

**Re-thinking Ideological Diversity in Group Theory:
Implications of Clinton's Middle East Policy**

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In addition to clarifying points of unity within political groups, group theory must incorporate an analysis of ideological diversity within political groups and policy domains. Group theorists can begin to do so by attending to groups as dynamic players in a developing political process. Assumptions that differing groups will compete and thereby weaken public positioning must also be challenged. This article uses a case study of American pro-Israel politics to explore the expanded theory.

One of the few arenas in which the still relatively new Clinton administration has been considered successful is that of Middle East politics. Contributing to this success has been the administration's ability to incorporate ideological diversity in a new type of domestic representation politics. In order to account for such ideological diversity we, as political scientists, will need to expand group theory so that it will be attentive to the dynamic of unity and difference within political groups. To do so we must also come to understand large-scale interest group politics as a phase of the political process connected to an internal political sub-process of identity and interest development. Toward this end, this article will address the impact of the increasingly public ideological diversity within the American Jewish community on Clinton's Middle East policy.

Issues of Unity and Difference in Group Theory

Since the beginning of contemporary efforts to study political groups there have been scholars who have warned against a tendency to see groups as monolithic. A.F. Bentley was perhaps the first to do so (1908, 213-214). In 1951 David Truman wrote of three dangers in group studies: the implication of a "certain solidity or cohesion," of ascribing "*a priori* interests" to groups, and of emphasizing a particular point in time while neglecting "dynamic changing content" (63-64). Despite such warnings, group scholars have often fallen into the trap of assuming such a unity within groups.

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Over emphasizing points of agreement, Truman himself wrote that it is the "shared attitudes" which actually "constitute the interest" (1951, 33-34). In much of the group scholarship of the 1960s and '70s this tendency not to include diversity within an understanding of unified groups continued (Dahl 1961; Salisbury 1969, 3-4; Olson 1971; Wilson, J.Q. 1973, 119-142). In the more recent studies, groups, communities, and even whole subsections of the population which form groups or which could potentially come to constitute a conscious political force are perceived as having natural and unified interests (for example: Uslander 1986; Hertzke 1988, 137; Herring 1990). In addition, the academic literature has responded to the development of what are commonly called "single issue" groups by assuming that a single issue focus connotes a single ideological perspective--as if, in narrowing the issue of concern, groups have narrowed the diversity of opinion on fine points of content and strategy as well (for example: Smith 1985; Hershey 1986).

As group theorists we tend to miss the politics of interest development: how a group comes to identify, understand and articulate its needs and develops the strategies to have these needs heard and met within a broader political context.¹ Furthermore, because diversity within groups (when the unit is still perceived as a group) receives little scholarly attention, group theory has not adequately attended to an analysis of the process through which differences within groups are addressed in the formation of group identity and the public statement of a group's policy preferences or interest. Traditional group theory offers only that the different sub-groups will compete (Dahl 1956; Schattschneider 1960, 65; Salisbury 1969, 3-4), thereby weakening the public bargaining position of the group as a whole. Thus, early on in the development of group theory, Truman (1951) wrote that groups must affect at least the appearance of unity. We can still find this equation of weakness with internal group diversity assumed in more recent studies as well (Rapoport, et al. 1991; Pinderhughes 1992).

The Pro-Israel Lobby

The pro-Israel lobby in the United States is one of the clearest examples of a political group receiving such treatment. Due to a tendency to see groups as monolithic, the labels "the Jewish lobby" and the "pro-Israel lobby" are often confused. The common conflation of these terms suggests an identification of Jewish politics (broadly defined) with being pro-Israel (specifically). This is the first stage in the reduction of a multi-issue, multi-ideological political force (here, the political activity of the American Jewish community) to a single ideological interest (that of a pro-

Israel stance).² The second stage in the reduction concerns the tendency to see the pro-Israel lobby as representing a particular position, or a set of specific policy preferences, rather than as the forum in and through which the whole group (in this case the American Jewish community) participates in the process of identifying, evaluating and--only then--presenting its perspective and stating its needs publicly within the broader context of American politics. From the empirical reality of a highly political community active in multiple issue domains, we are left with a singularly understood pro-Israel lobby. The concept of even a pro-Israel "politics" is basically unknown because a pro-Israel position is understood monolithically, leaving nothing dynamic to have a "politics" of.

