

THE SOFT SELL: UNDERSTANDING THE SHARED VALUES INITIATIVE
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to faithful servants of the U.S. Department of State for their often-thankless and unrecognized work in protecting and promoting the ideals of our nation, to the journalists who relentlessly pursue truth in a time where the very concept of such is attacked and eroded by those in power, and to the communicators who move nations and their peoples. Special thanks to my partner, Jordan, and pseudo-kid Sophie for supporting my work and making the sacrifices along with me to continue to pursue my dreams, and my whims. Finally, thank you to my parents, always to my parents, who inspire and drive me every day, each in their own unique way.

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ABSTRACT

This research provides an analysis of the Shared Values Initiative (SVI) through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in order to both better understand the program and to explore how an academic advertising theory can help shape foreign policy programs. This research concludes that while neither TPB nor any other advertising theory was explicitly used in the inception, development, and implementation of the SVI, advertising approaches can certainly be seen in the final texts of the initiative. This research used a dual-method qualitative case study approach through semi-structured interviews and rhetorical analysis to better understand the key components of the SVI – five “mini-documentaries” that attempted to persuade Muslims in the Middle East of the mutual supportability of U.S. culture and the Islamic way of life. These videos focused on shifting the social norms and overall belief of this claim in order to ultimately produce favorable intentions and outcomes of the viewers.

Introduction

Since the 1950s advertising has revolutionized the U.S. economy, culture, and society at large. Substantial research exists on both how and why advertising works, with an overwhelming focus on its role in the private, specifically commercial sector. This research into the utility and nuances of advertising theory spans decades with one theory of advertising, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), dating back to the late nineteenth century. In part due to the generations of research conducted, the results of these studies are often conflicting. Different case studies often find theories still relevant while others support the argument for refinement or complete replacement. Despite conflicting results, a number of these studies and their findings can be used to inform other approaches to communication outside the advertising field. Foreign relations policies in the United States, for example, often rely on effective communication strategy and plans to achieve desirable outcomes. In this specific application of advertising theories to foreign affairs, there is a gap in research and practice. Researchers have yet to delve into the question of the usefulness of advertising theories in shaping communications plans as part of an overall foreign policy. Practitioners, likewise, have seemingly ignored the established principles of advertising theories when developing foreign policy programs.

More specifically, the principles of the TPB, among other advertising theories, can be useful to inform communication components of foreign policy strategies. However, academics have yet to examine their utility and applicability while practitioners have yet to incorporate and test the principles of these theories in foreign policy programs and initiatives.

The purpose of this research is to examine to what extent a single advertising theory, the TPB, shaped the development and implementation of the Shared Values Initiative (SVI) in the early 2000s, and to better understand how this theory can help scholars understand and evaluate the initiative.

The SVI, developed and implemented during the first George W. Bush administration, was part of the United States' comprehensive strategy to counter terrorism in Arab-Muslim communities. The program was led by Charlotte Beers, an advertising executive who undoubtedly drew from her practical advertising knowledge to develop the content and dissemination plan. This research examines whether academic theory also influenced the conceptualization and execution of the initiative, and whether using TPB as a framework is useful in understanding the program's development, implementation, and results.

This research focuses on this particular case for a number of reasons. First, it is an example of a contemporary foreign policy program, meaning access to its creators was more likely than those of a historical case. Likewise, the media associated with the campaign is readily available for review and inclusion in this analysis, along with the press releases and official statements regarding the program. In short, access to the materials and individuals needed for a comprehensive and rigorous analysis is wide. Second, this initiative was solely reliant on communication. It was designed to persuade its viewers, change perceptions of life as a Muslim in the United States, and subsequently affect preferences and behavior. A program centered on effective communication and developed by experts in that field is one example of an initiative that could have been best informed by TPB. While the scope of this work is narrow, it can contribute to a

larger body of research that could arguably improve aspects of U.S. foreign policy by introducing interdisciplinary approaches. Understanding how those approaches could improve or refine a communication dominant strategy is a clear and useful starting point. Third, this initiative was led by an advertising executive, precisely *because* she was an expert in advertising. Charlotte Beers was selected to lead this team as a result of her ability to sell commercial products and thus ideas. This is a strong indication that those in the Bush administration understood the usefulness of integrating advertising approaches into foreign policy programs. It is also a strong indicator that advertising theory affected the program's content and approach, either directly or indirectly.

This research analyzed this case to understand if the tenants of TPB were applied to the development of the SVI, and if so to what degree. Since no credible evidence was found that TPB directly and consciously affected the implementation of the program, this research analyzed the utility of using TPB as a framework to better understand and evaluate the design of SVI as well as provide recommendations on how the use of TPB could have changed or improved the program. This research specifically looks at TPB theory (and sub-theories) because it remains one the longest-standing theories in advertising. Additionally, TPB has a number of "spinoff" or more narrow theories which might provide more specificity for follow-on research.

Research Question

Advertising works. There is substantial debate as to the degree to which it works or why it works, but there is general consensus that it does work. Many of the theories that drive effective and efficient advertising campaigns could also be used in other fields.

Foreign relations policies in the United States, for example, often rely on effective communication strategies and plans to achieve desirable outcomes. The principles of the TPB, among other advertising theories, can be useful in informing communication components of foreign policy strategies. In this specific application of advertising theories to foreign affairs, there is a gap between research and practice. Analyzing the SVI, however, may provide insight into how this interdisciplinary hybrid of theory and practice may work. Understanding how it has worked in a singular case can better inform the discussion of how such an approach could work in multiple programs. Therefore, this thesis will seek to answer the question: “Was the development of the Shared Values Initiative informed by the Theory of Planned Behavior? If not, can the theory be used to analyze and understand the initiative?”

Previous research has examined the use of soft power approaches to counterterrorism strategy in the United States from 2000-2016, during which the SVI emerged as a clear attempt to use soft power to combat violent extremism. Hard power is defined as power that is generated from the use of rewards, punishments, or the threat/promise of either. Soft power, first coined by Joseph Nye in the early 1990s, is the use of appeal and persuasion, or policies that are neither carrots nor sticks. Soft power, therefore, is heavily dependent on communication and image, two concepts studied intimately in any strategic communications department or company.

One soft power campaign utilized early in President Bush’s “War on Terror” was the SVI led by Charlotte Beers, an advertising executive hired by the State Department. The SVI sought to provide a counter-narrative to dispel the Al Qaeda extremist propaganda attempting to convince Muslims that Islam and the American way of life

were incompatible. Beers used her advertising knowledge to develop and implement a comprehensive campaign to show the opposite to be true – that American and Muslim values were mutually supporting. Unfortunately, the campaign was cancelled shortly after it was launched. As part of a larger shift from soft power to hard power approaches to counterterrorism, the program was defunded and largely forgotten. Arguably, this degraded the effectiveness of the United States’ counterterrorism strategy (Seymour, 2018, 266).

Smart U.S. foreign policy is critically important to all U.S. residents, and arguably to those outside national borders as well. Foreign policy, done right, decreases monetary and human costs while increasing security and stabilization. The development and implementation of smart policy must draw from academia and practitioners representing a multitude of backgrounds, including journalism and advertising. The gap between research/theory and practices is wide, and even more so between disciplines. This research will attempt to close both gaps by looking at the TPB and how it can better inform soft power campaigns in foreign policy.

