Predictably, a central element in our political adversaries' strategy was to link us with segment 1 in the public imagination.

Historically, Brit Tzedek had a clear formal strategy of mobilizing and organizing American Jews who 'already agreed with us' rather than converting our political opponents, but never made an organizational decision about the nuances of what this meant. In practice Brit Tzedek attempted to target all Pro-Israel Peace Advocates, and at times segment 5 as well.

Positioning

After a target audience is identified, the next step is to build organizational activities and a core message tailored to that audience. In social marketing, this process is called positioning. I have found the five-box positioning statement to be a particularly useful tool in this process (see Figure 3).

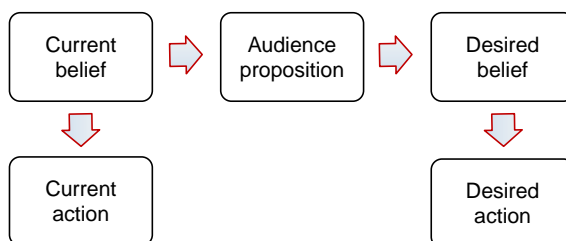


Figure 3. Five-box positioning statement.

The five-box positioning statement begins by summarizing what the target audience currently does (the Current Action) and what we would like the target audience to do in the future (the Desired Action). Next we determine why the target audience is behaving as they are? The answer to this question is summarized in the Current Belief box, which contains the key thoughts and feelings of the target audience which motivate their current action. Having identified the target audience's current state of mind, we next specify the Desired Belief, which is the state of mind that will lead them to take the Desired Action. Finally, we develop the Audience Proposition (aka Consumer Proposition) which is the one best thing to tell that target audience to move them from their Current Belief to the Desired Belief. The Audience Proposition then becomes the core message which is communicated relentlessly through brochures, lectures, e-mails, websites, advertisements, interpersonal conversations, and any other chance we have to communicate with the target audience.

A positioning statement should always be developed with respect to a specific target audience. In the case of the Pro-Israel Peace Advocates, it became clear that segment 2 had a pent-up demand for what Brit Tzedek could offer, and therefore the principal communications challenge was just letting them know that we existed (what social marketers call brand awareness) and generating enough confidence in us to justify their investment of time, energy and money (see Figure 4).

Over time, it also became clear that people in segments 3 and 4 required an additional element to their message, as illustrated in Figure 5.

When two parts of an opinion segment require different positioning statements, it generally means that it was a mistake to consider them part of the same segment to begin with. However, we were fortunate that the message developed in Figure 5 did not conflict in any way with the message in Figure 4, and hence we could continue treating Pro-Israel Peace Advocates as a single opinion segment which greatly simplified our strategies and operations.

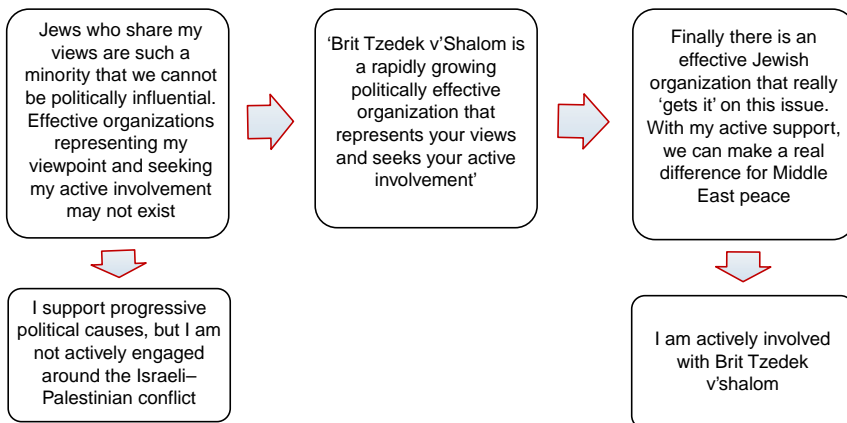


Figure 4. Five-box positioning statement for segment 2.