This assumption of the singularity of the pro-Israel lobby pervades both academic and popular perceptions of Jewish politics in the United States. The academic literature often refers to the Jewish or pro-Israel lobby in such reductionist terms (Wilson, G. K. 1981, 142; Greenwald 1977, 106-109; Uslaner 1986; Hertzke 1988, 39-40; Organski 1990). Moreover, although political candidates and governments in this country have long been said to be quite sensitive to what are called "Jewish interests," such interests are consistently assumed to be primarily pro-Israel. This pro-Israel interest is then narrowly understood as supportive of Israeli government policies and has been seen in an either/or dichotomized opposition to Arab (generally) and Palestinian (particularly) perspectives.

Given this narrow understanding of Jewish interests, the American Jewish community has long been heralded for marshalling its resources so effectively that it is often seen as among the most powerful interest groups in the United States; the particular representative organization usually identified with this political power is the lobby group AIPAC (Uslaner 1986, 246).³ As an American interest group, AIPAC's aim has been to foster "the special relationship between the United States and Israel." AIPAC has understood its ideological mandate--as an American pro-Israel interest group--to reflect the concerns of the Israeli government, regardless of the ideology of the party in power. Despite the presence of many individual doves working in the offices of AIPAC (even in the most high ranking positions), AIPAC policy had long been hawkish, as the Israeli government was led by the ideologically hawkish Likud Party since 1977. It is the tendency to see groups monolithically that has led to an over-focusing on a single organization, AIPAC, to represent--in both popular

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imagination and academic scholarship--the rather diverse political reality of the American Jewish community as a whole.

Difference, Competition and Weakness

Despite the fact that ideological diversity on this issue has always existed with the American Jewish community,⁴ traditional group theory usually ignored the reality of such diversity within this interest sector. When difference was acknowledged, scholars tended to interpret such as a sign of weakness.⁵ Presuming that differing subgroups will necessarily compete (Olson 1971, 8), group theory assumes that the force of a policy stand will be diluted when cracks are shown in a united front presented in a larger competitive political system. Because the suppression of difference characterizes the primary theoretical paradigm for interest politics in the U.S., actual groups feel tremendously pressured in practical politics to present this unified front and to stifle the existing diversity within their organizations and the larger communities which they claim to represent.⁶

Though American Jewish politics has often seemingly acquiesced to such demands in the past,⁷ there has been a fundamental shift recently in the pro-Israel politics of the American Jewish community. Succumbing less to the pressure to present a monolithic front, the American Jewish community is increasingly open to more serious discussion of the issues, bringing out the diversity of opinion that has been submerged under the more public surface. In national-level political discussions, the larger and more varied world of American Jewish communal politics as a whole was traditionally reduced to interest negotiations between American politicians and AIPAC officials. However, attention to internal sub-communal politics illuminates both the existence and importance of other American Jewish pro-Israel groups active on the national political level. This work will attend to the most active and well received group presenting an alternative ideological perspective to the AIPAC camp: Americans for Peace Now (APN).

APN formed in the early 1980s and has been gaining exposure and prestige over the last decade or so of intense Jewish communal pro-Israel politics. Groups such as APN⁸ have both benefitted from the communal effort to challenge the assumption that diversity connotes weakness as well as being promoters of such a challenge themselves. As a result APN is now participating at the top levels of communal pro-Israel politics. (APN also recently gained acceptance to the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations.) In the context of this paper, the development of APN as a political force is significant because, in contrast to AIPAC, it is identified with the Israeli doves and supports a more critical role for the American

Jewish community and the U. S. government in shaping the Middle East peace process.

Thus, the ideologies and political strategies of these two organizations, AIPAC and APN, diverge enormously. Although both groups are domestic American Jewish pro-Israel groups, their differences reflect the ideological diversity within their single community of origin. With the rise of groups such as APN as serious political players in the domestic interest group scene, group theory, to be at all relevant to actual group politics must be able to account for such ideological diversity. Group theory must be able to understand groups' interests in their multiplicity, if even embodying seemingly contradictory aspects. Such theory will also have to assess critically the possible contributions--as well as detractions--extant diversity may make to group strength. For example, the following discussion will demonstrate that it will still be proper to study the "pro-Israel lobby", but when doing so scholars will be challenged to take into account the reality and effect of ideologically diverse organizations comprising such an interest lobby.