This research could be applied to further the interdisciplinary collaboration between communication scholars and foreign policy wonks, opening up a new space in which journalists and communications experts can apply their hard-won knowledge and experience to help create a more secure and peaceful world. It can also serve as a model to test theories of communication, specifically advertising, in new spaces, providing an opportunity for revision, affirmation, and refinement.

Using a modified case study method, this research will seek to determine how, if at all, advertising theory affected the development and implementation of the SVI. This

study incorporated both semi-structured interviews with individuals who have studied the campaign, as well as a review of the public documents released around and through the program. Interviews were conducted to better understand if advertising theory or theoretical framework affected the program's development directly from those charged with that work. This research also used rhetorical analysis through a review of the media developed by the program to include the five-part video series, and accompanying print materials to better understand how the tenets of advertising theory were applied, if at all. More details about this approach will be discussed in the methodology portion of this proposal.

Survey of the Literature

This review is organized by theme – overview, TPB, and finally the application of TPB. The articles reviewed and summarized in each covered decades of research. While a number of the articles could be considered aged, they are included in this review to provide a historical account of the theories over time, as well as highlight the durability of the TPB models.

Overview

A number of authors chose to provide overviews of advertising theories, focusing on how specific theories have evolved or been replaced over time. Ambler and Vratsa's (1996) for example seek to highlight the history and the evolution of advertising theory, to provide a qualitative analysis of what academics have found, how it can be applied to advertisers, and where the research should go from here. Their article outlines the path

from black box to cognitive to persuasive, and finally to an integrative model approach to how/why advertising works on consumer behavior. Ambler and Vratsa's (1996) found that advertising does not need all the components set forth in various models to be effective, the hierarchy models are largely myths, and the effects of advertising as a whole are larger than the sum of its parts. Vratsa's and Ambler (1999) return to the question of how advertising works three years later when they present an analysis of 250 articles and studies about how advertising works with a presentation of popular models, an organization based on types of models, and recommendations for future research. The researchers found among all the categories of advertising theories (aside from the non-hierarchical theories) two main problems. First, the hierarchy cannot be empirically tested. Second, all the theories fail to factor in customer experience. The authors, therefore, propose that future models be constructed factoring in experience, affect, and cognition of a consumer.

Prior research such as that presented by Vaughn (1980) also attempts to contribute not to the question of if advertising works, but how and why. This piece provides a brief history of consumer models and recent developments in research and then presents an FCB (the author's advertising agency) model for advertising. The model is a quadrant of high/low involvement and think/feel based decisions. Each quadrant requires a different arrangement of the "learn-feel-do" sequence. as well as examples of purchase and consumer types in each quadrant.

Some work has been done examining the gaps in the research of advertising theory. Mortimer (2002) looks at the gaps in the bodies of research of advertising in the goods sector and the service sector. The author argues that there is an overall lack of

commonality in the conclusions reached in each body. Moreover, researchers in the service advertising camp have failed to examine the applicability of theories proposed in the goods advertising camp. The author argues that going forward, researchers investigating the theories and concepts of advertising for services would benefit from cross-pollinating, or borrowing from theories for advertising goods. Doing so, the researcher suggests, would give the service advertising camp more structure and rigidity that it is currently (2002) lacking. While Mortimer (2002) focused his research into gaps on the academic side, Nilsa and Reid (2009) looked at the gap between academics and practitioners in advertising. The work looks at a selection of common advertising theories used by advertising agencies in the field. Partially contributing to the academic-practitioner gap is the autonomy of practitioner knowledge, that is, a body of knowledge has been developed and evolved amongst practitioners independently of the body of research in academia. Two main theories among practitioners introduced in this piece are the “break through and engage,” and “mutation of effects,” both of which the researchers of this piece argue should be investigated by academics in order to benefit both academics and practitioners.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned behavior was first proposed as a psychological theory by Icek Ajzen in 1991 as an extension of the theory of reasoned action, also first codified by Azjen along with a colleague in 1975. “At the most basic level of explanation, the theory postulates that behavior is a function of salient information, or beliefs, relevant to the behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 189).” As depicted in simplest forms in Figure 1, the theory is comprised of five distinction components which help explain why an actor engages in a

particular behavior: attitude toward behavior, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, intention, and behavior. The first three components interact to produce an intention which in turn produces a behavior and are considered to be salient beliefs about a particular behavior. Alternatively, if the belief of perceived control is strong enough, this alone can produce an intended behavioral result.

An actor's attitude toward a behavior is the first determinant of intention and "refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991, 188)." The second determinant refers to the perceived social pressure or acceptance of a particular behavior and is designated as the subjective norm. The third determinant, perceived behavioral control, refers to the anticipated ease or difficulty in one's ability to perform a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 189). "As a general rule, the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm with respect to a behavior, and the greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger should be an individual's intention to perform the behavior under consideration. The relative importance of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in the prediction of intention is expected to vary across behaviors and situations. (Ajzen, 1991, 188)."

To understand how attitudes are formed, reformed, and affirmed, most psychologists adopt a cognitive or information-processing approach, that is to say that "attitudes develop reasonable from beliefs people hold about the object of the attitude (Ajzen, 1991)."

When describing intention, Ajzen argues that "Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior; they are indications of how hard

people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance. (Ajzen, 1990).” Ajzen makes clear in his presentation, however, that intention “can find expression in behavior only if the behavior in question is under volitional control (Ajzen, 1990,181).” A behavior is under volitional control if the actor has the capability and opportunity to conduct such behavior at will.

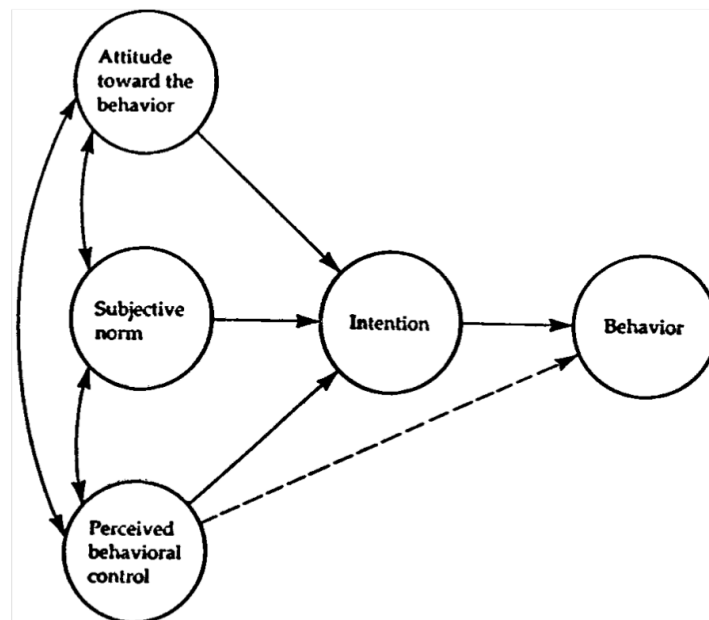


Figure 1: Ajzen's TPB Model

This distinction of capability and intent, and the critical need for both to produce a behavior, is mirrored in international studies literature on threat analysis. First presented as a mathematical formula in 1958 by David Singer, threat-perception was estimated to equal estimated-threat + estimated-intent (Singer, 1958). This calculation has widely been accepted by the intelligence community, and is used by analysts to both understand and

quantify security threats. It is also used to theorize in a number of other psychological fields. Ultimately TPB attempts to not only predict human behavior but to explain it, to break human behavior into distinction components. Logic follows that if the theory holds true and accomplishes its intended goal, that affecting one or more of the components presented in the theory to an adequate degree can produced a desired behavioral outcome.

