

American Jews and the 2008 Presidential Election: As Democratic and Liberal as Ever?

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The Jews have three veltn (worlds), di velt (this world), yene velt (the next world), and Roosevelt.

Judge Jonah Goldstein, Republican from New York, 1940s

The Context

The long-standing identification of large numbers of American Jews with the Democratic Party and the liberal camp in American politics has been one of the most reliable features of national elections. Jews' much-heralded attachment to the Democratic Party and its presidential candidates dates back at least four generations, starting with the 1932 election that brought Franklin Delano Roosevelt to office. Since then, most Jews, election after election, have behaved as among the most loyal Democrats, both as voters and activists. Of all white ethnic and religious groups in the United States, Jews have voted for Democratic presidential candidates more than any other in all 19 quadrennial contests from 1932 to 2004.

Levels of support for Republican and Democratic candidates in the general electorate have, of course, fluctuated over the years. As a result, Jews' voting behavior has varied as well, very much in line with currents in the larger society. That being said, however, for nearly eighty years, a significant gap in favor of the Democrats has characterized the Jewish vote in national elections in America. Among Jews, support for the Democratic presidential candidate (and those for lesser offices) certainly has fluctuated as the American center has moved both left and right over the years. Despite all of this movement, Jews have remained well to the left of that ever-moving mainstream – at least until recently.

The persistence of Jews' penchant for Democratic candidates and for politically liberal identities has been the source of pride for some, angst for others, and mystery to many. Many think (mistakenly, it turns out) that income is strongly related to party affiliation and political identity. According to this line of thinking, the poor and working class are supposed to identify as liberals and Democrats, the wealthy as conservatives and Republicans, and the middle class are meant to be torn between the two poles and two parties.

Popular and journalistic accounts in support of this thesis abound. But social science has shown that the picture is far more complex with partisanship and political identity being far from perfectly correlated to socio-economic status. When Jews were heavily concentrated in the working class, in the 1930s and 1940s, their Democratic leanings made perfect sense, this thinking goes. But as they emerged as the most highly educated and most affluent group in America (challenged only recently by some far smaller groups such as Japanese Americans and Hindus), the conservative and Republican camps should have drawn growing numbers of increasingly affluent Jews – or so it seemed. In fact, with each quadrennial election of late, both analysts and advocates have come to predict and/or promote the beginnings of a re-alignment of the Jewish vote, expecting Jews to shift right with their growing social achievements. As Milton Himmelfarb famously quipped, "*Jews earn like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans.*"

Yet, notwithstanding their affluence, Jews over the years – with a few wrinkles here and there – remained exceedingly loyal to the Democratic Party, with the Orthodox community a notable exception. While their relative affluence may argue in favor of a shift toward Republican affiliation and conservative views, other factors seem to have kept the Jews where they have been politically situated for almost eight decades. Among the key factors that account for this pull in the liberal and Democratic direction are: the Jews' high levels of education; their discomfort with attempts to "legislate morality" around social issues; and their persisting feelings of minority status, notwithstanding their penetration into elite positions throughout society.

The 2008 election again raises the question of how American Jews will vote – and why. Will they, aside from the Orthodox, continue to give lopsided support to the Democratic candidate? Or will 2008 bring a marked recession in the historically high levels of Democratic voting among American Jews? What about the Jewish response to the economic crisis in the United States – will Jews engage in economic retrospective voting or will particular socio-economic issues – such as the security of Israel – trump these larger national economic concerns?

Beyond the usual reasons to anticipate a significant shift away from the Democratic Party and historic liberal positions, there are several factors peculiar to this election that are

salient for the Jewish community and will certainly influence participation. One is the issue of Israel. This is an area of prime concern to a large number of Jews and certainly the preponderance of the organized Jewish community. At least until recently, polls have found John McCain to be more trusted among the general electorate on matters of foreign affairs than Barack Obama, suggesting that Jews may also find the Republican a “safer bet” on Israel than the Democrat. Moreover, Obama’s willingness to meet with a variety of foreign leaders, and seeming to some to refrain from fully endorsing the historic loyalty that the US has had with Israel, may have raised a number of flags within the Jewish community. Finally, rumors of Obama’s purported clandestine Muslim identity, and his middle name of Hussein, may have raised doubts about his candidacy among some decidedly pro-Israel Jews.

Thus, even if Obama were to win the election, and even if he were to attract a majority of Jewish voters, there is some reason to believe that this election may see a narrowing of the traditional gap between Jews and other Americans in their vote for president.

The Questions

Stimulated in part by this immediate possibility, this study seeks to address four related questions:

- 1) How large, in fact, is the gap between Jews and other Americans in their preferences for the next president of the United States?
- 2) How do Jews, in fact, differ from other Americans in their thinking about the election and the issues that matter to them?
- 3) Considering all the ways in which Jews differ from others, and insofar as Jews remain more inclined toward the Democratic candidate, what explains the Jewish/non-Jewish gap in voting preferences?
- 4) How do Jews vary among themselves in terms of electoral intentions by the major axes of social differentiation? And what can the intra-group differences among Jews tell us about their political values and inclinations?

The Data

To address these questions, in September 2008, we fielded two nearly simultaneous surveys of the American population. Undertaken by Synovate, Inc., the survey respondents consisted of members of their Global Opinion Panel whose 1.3 million members agree to participate in occasional surveys. Households are recruited by invitation through special mailings or intercepts on web sites. Key demographic variables about each household are captured when respondents complete their member forms. This information includes household composition, income, age, employment, employment type, etc. and is updated periodically. A Jewish respondent is determined by a question in the screening questionnaire that reads, “Please mark whether you are (or your spouse is): Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Other/None.”

By way of a combined mail-back and web-based survey of this panel, we interviewed over 1500 American Jews. At roughly the same time, by using a web-based survey exclusively, we surveyed a General Population sample of over 1500 respondents (including 43 Jews). In all, we received responses from 1596 Jewish respondents, and 1520 from non-Jewish respondents.

For this study, the Jewish sample was weighted by the number of adult Jews in the household, age, sex, region, and education to approximate the distributions found in the *2000-01 National Jewish Population Study* (Kotler-Berkowitz et al. 2003). An extended table in the Appendix compares the Synovate sample after the application of sample weights with the *2000-01 National Jewish Population Study* results, with respect to socio-demographic and Jewish engagement characteristics. With some exceptions, the gaps between the two surveys are small, suggesting that, with caution, we can rely upon the results from the Synovate sample.

The General Population sample was weighted in one stage so as to conform with US Census findings with respect to age, household size, region, education, and income. A second stage of weights took into account the under-representation of African-American and Hispanic households in the initial Synovate sample.