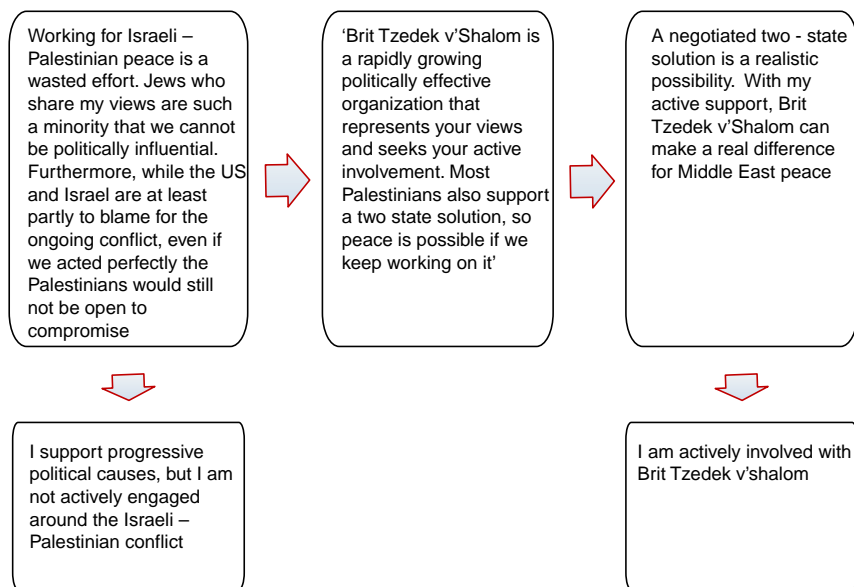


Figure 5. Five-box positioning statement for segments 2 and 3.

Figure 5 represents our core message strategy in a very simplified form as focusing on our effectiveness and creating optimism that peace was possible. Of course, when given the time our speakers would address many other issues, such as the threat that settlement expansion posed to a future peace agreement and why a peace advocate stance is really more 'pro-Israel' than a solidarity stance. In retrospect, the analysis of polling data presented here suggests that for many Jews in segments 3–5, what I will call 'process concerns' about the appropriateness of publicly criticizing Israel and/or advocating an activist US foreign policy, were greater barriers to their involvement with Brit Tzedek than were 'outcome concerns' about what kind of Israeli–Palestinian agreement they would support. Brit Tzedek's communications addressed both process and outcome concerns. But with the 20/20 vision of hindsight, this analysis suggests that a shift in emphasis towards addressing the audience's process concerns might have improved our effectiveness.

Conclusions and implications for the Minds of Peace Experiment

This article has used a case study of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom to illustrate a generalizable strategic planning process for political groups. This article has also presented an analysis of American Jewish political opinion which could inform the strategic planning of other groups working on this issue.

The strategic planning process illustrated here through the Brit Tzedek case study has both notable similarities and striking differences when compared to the

Minds of Peace Experiment. Among the similarities, both Brit Tzedek and Minds of Peace are attempts at grassroots mobilization. In the United States, Minds of Peace attempts to mobilize people in both the Palestinian and Israeli camps, whereas Brit Tzedek worked exclusively in the American Jewish community. However, Brit Tzedek did work cooperatively with Arab and Palestinian organizations such as the American Task Force on Palestine, which played an analogous role within the American Palestinian community to that played by Brit Tzedek within the American Jewish community. Although Brit Tzedek and Minds of Peace each got there by different routes, both organizations seem to have reached a similar conclusion that reducing us-and-them thinking while rekindling optimism about the possibility of peace are crucial steps in mobilizing the public in favour of peace through compromise.

On the other hand, Brit Tzedek faced different political and competitive landscapes than does Minds of Peace today. Brit Tzedek faced little direct competition for the energy of Pro-Israel Peace Advocates. Although other organizations such as Americans for Peace Now, Israel Policy Forum, Meretz, Ameinu, and the Union of Progressive Zionists (a collegiate organization) shared our political agenda; none of these organizations were highly active in most of the local communities we organized. In contrast, while the particular programme that Minds of Peace puts on is unique, in the American Jewish community it competes quite directly for grassroots energy with the combined forces of J Street, Brit Tzedek (which became J Street Local), and the Union of Progressive Zionists (now called J Street U). This much higher level of political organizational development among Pro-Israel Peace Advocates offers tremendous opportunities for Minds of Peace if it can form a collaborative relationship with these organizational structures, but also a much higher level of competition if it cannot.

Finally, my impression of Minds of Peace is that it presents an exciting and engaging opportunity for grassroots involvement. But if the Minds of Peace Experiment has a clearly thought-through strategy along the outlines presented here, or is using some other strategic model, I am not aware of it. Hence this strategic approach is offered to the Minds of Peace Experiment for their consideration.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all my friends from Brit Tzedek who worked with all their hearts, their souls and everything they have. What we built together is one of the proudest accomplishments of my life.