While TPB is a cornerstone in the advertising research body, some researchers argue its limitations. Heath (1999) challenges the assumptions of TPB by looking at the theories and notions that purchasing behavior is a result of rational decisions about brand imaging and argues that instead, purchasing decisions are made as a result of low-involvement exposure to a brand image and the sensory associations made as a result. Essentially this author argues that brands have sensory associations, and a great deal of consumer purchases are made as a result of those sensory associations and the feelings a consumer has about that brand.

Applications of TPB

Many other researchers have used the TPB as framework for their research into other areas. Incisor (2014) used TPB when he looked at advertising as a subject of both the communication and marketing field. He outlines the Vratsa and Ambler's model of advertising's effect on consumer behavior factoring both the consumer and filters. He also summarized theories that address the emotional component of consumer behavior as well as persuasive hierarchy theory, which tells advertisers that they should aim to produce a hierarchy of effects in a consumer culminating in a consumer purchase. Likewise, Ayer and Villa-Boas (2005) used the principles of TBS to recommend

approaches to segmenting. Their piece examines how advertising firms choose to target segments of the population, specifically how they target segments that are more likely to comparison shop versus how media targets segments with stronger preferences for their brand. The study concludes that companies should allocate more of their advertising budget to target segments of consumers who already have a preference for their particular brand. Not only does this yield more consumer sales, but also helps eliminate wasted advertising; that is, advertising that never had a chance to yield a purchase or desired behavior.

Other researchers such as Al-Ekam, Mat, Salleh, Baharom, Teh, Noh, & Hussain (2012) use the TPB to design and conduct research in understanding purchasing behavior in certain situations. Their study attempts to solve some problems with previous models of predicting purchases of a local market (some studies use 10 factors, others use four factors, and most studies are done outside of Yemen). This study seeks to understand four factors in predicting the actual purchase of local products in Yemen: trust, family, advertising, and purchase intention. This study seeks to contribute to the broader literature into the TPB. The study seeks to achieve two objectives: first, determine the influence of trust, family, and advertising on purchase intention, and second, determine the influence of trust, family, advertising, and purchase intention on actual purchase behavior. The study finds that trust, family, and purchase intention most directly affect actual purchase while trust, family, and advertising directly affect purchase intention when it comes to local brands.

Two other studies look at the interaction variable in understanding what prompts individuals to adopt a certain behavior. Namkoong, Nah, Record, & Van Stee (2017)

conducted a study seeking to understand how interaction can increase the effect of a media campaign to change behaviors, specifically in getting people to stop smoking. The study divided 201 participants into two groups. The control group was shown an anti-smoking media campaign. The experimental groups were shown the same campaign but were also allowed to interact with each other and contribute their own ideas for the campaign, as well as potential communication channels. The study found that interaction has a major impact in shaping behavior. The findings of this study could be applied to the use of various social media platforms in campaigns seeking to shape behavior. In a similar study evaluating the effectiveness of anti-smoking campaigns, Record et al (2017) sought to better understand the effectiveness of a print campaign to stop smoking on a college campus. The campaign, "Let's Clear the Air," was designed using the TPB and sought to persuade students to comply with the smoking ban on campus. The study looked at the number of cigarettes smoked on campus pre-intervention, during intervention, and post-intervention. The study largely found that the campaign was effective and therefore reinforces the validity of the TPB and its applicability to non-traditional advertising campaigns.

Yang and Wang (2015) also designed a study into social sharing using the TPB along with two other theories. Their study examined the behaviors of 319 college students and 370 general consumers in the U.S. to explore the attitudes, intent, and behavior of online users when it comes to sharing videos on social media. The study found that perceived pleasure and cost had direct impacts on online video sharing behavior. As most previous studies looked at the content of online videos, Yang and Wang attempt to combine the TPB, the Technology Acceptance Model, and Palka,

Pousttchi, and Wiedemann's (2009) viral marketing model to better understand the factors on the users' side that influence video sharing.

There is a wealth of research, and subsequent theories, available for policymakers to use when developing communication plans to support achieving strategic foreign objectives. This literature review looks at works that can better inform both research and practice in this area. The first theme encompasses research useful to better understand the evolution of select advertising theories as well as the leading theories available. The second section presents research using the TPB, a largely accepted theory advertising. These findings are valuable to understand how TPB could be used to design studies into the effectiveness of various communication strategies implemented as part of an overall foreign policy strategy.

Understanding the TPB, specifically how it has been tested and incorporated, informs the discussion on its potential applicability to U.S. foreign policy. Previous studies designed within the framework of theories such as TPB can serve as models for studies into the effectiveness of international political communications developed as part of a larger foreign policy approach or strategy. Follow-on research into the utility or effectiveness of these strategies in policy design is critical to ensure that U.S. actions in the international space are informed by the best scientific and academic theory available. That research should use qualitative research methods, specifically case studies, looking into foreign policies that have been informed by advertising theory, such as the SVI, as well as cases which may have benefitted from applying the concepts of advertising theory, as determined through research, personal interviews and in-depth analysis. For this particular analysis, this review of the literature has helped frame the methodology,

inspire the formation of the research questions, and provide context into how the TPB has been studied outside of the advertising space.

Methodology

This research uses a case study approach, using the SVI as the single case study. More specifically, it takes a dual-method qualitative approach to discussing and ultimately answering the research questions. As a result of the nature of this research question, two qualitative techniques were used while quantitative methods were deemed inappropriate – interviews with experts on the SVI and a rhetorical analysis of the five videos developed as the centerpieces of the program. The first approach consists of semi-structured interviews with two journalists and scholars intimate with the program to complement an in-depth review of existing literature. These interviews were primarily focused on understanding how TPB affected Beers’ development, pitch, and implementation of the program. They also provided depth and insight into the background of the program, Undersecretary Beers’ approach to international diplomatic communication in general, and the SVI specifically. The questions were designed to better understand where, looking back, Beers might make changes based on her knowledge of advertising theory. This research approach was concluded when no additional subjects were available or willing to participate. Utilizing semi-structured interviews allowed for both standardization between the interviews as well as flexibility to modify questions as interviewees volunteer more information or elaborate on their experiences. Additionally, one subject close to the initiative declined an interview but directed the research to previously published text to highlight his assessment of the program. “The semi-structured interview involves prepared questioning guided by

identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses (Qu and Dumay, 2011).” These interviews focused on maintaining consistent thematic approach rather than standardizing questions across all interviewees. It’s the very flexibility and accessibility of this method that results in semi-structured interviews being one of the most common and useful qualitative approaches (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Conducting one-on-one interviews rather than small focus groups allowed for the interviewees to feel comfortable speaking about their personal motivations and ideas as well as providing input into their coworker’s behaviors and general policymaking. While this topic is not particularly controversial, allowing for that privacy enabled a clearer understanding of the program and its developers.