The Findings

A strong Jewish tilt toward Obama

Consistent with the polls shortly following the Republican convention, respondents in this national sample of 3116 respondents were almost evenly divided between Obama (39%) and McCain (38%), with a sizable number at the time undecided (23%). As might be expected, blacks in this sample heavily supported Obama, with Hispanic-Americans giving the Democrat a very healthy margin of nearly 3-to-1 over McCain as can be seen in Figure 1. (Table 1 in the Appendix provides the complete numerical picture)

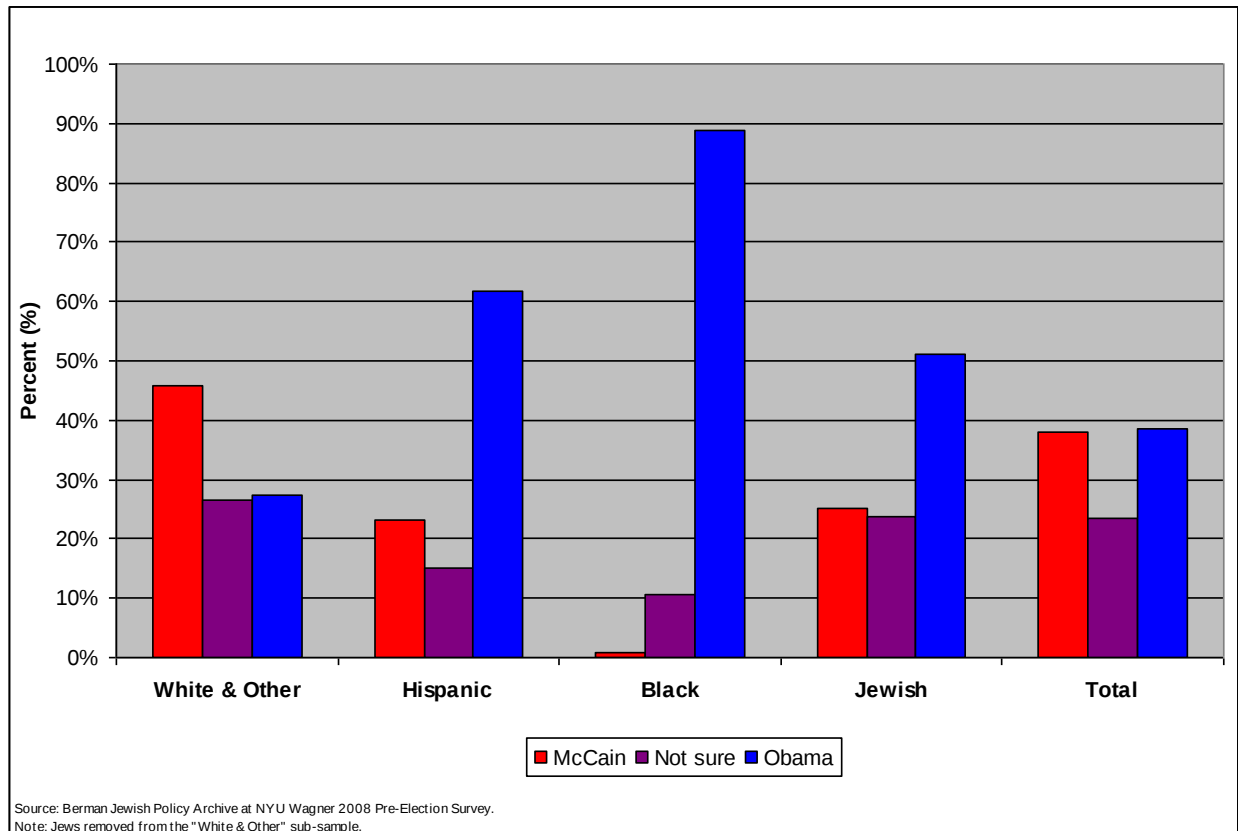
Jews at the time favored Obama by a 2-to-1 margin (51% to 25%), with a considerable number (24%) still undecided. In contrast, non-Jewish whites (a group that includes a small number of Asian-Americans, but excludes Jews, blacks and Hispanics) favored McCain over Obama 46% to 27%, with 27% undecided.

By eliminating the undecided from consideration (and statistically assuming that they will split as do others in their ethnic category), we find the national electorate at the time split evenly between Obama and McCain. The two non-white minorities heavily favored Obama, with blacks even more squarely in Obama's corner than Hispanics.

The Jewish tilt toward the Democratic candidate may be seen through two comparisons. First, Jews split 67-33 in favor of Obama, producing a gap of 17 percentage points with the nation. Second, and even more telling, is the contrast with non-Jewish whites. While only 37% of white respondents declared a preference for Obama, 67% of Jews did so – a gap of 30 percentage points. In short, with undecided voters eliminated from consideration, non-Jewish whites tilted heavily toward McCain, while Jews tilted even more heavily toward Obama.

Of course, since the electoral race has shifted since early September, we would expect all groups to shift in the same direction. As of this writing (October 20, 2008), Obama leads McCain in the national polls by 7 percent, or by 8 percent when the undecided voters are removed from the calculations. By extension, we would project a 75-25% margin in favor of Barack Obama among Jewish voters today.

Figure 1. Vote Intention by Ethnic Group



Liberal values are only part of the explanation

Why should Jews so heavily favor the Democratic candidate? One frequently offered explanation lies with their putatively liberal political values. Indeed, as the survey demonstrated, McCain and Obama voters differ rather dramatically on numerous issue areas. The survey permitted the construction of six scales (each consisting of two or more items) on which voters for the two candidates differ rather dramatically. (The scales were constructed to run from 0 to 100; see the mean scores on the table below for comparisons of the averages on these scales for McCain and Obama voters). Thus, Obama voters, far more than McCain voters believe that:

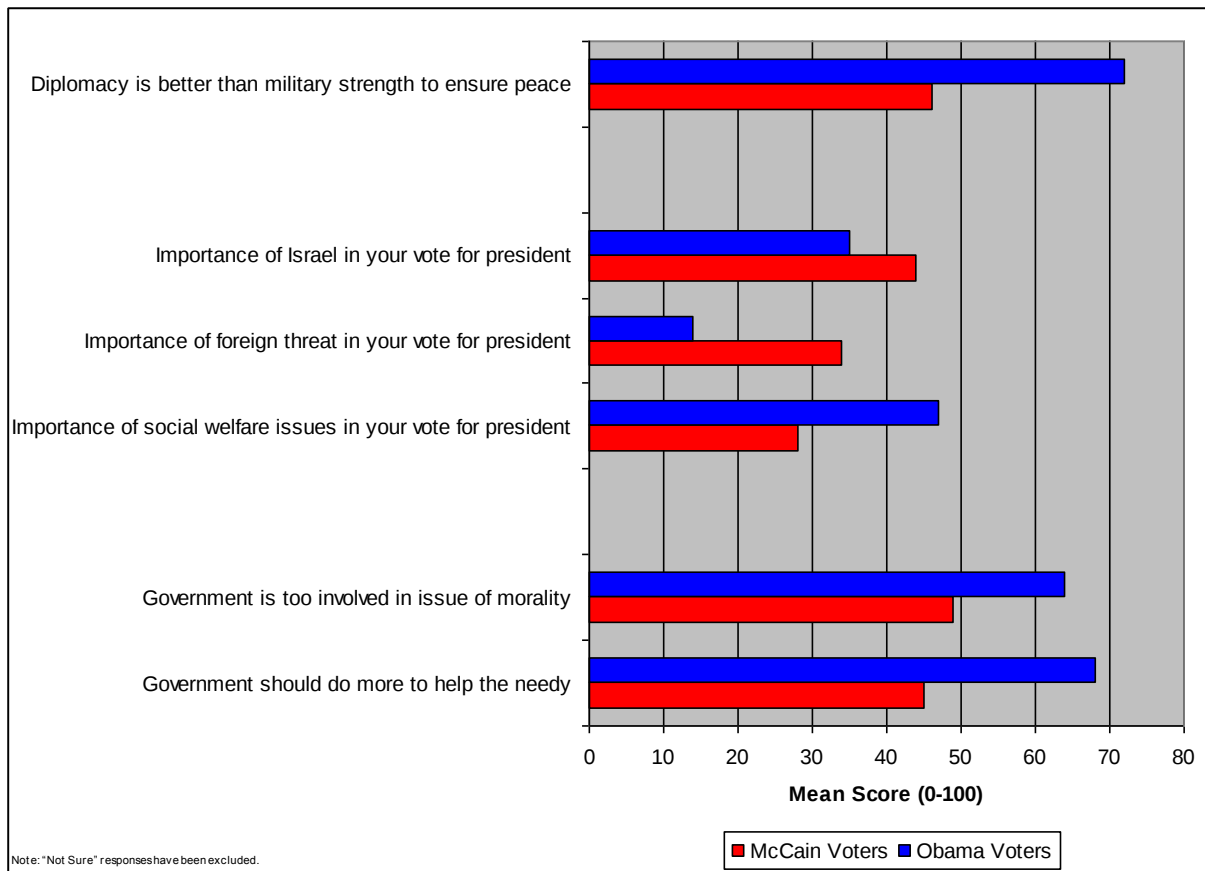
- The government should and can do more to help the needy
- The government is too involved in issues of morality (a codeword for the “social issues” that have been seen as dividing America).
- Diplomacy is better than military strength to ensure peace.

