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Identity *versus* Identity: Israel and Evangelicals and the Two-Front War for Jewish Votes

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Abstract: Republicans made major efforts to win a larger share of the Jewish vote in 2004 by emphasizing their strong support for Israel. They partially succeeded, but did not make a dent in the overall loyalty of American Jews to the Democratic party, since they lost approximately as many votes because of Jews' negative reactions to the party's evangelical base. We argue that both Israel and worries over evangelical influence in the country reflect concerns about Jewish identity, above and beyond disagreements on specific social issues. We compare American Jewish voting behavior and liberalism to the voting behavior of non-Jews in 2004 using a survey of Jews from the National Jewish Democratic Coalition and the American National Election Study. For non-Jews, attitudes toward evangelicals are closely linked to social issues, but for Jews this correlation is small. The Jewish reaction to evangelicals is more of an issue of identity and the close ties of evangelicals to the Republican Party keep many Jews Democratic. Attitudes toward evangelicals are far more important for Jewish voting behavior than for non-Jewish voters.

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INTRODUCTION

American Jews have long been loyal to the Democratic Party. Aside from African-Americans, they are the only part of the New Deal Democratic coalition that still votes overwhelmingly for the Democratic Party (Stanley and Niemi 2005). Jews have largely remained loyal to the Democratic Party, except in 1976 and 1980, when Jimmy Carter, who only received 64 percent and 45 percent of the Jewish vote, respectively, ran on the Democratic ticket.[1] In 1992, 60 percent of individual contributions to Bill Clinton came from Jews (Friedman 1993). Clinton, Al Gore, and John Kerry received between 75 and 80 percent of the Jewish vote.

American Jews have long faced a dual identity — as Americans and as Jews — and this is reflected in their political behavior. As with other Americans, party identification and the overall direction of the country loom large in their voting decisions (Sigelman 1991). As Jews, they often see themselves — and are seen by others — as "outsiders" who had to "become white" because their religion and culture were distinct from that of the larger American public (Goldstein 2006). This distinctiveness has shaped Jews' political orientations and behavior as socially and politically liberal. Jews identify with other minority groups that have faced discrimination, notably African-Americans, but also other groups such as gays and lesbians (Lerner, Nagai, and Rothman 1989; Glaser 1997; Greenberg and Wald 2001; Djupe 2007). Jews have developed a distinct culture within the larger American society — as economically prosperous, economically, and socially liberal, yet not fully secure.

Jews' status as a minority that faced discrimination has led to two distinctive policy positions and attachments. First, as a religious minority, Jews strongly support the separation of church and state. They are also the only religious or ethnic group for which ties to the "old country," Israel, remain strong across time and generations (Smith 2005, 10, 58–59). The "high wall" between church and state and the continuing identification with Israel reflect the ambivalence of Jewish identity in the United States. While economically secure and politically influential, Jews nevertheless feel insecure as a religious minority that has often faced persecution and been forced to give up their faith. The separation of church and state and the attachment to Israel both represent security against threats to Jewish identity. Israel was established as a homeland for the Jewish people after the Holocaust, a place where Jews could always be assured that their identity was safe.

Democratic President Harry Truman was instrumental in pressing the United Nations to establish the state of Israel and another Democrat, Lyndon B. Johnson, came to Israel's aid in the 1967 war with Arab countries. Republicans have been allied with Christian fundamentalists, who are seen by many Jews as forging an agenda to make the United States a "Christian nation," thus threatening Jewish identity (Wald and Sigelman 1997, 141).

The Democratic hold on Jewish voters, for whom Israel's security is paramount, was threatened in 2004. Some Democrats in the Congress, especially very liberal Democrats in the House, had veered from the party's traditional support for Israel (Oldmixon, Rosenson, and Wald 2005). And George W. Bush made a concerted effort to win the votes of Jewish Americans in 2004 through his strong support for Israel (Stolberg 2006). Yet, Bush was the first Republican nominee to identify closely with the Christian Right and his candidacy galvanized and unified evangelicals, according to Smidt (1989). The inroads that the Republicans made on the issue of Israel were balanced out by Jewish fears about the Christian Right. The Democratic ticket of John Kerry and John Edwards won about the same share (80 percent *versus* 77.3 percent) of the Jewish vote in 2004 as the slate of Al Gore, long a staunch defender of Israel, and Joseph Lieberman, the first Jewish nominee for Vice President in American history, had four years earlier.

Since many conservative Christian leaders have been vocal supporters of Israel, we might expect that support for Israel and ratings of evangelicals would complement each other, rather than work in opposite directions. Yet, we find that the importance of Israel and feelings about evangelicals pulled Jewish voters in different directions in 2004 rather than complementing each other. These two "threats" worked in different directions for different sets of Jewish voters. Those who were concerned with Israel's security responded to Republican entreaties, while other Jewish voters supported the Democrats because they disliked evangelical Christians.

We support these claims through an analysis of 2004 vote expectations in the Jewish and non-Jewish populations in the United States, as well as the linkages across several of our measures and vote change from 2000 to 2004. For Jews, we analyze a survey conducted for the National Jewish Democratic Coalition (NJDC) in the summer of 2004. We use the 2004 American National Election Study (ANES) to compare, to the extent possible, these findings with non-Jewish voting behavior for all non-Jews and for non-Jews excluding evangelicals. We find that issues of identity, feelings toward evangelicals, and the importance of Israel

matter only for Jewish voters–above and beyond the effects of party identification, the state of the country, and issues. Moreover, we find that issues of identity shaped not only vote choice for Jews, but also vote change from 2000 to 2004, supporting our expectation that identity concerns may have been more salient in the latter election.

WHY IDENTITY MATTERS

Jewish loyalty to the Democratic Party reflects the social and economic liberalism that characterized all of the members of minority ethnic and racial groups comprising the New Deal Democratic coalition. Yet, only Jews and African-Americans are still overwhelmingly loyal to the Democratic Party and to liberal values. Both Jewish Americans and African-Americans are drawn to the party that has traditionally represented minority groups because each feels vulnerable in American society. Perceptions of threat from politically powerful groups, leads minority group members to solidify their own political allegiance.