This approach also avoided some of the common disadvantages of structured interviews such as tendency for redundancy in answers from the same interviewee and the risk of perceived iciness or aloofness of the interviewer by the interviewees. As this research will be conducted by a single researcher and the interviews were less than 10, the advantages of structured interviews (organized data, ease of conducting interviews across teams) were little to none for this research (Atkinson, 2017). The interviewees were conversational in tone and structure, following the “traveler method” as outlined by Atkinson, which encouraged interviewees to dig deeper into the motivations behind program decisions made as part of the SVI. Sequencing these interviews allowed the researcher to modify or adapt questions and tone based on the results and experiences outlined in previous interviews. As one of only two research approaches used for this study, it was imperative that these interviews be conducted thoroughly and effectively. As Qu and Dumay point out, use of various skills, such as intensive listening and note-

taking, but also careful planning and sufficient preparation, will be required for this method to be effective (Qu & Dumay, 2011). This preparation included deep research into TPB and SVI, as well as into the background of the subject, in order to ensure that both the researcher and the interviewee were speaking the same language and can discuss richer and more in-depth concepts.

These interviews were conducted via Zoom on July 29, 2020 and August 3, 2020 with Dr. Jami Fullerton and Wendy Mellilo respectively. Dr. Jami Fullerton serves as the Director of Academic Programs in the School of Global Studies at Oklahoma State University, and as a full professor in the School of Media and Strategic Communications. She is the co-author of *Advertising's War on Terror* along with Dr. Alice Kendrick, and provides a comprehensive review of the Shared Values Initiative. The interview lasted approximately one hour. The second interview was conducted with Wendy Mellilo, a full-time professor of Journalism at American University, journalist, and author. She was interviewed for her expertise garnered while covering the Shared Values Initiative during its implementation and post-cancellation. This interview lasted one hour. The researcher also contacted John Stauber, co-author of the book *Weapons of Mass Deception* who referred the author to his text as well as external articles covering similar material for more journalistic audiences. The researcher contacted eight other subjects for interview but was unable to secure further responses.

Thus, this research is primarily a rhetorical analysis of the five videos of the initiative, the cornerstone of the program, as well as the associated written literature that was to complement the digital media. "Rhetorical analysis...requires the analyst to consider both the overall communicative purpose of a text and how its constituent parts

contribute to (or sometimes detract from) the realisation of that purpose (Zachry, 2009).”

As Zachry highlights, in-depth rhetorical analysis first requires the identification and labelling of aspects of the text and then a careful analysis of the individual parts of the video alone and in context of the whole video (Zachry, 2009). Zachry outlines a four-step process to rhetorical analysis that will be useful in organizing this research. “Identify text(s) for analysis, Categorise the text(s) according to purpose and type, identify constituent parts of text(s), Interpret and discuss one or more configurations of the parts and/or whole of the text(s) in relationship with some overarching theoretical concept(s). (Zachry, 2009)” The first of these steps was completed prior to the commencement of the analysis with the five videos for Identify and Categorize as the entirety of the visual media associated with SVI. Furthermore, the purpose of these videos is clear – to persuade Muslims abroad that living in the United States and practicing Islam are not mutually exclusive but rather mutually supporting. The process and conclusions drawn from the conduct of the third and fourth step will be examined at length in the discussion and conclusions portion of this thesis.

This analysis was underpinned, for a large part, by the traditional perspective of rhetorical analysis. “Of central importance to the work of rhetorical analysis is the recognition that people are able to persuade others to believe things through communication. How such persuasion occurs has always been a primary concern in rhetorical studies (Zachry, 2007).” As the SVI was intended to persuade individuals and groups, the traditional underpinning is the most appropriate. Additionally, the videos, according to initial viewing and cursory analysis, utilized elements of pathos, logos, and

ethos to attempt to persuade and can be categorized as demonstrative rhetoric (Zachry, 2007).

Five videos were produced as part of the SVI and thus this analysis was exhaustive. In this analysis, words and phrases that attempt to utilize the components of TPB to produce a behavioral outcome were noted. This research also analyzed sound, filming location, body language, color schemes and text choices, as well as the inclusion of any props or backgrounds to better understand why these factors were deliberately included in the materials. While this approach did not expect to determine the intent of developers, careful analysis of these videos was useful to illuminate if the framework of TPB can be used to understand the approach of the program leaders. Combined with insights from the interviews, the final texts did provide better understanding of the program's creation and intended goals.

An interview is the best way to understand what conscious factors played into the development and implementation of the program. While the creators of the program were unavailable, scholars who studied and reported on this initiative were extremely helpful in providing context for its development and implementation. Once that was accomplished, the analysis of the actual videos and materials that comprised the program, the cornerstone of the research, were better understood and the research able to highlight aspects of the campaign that could have been improved or included by using the TPB framework. As through the course of the interviews it became clear that the theory was not consciously used to develop the program, the rhetorical analysis also helped determine how the TPB framework could be used to explain and organize the objectives and content of the program.

Background

Undersecretary Charlotte Beers

Prior to his appointment as President George W. Bush's Secretary of State, Colin Powell served on a board of directors of Gulfstream Aerospace with Ms Charlotte Beers, an advertising executive most famous for her massively successful campaign with Uncle Ben's Rice. In early 2001, Powell tapped Beers to serve as the Deputy Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, a job currently described as "lead policy maker for the Department's overall public outreach and press strategies, whether conducted virtually or in-person (State Department, 2020." Originally brought on to conduct campaigns targeting Asia and sub-saharan Africa, by the time Beers was confirmed, the U.S. had already been attacked on 9/11 and begun planning two wars in retribution (Reiling, 2014). Beers was part of an overall push by Powell to infuse the department with fresh ideas and personnel from the private sector. Post 9/11 this push for private collaboration was matched with a renewed attention on the role of public diplomacy in America's actions abroad. Just two months after the 9/11 attacks, Congress held a hearing to discuss the neglected utility and future role of public diplomacy with five witnesses, each from the private sector, testifying to its potential (Congress, 2001).

Not shying away from his new appointee's background, Colin Powell embraced the idea of "rebranding" the United States abroad, testifying before the Senate in March of 2002, arguing that "These programs require a new culture within our foreign affairs apparatus – a new public-private partnership that mobilizes the very best institutions to

our country. (Powell, 2002).” In another conference prior to 9/11 Powell defended his choice by arguing:

I wanted one of the world's greatest advertising experts, because what are we doing? We're selling. We're selling a product. That product we are selling is democracy. It's the free enterprise system, the American value system. It's a product very much in demand. It's a product that is very much needed. It is our job to be salespersons, and one of the best tools we are going to have is the Internet, web design, NetDiplomacy, all of the things you're working on. It is vital that we do it well. It is vital that we do it right (Powell, 2001).

Beers, on the other hand, struggled to rebrand herself as a serious international affairs practitioner. During the pre-launch of her first initiative, part of the State Department’s Rewards for Justice program, a sort of international crime-stoppers approach that rewards those who provide tips on terrorist activity, she stopped a reporter who asked, “Will there be other campaigns?” by insisting, “There will be other work. I wish you’d stop using campaign, which really suggests that we’re going to start running Coca-cola ads (Carlson, 2001).” This may have been in response to the cultural backlash experienced by Beers upon her arrival at the State Department. As Dr. Fullerton, who analyzed and ultimately published a comprehensive text on the program, relayed, “There was definitely a cultural divide between the public diplomacy folks at the State Department and the advertising executives on Madison Avenue. (Fullerton, 2020). The divide came from the sense of public diplomacy as a sort of “noble” or “higher” field than the commercialized advertising world. “There was an idea that advertising was a dirty word in foreign affairs, akin to propaganda and beneath the dignity of the Department of State and the United States overall,” according to Dr. Fullerton. The feeling was somewhat mutual on behalf of the advertising world, with a number of

experts and journalists in the field mocking Beers and Powell for their attempts to “sell” America to the world, referring to her new position as “chief of propaganda” and minimizing her success in the private sector (Carlson, 2001). Powell, however stood by his choice – arguing that the ability to sell a product in the grocery aisle can translate to selling a policy in global affairs. Beers’s strength lay in her ability to brand or rebrand a product or product line, and post 9/11, the U.S. found itself in desperate need for rebranding with the Arab-Muslim world. George Bush’s harsh rhetoric and “with us or against us” approach combined with terrorist messaging that the western way of life was inherently incompatible and hostile with that of a “good Muslim,” left the U.S. at odds with entire regions and religions. Beers thought that public diplomacy was a new and effective way of countering this narrative and combatting terrorism. In one interview she asserted that public diplomacy was “a vital new arm in what will combat terrorism over time. All of the sudden, we are in this position of redefining who America is, not only for ourselves under this kind of attack, but also for the outside world (Teinowitz, 2001).”