On all of these issues, Jews score higher than their white counterparts. But it is noteworthy that the differences are not all that great and that on helping the needy and diplomacy. With respect to helping the needy, Jews’ scores match those of Hispanics and fall short of those of blacks as seen in Table 2.

In thinking about their vote for president, voters differentially weigh the issues and considerations placed before them. In analyzing responses to a list of 15 issues, we found one dimension which can best be characterized as “foreign threat.” It consists of three items: the campaign on terror, Iran, and immigration. A second critical dimension embraces “social welfare” issues: health care, education, and poverty in the US.

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Figure 2. Issue Positions: Mean Scores Among Committed Voters



Predictably, McCain voters place far greater emphasis on foreign threat than Obama voters, while the reverse is true for social welfare issues. (Figure 2 and Table 3) Perhaps not surprisingly, Jews differ little from other Americans in the extent to which they score high on this measure of concern with foreign threat. But, in sharp contrast with their reputation for commitment to the liberal camp, Jews score the lowest of all four groups distinguished in this study on social welfare concern, roughly equaling the levels reported by whites and Hispanics, and significantly trailing the level of concern expressed by blacks. Health care, education, and poverty may well have moved working class Jews in the Depression, or as middle-class city dwellers and suburbanites in the sixties. But, apparently, they do not ignite the passions of the Jewish electorate in the first decade of the 21st century.

With respect to the importance of the Israel-Palestine conflict in their thinking about the election, Jews do in fact, as would be expected, lead other Americans. However, this issue is one which works in favor of McCain's candidacy as his voters place more emphasis on the Israel-Palestine issue than do Obama voters.

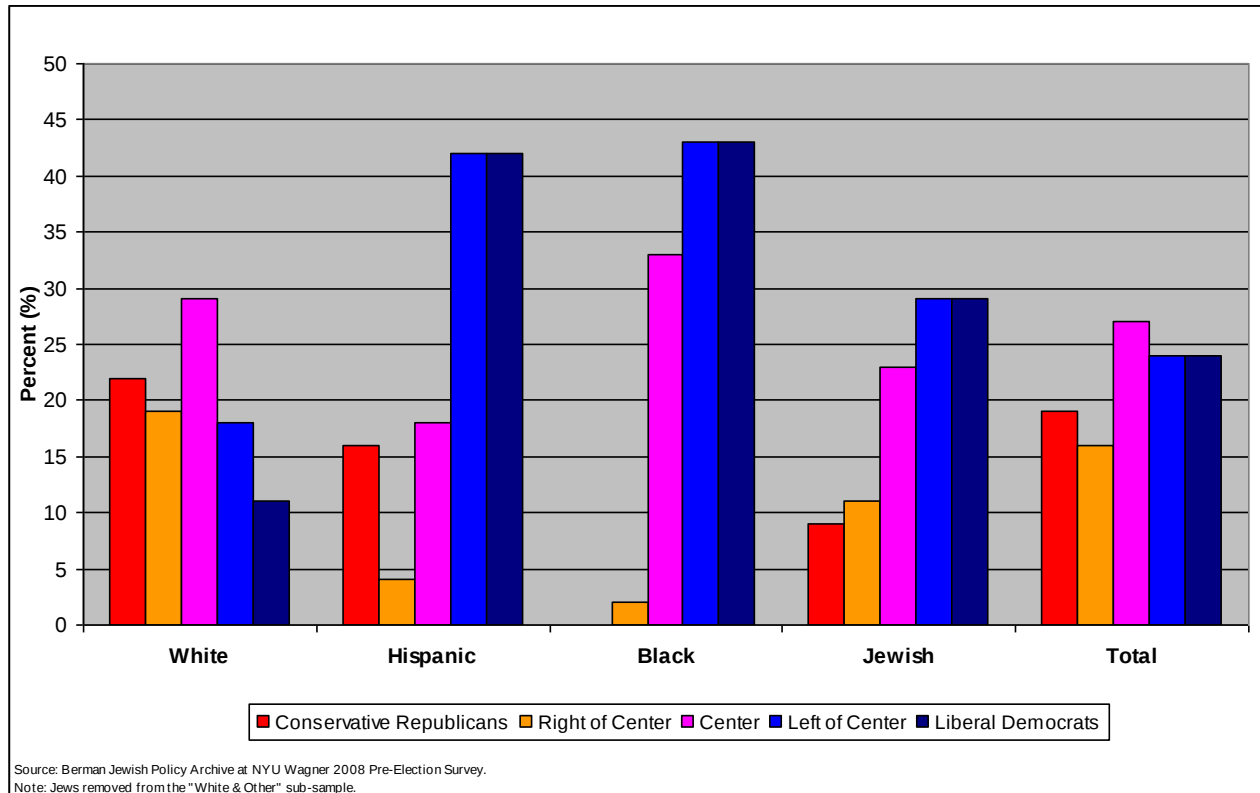
While the political and electoral values measured in this study work well to differentiate Obama from McCain voters, they, in fact do a poor to moderate job of differentiating Jews from other white Americans. Thus, it comes as no surprise that political and electoral values hardly explain the Jewish-white vote-intention gap.

A multiple regression analysis we performed starts with a 31 percentage point gap in vote intention between Jews and whites. The introduction of gender, age, education, and income does nothing to close the gap statistically (a sign that these factors help do little to explain why Jews say they will vote for Obama far more than non-Jewish whites). The introduction of all the political value measures narrows the Jewish-white vote-intention gap to 24 percentage points, a reduction of under 30% of the original gap. In other words, differences in political values (or at least just these particular values) do not go very far in telling us why Jews and non-Jewish whites have such radically different vote intentions. Something else, something other than a commitment to the liberal social, political, cultural and foreign policy agenda must be operating to lead so many Jews to support the Democratic candidate.

Political identity at the core

As an alternative to issue-stances, we focus upon a concept we term "political identity." That is, how do Jews (and others) label themselves politically? To what extent do they identify as Republicans or Democrats? To what extent do they see themselves as conservative or liberal?

Figure 3. Political Identity by Ethnic Group



As one might expect, Jews are twice as likely as other whites to see themselves as Democrats, while the reverse is true for Republican identification as shown in Figure 3. Similarly, Jews are twice as likely to see themselves as liberal than conservative, and approximately the reverse is true for non-Jewish whites. Party affiliation and political viewpoint are highly correlated, allowing us to create a single index of political identity that places conservative Republicans at one pole, liberal Democrats at the other, and all others somewhere in between. (Table 4)

Predictably, twice as many Jews as whites (58% vs. 29%) fall on the left of the identity spectrum (either liberal Democrats or "left-of center"). And twice as many whites as Jews (41% vs. 20%) fall on the right of the spectrum (either conservative Republicans or "right of center").

