

GOT OUT THE HATE VOTE?

Friday November 6, 2006

President Bush's 2004 margin-of-victory was the slimmest of any presidential incumbent (Bush: 51%; Kerry: 48%); his margin-of-victory was about three million votes cast nationally, and Bush's electoral vote victory hinged on his winning Ohio's 20 electoral votes. Bush's popular vote margin-of-victory in that state was a meager 118,601, which was just 2.1% of the total votes counted in that state. Theories of voter fraud notwithstanding, it is generally accepted by both major political parties that the GOP was able to retain the White House in 2004 because of its ability to mobilize Evangelical Christian voters and other "values" voters across the country. After having discovered in the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* that the number of active hate groups in the United States rose over 5% from 2004 to 2005—a percentage generated from information gathered and reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization renowned for its civil rights work and its work reporting on, monitoring, and combating hate groups—trendsinhate wondered the unthinkable.

Trendsinhate wondered if something else might have been operating to push the Republicans to victory in 2004. Hate. Or, its predecessor: Intolerance. To explore this possibility, we examined the 2004 presidential voting results across the United States to see if George W. Bush fared better in communities with an active hate group (hate group communities or HGCs) than he did in the state in which those HGCs are located.

First, trendsinhate turned to a website, tolerance.org, run by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), an organization with which trendsinhate has no affiliation, but whose work we greatly admire. Tolerance.org shows what hate groups are operating in which states and, where known, which towns. Using that information as well as geographical information available at other internet websites, over 94% of the time trendsinhate was able to locate from which counties these SPLC-identified active hate groups operated in 2004. For purposes of our research we considered each of these counties a HGC.

But before the results are revealed and discussed, a word about stereotyping. Trendsinhate is not suggesting that many people who live in a HGC belong to an active hate group, and we are not suggesting either that most persons who live in a HGC are hateful or intolerant. HGCs—and maybe you live in one—were merely markers trendsinhate decided to examine, *markers of relative micro-community intolerance*. Our assumptions are simple ones. If a community (usually a county) has an active hate group—like a currently operating chapter of the Ku Klux Klan—then chances are it is a location of greater relative intolerance than locations without hate groups, even nearby locations. Trendsinhate assumes too that the more intolerant a community, the more likely that community as a whole will be attracted to political candidates and ideologies that espouse intolerance. We do not assume, however, that HGCs are the only places where intolerance exists. Sadly, we all will agree intolerance and hatred are ubiquitous. They are states of individuals' minds. What trendsinhate set out to do was simply this: look for a reasonable micro-community marker of *relative intolerance*, and compare it to actual election results. HGCs seemed a logical choice; and, to our knowledge, this type of voting analysis has never before been conducted.

Now a brief caveat about the employed research methodology. Although the concept of a micro-community cannot encompass an entire, diverse large metropolis, nonetheless trendsinhate included data from all counties—even those with large cities, such as Boston and San Francisco (yes, folks, those cities have active hate groups). We know that by including these large cities—which generally favored John Kerry over George W. Bush in the 2004 election—our analyses are somewhat slanted towards finding that intolerance had *nothing* to do with the outcome of the 2004 presidential election. But, our reasoning to include counties with large cities was this: trendsinhate wanted to be as complete as possible; and frankly, we wanted to give our elected president and his political party that small benefit of the doubt. After all, we're testing a disturbing hypothesis: did hate and intolerance affect who our currently sitting president is?

Here's what trendsinhate found.

Of the 762 active hate groups listed at tolerance.org in 2004, we were able to determine that 715 (94.45%) of them are located in 411 counties in 46 states (this number excludes

the District of Columbia because it does not have a county; and, the county locations of the remaining 42 hate groups are unknown, because they are more widely dispersed and do not operate out of a single, identifiable county). Next, trendsinhate tabulated county-by-county who voted for John Kerry and who voted for Bush in these 411 HGCs. Then, trendsinhate compared the HGC voting results with the state's overall voting results (official voting results were used, not exit poll numbers). As was said earlier, we wondered if Bush fared better in the HGCs than he did overall in the state where the HGCs are located. A HGC was said to favor a candidate if, in that community, the candidate performed better than 0.5% than his performance in the state, and if his opponent performed worse than 0.5% than his own overall state's performance (otherwise the community was said to favor neither candidate). For example, from the list of active hate groups in 2004 as identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center was a hate group that trendsinhate pinpointed to Collin County, Texas. The 2004 presidential election results for Texas show that the Bush-Cheney ticket received 61.09% of that state's vote whereas the Kerry-Edwards ticket received 38.22% of the vote (the remaining 0.69% of the vote went to other candidates). In Collin County, Texas, Bush-Cheney received 71.2% of that county's vote whereas Kerry-Edwards received 28.1% of the vote. Thus, we counted Collin County, Texas, the location of a Ku Klux Klan group in 2004, as favoring Bush.