Social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Turner et al. 1987) and more recent literature on racial prejudice help to explain the Jewish attachment to the Democratic Party, above and beyond ideological attachment. A group norm develops when people see their identity as shaped by contrasts with others; especially when people see a common threat to their group from others, this norm will involve active opposition to the "other" group (Brewer 1999, 436; Turner et al. 1987, 203). Perceived conflict between two groups enhances the cohesion of each group (Tajfel 1982, 15). Hence, there is pressure to conform to the group threat *even if individual members do not feel at risk* (Bobo and Hutchings 1996, 956–957). Concerns about threats from out-groups are particularly strong for minority groups (Brewer 1979, 316).

Conover (1988, 65) argues that groups define themselves politically on issues that are at the core of their identities. Out-groups often form the focal point of group thinking about politics; when the in-group (Jews) believes that the out-group threatens its long-term fate (or is "negatively interdependent" with the in-group), the out-group may become a critical element in the in-group schema. Blumer (1958, 5) characterized the roots of prejudice as "a felt challenge to [a] sense of group position." It is the foundation of how minorities, especially African-Americans, perceive their social status (Bobo and Hutchings 1996) and their political world.

For many years and across countries, Jewish political preferences have been shaped by perceptions of threat from other groups. Where Jews have

perceived threats from economically or politically dominant groups, as in Central and Eastern Europe and in South Africa in the 20th century, they have identified with parties to the left of center, but where they see threats from below they have supported more conservative movements (Medding 1977). In the United States, Jews have historically identified with the party that has defended minorities — the Democrats. Today, many Jews see evangelicals as posing a threat to their future as a religious minority. Perhaps ironically, the reactions of Jews to the threat from the Christian Right parallel the behavior of evangelicals when they are in a distinct minority in a community: White evangelicals were more likely to vote for Republican presidential candidates when the secular threat, measured by the share of secularists in a county or a state, was greatest (Campbell 2006).

Such threats — to security (through the State of Israel) and to identity (through the linking of church and state) — are collective rather than personal. They are not in competition over scarce resources and the struggle for dominance, as between African-Americans and whites (Giles and Evans 1986). The threat is not personal because few, if any, Jews feel that they are in danger either of persecution or of being compelled to convert to Christianity. Rather, the threat is to their identity.

Even though individual Jews may not feel threatened by evangelicals, the perceived danger to Jewish identity leads to sharp reactions against evangelicals above and beyond the disagreements on specific issues. Many Jews are especially sensitive to the Christian Right's belief that the renewal of the Jewish state is a prerequisite for the second coming of Jesus. Ariel (2002) details the place a renewed and strong Israel holds at the center of evangelical theology and the detachment of such views from attitudes toward Jews more generally. Fifty-nine percent of evangelicals believe that Israel represents the fulfillment of the Biblical prophecy of the second coming of Jesus Christ (Pew Research Center on the People and the Press 2006, 21). In a 1996 survey conducted by Queens University, 87 percent of American evangelicals expressed the belief that it is very important to encourage non-Christians to become Christians, compared to 56 percent of non-evangelicals; 65 percent disagreed that all religions are equally true, compared to 41 percent of non-evangelicals.[2] In the 2004 American evangelical survey by Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, 86 percent of those who identified themselves as born-again Christians held that it is important to convert non-Christians and over 90 percent of religious conservatives (self-identified fundamentalists, evangelicals, charismatics, and Pentecostals) said that it is important to spread their faith to others.[3]

Jews also worry that the Christian Right's proposals would remove barriers between church and state and make the United States into a nation based upon Christian principles. Three-quarters of Americans agree that the United States *is* a Christian nation[4] and 60 percent of white evangelicals (and a plurality of conservative Republicans) believe that the Bible should be more important in shaping national laws than the will of the people (Pew Research Center on the People and the Press 2006). Jews see this low wall of separation as threatening their status as "good Americans" (Wald and Sigelman 1997, 155–156). Two-thirds of Jews in the 2004 NJDC survey said that the separation of religion and the state was an important issue and 70 percent (of a half sample) favored a high wall of separation between religion and the state.

Almost 60 percent of American Jews, in a 1988 survey by the National Jewish Community, said that "many" or "most" fundamentalist Christians were anti-Semitic, more than members of 10 other groups. Although he was a Catholic, Jewish leaders were also alarmed when many evangelicals supported Pat Buchanan, a strong critic of Israel who had made "veiled anti-Semiti[c]" comments in his campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1996 (Wald and Sigelman 1997, 155, 157).

American Jews do *not* need to feel personally threatened by evangelicals. Yet they may feel less secure *in their group identity* and may worry that the Jewish people may be endangered, as has happened in other places at other times. As such, their political identity will be shaped, at least in part, by such perceived threats to Jewish identity (Medding 1977), much as African-American social and political identity is determined in no small part by perceived threat from the dominant white society (Blumer 1958). Endangered minorities see themselves as more vulnerable than majorities facing threat. So a political norm of supporting the party that has historically defended the underdog in general and Jews in particular becomes a reasonable political strategy. As the Republicans have become increasingly linked to the Christian Right, concern over Evangelical motivations should lead to stronger support for the Democrats. Jews now see the Christian Right as one of the greatest threats to Jewish concerns (Wald and Sigelman 1997, 141).

Dawson (1994, chs. 4 and 6) traces African-American liberalism (and through ideology, attachment to the Democratic party) to a sense of "shared fate" with other blacks — in contrast to a weaker sense of group identity. Blacks who see a common destiny with African-Americans are more likely to define their political interests in terms of race (Dawson 1994, ch. 5). Greenberg and Wald (2001, 173–174) make a similar

argument about Jewish collective identity: the Democratic Party's "compassion toward the disadvantaged" and its positions in accord with "Jewish values" (Greenberg and Wald 2001) lead American Jews to support Democrats. Lerner, Nagai and Rothman (1989) argue that Jewish liberalism and attachment to the Democratic Party stems from a sense of marginality in American society that is passed down from one generation to the next.

Jewish concerns with these issues of identity make them distinctive. Fifteen percent of Jews saw positions on Israel as the most important issue in the election, but only two of 1,032 non-Jewish respondents to the ANES (0.2 percent) rated Israel as one of the nation's most important problems. While Jewish worries about evangelicals largely reflect church-state issues, the rest of the electorate links fundamentalist Christians with social policies such as abortion and gay marriage. Since the 1980s, these connections have become increasingly tight (Layman and Green 2005; Miller, Wlezien, and Hildreth 1991, 1139–1140).