Also, not surprisingly, McCain and Obama voters cluster where we would predict. Among McCain voters, 75% are on the right, as compared with just 2% of Obama voters. In

contrast, fully 71% of Obama voters are on the left, as compared with just 6% of McCain voters. (Figure 4 and Table 5)

When we stratify by political identity and compare the vote intentions of Jews with those of non-Jewish whites, we find that the Jewish/non-Jewish differences almost entirely disappear. Intentions of voting for Obama or McCain are nearly equivalent for Jews and non-Jews within each stratum of political identity. The only departure from this generalization is that Jews on the right have a slightly greater (though very small) tendency to vote for Obama, as compared with their equally right-wing non-Jewish white counterparts. (Figure 5 and Table 6)

Regression analysis yields similar results. The initial gap between Jews and non-Jews of 30.9 percentage points drops to 6.6 points, once we control for the single measure of political identity. In other words, political identity alone accounts for about 80% of the reason why Jews in September said that they are going to vote for Obama significantly more than non-Jewish whites in America. In short, as we have noted, the Jews support for the Democratic candidate has less to do with their stances on the issues, and more to do with their historic, passionate, and highly significant commitment to the Democratic Party and the liberal camp in America. (Full statistical results for this multivariate analysis are presented in Tables 12 and 13 in the Statistical Appendix.)

In fact, in other analyses we performed (not shown here), we demonstrate that Jews are “excessively” associated with the Democratic Party and liberal self-definition. Their stands on the issues of the day (social welfare, foreign affairs, and the social issues) are not sufficiently left-of-center to warrant the large extent to which they identify with the left-of-center. For Jews, as for other Americans, politics are a matter of identity – and electoral decisions are a matter of political identity.

Figure 4. Political Identity by Committed Voters and Undecideds

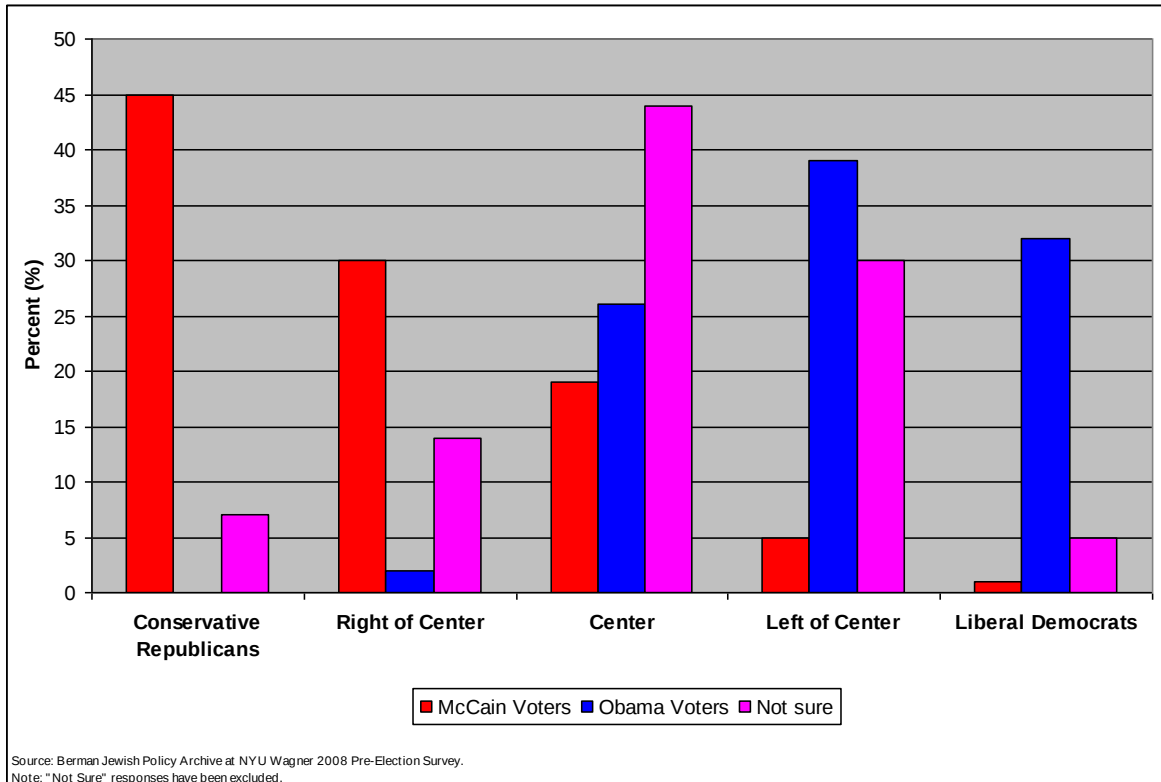
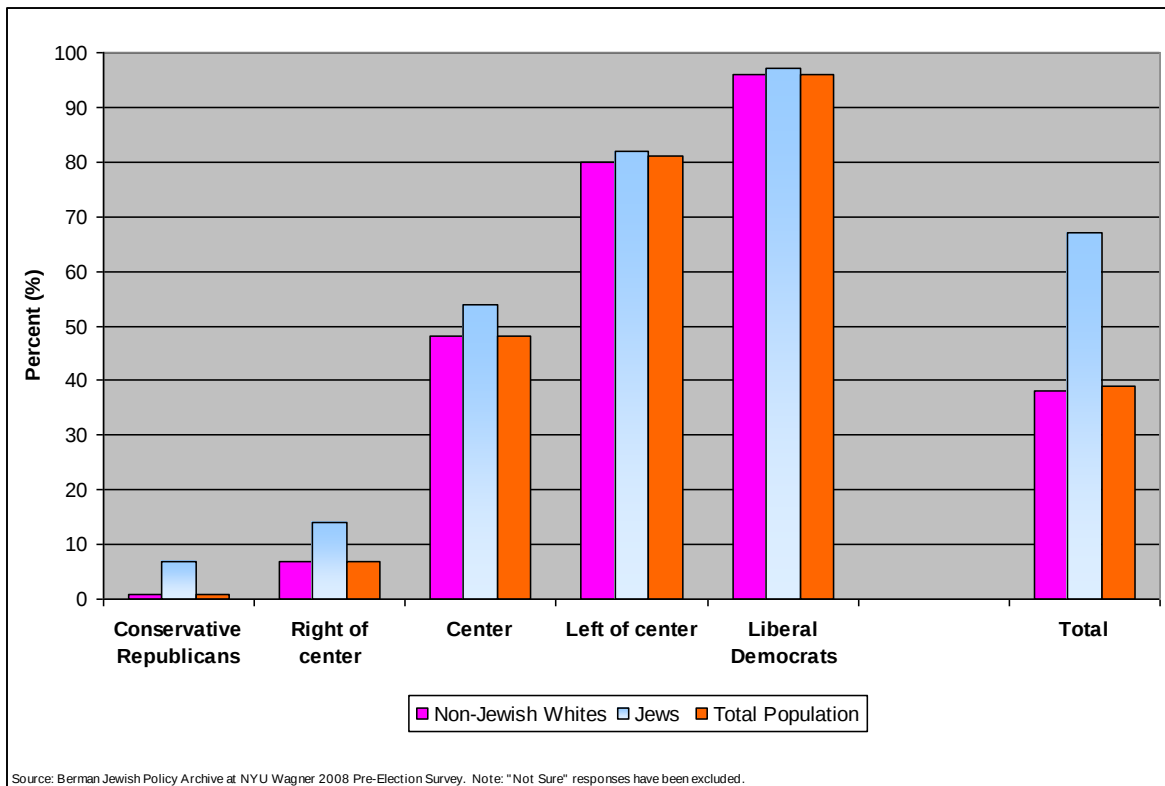


