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To: Friends of Democracy Corps

From: Stan Greenberg

RE: UPDATING *THE TWO AMERICAS*
The political segments that make up our political world

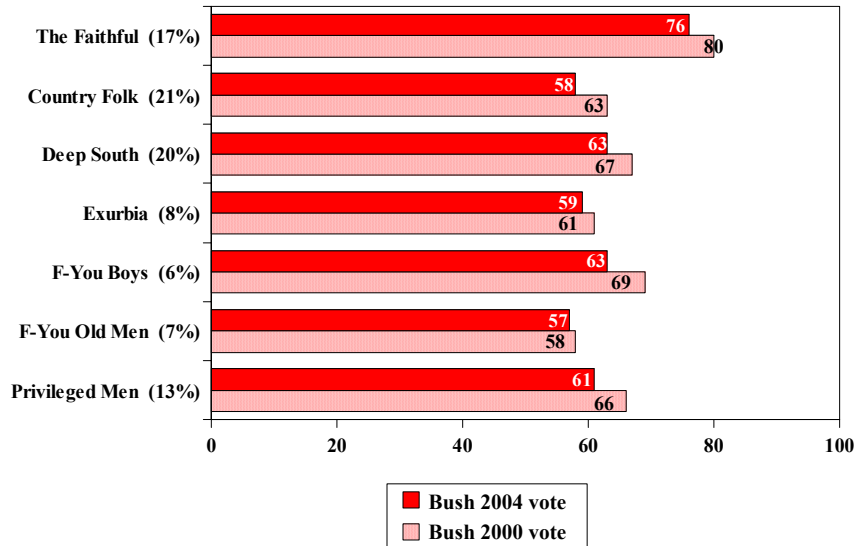
America in 2004 is still divided and polarized, indeed, even more so than in 2000. And yet, there are emerging patterns and tensions that may forecast a discernible shift toward the Democrats in the coming months. Over the course of 2004, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted eight national surveys for Democracy Corps and other clients, including 7,825 interviews between January and April. In that four month period, 48 percent of those surveyed aligned with the Democrats and 44 percent with the Republicans, a 4-point margin, which is already being reflected in the presidential contest.¹ Only in our perverse world of party parity does such a small shift matter, but this is what happened in 2002 when Republicans took over all the major institutions of government. Now, the Democrats may be poising themselves for similar gains.

The Republican Loyalist World – the dangers of cooling cultural fires

The Bush White House, determined from the outset of its presidency, to strengthen support among Republican loyalists, is falling short, as cultural fires seem to be cooling. Republican efforts this year, particularly post-Super Tuesday, have consolidated core Republicans, but the broader set of Republican loyalist groups are falling a little short of the strong result achieved in 2000, after the super-hot culture wars of the late Clinton presidency. This is true for every social group in the Republican loyalist world - the Faithful (white evangelicals), the Country Folk (white rural), the white Deep South, Exurbia (outer suburbs), F-You Boys (younger non-college married men) and F-You Old Men (white non-college male seniors) and Privileged men (white married college graduates) - all of which give the Republicans about 4 points less support in the coming presidential contest.

¹ This analysis does not include the latest Democracy Corps poll conducted in May because of the upheaval in Iraq, favorable to Kerry and the Democrats, which still might be momentary or indeed represent a new phase of the campaign. Stay tuned.