Evangelical and fundamentalist groups do proclaim their "love" for Israel and the Jewish people. Pat Robertson cites the common roots of Judaism and Christianity and God's plan for Israel to be "a blessing to all the peoples of the earth" among the reasons why evangelicals support Israel and have an affinity for Jews.[5] Yet, there is little evidence of a distinctively high affinity among the Christian Right. In the 2004 ANES, the mean feeling thermometer on Jews is almost identical for fundamentalists and other non-Jews (mean scores of 68.21 and 67.07), results exactly the same as in the 2000 Annenberg survey comparing born-again Christians with other non-Jews (mean scores of 67.7 and 67.0, respectively). In the 2004 ANES, evangelicals do show a slightly higher feeling thermometer for Israel (62.59 compared to 57.43 for other non-Jews, $r = 0.139$ with a dummy variable for fundamentalists, $N = 965$).

American Jews have not accepted the fundamentalists' expressions of support for Israel as evidence of a common interest, much less of a similarity in identity. Christian Right leaders have been among the most vocal supporters of Israel, both inside and outside the Congress. Nevertheless, many members who identify themselves with the movement often voted against the Jewish state's annual appropriation (Oldmixon, Rosenson, and Wald 2005; Wald and Sigelman 1997, 157) and demonstrated inconsistent support in sponsoring and co-sponsoring pro-Israel legislation in the Senate (Rosenson, Oldmixon, and Wald 2009).

While evangelicals may not be dramatically more supportive of Israel, their positions on the Middle East are distinctive because of their negative

views toward Muslims (Mayer 2004). Pat Robertson warns against "a fanatical religion intent on returning to the feudalism of 8th Century Arabia" (see note 5). In the 2004 ANES, evangelicals had a mean Muslim feeling thermometer rating of 46.93 compared to 55.48 for other non-Jews (the correlation between the Muslim thermometer and evangelical identification is -0.133, $N = 945$).

The Jewish electorate in 2004, the NJDC survey shows, was divided between the small share of Jews who cited Israel as a key voting cue and the larger bloc (37 percent) who were most hostile to evangelicals:[6] 55 percent of Jews who were strongly motivated by Israel voted for Kerry (compared to 83 percent of other Jews), while 86 percent of those most fearful of evangelicals cast ballots for Kerry (compared to 72 percent of other Jews). Only six percent of the Jewish sample can be regarded as strong supporters of both Israel and evangelicals. We turn now to our analysis of vote choice for Jews and non-Jews.

THE JEWISH VOTE AND THE NON-JEWISH VOTE

Our expectations are clearly born out in our models of vote choice. The salience of Israel and attitudes toward evangelicals has significant effects on the Jewish vote. Neither shapes the voting behavior of non-Jews.

The NJDC survey of 817 Jewish likely voters was conducted over the Internet by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research in Washington, D.C. Greenberg Quinlan Rosner selects its sample from a national data base of Internet users, sends e-mail invitations to a potential sample, and screens possible respondents according to their self-designated religious affiliation. Survey respondents are concentrated in major metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, Boston, and New Jersey), who comprised 56 percent of the sample. While there may be some concern about online surveys, they are becoming more common in survey research and we have good reason to believe that the sample is representative of American Jews.[7] The NJDC survey estimated that 77.3 percent of Jews voted for Kerry, close to the 75 percent of the smaller sample (266) in the 2004 national exit polls (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research 2005).

The NJDC survey breakdown of party identification is very similar to the 2004 national exit poll and the 2004 Annenberg survey estimates:[8] 60.2 percent Democrats (compared to 62.4 percent in the exit polls and 60.0 percent in the Annenberg survey), 13.6 percent Republicans (compared to 18.4 percent and 14 percent, respectively), and 26.2 percent

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independents (compared to 19.1 percent and 26.0 percent, respectively). Since the Annenberg survey had a much larger Jewish sample than the exit polls (1,634 compared to 264), the close correspondence with the Annenberg results is reassuring.

We estimate models of vote choice in 2004 first for Jews in the NJDC survey and then for non-Jews excluding fundamentalists in the 2004 ANES. Our models reflect the available questions in the NJDC. Question wording often differed between the two surveys, so our comparisons are approximate. However, they are generally revealing and tell a story consistent with our theoretical expectations. We recognize that thermometer scores may reflect a positivity bias — where people have a tendency to rate all groups positively. Following Wilcox, Sigelman and Cook (1989), we normalize the thermometer scores by subtracting the mean of thermometer scores common to the two surveys from the evangelical (NJDC) and the fundamentalist (ANES) thermometers.[9]

The NJDC and ANES surveys ask about different Christian groups for the thermometer ratings. Jews rated evangelicals at a mean score of 23.8 on the 0–100 feeling thermometer, compared to ratings of Christian fundamentalists of 59.4 for all non-Jews in the ANES and 56.4 for non-Jews excluding evangelicals. Evangelicals and fundamentalists have significant differences between them, especially on theological grounds (Kellstedt and Smidt 1996). And in the one survey that asks respondents to rate both evangelicals and fundamentalists on feeling thermometers — the 1988 American National Election Study — both Jews and non-Jews placed fundamentalists higher: Jews rated evangelicals at 23.4 and fundamentalists at 31.0, a modest difference, while non-Jews rated evangelicals at 43.8 and fundamentalists at 54.1.

The correlations between evaluations of evangelicals and fundamentalists are 0.539 for non-Jews ($N = 1443$) and 0.565 for Jews ($N = 97$). A simpler test is whether respondents saw evangelicals and fundamentalists in similar ways. We trichotomized the thermometers into negative (below 50 on the thermometer scale), neutral (at 50), and positive (above 50). For non-Jews, the τ_b between these measures is 0.956 ($N = 2562$), with 92 percent of the cases on the diagonals. For Jews, the τ_b is 1.00. Every Jewish respondent gave consistent responses, with 74 of 78 respondents rating both evangelicals and fundamentalists negatively (and only one positively).