Our results are shown in the table on the following two pages (TABLE ONE), and here is how to read it. Let's take Arkansas as an example. In 2004 Arkansas had active hate groups operating out of 13 of its 75 counties (which is about 17% of its counties). Thus, it had 13 HGCs whose election results were examined (second column). George W. Bush had 54% of Arkansas' popular vote, and in 8 of the 13 HGCs he won **more** than 54% of the vote (last column) by at least one-half of one percentage point. On the other hand, John Kerry got 45% of the Arkansas vote, and in 3 of the 13 HGCs he got **more** than 45% of the vote by at least one-half of one percentage point (column three). In the two remaining HGCs, both candidates got the same percentage of votes as was reflected in their overall percentages statewide in Arkansas (column four).

TABLE ONE

Region/State	Total Number of 2004 HGCs	2004 State Comparative Election Results in HGCs		
		favoring Kerry	favoring neither	favoring Bush
Northeast:	(19)	(5)	(0)	(14)
<i>Connecticut</i>	3	1	0	2
<i>Maine</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Massachusetts</i>	4	1	0	3
<i>New Hampshire</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>New York</i>	8	1	0	7
<i>Rhode Island</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Vermont</i>	1	0	0	1
Mid-Atlantic:				
	(57)	(23)	(4)	(30)
<i>Delaware</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Maryland</i>	4	1	0	3
<i>New Jersey</i>	11	7	2	2
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	21	5	2	14
<i>Virginia</i>	20	9	0	11
South:				
	(210)	(76)	(5)	(129)
<i>Alabama</i>	15	7	1	7
<i>Arkansas</i>	13	3	2	8
<i>Florida</i>	20	6	0	14
<i>Georgia</i>	24	7	0	17
<i>Kentucky</i>	9	4	0	5
<i>Louisiana</i>	12	5	0	7
<i>Mississippi</i>	18	6	0	12
<i>North Carolina</i>	20	10	1	9
<i>Oklahoma</i>	7	4	0	3
<i>South Carolina</i>	26	10	1	15
<i>Tennessee</i>	19	3	0	16
<i>Texas</i>	22	10	0	12
<i>West Virginia</i>	5	1	0	4

TABLE ONE (continued)

Region/State	Total Number of 2004 HGCs	2004 State Comparative Election Results in HGCs		
		favoring Kerry	favoring neither	favoring Bush
Midwest/Plains:	(76)	(25)	(5)	(46)
<i>Illinois</i>	7	2	0	5
<i>Indiana</i>	9	4	0	5
<i>Iowa</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Kansas</i>	4	1	1	2
<i>Michigan</i>	13	4	1	8
<i>Minnesota</i>	6	2	0	4
<i>Missouri</i>	13	3	2	8
<i>Nebraska</i>	3	1	0	2
<i>North Dakota</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Ohio</i>	15	4	1	10
<i>South Dakota</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Wisconsin</i>	5	3	0	2
West:	(49)	(17)	(2)	(30)
<i>Alaska</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Arizona</i>	4	0	0	4
<i>California</i>	17	6	0	11
<i>Colorado</i>	7	2	2	3
<i>Hawaii</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Idaho</i>	3	3	0	0
<i>Montana</i>	2	0	0	2
<i>Nevada</i>	3	1	0	2
<i>New Mexico</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Oregon</i>	4	2	0	2
<i>Utah</i>	2	1	0	1
<i>Washington</i>	4	1	0	3
<i>Wyoming</i>	2	1	0	1
Total, US	411	146	16	249

When totaling the numbers for the entire nation, *the results show that in the 2004 presidential election George W. Bush had a greater margin-of-victory (or much less frequently occurring, a lesser margin-of-loss) in 60.6% of those communities with an actively operating hate group in 2004 than he had overall in the states where the hate groups are located. Specifically, in 249 of 411 HGCs Bush scored better numbers than*

he did overall in the states where the HGCs are active. John Kerry had a greater margin-of-victory (or a lesser margin-of-loss) in 35.5% of the HGCs, by contrast.

Are these differences mathematically significant, or are they just a chance occurrence? In other words, is the 60.6% versus 35.5% finding significant beyond what would be expected to occur randomly? Yes, the margin-of-victory differences between the candidates in the HGCs are statistically significant (such a difference should only occur randomly every 40,000 years; $\chi^2 = 26.8582$, $p < .0001$). Moreover, even if one were to lump those HGCs that favored neither candidate into John Kerry's overall tally, the percentage difference between the two candidates (Bush: 60.6%; Kerry: 39.4%) is still statistically significant (such a difference should only occur randomly every 40,000 years; $\chi^2 = 18.416$, $p < .0001$).

Although the results in Table One are not due to chance, we wondered whether or not our findings might have been due to the unique locations of the 2004 hate groups—a uniqueness that might not have occurred in 2005. Since the locations of some active hate groups change from year to year, and since some hate groups emerge while others (thankfully) disband or go inactive, we conducted the same analyses using the 2005 active hate groups as identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center's tolerance.org, and the community locations of these hate groups as determined by us. Our results of the 2005 active hate groups and the 2004 presidential election are shown in Table Two, and they are strikingly similar to the results using the active hate groups in 2004.