Despite the cultural chasm between advertising and foreign policy, the use of ads in national security wasn’t altogether a new one. In fact, Beers sought partnership with the Ad Council, which was originally formed as the “War Advertising Council,” after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor (Rampton & Stauber, 2003, 12). In fact, the involvement of the Ad Council in State Department initiatives has been controversial due to their origins as well as their campaigns and partnership with the CIA during the 1950s and 1960 (Mellilo, 2020). Nor was the idea of “branding America” new, with some State Department officials calling for a cohesive State Department brand as early as 1998, when USIA merged with the department (Tiedeman, 2005).

Shared Values Initiative

Beers' work at the State Department included a number of public diplomacy initiatives, but none as comprehensive or recognized as the Shared Values Initiative. Beers started her cornerstone campaign like she started all her advertising campaigns – with extensive research (Fullerton, 2020). Using data from the RoperASW Worldview research tool known as ValueScope™, which identifies 57 unique values and their relative importance to communities of 35 countries, Beers was able to discern the top three values shared by both predominantly Muslim countries and the United States. These values were that of faith, family, and learning (Fullerton and Kendrick, 2004, 27). Comparing this data with polls showing that many Muslims across the Middle East saw U.S. society as immoral and inconsistent with the teachings of the Koran, Beers decided to focus on faith as the cornerstone value in the campaign.

The cornerstone of the SVI were the five videos, but the campaign was part of a larger approach to persuade Muslims that an Islamic way of life was not incompatible with an American way of life, and that in fact the two were mutually supporting. Ultimately the development of the program was completed without much resistance; however, the implementation of the program was stalled by multiple audiences. In general, the use of public diplomacy to combat terrorism has traditionally been a hard sell in the national security space for any number of reasons, not to exclude the U.S. realist to tradition. While Congress did give more attention (and resources) to public diplomacy post 9/11, the gulf between the soft power nature of the State Department and the hard power realist approaches of the DoD and other departments was far too wide to overcome with such a marginable increase in spending. Moreover, the realist tradition took on a

new face with the Neoconservative movement, which gained power and popularity during the G.W. Bush administration. “The counterterrorism policy of George W. Bush during his first term was heavily influenced by neoconservative principles of unilateral action and preventative war – both solidly hard power approaches. His funding levels reflected his preference for military action over diplomacy (Seymour, 2018).”

While the U.S. was reluctant to heavily invest in public diplomacy and persuasion campaigns, the Muslim world was equally uninterested in receiving them. After 9/11, efforts by the longstanding Voice of America program failed to reach the younger demographic in the Middle East, with rhetoric often serving to annoy and offend Muslim audiences rather than persuade or convince them. Lee McKnight, former director of the Edward R. Murrow Center at Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, explained it this way: “We can’t convince anyone we’re right if we don’t understand their point of view (Sharma, 2001).”

In addition to the general problem of hard power preferences over soft power diplomacy approaches and the failure of multiple attempts to reach Muslim audiences, there was the added cultural divide between the longstanding diplomats and the new advertising executive. According to Dr. Fullerton, the problem was Beers’s failure to achieve complete buy-in of her own State Department colleagues. Because advertising was largely considered a lower form of persuasion in comparison to public diplomacy, many Embassies in the Middle East were reluctant to invest time, energy, and other resources in assisting the program. Likewise, many of the preferred targeted nations maintained state-run media and refused to air the SVI programming, citing its one-sidedness, political nature, and/or flatly refusing it as western propaganda (Seymour,

2020). These hurdles combined with the pending U.S. invasion of Iraq undoubtedly led to the cancellation of the airing of the five videos in December of 2002, just two months after their launch. Of note, the other components of the campaign, to include Radio Sawa and the television station al-Hurra, continue to run today. In earlier 2003, Charlotte Beers resigned her post citing health reasons.

Analysis

While the SVI included both print and video materials, and was part of an overall initiative that included television programs and radio channels, the centerpiece of the campaign were five videos or “mini-documentaries” featuring American Muslims living and thriving in the United States while also practicing their faith. By using a rhetorical analysis of this videos, this research breaks down the components of these “advertisements” to better understand not only the overall intent of the texts, but the individual components as well. This research looked at each video individually to discern any nuanced differences in messaging and/or tone, and then analyzed all five together to better understand any running threads or themes throughout all five. Both were found. As discussed below, each video was similar in structure and tone, use of music, and use of overlaying text – particularly in the opening and closing shots. While the themes of each video were typically tied to one or more of the three determined shared values – faith, education, family – the videos varied slightly in focus, likely to provide an overall comprehensive message to viewers.

The Baker

The video entitled “The Baker,” runs approximately two minutes long and opens with three Muslim men and a small child singing in Arabic with the text “On the occasion of Ramadan, an American Muslim shares his thoughts.” This opening scene appeals to two of the three shared values – family and faith. The use of music, in Arabic, is likely attempting to achieve two distinct yet interactive outcomes. First, it seeks to capitalize on the close link between music and emotion, specifically between emotion and identity formation as explained by Rolf Lidskog (Lidskog, 2016). The use of Arabic music immediately signals to the viewer that the subject of the video shares an identity with the viewer.

Second, opening a spot with Arabic speech reinforces to the audience that this message is coming from a person within your in-group, targeting the subjective norm component of the TPB. Highlighting the fact that these views are shared during Ramadan further reinforces the “sharedness” of the value of religion, and implying that Ramadan can be observed in the U.S. as well. Not only can Muslims be Muslims in America, but especially so during their highest of holy occasions.