The differences in evaluations — at least for Jews — seem to have withered over time. In the Annenberg 2000 election survey, the small Jewish sample rated Christian fundamentalists at a mean thermometer score of 26.3, very close to the NJDC mean for 2004. The Annenberg

2004 survey did not ask for a thermometer rating for fundamentalists, but did ask a "favorability" question on a 0–10 scale. The larger Jewish sample rated fundamentalists at 30 (compared to 48 for non-Jews excluding born-again Christians). The difference between ratings of Christian fundamentalists and evangelicals is relatively small on these thermometers. On all of the variables we use in this analysis from the 2004 ANES, except for the Israel thermometer, there are only minuscule differences between evangelicals and fundamentalists,[10] consistent with the findings of Smith (1998, ch. 2; 2000, 197–225) who finds little difference between them on either theological or social issues.

We estimate the models of vote choice with probit analysis. We experimented with simultaneous equation estimation (two stage least squares) to control for the endogeneity of ideology and party identification. However, the instruments available in the NJDC survey were very limited — and this led to models for vote choice, party identification, and ideologies that were either too sparse or so similar to each other that key variables became insignificant in all of the models.

In probit models, the coefficients are nonlinear, so they do not have straightforward interpretations as regression coefficients do. Instead, we estimate probit "effects" (Kellsted 1989) — changes in the probability of vote choice (or vote change) as we move from the minimum to the maximum values of each predictor. For some highly skewed independent variables, we restrict the ranges of the effects to values of the independent variables at less extreme bounds (at 20% and 80% of the distributions).

Our model of vote choice for American Jews includes party identification, ideology, retrospective evaluations (the direction of the country), religiosity, standard demographics (gender, income, education, and age), and positions on key issues. The NJDC survey had a thin set of questions on issues, but it did have a wide range of questions on how important likely voters saw a range of issues in shaping vote choice. Petrocik (1996) has shown that the two parties "own" a range of issues, so voters who are especially concerned with terrorism should be more likely to vote Republican — an issue the President's party "owns" — while voters motivated more by health care or Iraq should be more likely to cast Democratic ballots.[11]

Traditionally, both parties have supported Israel, though the Democrats have come closer to "owning" this issue. Yet, American Jews have shifted toward the Republicans when they believed that that party is more strongly supportive of Israel. Following the 2000 election, the Bush administration has tried to claim this issue for the Republican Party through its strong support for the Jewish state. The NJDC survey also includes questions on

the importance of Iraq and the economy, and Israel. Each of the issue measures *except for health* is based upon a dichotomous coding of the standard questions of what are the most important and second most important issues in the campaign (combined into a single measure for each issue). Health did not rank highly enough, so we use a 10 point issue importance measure for these issues in the survey.

The NJDC and ANES surveys have questions on social issues, but they are different. The NJDC asked half of its sample whether they approved of gay civil unions (two-thirds did). We imputed values for the other half sample.[12] The ANES asked about approval of gay marriage (44 percent of our voting sample approved and another three percent accepted civil unions). The ANES had questions on when abortion should be allowed and whether gun possession should be made more difficult. The NJDC only had feeling thermometers on pro-life activists and for the National Rifle Association (both with mean scores of 20). Hence, we need to be cautious when we compare the effects of these social issues across surveys.

We expect that Jews who see Israel as a central issue in the election *or* who are strongly pro-Israel will be more likely to vote Republican. Very few non-Jews see Israel as a critical issue. We include the Israel thermometer in the equations for non-Jews and we have a weak expectation that higher values on the thermometer will lead to a greater likelihood of voting Republican.

Evaluations of evangelicals on the feeling thermometer should be an important factor in vote choice, *but primarily for Jews*. For non-Jews, the thermometer is for "Christian fundamentalists." We expect greater likelihoods of voting Republican for our two measures of religiosity — frequency of attending religious services and being a member of a religious organization. Higher income and more education should make people more likely to vote Republican; older people should also tilt toward the Republicans (though this effect may be weak), while women and African-Americans (in the non-Jewish models only) should be more likely to vote Democratic.

JEWISH VOTE CHOICE IN 2004

Jewish and non-Jewish vote choices are largely driven by the same factors, but Jews start from a more liberal, pro-Democratic base. Seventy-four percent of Jews identify with the Democratic party,

Table 1. The Jewish Vote in 2004: NJDC Survey

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	MLE/ SE	Effect
Party identification	−0.377[c]	0.050	−7.55	−0.461
Ideology	0.180	0.148	1.22	0.045
Direction of country	1.222[d]	0.205	5.95	0.219
Israel thermometer	0.005	0.003	1.48	0.067
Importance of Israel	−1.078[d]	0.221	−4.86	−0.177
Evangelical thermometer (normed)	−.0010[c]	0.003	−3.11	−0.253
Gay union support (imputed)	0.107	0.099	1.09	0.058
Pro-life feeling thermometer	−0.0002	0.003	−0.00	−0.0002
National Rifle Association thermometer	−0.007[b]	0.003	−2.17	−0.098
Importance of health care	0.112[c]	0.046	2.44	0.175
Importance of terrorism	−0.673[d]	0.173	−3.89	−0.085
Importance of Iraq	0.252	0.221	1.14	0.030
How often attends synagogue	−0.170[b]	0.096	−1.77	−0.066
Member Jewish organization	−0.373[b]	0.196	−1.91	−0.044
Gender	0.287	0.173	1.95	0.034
Income	−0.078[a]	0.060	−1.30	−0.053
Education	−0.021	0.087	−0.25	−0.013
Age	−0.006	0.006	−0.98	−0.041
Constant	−0.427	1.025	−0.42	

[a]$p < 0.10$. [b]$p < 0.05$. [c]$p < 0.01$. [d]$p < 0.0001$ (all tests one tailed except constant).
$N = 719$. Estimated $R = 0.814$. −2*Log Likelihood: 317.274.
Percent predicted correctly: Model: 91.5; Null: 79.7.

compared to 49 percent of all non-Jews and 54 percent of non-Jews excluding evangelicals. Half as many Jews identify as conservatives (17.8 percent) as do non-evangelical non-Jews (35.6 percent). Eighty-two percent of Jews believed that the country was on the wrong track in 2004, compared to 60.2 percent of non-evangelicals non-Jews seeing the United States on the wrong track.