Figure 5. % Voting for Obama by Political Identity for Non-Jews and Jews



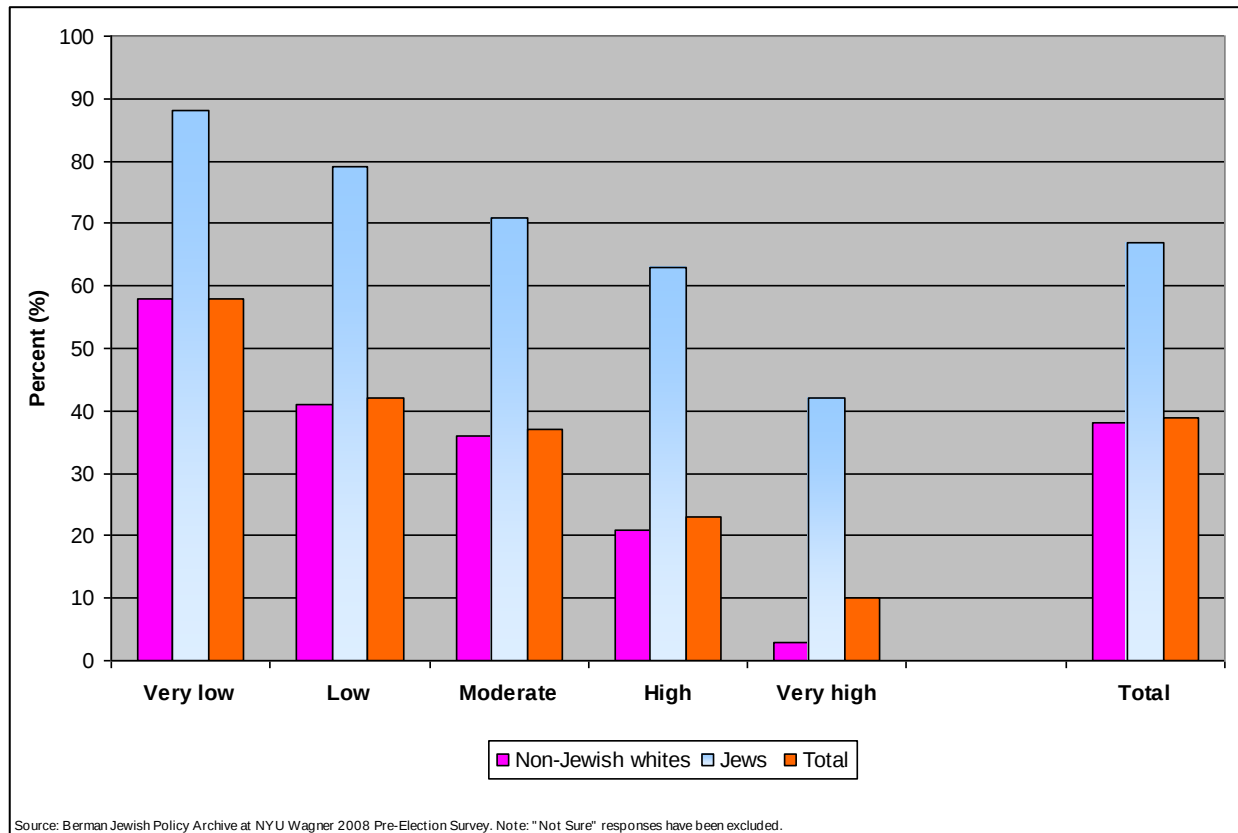
What about Israel?

Commentators have suggested that Jews' concern for Israel may well serve to diminish their enthusiasm for the Democratic candidate. Indeed, Jews do care about the Israel-Palestine conflict more than other Americans. Yet, with that said, the Israel issue ranked 8th out of 15 issues in importance as a presidential election consideration for Jewish respondents. Aside from the economy (a prime issue of concern for the vast majority of respondents), ahead of Israel on Jewish voters' minds were such matters as health care, gas prices and energy, taxes, and education. Ranking just below Israel in importance for Jewish respondents were appointments to the Supreme Court and the environment. In fact, when asked to name their top three issues, just 15% of Jewish respondents chose Israel as one of the three, and these were heavily Orthodox Jews.

Indeed, we find that the level of importance attached to Israel in thinking about the vote for President bears an inverse association with the intent to vote for Obama – or a direct association with the intent to vote for McCain. That is, for both Jews and non-Jews, the more one cares about Israel as an issue in this election, the more one is likely to vote for McCain. (Figure 6 and Table 7)

In examining the vote intention results by level of concern for Israel for Jews and non-Jews, we find a curious phenomenon. At every level of concern for Israel, Jews' intentions to vote for Obama exceed those of comparable non-Jews. This pattern is to be expected if, for no other reason, Jews are far more inclined to support the Democratic candidate. However, the gap in vote intentions between Jews and non-Jews grows considerably as does the level of passion for Israel. We may focus for the moment upon the many non-Jews and the few Jews for whom Israel is a very minor concern. Among them, Jewish Obama voters are relatively more numerous than among the comparable Israel-indifferent non-Jews: 88% vs. 58% -- a sizeable gap, but one of reasonable size. In contrast, we may examine the same gap for those few non-Jews who make Israel one of their top three concerns in this election as compared with the significant minority of Jews (many of whom are Orthodox) with as much concern for Israel. Here, we find a situation with virtually no Obama supporters among the white non-Jews (3%), and a sizeable minority of Obama voters (42%) among Jews. In other words, the most committed Jewish supporters of Israel come in a variety of political colorations; but when they engage with their most passionate pro-Israel allies among non-Jews, they find counterparts with decidedly Republican and conservative inclinations.

Figure 6. % Voting for Obama by Importance of Israel in Your Vote for President



In any event, given the particular configuration of attitudes toward Israel, Jewish identity, and vote intention, Israel attitudes do nothing to explain why Jews are voting so heavily for Obama. If anything, their concern for Israel leads some, in small measure, to line up behind McCain.

Peculiar Relationships with Education and Income

As noted at the outset, the widely anticipated relationship between vote intentions and education and income do not emerge clearly in this study, and especially not for Jews. The conventional wisdom suggests that higher education should lead to more support for Democratic candidates, while higher income should have a conservatizing effect.

In terms of the relationships with vote intentions among whites, some weak evidence for these tendencies may be seen. Aside from the least well-educated, support for Obama rises with education. And, across the income spectrum, support for Obama erodes very slightly with increasing income. (Figure 7 and Table 8)

Among Jews, hardly any such effects can be observed. Education levels from “some college” to post-graduate training bear a flat relationship with vote intent. And the impact of income is negligible aside from a six percent drop in Obama support among those earning \$200,000 or more as compared with those in the \$125,000-200,000 annual income range. (Figure 8 and Table 9)

In short, in terms of predicting the presidential vote, education and income matter relatively little for white non-Jews, and even less for Jews.