The subject of the video, a baker by the name of Abdul Kaouf Hammuda opens by directly stating that most Americans respect the Islamic faith and that “Muslims can practice their faith in totality. (The Baker, 2002).” This voiceover is spliced over scenes of Muslim families – smiling women in headscarves holding children while Muslim men and women plant flowers on a sunny day. Mr. Hammuda introduces himself in front of his bakery in Toledo, Ohio, and highlights clips of non-Muslim customers exchanging conversation and smiles with Muslim staff while purchasing baked goods. Within the

first 20 seconds, using music, language, text, and imagery, the video attempts to reinforce the idea that the subjective norm isn't one of "us" vs "them," but rather one of mutual understanding and support. Moving on, the baker adds a note that his bakery is known for having the greatest pita bread – highlighting another facet of Muslim culture that is valued in the United States. The baker then relays his story of a Libyan upbringing and a move to the U.S. for school – another shared value of the two regions. Meanwhile the camera is showing generations of men engaged in preparing dough in the bakery kitchen, focusing again on family togetherness. The subject then goes on to explain that he stayed in the U.S. for the business opportunity and introduces his wife as his "right-hand person," both a subtle reference to the shared honor in the right hand in Islam and Christian and a re-emphasis on the family nature of his life and business. She introduces herself, speaking with a slightly heavier accent than her husband and displays a dish of lentils and rice, more nods to the culinary norms of her (and the intended viewer's) culture. The Baker goes on to directly share that in addition to expanding the physical size of the bakery, he also introduced the community to traditional dishes of the "African nations of Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia" while the screen shows an American customer looking over a display of hookahs – another cultural reference (Shared Values: Baker, 2002). Returning to the values of family and education, Mr. Hammuda's children then introduce themselves, a son studying pharmacy at the University of Toledo, and a daughter who is a junior at the Toledo Islamic Academy. Moving out of the bakery and into the school, the viewer is then shown Mr. Hammuda interacting with smiling children while explaining the role of the school in the community and his position as one of the co-founders of the school. This portion of the video shows small children singing in

Arabic in a classroom as well as high school students, in head coverings, learning in a lab and on desktop computers. After establishing credibility with the viewer and highlighting the three values outlined above, the video shifts to showing the compatibility of the Islamic faith and the American way of life, using a quintessentially American setting – a local fair. With an image of a Ferris wheel in the background, Mr. Hammuda assures the viewer that religious freedom is something that is very important in his found home, and that “no one has ever bothered us.” He goes on to assert that living the “straight path” in America is not hard, while the camera shows him and his family praying with the images and sounds of the fair ongoing in the background. Complete with a montage of a child dancing, western customers at the bakery, and a customer with a tie of national flags, all set to the Arabic music to which the video opened, Mr. Hammuda more directly addresses the targeted belief in question, stating that after 9/11, his community showed overwhelming support, and that “America is a land of opportunity, of equality, and we are happy to live here as Muslims and preserve our faith (Shared Values: Baker, 2002).” The video ends with a shot of a smiling man playing the darbuka (a drum popular in Arabic music) and the text “Presented by the Council of American Muslims for Understanding.” and then a black screen with the text “and the American people.” Not only does the video omit the actual funder of the project – the U.S. Department of State, but prioritizes the Muslim group above the American people, again attempting to affect the perceived society norm of the Muslim society rather than U.S. society.

Throughout the video, neither Mr. Hammudah nor his featured family members are ever isolated, always surrounded by their family or their community members – again highlight both the value of family in the U.S., as well as showing that this experience is

not just the experience of one man, but of an entire family and community of Muslims in America, attempting a more convincing argument than that of the societal norm. This, along with the music and shots of dancing and Muslim prayer, is attempting to play to the emotion or *pathos* of the viewer, something Beers promised to bring back to public diplomacy. Along with the *ethos* or credibility of the piece established by having a Muslim subject, and the *logos* established by presenting clear displays of U.S. and Muslim compatibility, this video pulls in from literary, psychology, and advertising disciplines to appeal to and ultimately persuade its intended Muslim audience.

Teacher

The second two-minute video features a female Muslim teacher in America and opens with a shot of her in a classroom with young diverse students, explaining her motivation to become a teacher stemming from her love of children. Again, the text “On the occasion of Ramadan, an American Muslim shares her thoughts” appears at the bottom of the screen. Again, and more directly with this particular video, the viewer is immediately clued into her adherence to her faith (she is wearing a hijab) and her commitment to education – two of the shared values. Rawia Ismail introduces herself as a public-school teacher over a shot of her name written in both English and Arabic on a school blackboard, a powerful image of the integration of her two cultures. She goes on to explain that while she wears a hijab in the classroom, she’s never had any issues with children regarding this iconic symbol of the Muslim faith: on the contrary, she reveals that both the students and their parents appreciate the exposure to her culture. She shares her background with the viewer – birth in Lebanon and her move to the U.S. in 1984, as

the camera shows her preparing dinner for her children along with her husband. As she is serving one of her children what appears to be a naan type of bread, she speaks in Arabic – highlighting her inclusion into the “in-group” of the targeted viewer. The next scene is then classic Americana – her husband playing catch with their son dressed in a baseball uniform (Shared Values: Teacher, 2002). Rawia goes on to explicitly state that following Islam in America is just as easy as following Islam in the village where she was raised, as the camera cuts to a shot of her family preparing for Muslim prayer. Her son begins the prayer in Arabic while the entire family joins into the ritual. Rawia’s husband echoes his wife’s sentiments, “in general it’s very practical to practice Islam and live in the U.S. My neighbors are fair-minded and good people, they understand us,” he shares in their suburban backyard (Shared Values: Teacher, 2002). This last phrase mirrors the intent of the campaign – mutual understanding. In addition to being a public-school teacher, Rawia also teaches at her children’s Islamic School, with scenes of an Arabic class and religion class, before cutting back to the American scene of a baseball game. Rawia goes on to explain that the non-Muslim parents in her life care “just as much about their children’s education as I do and about family values,” and that she didn’t see any prejudice in her neighborhood after 9/11. Again, hitting on the three themes of family, faith, and education before closing the video with the same text as the baker, a final thought from Rawia notes that she often encourages her students to “focus on our similarities rather than our differences (Shared Values: Teacher, 2002).” This conclusion, while presented as a teaching for Rawia’s students, is clearly intended for the viewer. Again, the video doesn’t directly address any behavior modifications that the campaign might seek, but rather attitudes about societal norms in the United States as well as held by Muslims, in

addition to including affirmations of volitional control enjoyed by Muslims in the United States.

Doctor

The third two-minute “mini-documentary” features the most prominent Muslim of the five subjects – Dr. Elias Zerhouni, the then director of the National Institute of Health (NIH) under President George W. Bush. Again, the opening scene of this video is set to Arabic music with clips of Dr. Zerhouni working in a lab while explicitly highlighting the “profound connection between medicine and Islam (Shared Values: Doctor, 2002).” Dr. Zerhouni even uses the phrase “the lot of man” with all its religious undertones in his opening statement. This video has a much heavier focus on Dr. Zerhouni’s profession than the other two videos, perhaps to emphasize the high level of his appointment, which the subject is careful to point out was a result of President Bush’s nomination, while also emphasizing the institute’s mission to “advance knowledge.” which goes to the heart of the value of education. In fact, while the other videos open with the backgrounds of the subjects, Dr. Zerhouni doesn’t share his origin story until half-way through his spot, relaying his birthplace in Algeria and his welcome to America in 1975, revealing that his professors and colleagues would often say “we’re all immigrants here (Shared Values: Doctor, 2002).” The video goes on to show Dr. Zerhouni receiving an award and standing ovation from his western colleagues while he tells the viewer that over the history of medicine, some of the most remarkable doctors have been Muslim doctors. The video then switches to a clip of Dr. Zerhouni with President Bush while the doctor goes on to state that not only has the U.S. embraced him and his Muslim heritage, but that there is

no other country in the world in which such different people from different backgrounds can live together in harmony. This video, unlike the rest, does have more shots of Dr. Zerhouni alone and few textual, audial (aside from the Arabic background music), or visual references to his faith or culture. The overall theme of this video appears intended to highlight the success of Muslim Americans, emphasize the potential for achievement at the highest levels of American government not despite Muslim heritage, but perhaps because of it. The same opening and ending text appear in this, and all five videos.