We now move to our model of vote choice for Jews in 2004 in Table 1. The model performs very well, predicting 91 percent of the cases correctly (compared to 79.7 percent for a null model). After party identification, the normed evangelical thermometer has the greatest effect on vote choice in 2004 for Jews. The voter who is least favorable toward evangelicals is 25 percent more likely to support Kerry than is the one with the warmest feelings. The normed evangelical thermometer has a greater effect than the direction of the country, the importance of Israel, and the salience of health care, the other key factors shaping

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ballot choice for Jews. Feelings toward evangelicals and the salience of Israel *only shape vote choice for Jews*.

The normed evangelical thermometer ranges from −68.3 to 96.5, with 90 percent of the respondents falling between −50 and 40. Setting all other variables at their mean (using Gary King's Clarify routine in Stata), a Jewish voter who rates evangelicals at −50 on the normed thermometer would have a probability of voting for John Kerry of 0.94; Jews who rate evangelicals at 40 still are likely (0.74) to vote Democratic. Only 21 voters in the NJDC sample (2.6 percent) rated evangelicals at 40 or higher on the normed thermometer; for the unnormed measure, barely 10 percent were above the neutral score of 50.

Attachment to Israel, on the other hand, pushed voters to the Republican Party. Respondents who said that Israel was one of the two most important issues in the election — 15 percent in total — were 18 percent more likely to vote for Bush. And voters who rated Israel far more highly than the Palestinians were 11 percent more likely to vote for Bush than those who had the opposite sympathies in the Middle East — an effect about the same as we find for the evangelical thermometer. A Jewish voter who rated Israel as one of the two most important issues would still have a 0.70 probability of voting for Kerry until their evangelical thermometer score crossed the neutral score of 50 — which was true of just two percent of the NJDC sample. *The importance of the Israeli issue was very powerful, but only among a handful of Jewish voters.* Thirty-six percent of Jewish supporters of Bush rated Israel as one of the most important issues, compared to just eight percent of Kerry's backers. The effect of attitudes toward evangelicals was just half of that for Israel's importance, but it shaped the vote choices of far more Jewish voters.

There was clearly a trade-off among Jewish voters on ratings of evangelicals and the importance of Israel. Jewish voters with normed thermometer scores at −30 had a 94 percent likelihood of voting for Kerry if they did not rank Israel at the top of their voting agenda but a 67 percent if Israel was so important (using Clarify). Even a rating of 20 on the normed evangelical thermometer (only nine percent of the voters) would lead to an 84 percent likelihood of voting for Kerry if Israel was not a key voting issue but just 48 percent if Israel were salient. The problem in converting Jews to the GOP is that only 2.2 percent of Jewish voters had a normed evangelical rating of 20 or higher *and* ranked Israel at the top of their voting agenda.

Jewish voters had overwhelmingly positive evaluations of Israel, even if the security of the Jewish state was not one of their most important

voting cues. Jews who did not rate Israel as a voting issue still had strong feelings for the state, with a thermometer average of 77.2, compared to 95.0 for Jews who rated Israel as a key voting issue (and 61.6 for all non-Jews in the ANES model estimated below). Thus, Israel thermometer ratings had little effect on Jewish voters.

Voters who saw terrorism as a key issue were also more likely to vote for Bush, by almost nine percent. A Jewish voter who rated *both* Israel and terrorism as among the top two issues and was at the mean for evangelical evaluations had a two-thirds probability of voting Democratic, still substantial but considerably less than the sample average (80 percent). Such voters made up only three percent of the NJDC sample (23 voters). Only four percent rated both of these issues as critical and only six percent rated Israel as critical and were at or above the mean on the evangelical thermometer.

Is this part of a general hawkish syndrome based upon support for Israel and a concern for terrorism? The correlation between the importance of the two issues is minuscule ($r = 0.055$). However, the two issues are linked for the small share of voters for whom Israel was a central voting issue. In a simple probit analysis for the 88 respondents to the 2004 NJDC survey who rated Israel as one of the two most important issues, party identification, the frequency of synagogue attendance, and the importance of terrorism were all significant predictors of Presidential vote choice, while attitudes toward evangelicals were not. For the 700 respondents for whom Israel was not one of the most two important issues, party identification, the frequency of synagogue attendance, and attitudes toward evangelicals are significant predictors of vote choice, but the importance of terrorism is not.[13] The salience of Israel was linked to a more hawkish view on foreign policy for a small number of American Jews in 2004. *There were powerful effects for foreign policy issues, especially the "identity" issue of Israel. However, for a much greater share of Jewish voters, the "zero-sum" identity issue of evangelicals loomed much larger.*

We do not argue that the Jewish vote in 2004 was motivated primarily by issues of identity such as the importance of Israel or evaluations of evangelicals. The largest probit effects come from factors that are common to all voters: Party identification and the direction of the country (positive coefficient indicates negative evaluation of the country's direction) are the only other variables to shift vote choice by more than 20 percent — but these are powerful effects for a sample where 80% of the sample in this estimation voted for Kerry.[14] The

importance of health care leads to an 18 percent increase in Democratic voting, about the same as the salience of Israel. There is little direct impact of issue voting on either domestic or other foreign policy issues in our model and only a marginal contribution for ideology. More religious Jews — either by attending synagogue weekly or by belonging to a Jewish organization — were more likely to vote Republican. Orthodox Jews were more likely to vote for Bush — 51 percent did so. But Orthodoxy was moderately correlated with the other religiosity measures and was not significant, so we excluded it from this analysis.

VOTE CHOICE AMONG NON-JEWS

We present our model of vote choice for non-Jews in Table 2. We estimate an equation for non-Jews excluding fundamentalists. We construct our issue importance variables from the most important issue question. The ANES asked only one question on the most important problem but it did ask about the importance of other issues (such as health care). Instead of the "direction of the country," as in the NJDC, the ANES has a measure of whether the country is on the right track.

The estimations for all non-Jews and non-evangelicals are generally very similar. The models once more are very successful, with over 90 percent of vote choices predicted correctly. The key difference between Jews and non-Jews in 2004 is reflected in the null models, which are based upon modal vote choices. For Jews, prediction that all cases fall into the modal category leads to an 80 percent success rate with no predictors (the null model); for non-Jews (excluding fundamentalists) it is 53.3.