Figure 7. % Voting for Obama by Education for Non-Jews and Jews

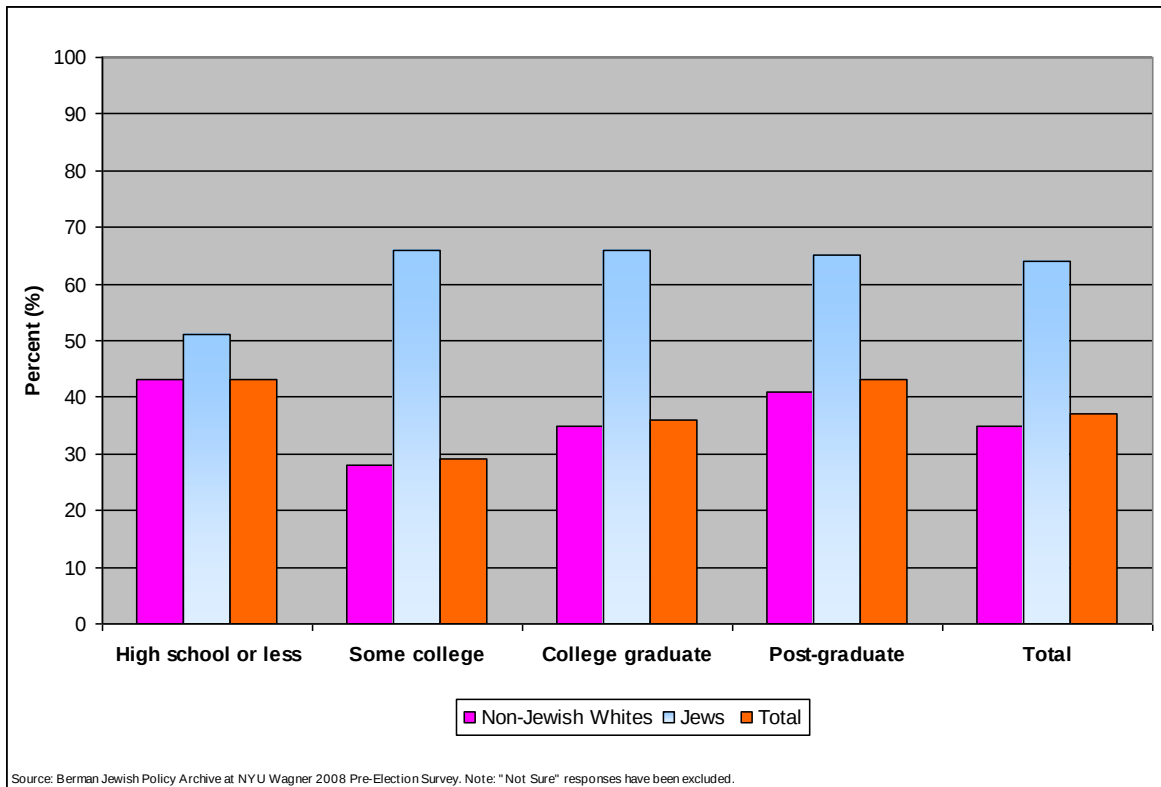
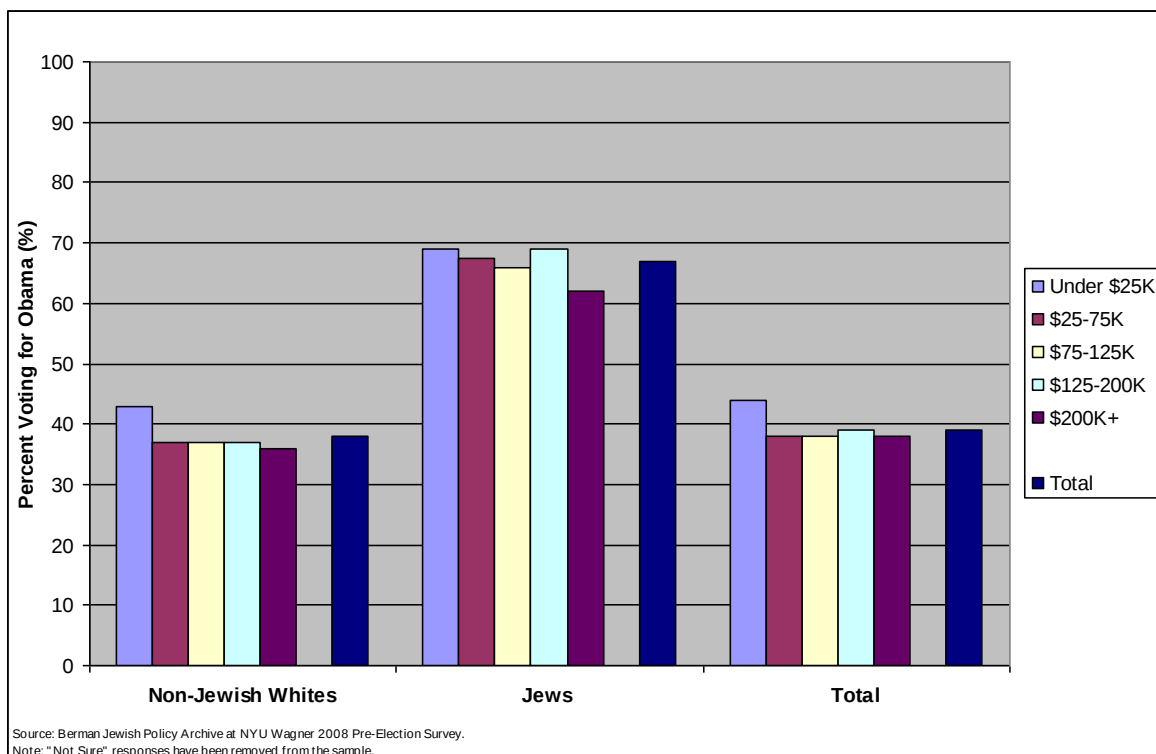


Figure 8. % Voting for Obama by Household Income



Denominational Identity: Orthodox Exceptionalism

As might be expected, for Jews, the left-right continuum in denominational terms has political bearing as well. Jews with more liberal religious identities in denominational terms express more liberal political identities and vote intentions as well. Reform Jews are more inclined to support Obama than Conservative Jews, and the latter are more Democratic in their vote intentions than the Orthodox. With that said, the truly significant gap is the one that separates Orthodox Jews from all other Jews. Whereas almost three quarters of Orthodox Jews intend to vote for McCain (excluding "not sure" responses), almost as many non-Orthodox Jews are intending for vote for Obama (and probably even more are so inclined as a result of shifts in electoral intentions in the last month). (Figure 9 and Table 10)

This pattern, of course, is but one example of a much broader pattern whereby Orthodox Jews and their leaders have been seen as supporters of conservative political groups and causes. And this circumstance has led many astute observers to opine that Jewish ethnic

embeddedness among Jews (if not among others) inclines individuals toward more parochial, particularist, and, hence, conservative political and social attitudes.

In fact, as we demonstrate below, the issue is more complicated. Among Orthodox Jews, those whose close friends are all Jewish, almost universally support McCain over Obama (90% vs. 10%), far more than those with mostly, or even fewer, Jewish close friends (60% McCain vs. 40% Obama).

However, the impact of having many Jewish friends is the reverse for the non-Orthodox. Among the vast majority of Jews who are not Orthodox, having more Jewish friends is associated with greater support for Obama (and less support for McCain). Support for Obama grows from 68% among those with mostly non-Jewish friends to 77% for those with mostly Jewish friends. In similar fashion, it grows from 68% among those with non-denominational identity ("just Jewish," "secular," etc.) to 77% among those who identify as Reform.