The Clinton Administration and the New Face of Pro-Israel Politics

With respect to domestic interest politics, it is true that the Clinton administration retains, as did prior Republican administrations, a public relations stance of close ties to the American Jewish community. There are a number of prominent American Jews in the new administration and the public statement of its "special relationship" to Israel, connoting its pro-Israel stance in AIPAC-language, remains the official position of the government. However, there is a fundamental difference between this administration and previous ones. A U.S. pro-Jewish and pro-Israel stance remains, but what this *means* is fundamentally altered in the Clinton administration.

The Clinton administration has taken note of the shift in internal group politics and begun to work with it.⁹ The pro-Israel representatives in the Clinton administration now reflect more of the Jewish community's diversity. A number of prominent American Jews with positions in the current administration and the Democratic Party have ties to APN.¹⁰ This means that, although these people are still pro-Israel, their perspectives reflect a different ideological approach from that which AIPAC consistently has put forward.

We find, then, that within the current administration, the differing ideological perspectives of a single community are represented. We must now look at the relationship between these differing sub-groups and ask:

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must they compete and does their mutual existence weaken the pro Israel lobby? In attempting to answer these questions brief attention to the development of the 1992 Democratic Party Platform's Middle East plank will prove illuminating. In contrast to the assumptions made in group theory, the following discussion will demonstrate that differing sub-groups do not necessarily have to compete for dominance and that the political struggle between them need not weaken their power position in pressure politics. In fact, the following is an example of cautious cooperation through which the American Jewish community as a whole became better represented in national politics.

The Politics of the Middle East Plank of the 1992 Democratic Party Platform

In an unprecedented step, AIPAC and APN, groups with seriously divergent ideological perspectives, worked together on drafting language to present to the Platform Committee of the Democratic Party¹¹ on behalf of the Jewish community in the United States.¹² This was the first time that a group solidly identified with the peace camp was a part of the Platform negotiations and was actually an equal partner with AIPAC in proposing the Platform language. Following many years of activity on the part of APN and ideologically similar groups within the American Jewish community, as well as responding to new realities of shifting global politics, leaders of APN and AIPAC met in advance to negotiate the language that each felt could sufficiently represent their differing pro-Israel aspirations. This language eventually was proposed to the Democratic Party.

At first glance the Middle East plank of the 1992 Platform may not sound too different from previous platforms in which only AIPAC was consulted. For example, the 1992 Democratic Party Platform supports the Middle East peace process based on the Camp David accords, reiterates all the traditional AIPAC language of the "special relationship between the United States and Israel," and affirms Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel and as an undivided city. However, the development of such language was far from an example of the process of politics as usual. Despite the inclusion of much longstanding AIPAC code language, a closer analysis will demonstrate the significance of APN's participation in the Platform negotiation process. APN's presence specifically affected three issue areas of relevance to the American Jewish community and on which the Democratic Party came to make its views known: the fate of Jerusalem, the nature of the U.S. commitment to the current Middle East peace process, and the U.S. loan guarantees to Israel.

Jerusalem:

A major aspect of the Middle East plank that reflects the struggle for a more balanced representation between the two ideological perspectives held within the pro-Israel lobby concerns the fate of Jerusalem. One of AIPAC's primary goals for this Platform was to get "Jerusalem back in", after its absence from the 1988 Democratic Platform. The dovish pro-Israel position on the fate of Jerusalem, represented here by APN, differs from the hawkish view, represented until recently by AIPAC. Given this situation, APN's presence was essential to the outcome. The final 1992 Platform statement merely reiterated U.S. government policy on the issue since 1967 and APN was able to keep out a statement about moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. It is important to note that moving the U.S. Embassy has been the concrete political commitment that AIPAC demands in its discussions of the fate of Jerusalem. As Clinton and Gore personally favored moving the Embassy, keeping the issue out of the Platform so that it could be introduced later "when it would not detract from the peace process" was the result of AIPAC's coming to terms with another pro-Israel vision from within the American Jewish community.

The Peace Process:

APN's primary goal for this Platform was to secure a commitment to the peace process. This was not the original intent of AIPAC. In fact, when AIPAC took on former President George Bush over the issue of American loan guarantees to Israel and lost, the American Jewish community found itself at a crossroads. The anti-Semitic tone of the loan guarantee battle set many Jews on edge and AIPAC was able to use the fear generated to paint a picture of the President as the ultimate enemy of the Jewish people. Despite the fact that polls show a majority of American Jews favoring a curb on settlements and an active role for the American government toward that end, there were forces in AIPAC hoping instead to use the loan guarantee fiasco to push the agenda further to the right. Right wing Jewish players inside the Democratic Party were hoping to influence the Clinton campaign to demonstrate his difference from President Bush by staking out a position less committed to the current peace process.