Neither the fundamentalist feeling thermometer nor attitudes toward Israel are significant in the model for non-Jews. The effect for the normed fundamentalist thermometer is −0.059, about a fifth the impact of evangelical ratings for Jews (and not significant). The Israel thermometer is also insignificant, with a minuscule effect. As with Jews, the strongest effects come from party identification, whether the country is on the right track, and the importance of the health care issue. Ideology, abortion, and gun access are significant for non-Jews, with a lesser (but significant) impact for the importance of terrorism. Each of these factors work's as expected: Democratic identification, liberalism, rating health care as important but terrorism is not as salient, saying that the country is heading in the wrong direction, favoring abortion rights, and limiting gun access all lead to greater likelihoods of

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Table 2. Presidential Vote Choice in 2004: Non-Jews: 2004 ANES (Fundamentalists Excluded)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	M LE/ SE	Effect
Party identification	−0.495[d]	0.074	−6.67	−0.518
Ideology	−0.296[b]	0.128	−2.31	−0.203
Country on right track	−1.302[d]	0.270	−4.82	−0.168
Israel thermometer	−0.008	0.007	−1.16	−0.072++
Fundamentalist thermometer (normed)	−0.001	0.004	−0.19	−0.059
Oppose gay marriage	−0.176	0.150	−1.17	−0.034
Abortion (favor rights)	0.409[c]	0.147	2.79	0.123
Favor gun access	−0.272[b]	0.134	−2.03	−0.113
Importance of terrorism	−0.513[b]	0.279	−1.84	−0.052
Importance of health care	2.807[d]	0.782	3.59	0.299
Importance of Iraq	0.079	0.370	0.21	0.007
Frequency of attending church	−0.091	0.110	−0.83	−0.034
Active in church	−0.016	0.378	−0.04	−0.001
Gender	0.443	0.295	1.50	0.042
Income	0.014	0.024	0.56	0.028
Education	−0.074	0.099	−0.75	−0.042
Age	0.002	0.009	0.20	0.010
Black	1.415[c]	0.421	3.36	0.149
Constant	3.759[c]	1.105	3.40	

[a]$p < 0.10$. [b]$p < 0.05$. [c]$p < 0.01$. [d]$p < 0.0001$ (all tests one tailed except constant).
$N = 423$. Estimated $R = 0.869$. −2*Log Likelihood: 143.275.
Percent predicted correctly: Model: 93.7; Null: 53.3.
+ Effects for age between 18 and 75.
++ Effect = 0.051 for values between 15 and 100.

voting Democratic. Social issues divide non-Jews more than Jews because there is more consensus within the Jewish community on guns and abortion. The only demographic variable that is significant is race: African-Americans are more likely to vote Democratic. The religiosity variables are insignificant as are all demographics except for education and race.

VOTE CHANGE FROM 2000 TO 2004

There is further support for our argument when we examine patterns of vote change from 2000 to 2004 using recalled vote choice in both the NJDC and ANES surveys. There are only 71 instances of vote change in the NJDC survey — 40 toward the Republicans and 31 toward the

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Democrats in 2004, and just 60 vote changers among non-Jews (and 48 among non-evangelical non-Jews) in the ANES, 57 percent toward the Democrats. This small number of cases makes multivariate analysis too hazardous, so we present some descriptive statistics (though we have estimated probit models, which confirm the bivariate results we present).

Jews who shifted from Al Gore in 2000 to Bush four years later were 14 percent more pro-Israel than Jews who changed from Bush in 2000 to Kerry (the simple correlation with the Israel thermometer is -0.250). Sixty two percent of the Jews who shifted to the GOP placed Israel as the first or second most important issue, compared to just five percent who moved from Bush to Kerry ($r = -0.585$). We find no similar effect for non-Jews; indeed, non-Jews shifting to Kerry in 2004 were marginally more pro-Israel than those who changed to Bush.

For both Jews and non-Jews, voters switching to the Democrats were more negative toward evangelicals than those who changed to the Republicans. The simple correlation was higher for Jews ($r = -0.209$ for the untransformed measure, -0.274 for the normed thermometer) than for non-evangelical non-Jews ($r = -0.172$ and -0.221, respectively). The correlation for non-Jewish non-evangelicals is affected by two outliers with very negative normed views of evangelicals; removing these two cases reduces the normed correlation to -0.153. The simple percentages tell an even more dramatic story. The gap in (untransformed) thermometer scores for Jews switching from one party to the other was 17 percent for Jews, compared to five to six percent for non-Jews. Non-Jewish non-evangelicals who switched to Kerry had positive views of fundamentalists, with average scores of 56.0. Jews who switched to Kerry not only had strongly negative views of evangelicals (mean rating of 15.4), but their average score was *five percent less favorable to evangelicals than were Jews who voted Democratic in both 2000 and 2004*. Half of all Jewish voters who switched to the Democrats rated evangelicals at zero; three-quarters of switchers to Kerry rated evangelicals at 30 or less and 95 percent had a negative rating — compared to only two-thirds of non-Jews.

Vote change for Jews in 2004 focused on two key issues of Jewish identity. The more religious Jews have stronger attachments to Israel (Wald and Williams 2006) and they have become less loyal to the Democratic Party. Outside the Orthodox community, Jews worry less about Israel than about the threat to their identity from evangelical Christians. This perceived threat keeps Jews in the Democratic fold — and brings some who have strayed back. For those who voted

Republican in 2000 or were tempted to vote for Bush in 2004, the perceived threat from the Christian Right seems to have solidified ties to the Democratic Party, the traditional home for minorities that have faced discrimination. When there is a perceived threat, there is a greater likelihood of a sense of shared fate against the out-group and a felt need to show group solidarity. The overwhelming Jewish support for Kerry thus stands in contrast to the continuing weakness of the traditional New Deal coalition — and very much in the mold of African-American loyalty to the Democratic Party based upon a perception of shared fate. In 2004, these two issues of Jewish identity were almost a wash. President Bush did lead some Jews who backed Gore in 2000 to vote for him four years later, but a slightly greater number turned away from the Republicans because of their ties to evangelicals. Our probit analysis (also including the importance of terrorism and taxes) indicates that the importance of Israel had an effect of 0.50 toward Bush, while the (normed) evangelical thermometer led to a shift of 0.58 toward Kerry.