Notes on contributor

Aaron Ahuvia is Professor of Marketing and the University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Business. He is best known for research on the psychology of love in non-interpersonal contexts, such as loved activities and objects, as well as his work on the relationships between income, consumption and happiness.

Notes

1. The term “Social Marketing” is used here to refer to the academic discipline which studies the use of marketing techniques to advance a pro-social agenda. This is not to be confused with a newer use of the term to describe marketing which leverages web 2.0 social networks such as Facebook.
2. After the segments are created based on opinions and attitudes, it is useful to profile the segments and see if they differ from each other demographically, but this is very different from using demographic variables at the outset as the basis for segmentation.
3. An earlier version of this segmentation scheme was presented in Ahuvia, A. C., “Six Degrees of Separation: ‘Pro-Israel Realists’ Versus ‘Worried Jews’” *Israel Horizons* (Summer 2008): 8–10.
4. See note 2.
5. The perceptions of the audience must be respected, even if an expert might believe that the messages do not conflict and are all true at the same time
6. An earlier version of this segmentation scheme was presented in Ahuvia (2008).
7. AJC, The 2002 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and conducted by Market Facts – 1008 Jewish Americans were included in the random telephone sample. The survey’s margin of error is $\pm 3\%$; Ameinu, “The 2005 National Survey of American Jews,” sponsored by the Jewish Agency’s Department for Jewish-Zionist Education, in cooperation with the Florence G. Heller/JCCA Research Center – this mail-back survey sampled 1386 American Jews. The survey’s margin of error is $\pm 3\%$; APN, Americans for Peace Now survey was conducted January 12–15, 2004 by Zogby International – 500 Jewish Americans were included in the random telephone sample. The survey’s margin of error is $\pm 4.5\%$; JA, The 2002 National Survey of American Jews, sponsored by the Jewish Agency’s Department for Jewish-Zionist Education, in cooperation with the Florence G. Heller/JCCA Research Center. This mail-back survey sampled 1386 American Jews – the survey’s margin of error is $\pm 3\%$.
8. Aaron Ahuvia, “The Psychology of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict” (paper presented at Pathways to Peace: Resolving the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict, Central Connecticut State University, March 2008); Stephen Fabick, “Two Psychologically Based Conflict Resolution Programs: Enemy Images and US & THEM”, *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology* 1, no. 2 (2007); Moises Salinas, “Israeli–Palestinian Conflict Resolution: A Model Based on Psychological,” in *Resolving the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict: Perspectives on the Peace Process* (Cambria Press, 2009), 121–30; Vamik Volkan, “Large-Group Identity: ‘Us and Them’ Polarizations in the International Arena,” *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 14, no. 1 (2009): 4.
9. Salinas, “Israeli–Palestinian Conflict Resolution,” 122.
10. Ahuvia, “The Psychology of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict”; Amarina Ariyanto, Matthew Hornsey and Cindy Gallois, “Intergroup Attribution Bias in the Context of Extreme Intergroup Conflict,” *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 12, no. 4 (2009): 293; Salinas, “Israeli–Palestinian Conflict Resolution.”
11. I do not believe this distinction has been previously published, and would like to acknowledge Michael Dover as the person who, to the best of my knowledge, developed these definitions.
12. APN, Americans for Peace Now survey 2004.
13. Aaron Ahuvia, “Six Degrees of Separation: ‘Pro-Israel Peace Advocates’ Versus ‘Israeli Government Solidarity Advocates,’” *Israel Horizons* (Summer 2008): 8–10.
14. Ahuvia 2008.

15. APN, Americans for Peace Now survey 2004.
16. AJC, The 2002 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion.
17. Ameinu, "The 2005 National Survey of American Jews."
18. APN, Americans for Peace Now survey 2004.
19. Being willing to recommend a policy to the Israeli government is a more active form of endorsement than simply being willing to support that policy if it is chosen by the Israeli government.
20. JA, The 2002 National Survey of American Jews.
21. Ameinu, "The 2005 National Survey of American Jews"; AJC, The 2002 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion.
22. AJC, The 2002 Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion.
23. APN, Americans for Peace Now survey 2004.
24. Ameinu, "The 2005 National Survey of American Jews."