In this political environment, the fact that the opening line of the Middle East section reads, "support for the peace process now underway in the Middle East, rooted in the tradition of the Camp David accords...with no imposed solutions" is significant. The Democratic Party chose to adopt this position of commitment to the peace process because of the presence of APN in the Platform negotiations. APN was able to hold back right-wing

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pressure from within the American Jewish community intent on undoing the steps already achieved in the peace process. Moreover, it was able not only to elicit a firm commitment to continuing the talks, but to continuing them in the spirit envisioned by those differing voices now being heard in the community which have asserted that the ends of the talks can only be determined by the parties themselves through political negotiations.

U.S. Loan Guarantees to Israel:

Another example of the impact of interest groups working with diversity, in this case AIPAC's including a group such as APN in its political work, concerns the Platform's statement on the issue of U.S. loan guarantees to Israel. The Shamir government in Israel had requested \$10 billion in guarantees for loans to help aid the resettlement of Soviet immigrants. AIPAC lobbied in favor of the guarantees and supported the Likud position opposing the linkage of the guarantees to its future policies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. APN, which disagreed with AIPAC's position on this issue, was able to keep the issue of the loan guarantees out of the Platform altogether. The absence of a clear position statement here is significant because the Democrats were indicating that they could attempt to position themselves against the Republicans by denying any association between the loan guarantees and the settlements, effectively upholding the Likud/AIPAC position.

Diversity for a Strategy of Strength:

The language officially proposed to the Democratic Party by the organizational representatives in the American Jewish community reflected an internal struggle to acknowledge and work with multiple, ideologically diverse sub-groups comprising a larger community-based pressure group. In contrast to previous attempts to silence difference (usually equated with weakness), affirming and incorporating diversity was, in this case, chosen as a strategy of strength. AIPAC's position in support of the Israeli Likud policy always contradicted American Jewish popular opinion. Public opinion polls show that the American Jewish community overwhelmingly supports the Israeli Labor Party and the ideology it represents (Cohen 1983, 1984, 1989, 1990). Particularly since the late 1970s, AIPAC's achievements had to be carefully constructed in negation of this fact. Thus, despite the perceived success of AIPAC as a lobby group, American Jewish pro-Israel interests were not being represented. The inclusion of APN, an ideologically different group, in 1992 changed this pattern.

On May 18, 1992, Linda Kamm, a Washington, D.C. attorney who served as General Counsel to the Department of Transportation in the

Carter Administration, testified before the Democratic National Platform Committee in her capacity as a member of the Board of Directors of APN and as the co-chair of the Center for Israeli Peace and Security, APN's office in Washington, D.C. To bolster support for the joint APN-AIPAC proposal, Kamm spoke of the recent surveys of American Jewry which "found that a majority of American Jewish leaders favor active U.S. involvement in the peace process and territorial compromise between Israel and its Arab neighbors," and an overwhelming majority of eighty-eight percent of grassroots American Jews agreed that "Israel should offer the Arabs territorial compromise in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in return for credible guarantees of peace."¹³ Here, in coalition, these views were made public, thereby exposing a diversity in opinion as to what constitutes a pro-Israel position. Far from being a disorganized portrayal of weakness, this strategy of exposing and working with diversity served to represent the pro-Israel position of the American Jewish community better than at any time previously.

Toward an Expanded Theory of Political Groups:

Traditional group theory has helped us to see the role of groups in the political arena, name their interests and note their essential importance to the political process. Identifying points of ideological convergence has enabled group theorists to analyze the interplay of interests in politics. In the process, however, we have often lost sight of other important aspects of the reality of political groups. Group theory must now be expanded in order to incorporate these other aspects into a more comprehensive theory. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to present a completely new theory, the above discussion has suggested certain important ideas for consideration in the development of a new framework for theories of political groups.

Group theory must of course acknowledge and clarify the points of unity within political groups, but it must also be attentive to diversity. One way to ensure such attention is to incorporate an understanding of groups not as static but as dynamic players in a developing political process. In addition, a new framework for theories of political groups that acknowledges difference within groups (understood dynamically) will also need to examine, more critically, whether such difference results in adversarial relations among camps thereby weakening the group's public position in the political arena.