REPRISE

Why do Jews vote Democratic? Mostly for the same reasons others vote Democratic – they are liberal. Jewish voters generally respond to national events in much the same way as non-Jews (Sigelman 1991). Even when Jews follow the crowd, they do it to a different beat. Jewish political loyalties depend at least in part on how secure they feel in their surroundings (Medding 1977).

Jewish concern about evangelicals is hardly new: A 1964 survey of anti-Semitic attitudes in the United States by the fraternal organization B'nai B'rith (Glock et al. 1964) revealed much stronger negative attitudes toward Jews among evangelicals than among other Americans. Evangelicals scored significantly higher than other Americans on two overall measures of anti-Semitism (by 54 percent to 27 percent anti-Semitic on the first scale and by 58 percent to 28 percent on the second), were more likely (by 58 percent to 48 percent) to say that Jews were responsible for the death of Christ, were more likely to say that Jews are shady (by 60 percent to 41 percent), to say that Jews controlled international banking (by 68 percent to 49 percent), to say that Jews push themselves into places where they are not wanted (by 37 percent to 26 percent), and that Jews are so tricky that others don't have a fair chance in dealing with them (by 48 percent to 35 percent) — and were

almost 20 percent more likely (67 percent to 49 percent) to say that they have no close Jewish friends. Data from the 1996 Religious Right Survey of the American Jewish Committee show that while "[t]he Religious Right strongly endorses Israel and the Jew's special Biblical position... [its] "supporters tend to take antithetical positions toward Jews more often than other Americans do...[and] have higher anti-Jewish scores" on a scale encompassing stereotypes of Jews and the compatibility of Jews and Christians in society, among other variables (Smith 1999, 249, 250, 253).

Yet Jews were hardly preoccupied with Christian evangelicals in 1964 for at least four reasons. First, Jews could hardly find reassuring the overall level of anti-Semitic attitudes revealed in the B'nai Brith survey. Second, over time, anti-Semitism receded among evangelicals. In a 1981 replication of the anti-Semitism survey sponsored by the American Jewish Committee,[15] self-identified born-again Christians were more likely to say that Jews were more loyal to Israel than to the United States (by 57 percent to 40 percent), that Jews have a lot of irritating faults (by 34 percent to 27 percent), that Jews cause trouble (by 18 percent to 11 percent), and that Jews have assimilated into the larger society (by 48 percent to 55 percent). Born-again Christians were substantially less likely to have either social or business contacts with Jews across a wide range of measures compared to other non-Jews. While there is still evidence of negative stereotypes of Jews among conservative Christians and a persistent social distance, the differences between born-again Christians and other non-Jews had declined considerably and were insignificant for most questions.

Third, and more critically, evangelicals did not constitute a political threat to American Jews. Jews were heavily Democratic in 1964: 92 percent said that they voted for Lyndon B. Johnson, the Democratic nominee, and 85 percent identified with the Democratic Party. Yet, 68 percent of evangelicals also said that they voted for Johnson and 65 percent identified as Democrats. *In 1964, evangelicals did not pose a political threat to American Jews.* Both groups were on the same side and there was thus no stimulus to provoke an identity-based vote. And, finally, evangelicals were not a well-organized political force in the 1960s but this had changed dramatically by 2004. In the 1980s, evangelicals became a more prominent force within the Republican coalition. Jewish concern over the role of evangelicals is not new. Even though the Jewish samples in the ANES are very small (between 20 and 40) from 1980 to 2000, they consistently show that Jews give far lower

thermometer scores to both evangelicals (from 1980 to 1988) and Christian evangelicals (1988 to 2000) than do non-Jews. Jews rate, on average, both evangelicals and fundamentalists 20–25 points lower than non-Jews, about what we observe comparing the 2004 NJDC and ANES surveys. The correlation of the thermometer scores with Presidential vote choice was inconsistent, however. There were moderate to strong correlations in some years ($r = -0.56$ in 1980, -0.41 in 1984, and -0.53 in 2004), but the relationships were close to zero in the other years.

If Jews have been concerned about the influence of the Christian Right since the 1980s, 2004 presented them with perhaps the starkest choice they have confronted. The identity issue helps to explain why John Kerry won the votes of 48 percent of Jewish conservatives and 77 percent of Jewish moderates in 2004, while gaining only 18 percent of non-Jewish conservatives and 58 percent of non-Jewish moderates. At a meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the major lobbying arm of American Jews, in November, 2005 Republican National Committee chair Ken Mehlman (himself Jewish) said that the Republicans' stronger position on terrorism would better protect Israel. Democratic National Committee Chair Howard Dean held that Democrats "believe that Jews should feel comfortable in being American Jews' without being constrained from practicing their faith or be[ing] compelled to convert to another religion" (Tobin 2005).

The countervailing issues of Israel and attitudes toward evangelicals point to the importance of group identity in shaping political choice among minority group members. The negative evaluations of evangelicals unite Jews of otherwise differing views may constitute a "shared fate" among American Jews — a fate defined by perceptions of threat to a way of life. Support for Israel represents a shared fate with other Jews throughout the world — and, as with attitudes toward evangelicals, there is only modest variation in positive views. The mean feeling thermometer is 79.6 and even secular Jews, who are the least supportive, have a mean score of 69.1 (compared to over 88 for Orthodox and Conservative Jews and between 78 and 80 for Reform and Reconstructionist adherents).

Even the most likely Jewish targets — who identify as Republicans and conservatives, who see the country moving in the right direction, who take conservative positions on issues, who are strongly motivated by the issues of Israel and terrorism, who are wealthy and highly educated — are more likely to vote Democratic if they rate evangelicals negatively. When faced with a perceived threat to group identity, people rally around symbols that

have been important to their heritage — and for many Jews, this includes the Democratic Party.

The Jewish concern about evangelicals may constitute a more lasting political problem for Republicans than does the salience of Israel for Democrats. The differences between the parties on Israel are not large. The salience of Israel for vote choice is also modest, at 15 percent of American Jews. The subsample for whom Israel was one of the two most important voting issues was already predisposed toward Republicans: They are twice as likely (29 percent compared to 14 percent) to profess Republican identification and in 2000 they were 10 percent more likely to vote for Bush than other Jews.