Firefighter

The “Firefighter” video of the series perhaps most directly addresses the 9/11 attacks and features two American Muslims: a paramedic with the New York Fire Department, Farooq Muhammad, and a chaplain with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority police department, Abdul Malik. While their role in the response to 9/11 isn’t clear from the video, the use of two men in security roles in New York City was undoubtedly a calculated decision. Farooq focuses on the diversity within his job and his community, highlighting the different religions of his coworkers and attesting to the harmonious atmosphere of this diversity. Meanwhile, Abdul focuses more heavily and directly on the shared faith of the subjects and intended viewers, a logical move considering his profession as a chaplain. Farooq, like Dr. Zerhouni, argues that not only is the U.S. accepting of his Islamic faith and lifestyle, but perhaps more so than anywhere else: “You have more freedom to work for Islam in the U.S. than any other,” he concludes (Shared Values: Firefighter, 2002). The video, like the others, shows a mix of Islamic and American imagery to include a mosque in New York City in the opening shot, and a view

of Abdul walking through a market similar to those found throughout the Middle East while an American flag hangs in the background. In another shot we see Abdul shaking the hand of a westerner and then placing his hand over his heart and nodding slightly in the traditional Islamic greeting. Abdul wears a *taquiyah*, or woven skull cap, throughout the video, with a number of shots of him in front of “MTA Police” signage, while Farook in his paramedic uniform throughout the video is shown in front of official vehicles during his monologue. A New York street scene highlights the diversity of the city and country by showing a Jewish man, westerner, and Abdul coexisting in a modern setting, again with an American flag waving in the background. Again, we have Arabic music throughout the video, implicitly reminding the viewers that this life and culture shown on the screen is similar to their lives.

Journalist

The fifth and final video produced focuses on the shared value of education and features Indonesian-born Devianti Faridz, a student pursuing her Masters in Journalism at the University of Missouri. Devianti, unlike the women in the other videos, is not wearing a head covering, but opens by directly stating the the principles of journalism are principles she learned as a Muslim – truth, objectivity, and honesty (Shared Values: Journalist, 2002). She goes on to explain the parallels between her time growing up in Muslim family and attending class at the university. The images in this video are much more western than in the Baker, Firefighter, or Teacher videos, highlighting a busy newsroom and class with a western male professor, and Devianti does not speak with an accent. However, the second half of the video does show the local mosque as well as

fellow Muslims reading the Koran, gathering socially, and praying. Here we see Devianti in full prayer dress before switching back to scenes of both her seemingly seamless integration into American life, as well as her professional and educational success. After sharing her desire to return to her Muslim homeland of Indonesia, Devianti is shown engaging in conversation with fellow Muslim women, westerners, and smiling in a cornfield as she calls for “mutual understanding.”

Discussion

Arguably, the very inception of the Shared Values Initiative can be understood through the component of the Theory of Planned Behavior, in the sense that Beers was allocated additional resources for her campaigns post 9/11 with the understanding that the U.S. was attacked as a result of Islamist extremists’ failure to understand the United States. That is to say, that because of a subjective norm to distrust or dislike the United States. Where U.S. policymakers failed is their inability to precisely identify the subjective norm that needed to be addressed. President Bush routinely argued that the attacks were conducted out of a hate for the U.S. way of life, and subsequently the Shared Values Initiative was developed out of a desire to correct this misunderstanding of different cultures. However, it’s more accurate to understand that the intent of these attacks did not evolve out of a misunderstanding of U.S. society, but out of a growing disdain of U.S. actions abroad. While the majority of Muslims across the Middle East did not support the attacks on 9/11, many were not particularly surprised. “Rather, they say, a mood of resentment toward America and its behavior around the world has become so commonplace in their countries that it was bound to breed hostility, and even hatred (Ford, 2001).” In fact, public opinion of the U.S. in the Muslim world was critically low

in the years surrounding the 9/11 attacks, with one Pew Research poll in 2003 showing that less than 15% of those surveyed in Indonesia, Turkey Lebanon, and Jordan, reported a favorable opinion of the United States (Pew Research, 2003). The Council on Foreign Relations commissioned an independent task force to better understand the reasons behind this continued trend and published their findings in 2003. According to their report, the problem was not a misunderstanding, but rather a disapproval of a number of aspects of American policy, culture, and behavior (Peterson, 2003). Charlotte Beer was hired to open a dialogue with the Muslim world, to reaffirm that the U.S. was not at war with Islam, and that Muslims were treated well in the United States, but that was not the attitude or social norm that was influencing their behavior. As the CFR report outlines, anti-Americanism at the time was a result of four factors – envy and resentment of the U.S. position as the sole global superpower, perceived offensiveness of U.S. culture combined with its global spread, objection to its unbalanced and unjust foreign policy, and foreign government-sponsored media channels that heightened anti-Americanism throughout the Muslim world (Peterson, 2003).

SVI, in attempting to change the narrative regarding the incompatibility of American and Muslim cultures, failed to address any of these factors directly. While there is an argument to be made that the campaign attempted to reframe American culture in addressing the second factor, that argument is tenuous at best. In other words, the SVI attempted to change a real belief held by a majority of Muslims (anti-Americanism), but it failed to change the *right* core belief, the one connected to the threat behavior. Moreover, the program failed their due diligence in understanding that the fourth cause of

anti-Americanism, the use of state-run media throughout the Muslim world, would also end up severely limiting the spread of their message.

In a general sense, one can argue that the SVI can be understood through TPB as it was attempting to change the behavior of a targeted audience, even if that designated behavior is somewhat murky. Beers was charged with opening a dialogue with the Muslim world – but to what end? Shifting perceptions as the ultimate desired end goal of U.S. counterterrorism strategy at the time? Unlikely. More likely, this program was intended to provide the means in which the ends of curtailing terrorist recruitment and activity could be achieved. That is to say, the ultimate goal of the program was to shift perception in order to prevent Muslims abroad from sympathizing, protecting, or joining terrorist groups or engaging in terrorist activities, with a tertiary goal of garnering support for U.S. counter-terrorist efforts abroad (Elasmar, 2007, 7).

In another sense, the use of shared values can be understood through the lens of subjective norms, as perceived control of individuals being able to conform to the social norms of Islam *and* the social norms of the United States. They were able to exert control over their behavior in both societies despite rhetoric to the contrary. The use of the Council for American Muslims goes to the heart of the subjective norm component of TPB. By presenting these videos and accompanying literature and cultural events from a council of Muslims, Beers was attempting to garner instant credibility with her Muslim audience and change what was possibly the societal norm against the United States.

The use of personal narratives arguably highlights the perceived behavioral control. While this research will discuss at length the individual videos, a common theme through the five is the idea of the freedom of individual Muslims to practice both their

faith and uphold their Islamic values in American society. The use of Muslim Americans was a direct appeal to the idea of societal norms. Beers understood that the message of shared values would be much less effective coming from non-Muslim representatives. Or as the Council on Foreign Relations put it, getting the messenger right was just as important as crafting the right message (Council on Foreign Relations, 2001). By using the front organization of CAMU in conjunction with featuring Muslim Americans, Beers was attempted to hammer home the idea that the global societal norm for Muslims was to live in synch with American values. While there were certainly common themes in the videos – specifically the ideas of family, faith, and education, the use of diverse subjects undoubtedly intended to appeal to a wide swath of Muslim audiences – from the deeply religious to the casual observer of the faith. Women throughout the video were shown with various types of head coverings, or none at all. All six of the actors were born in different countries (with two undisclosed countries of origin), with various accents in various roles. The actors were shown in rural, suburban, and urban areas in various types of dress to include western, traditional Arabic, and a hybrid of the two. Men and women of various ages were highlighted as well, all in an attempt to appeal to Muslims across a region with all their inherent heterogeneity.