Figure 9. % Voting for Obama by Jewish Denominational Identity

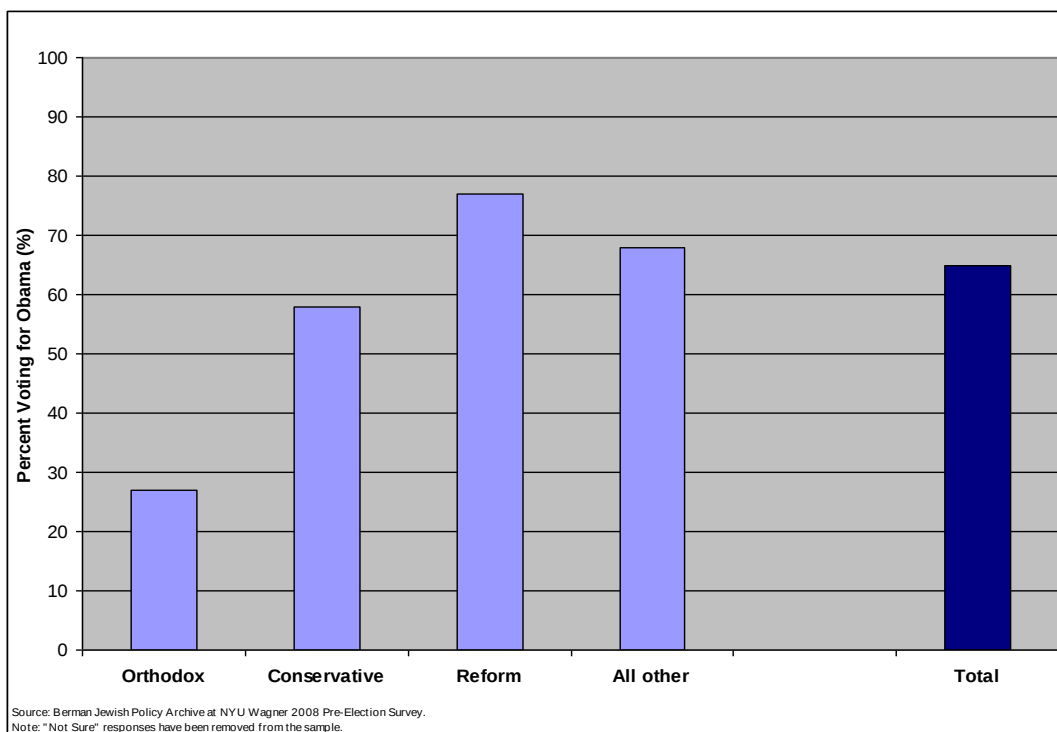
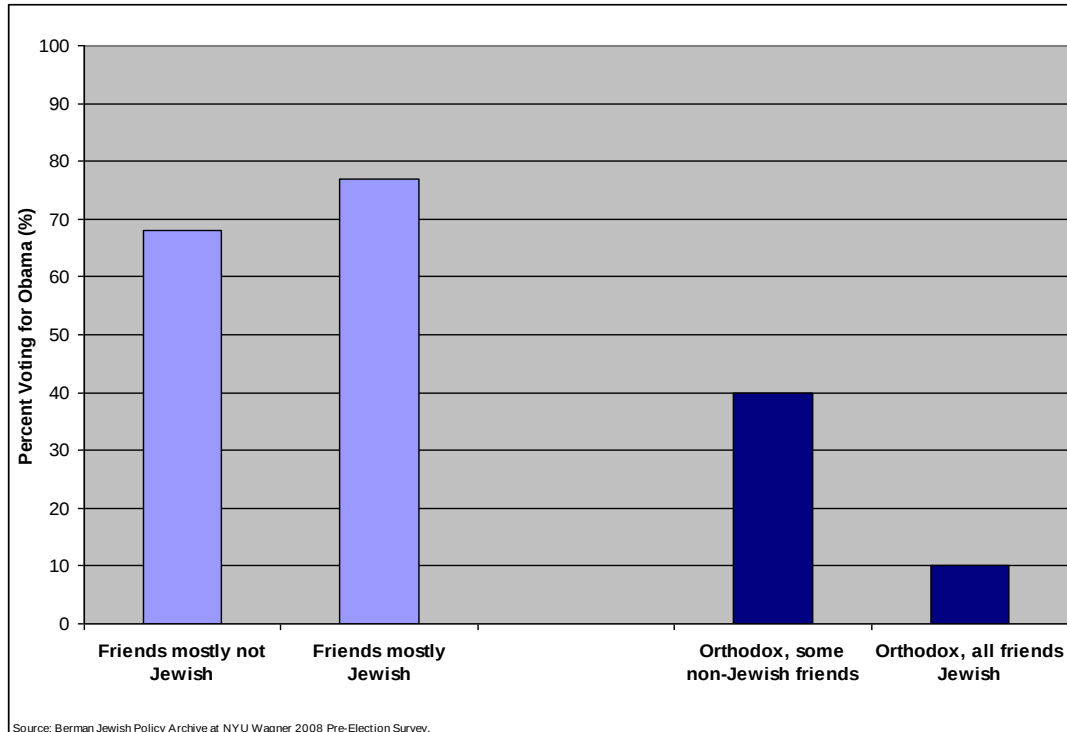


Figure 10. % Voting for Obama by Orthodox vs. Non-Orthodox by Jewish Friends



For non-Orthodox Jews, Democratic Party affiliation and liberal political views derive from ethnic attachment and ethnic embeddedness. The loss of ethnic cohesiveness, for Jews outside of Orthodoxy, also means a loss of commitment to the ethnically linked identities as liberals and Democrats. (Figure 10 and Table 11)

A Note About the Undecideds

This analysis has relied upon those voters who have made up their minds, and we have presumed, with good reason that the undecided voters will split as others with their characteristics. That being said, at the time of the survey, slightly under a quarter of the Jews had not yet declared their vote intentions. This matches fairly well with the national picture of 23% of the American population being undecided at the time. These data collectively reveal that despite an election only two months away at the time, a large number of Americans were still unsure about their vote choice and which candidate and political party possesses the best vision and ability to move the United States forward. As of this writing (October 20, 2008),

about 8% of likely voters are still undecided and their eventual decisions could well affect the eventual outcome of the election. Thus, it is important to understand these undecided voters and figure out what do we know about them. And how are they different from those who were ready to be counted as Obama or McCain supporters?"

When looking at the vote intention question, we see that 51% of Jews plan on voting for Obama, while 25% for McCain and 24% are undecided. For a group that has historically been a key remnant of the New Deal Coalition and the Democratic base, this degree of wavering is an important shift. Moreover, when we look at vote intention broken down by party identification, we see some dissonance among Democrats - 20% are undecided and McCain receives 10% of the vote. Given the recent sorting of the electorate over the past two decades and the historic strength of Jews with the Democratic Party, this is may be evidence for some erosion in Democratic Party line voting. Among Independents, we see even more of a pronounced split with Obama garnering just over 36%, McCain close to 30%, and undecided at 30%.

At this point, it is far too early to make any definitive conclusions about vote choice in the November election. Nonetheless, these data illustrate there is just considerable uncertainty out there among the general populace as well as within the Jewish community. While this level of undecided voters is often typical among the general population, it is noteworthy here given the long-standing support and relationship of the Jewish community with the Democratic Party. While some of this movement is clearly predicated on candidate and issue positions - like security and Israel - it appears, based on self-placement along the liberal-conservative index, that there is some movement to the right while still retaining the label of being Democrats. Finally, Jews have long been strong Democratic partisans and partisans have historically made electoral decisions far earlier than independent voters and the fact that so many votes are still up for grabs suggests that the historic party allegiance in the voting booth is trumped by actual issues and political concerns regardless of party.

Conclusion

For years, Jews have voted for Democratic candidates to an extent far greater than non-Jews. For years, prognosticators of various stripes have foretold the waning of Jewish liberalism in America and the decline of Jews' attachment to the Democratic Party. The election of 2008 promises to confound these expectations of a shift from historic patterns as Jews, indeed, are likely to provide Barack Obama with as large a "surplus" of votes as they have for Democrats in the recent past. In all likelihood, if the undecided voters split as expected, Jews will vote for Obama around 17 percentage points more than other Americans, and about 30 percentage points more than other white Americans.

The real mystery is not so much the extent of the Jewish tilt toward the Democrats, but the reasons for that tilt. While their political views tending in the liberal direction help explain their support for Obama, and their concern for Israel may actually pull them in the other direction, political views alone cannot explain their high levels of Democratic vote intention. Neither can the major socio-demographic variables. Rather, their vote intentions are a product of their political identities – their long-standing association with the liberal camp and the Democratic Party.