Evangelical ties to the Republican Party are not likely to wane any time in the immediate future. Feelings of threat from a powerful and more numerous groups in the society is an essential stimulant to group cohesion, as the strong *and persistent* identification of African-Americans with the Democratic Party shows. The Catholic ethnic groups (Italians, Irish, Poles, and Germans, among others) who now divide their loyalties between the parties feel a greater sense of security, backed by their much larger populations. Attachment to the party that traditionally attracted minorities that do not feel completely secure in a predominantly white Christian nation makes a lot of sense to both Jews and blacks, the last remaining bastions of Democratic loyalty from the New Deal coalition.

Yet, this too may not be so durable. There is suggestive evidence — from a probit model similar to that in Table 2 — that attitudes toward evangelicals did *not* shape Jewish vote choice in 2000.[16] If the Republicans distance themselves from evangelicals by nominating a candidate not so clearly associated with the Christian Right, they might be able to sway some Jewish voters away from their traditional allegiance to the Democratic Party. In 2004 and especially in 2008, Republicans have tried to gain adherents in the Jewish community by stressing their leaders' strong commitment to the security of Israel — and, especially in 2008, implying that the Democrats would be less devoted to the Jewish state.

Yet, Jewish identification with the Democratic Party is likely to remain strong as long as evangelicals play a major role in American politics. The 2008 Republican nominee, John McCain, made a strong play for the Jewish vote by stressing security issues. McCain was not tied to the evangelical movement, but he did seek the endorsement of the prominent evangelical minister John Hagee — so he could bring both Jews and evangelicals under the same political umbrella. Hagee was then found to have made a statement linking the Holocaust to God's plan to reestablish a

Jewish state in the land of Israel. Hagee's comment reinforced the views of many Jews that evangelical support for Israel rested upon an end-times vision where Jews would have to convert to Christianity. McCain had to reject the pastor's endorsement, furthering evangelical skepticism about him (Kindy 2008). McCain seemed to have recovered some Jewish support until he named Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, an evangelical herself, as his running mate for Vice President. Many Jews reported shifting back to the Democrats after Palin was nominated (Krieger 2008) and especially after her pastor was linked as a close associate to a leader in the "Jews for Jesus" messianic movement that actively seeks to convert Jews to Christianity (Smith 2008). It was not an easy task to bring evangelicals and Jews into the same coalition — or to change partisanship that rests on issues of identity, especially when that identity is determined by who your out-groups are as well as how you see yourself.

Ironically, any reconciliation between Jews and evangelicals may not benefit the Republican Party. Some evangelicals now argue that the message of Christianity focuses just as much on social justice and protecting the environment as on social issues — and have become more open to considering support for Democratic candidates. How many evangelicals back Democrats, and whether this can breach the divide with social liberals and Jews in particular, remains an open question.

NOTES

1. Carter might have lost votes because he was clearly identified as an evangelical Christian. However, he neither endorsed the evangelical social agenda nor espoused lowering barriers between the church and the state. Moreover, as we note below, the small Jewish sample in the ANES cumulative file points to a strong *negative* correlation between the evangelical thermometer and voting for Democrats in 1980.

2. For a description of the study and access to the data (which includes surveys of both the United States and Canada), see http://www.thearda.com/file.asp?File=QUEEN'S&Show=Description.

3. The survey was conducted for Religion and Ethics Newsweekly. A description of the study and the data are available at http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/EVANGEL.asp.

4. From a survey by the Pew Research Center on the People and the Press and the Pew Forum on Religion, August, 2006, at http://pewforum.org/publications/surveys/religion-politics-06.pdf.

5. See http://www.patrobertson.com/Speeches/IsraelLauder.asp, accessed October 24, 2005.

6. The "most hostile" segment of the Jewish sample was respondents who rated evangelicals at zero on the 0–100 scale.

7. Personal communication from Patrick McCreesh of Greenberg Research by e-mail, June 23, 2005. McCreesh told us by phone that the weighted sample is highly representative of the American Jewish population. We use weights in all of our analyses below. The weighted percentages from each region are: Boston and New Jersey: 11.5, New York City, 30.5; Midwest, 9.1; South: 16.0; Mid-Atlantic, 11.3; West Southwest: 8.4; and Los Angeles: 13.3.

8. The Annenberg survey had 116 Jewish respondents. The mean thermometer for all non-Jews is 54.5; excluding respondents who called themselves "born again" (who are not necessarily the same as evangelicals in the 2004 ANES) lowers the mean thermometer to 47.6. On the Annenberg survey, see http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/naes/.

9. The thermometers common to the two surveys we employ are for George W. Bush, John Kerry, Dick Cheney, John Edwards, the Democratic Party, and the Republican Party.

10. The coding of evangelicals and fundamentalists follows Layman (2001). Since there were only 24 fundamentalists in the 2004 ANES, we used an alternative criterion: Fundamentalists are evangelicals who see the Bible as the literal word of God (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

11. We also constructed measures of the importance of moral issues, taxes, Social Security, education, the environment, and the economy, but none were significant, so we dropped them from the model we report.

12. The NJDC survey asked the gay marriage question of only half of the sample. To get a larger *N*, we imputed values for the other half of the sample. The variables we used to impute gay marriage support were: income, gender, the evangelical thermometer, the prolife thermometer, the importance of terrorism, health, abortion, the environment, Social Security, education, Iraq, poverty, and moral issues, being single, and being widowed. All were significant at least at $p < 0.10$ and the regression had an adjusted R^2 of 0.318.

13. For Jewish respondents for whom Israel was a key voting issue, the McKelvey-Zavoina $R^2 = 0.691$, with 83 percent of the cases predicted correctly (compared to 56.8 percent for a null model). For the 700 cases for whom Israel was not one of the most two important issues, the McKelvey-Zavoina = 0.757, with 90 percent of the cases predicted correctly (compared to 83 percent for a null model). Details are available upon request.

14. Three-quarters of Jews identified as Democrats and 18 percent as Republicans in 2004; 82 Jews believed that the United States was heading in the wrong direction.

15. The data and codebook are available from http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/ANTSEM81.asp.

16. We ran the same model as in Table 2, dropping variables (the direction of the country, the importance of terrorism, and the importance of Iraq) that could not shape the 2000 vote.

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