With reference to the American Jewish community we can now be more specific. Scholars must be careful not to conflate the terms Jewish and

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pro-Israel, as the political activity of the American Jewish community extends far beyond issues directly related to Israel. Concerning the pro-Israel lobby, despite the pressure to appear monolithic, there have always been many ideologically diverse groups active within this policy domain. The above discussion shows a community struggling with its longstanding differences so that it can present coherent demands in the public arena while respecting the variety existing within its ranks.

The above discussion of the pro-Israel politics involved in the development of the 1992 Democratic Party Platform does not suggest that the full spectrum of American Jewish opinion with respect to Israel was represented or that all American Jewish political groups active on this issue were satisfied with the compromises reached between APN and AIPAC. The diversity reflected in the 1992 Platform suggests instead that such diversity within an interest sector exists, that the differing sub-groups may in fact cooperate (rather than compete) and this actually strengthened (rather than weakened) this interest sector in American representation politics. Finally, the above discussion is meant to suggest that group theory will have to incorporate the issue and the implications of ideological difference if it hopes to make sense of the activity in this particular issue area that we are likely to continue to see on the part of the Clinton administration.

Endnotes

1. Others have criticized group studies for being ahistorical (for example: Balbus 1971, 155-156; Hinckley 1978).
2. Despite the importance of Israel to the American Jewish community, issues concerning that country are only part of a broader agenda of organized Jewish political groups in the United States. Domestic Jewish groups are highly active, for example, on church-state and first amendment topics, abortion, race relations, affirmative action, refugee and immigration issues as well global war and peace concerns. Communal organizations active on these political issues include the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Anti-Defamation League, National Community Relations Council, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and the National Council of Jewish Women.
3. In addition to AIPAC (the American-Israel Affairs Committee), there are also the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations and approximately seventy-five "pro-Israel" political action committees. These groups have generally had the same ideological understanding of what constitutes a pro-Israel stance as did AIPAC.
4. There have always been divergent ideological strands with respect to Israeli politics within the American Jewish community. Such differences: 1) reflected the array of political parties active in Israel, or 2) were stimulated within the context of American pro-Israel, rather than Zionist, sentiment. For example, during most of this century the Israeli Labor (Ma'arach) and Socialist (MAPAM) parties have had arms active within the American Jewish community; the right wing Likud party began organizing later in the 1970s. Breira, a dovish American-based pro-Israel group, was active in the 1970s. During its brief life-span Breira managed to testify before Congress and be covered in the national press (New York Times 5/11/76 and 12/30/76; New York Post 4/28/76).
5. With reference specifically to the Jewish lobby, see for example, Zeigler and Peak (1972, 271-274). An exception to this may be found in the treatment of diversity within the Jewish lobby found in The Washington Lobby (1987, 80-84).

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6. In 1977 the annual report of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations stated that public dissent gives "aid and comfort to the enemy" and weakens Jewish unity. Cohen's 1989 survey of American Jewish leaders showed the continued prevalence of the idea that "criticism [of Israel] detracts from the image of world Jewish unity that, they claim, is so important for influencing the American government" (33).

7. See for example Findley's story (1985).

8. Examples of other ideologically similar American Jewish groups active in Washington, DC on this issue include Project Nishma, the Religious Action Center of the Reform Movement and the Jewish Peace Lobby (recently most active in the State Department).

9. Previous administrations have been identified as directly pressuring American Jewish political organizations to speak "with one voice" (Tivnan 1987, 40).

10. Some prominent examples are Samuel Berger, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Eli Segal, Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of National Service; Sarah Ehrman, Senior Policy Advisor on the Democratic National Committee; Peter Edelman, Policy Counselor in the Department of Health and Human Services.

11. These groups were also active on the Republican Party Platform, though a discussion of this activity is beyond the scope of the present article.

12. Information for this section was compiled from confidential interviews with senior AIPAC, APN, and Democratic Party officials throughout the summer and fall of 1992. Earlier thoughts on the subject were offered by the author in Israel Horizons, V40 N4 1993.

13. From Kamm's testimony before the Democratic National Platform Committee, Cleveland, OH, May 18, 1992. The data she cites are from polls sponsored by the Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles and funded by Project Nishma (1991), and from the 1990 Jewish Public Opinion Survey sponsored by three institutes of Brandeis University.

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