These results speak to the power of political identity as a driving force behind Jewish vote intentions and political activity more generally. Values and interests alone cannot explain why Jews will be voting so heavily for Obama on November 4. Rather, for Jews, as for other Americans, electoral behavior is very much a reflection of political identities as Democrats or Republicans, and as liberals or conservatives.

Ironically, Jews and other highly educated voters often view other Americans as responding to instinctual, historic habits, to their political heritage, if you will. People like to think of themselves as totally rational and driven by carefully considered values.

In fact, Jews in the upcoming election also respond to their identities. In their case, they will be reflecting their long-held, multi-generation attachment to the liberal camp in America, and to the Democratic Party.

Statistical Appendix

Table 1. Vote Intention by Ethnic Group

	Whites & Others	Hispanics	Blacks	Jews	Total
			%		
Intend to vote for McCain	46	23	1	25	38
Intend to vote for Obama	28	62	89	51	39
Not sure	27	15	11	24	23
<i>Percentages excluding “not sure” responses:</i>					
Intend to vote for McCain	63	27	1	33	50
Intend to vote for Obama	38	73	99	67	50

Table 2. Issue Positions: Mean Scores by Ethnic Group

	Whites & Others	Hispanics	Blacks	Jews	Total
Govt should do more to help the needy	54	57	72	58	56
Govt is too involved in issue of morality	57	56	48	64	56
Diplomacy is better than military strength to ensure peace	57	61	71	61	59
Importance of social welfare issues in your vote for president	34	39	57	33	37
Importance of foreign threat in your vote for president	23	23	17	22	23
Importance of Israel in your vote for president	37	38	39	57	38

Table 3. Issue Positions: Mean Scores Among Committed Voters

	McCain Voters	Obama Voters
Govt should do more to help the needy	45	68
Govt is too involved in issue of morality	49	64
Diplomacy is better than military strength to ensure peace	46	72
Importance of social welfare issues in your vote for president	28	47
Importance of foreign threat in your vote for president	34	14
Importance of Israel in your vote for president	44	35

Note: "Not Sure" responses have been excluded.

Table 4. Political Identity by Ethnic Group

	Whites & Others	Hispanics	Blacks	Jews	Total
	%				
Conservative Republicans	22	16	0	9	19
Right of Center	19	4	2	11	16
Center	29	18	33	23	27
Left of Center	18	42	43	29	24
Liberal Democrats	11	21	23	29	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 5. Political Identity by Committed Voters and Undecideds

	McCain Voters	Obama Voters	Not sure
	%		
Conservative Republicans	45	0	7
Right of Center	30	2	14
Center	19	26	44
Left of Center	5	39	30
Liberal Democrats	1	32	5
Total	100	100	100

Table 6. % Voting for Obama by Political Identity for Non-Jews and Jews

	Non-Jewish Whites	Jews	Total
	%		
Conservative Republicans	1	7	1
Right of center	7	14	7
Center	48	54	48
Left of center	80	82	81
Liberal Democrats	96	97	96
Total	38	67	39

Note: "Not Sure" responses have been excluded.

Table 7. % Voting for Obama by Importance of Israel in Your Vote for President (Mean Scores)

	Non-Jewish whites	Jews	Total
Very low	58	88	58
Low	41	79	42
Moderate	36	71	37
High	21	63	23
Very high	3	42	10
Total	38	67	39

Note: "Not Sure" responses have been excluded.

Table 8. % Voting for Obama by Education for Non-Jews and Jews

	Non-Jewish Whites	Jews	Total
High school or less	43	51	43
Some college	28	66	29
College graduate	35	66	36
Post-graduate	41	65	43
Total	35	64	37

Note: "Not Sure" responses have been excluded.

Table 9. % Voting for Obama by Household Income

	Non-Jewish Whites	Jews	Total
Under \$25K	43	69	44
\$25-45K	41	68	42
\$45-75K	33	67	34
\$75-125K	37	66	38
\$125-200K	37	69	39
\$200K+	36	62	38
Total	38	67	39

Note: "Not Sure" responses have been excluded.

Table 10. % Voting for Obama by Jewish Denominational Identity

	Vote
	%
Orthodox	27
Conservative	58
Reform	77
All other	68
Total	65

Note: "Not Sure" responses have been excluded.

Table 11. % Voting for Obama by Orthodox vs. Non-Orthodox by Jewish Friends

	Vote
	%
Friends mostly not Jewish	68
Friends mostly Jewish	77
Orthodox, some non-Jewish friends	40
Orthodox, all friends Jewish	10

Note: "Not Sure" responses have been excluded.

Table 12. Regression Analysis: Part I

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Jews vs. non-Jewish whites	30.85*	33.49*	24.38*	11.79*
HH income	--	-2.93*	-1.16	-0.32
Education of respondent	--	-2.06	-1.81	-1.12
Age	--	-3.91*	-1.39	-0.39
Gender	--	-2.34	-6.12*	-4.96*
GodFaith	--	--	-0.11*	-0.02
Importance of foreign threat in your vote for president	--	--	-0.49*	-0.33*
Importance of social welfare issues in your vote for president	--	--	0.45*	0.29*
Govt is too involved in the issue of morality	--	--	0.29*	0.17*
Govt should do more to help the needy	--	--	0.34*	0.12*
Diplomacy better than military strength to ensure peace	--	--	0.84*	0.46*
Political identity: party + liberal / conservative	--	--	--	0.77*
Constant	49.32*	80.63*	-10.01	-20.78

* p<.05

Table 13. Regression Analysis: Part II

	Model 1	Model 2
Jews vs. non-Jewish whites	30.85*	6.60
Political identity: party + liberal / conservative	--	1.17*
Constant	49.32*	-7.76*

* p<.05

A Comparison of the Berman-Wagner, Pew and NJPS Survey Demographics

	Berman-Wagner Survey	Pew	NJPS
	%	%	%
Gender			
Male	49	52	47
Female	52	48	53
Age			
18-34	27	28	24
35-44	14	14	16
45-54	22	17	22
55-64	16	19	13
65+	22	22	26
US Census Regions			
NE	44	41	43
MW	10	12	12
South	23	26	22
West	23	21	22
Marital Status			
Married	58	57	60
Never married	24	19	21
Divorced/separated	13	9	10
Widowed	5	8	8
Living with someone	--	6	1
HH Size			
One	24	--	22
Two	41	--	41
Three	16	--	14
Four	14	--	13
Five	5	--	6
Six	0	--	3
Seven or more	0	--	2
Education			
HS or Less	39	22	44
Some College	--	19	13
BA or Equiv	36	24	26
Grad	26	35	17

	Berman-Wagner Survey	Pew	NJPS
	%	%	%
HH Income			
<\$100K	77	54	68
>\$100K	23	46	32
Most or all Jewish friends	31	--	40
Percent Unmarried	70		75
Jewish Denomination			
Orthodox	8	--	10
Conservative	23	--	26
Reform	27	--	35
Reconstructionist	2	--	2
Other Jewish	40	--	27
Synagogue member	37	55	46
Attend services at least once a week	13	16	17
Imp of religion: Very	26	31	32
Imp of being Jewish: Very	49	--	52
Fast last Yom Kippur	59	--	60
Usually light Shabbat candles	26	--	28
Been to Israel	38	--	41
Partisan Identification			
Democrat	58	--	58
Republican	16	--	14
Independent/Not sure	26		28

Sources: Berman Jewish Policy Archive at NYU Wagner Political Survey of American Jews, October, 2008; The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, 2008; The National Jewish Population Study of 2000-01.