When totaling the numbers for the entire nation, *the results show that in the 2004 presidential election George W. Bush had a greater margin-of-victory (or much less frequently occurring, a lesser margin-of-loss) in 56.7% of those communities with an actively operating hate group in 2005 than he had overall in the states where the hate groups are located. Specifically, in 240 of 423 HGCs Bush scored better numbers than he did overall in the states where the HGCs are active.* John Kerry had a greater margin-of-victory (or a lesser margin-of-loss) in 36.9% of the HGCs, by contrast.

TABLE TWO

Region/State	Total Number of 2005 HGCs	2004 State Comparative Election Results in HGCs		
		favoring Kerry	favoring neither	favoring Bush
Northeast:	(16)	(6)	(1)	(9)
<i>Connecticut</i>	3	1	0	2
<i>Maine</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Massachusetts</i>	3	1	1	1
<i>New Hampshire</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>New York</i>	8	2	0	6
<i>Rhode Island</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Vermont</i>	0	0	0	0
Mid-Atlantic:	(54)	(23)	(6)	(25)
<i>Delaware</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>Maryland</i>	5	2	1	2
<i>New Jersey</i>	11	6	2	3
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	17	4	3	10
<i>Virginia</i>	20	10	0	10
South:	(219)	(78)	(8)	(133)
<i>Alabama</i>	14	8	1	5
<i>Arkansas</i>	13	3	2	8
<i>Florida</i>	23	8	0	15
<i>Georgia</i>	24	6	0	18
<i>Kentucky</i>	9	3	0	6
<i>Louisiana</i>	13	5	0	8
<i>Mississippi</i>	18	4	1	13
<i>North Carolina</i>	24	13	2	9
<i>Oklahoma</i>	9	7	0	2
<i>South Carolina</i>	23	9	0	14
<i>Tennessee</i>	24	6	1	17
<i>Texas</i>	19	4	1	14
<i>West Virginia</i>	6	2	0	4

TABLE TWO (continued)

Region/State	Total Number of 2005 HGCs	2004 State Comparative Election Results in HGCs		
		favoring Kerry	favoring neither	favoring Bush
Midwest/Plains:	(79)	(28)	(7)	(44)
<i>Illinois</i>	7	1	0	6
<i>Indiana</i>	11	4	0	7
<i>Iowa</i>	2	2	0	0
<i>Kansas</i>	5	2	1	2
<i>Michigan</i>	13	3	3	7
<i>Minnesota</i>	5	2	0	3
<i>Missouri</i>	12	3	2	7
<i>Nebraska</i>	3	2	0	1
<i>North Dakota</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Ohio</i>	16	5	0	11
<i>South Dakota</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Wisconsin</i>	5	4	1	0
West:	(55)	(21)	(5)	(29)
<i>Alaska</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Arizona</i>	6	1	0	5
<i>California</i>	18	6	1	11
<i>Colorado</i>	7	2	2	3
<i>Hawaii</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Idaho</i>	3	3	0	0
<i>Montana</i>	4	2	0	2
<i>Nevada</i>	4	1	1	2
<i>New Mexico</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Oregon</i>	3	2	0	1
<i>Utah</i>	2	1	0	1
<i>Washington</i>	5	2	1	2
<i>Wyoming</i>	3	1	0	2
Total, US	423	156	27	240

Are these differences mathematically significant, or just chance occurrence? In other words, is the 56.7% versus 36.9% finding significant beyond what would be expected to occur randomly? Yes, the margin-of-victory differences between the candidates in the HGCs are statistically significant (such a difference should only occur randomly every 40,000 years; $\chi^2 = 17.82$, $p < .0001$). Moreover, even if one were to lump those HGCs

that favored neither candidate into John Kerry's overall tally, the percentage difference between the two candidates (Bush: 56.7%; Kerry: 43.3%) is still statistically significant (such a difference should only occur randomly every 400 years; $\chi^2 = 7.681$, $p < .01$). These findings confirm those shown in Table One: there was a significant association between active hate groups and national voting patterns in 2004. Where there was active hate groups in 2004 there tended to be relatively more voters casting their votes for the Bush-Cheney Republican ticket.

Taken together, our results show that something was going on in 2004 with respect to George W. Bush's better showing in communities with an active hate group, but it was not random chance. Keep in mind the methodology we used was somewhat skewed to find that intolerance was *unrelated* to Bush's re-election. Most clearly these voting results suggest that in relatively intolerant micro-communities Bush's message resonated significantly better with voters than John Kerry's message. Trendsinhate argues too that in relatively intolerant **minds** across the country President Bush's message resonated better with voters than did John Kerry's message, minds perhaps made more intolerant—even if only temporarily—by the GOP's pre-election blitzkrieg of scare ads. Our voting analyses lend support to the notion that using hot-button issues that inflame a person's level of intolerance the GOP played the Hate card in 2004, and by the tiniest of margins, it worked.

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