Ultimately the aim was to affect the behavior of Muslims by changing their perceptions, so the program was working within the framework of the TPB. No explicit behavior was attempted to be produced, but overall a set of behaviors favorable to the United States. These behaviors included assisting U.S. forces and counter-terrorism efforts abroad as well as generally opposing terrorist activities conducted under the false narrative that the western way of life was inherently anti-Islam.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

The components of the Theory of Planned Behavior have multiple applications, not just in communication strategies at the State Department, but in foreign policy approaches in general. Originally coined in the early 90s by international relations scholar Joseph Nye, Soft Power as a concept stands in contrast to the traditional understand of Hard Power. As mentioned previously, Hard Power in foreign policy seeks to produce favorable outcomes or behaviors by offering rewards or threatening punishments. These can manifest in ways such as military actions or economic sanctions. Soft Power, on the contrary, attempts to appeal to international actors to persuade them to modify their behaviors into favorable outcomes, and is often understood through the lens of culture, language, and other less quantifiable resources. Going back to the TPB diagram outlined earlier in this research, one can see the parallels between the concepts of power and the model presented by Ajzen. With Soft Power approaches, one actor attempts to interject or modify an attitude or a norm and thus change the intention of the targeted actor. On the contrary, a Hard Power approach offers a concrete behavior control (through reward or punishment) thus seeking to modify the other two components influencing intention, or bypassing the intention completely and seeking to make a direct change to an actor's behavior. Additionally, the theory of planned behavior can be understood and used in a similar fashion to the often-cited Rational Actor Model in international relations. "A tenet of the realist school and rightfully criticized for its parsimony, RAM can be understood and presented in a number of ways. Perhaps most simply, however, is the idea that all choices can be understood through the framework of

preferences, beliefs, information, and action. The theory argues that actors will make decisions and behave according to their desired outcomes or preferences, the information available about a situation, and their beliefs regarding which course of action is most likely to achieve their desired outcomes. (Seymour, 2020).”

Other psychological and advertising theories can be used in tandem to better understand the outcomes of foreign policies, particularly in the case of modifying intentions in order to modify behavior. Experiments such as the forbidden toy or robot experiment conducted by Elliot Aronson and J. Merrill Carlsmith serve as one such example. In this experiment, the researchers divided pre-school-aged children into two groups. In the first group, children were given five toys and warned not to play with a particular toy (a very appealing robot). Children in the second group were presented with the same five toys, but instead of a severe warning not to play with the desirable robot, were offered a small gift to play with one of the four less appealing toys (ultimately resulting in their not playing with the robot toy). While the children in the first group complied temporarily, the children in the second group continued to play with the robot less than their counterparts even when the gifts and threats were removed (Aronson & Carlsmith, 1963). The findings of this study and similar replication studies have interesting implications for foreign policy programs seeking to modify international actors’ behavior using rewards and punishments, and should be investigated further.

Perhaps the SVI could have been improved with a more direct application of TPB to include a specific behavior targeted. First, this would have enabled a narrowing scope. Moreover, this would have enabled a quantifiable metric. As one scholar writes, “In addition to her lack of credibility, Beers was also doomed to fail because there was no

existing system to measure the success or failure of her campaigns (Tiedeman, 2005).”

While Beers was used to have measures of effectiveness through levels of sales, the success of public diplomacy in the immediate term lies in public opinion, and in a longer, more strategic sense, in the ability of a campaign to influence individual and collective behavior of a targeted international actor or group. In this case, individuals in the targeted group were Muslims living outside the United States. Still, public opinion, as discussed in the findings by the Council on Foreign Relations above, is influenced by a number of different factors, and its statistical worth can hardly be tied to a single program or initiative. This was a common refrain from a number of Beers’ critics, one that Dr. Fullerton challenges. She argues that the campaign did likely shift perceptions of the Muslim world when it came to the United States; unfortunately, with two wars in the Middle East, the militarized foreign policy overwhelmed any progress by the public diplomacy campaigns waged by Beers (Fullerton, 2020). Likewise, Beers contends that the desired effects of the campaign were achieved, and that “when a person said ‘my children can go to their Muslim school down the street’ that was absolutely riveting to the audiences across the world because they had no idea that that privilege was granted to anyone (Reiling, 2015).”

Further research should also be done on the success of campaigns like SVI that do not fail to properly identify the core attitude or belief about a subjective norm to be modified. As discussed above, research indicates that the attacks against the United States were not conducted out of a misunderstanding of U.S. culture, nor were they carried out as a result of a belief that the American way of life was incompatible with the Islamic way of life, despite the latter belief’s existence. While it’s both impossible to determine

and remains outside the scope of this research, the findings here beg the question: if done right, would SVI have had a better outcome?

Conclusions

Charlotte Beers was brought into the State Department based on her extensive success as an advertising executive and she ultimately applied her knowledge of advertising to her short stint at the department. However, her strengths in advertising were in customer relations. Her antics during pitches to clients were infamous: busting a vacuum and eating dog food during one meeting (Mellilo, 2020). Her strengths were not, however, in the creative side of advertising. Still, she clearly understood the basics of advertising theory, if not consciously and from an academic standpoint, then subconsciously from a practitioner's knowledge. She applied these concepts to the Shared Values Initiative, approaching the program with the rigor and process she had used in dozens of prior successful advertising campaigns. While there is no evidence that she directly used the concepts of the Theory of Planned Behavior in the development of the program, analyzing the content of program is served by used the theory as a framework. Moreover, using this framework can help future policymakers identify the failings of the SVI and help to develop more robust and effective initiatives in the future.

Simply put, the TPB states that three components can interact to create intentions and ultimately behavior – attitudes regarding a behavior, societal norms, and perceived control. The SVI, operating on the assumption that Muslims abroad saw the U.S. way of life as incompatible with maintaining a faith and allegiance to Islam, attempted to primarily change this societal norm, as well as, to a lesser degree, attitudes regarding

terrorist behavior and perceived control. This attempt was made ultimately in efforts to inspire favorable behavior of Muslim individuals and communities around the world. Using a front organization of Muslim leaders and testimonies from Muslim Americans, the SVI attempted to capitalize on the idea of the in-group speaking to fellow Muslims rather than members of an out-group attempting to persuade. Using a collection of text, imagery, and audio cues, these five videos reaffirm the message that Muslim life is not only *not* in conflict with American society, but is in fact genuinely supported by it. Furthermore, these cues are used to reaffirm that this message is coming from a trusted member of the viewer's own in-group.

Ultimately the use of advertising practice and theory was met with a number of challenges during Under Secretary Beers's time at the department, some inherent to the work and some imposed by cultural and logistical constraints. Still, U.S. foreign policy – particularly those initiatives developed and carried out by the diplomatic branches of the foreign affairs apparatus – would be well-served to draw on the breadth and depth of knowledge found in the communications and advertising fields (among others). Despite cultural differences, the knowledge honed in and gleaned from both the academic and commercial space of the advertising field, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, have the potential to shape creative, resourceful, and effective foreign policy for decades to come.

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