The Republican Loyalist World
Support for Bush: 2004 and 2000

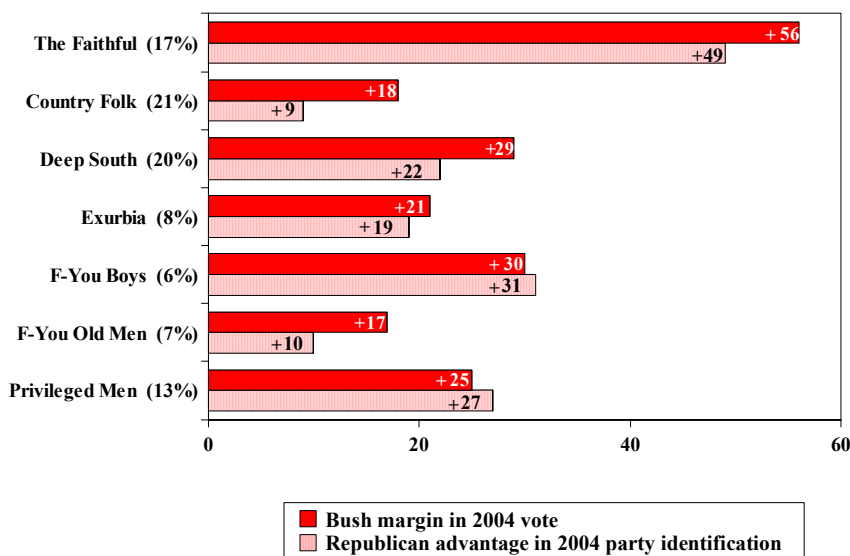


The fact that all of these loyalist groups are falling short of their 2000 performance may present Democrats with an opportunity. Bush’s advisors might reasonably believe there are more votes in their base strategy, particularly if the Republicans highlight cultural issues. Roughly 70 percent of Country Folk, Deep South and F-You Boys and F-You Old Men are hostile to gay marriage; 84 percent of the Faithful (white evangelicals) feel that way.

The White House probably has no choice but to fan the cultural flames to get more votes, but this strategy may fail. While Bush is *under-performing* with these groups compared to 2000, he is *over-performing* compared to the current party identification.² For some groups, like The Faithful, F-You Boys and Privileged Men, the gap between 2000 and today is minor or non-existent and can be erased as the campaign makes its late appeals. In some sense, these are the groups that were most in the White House’s line of sight – abortion for the white evangelicals, the war and tough military response for the young blue-collar men and tax cuts for the upper-income men.

² For party identification we allocated independents to the party they said they lean toward. We use the net party advantage as the key indicator: for Democrats (Democratic minus Republican alignment); for Republicans (Republican minus Democratic alignment).

The Republican Loyalist World
 Support for Bush 2004 and Party Identification
 Net Advantage



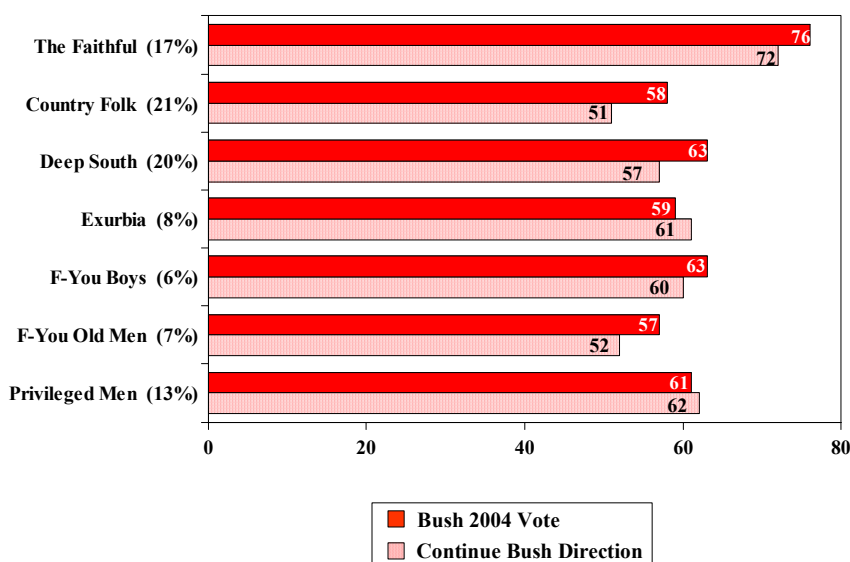
But other groups that could greatly impact the election have pulled back from the Republicans, leaving Bush exposed with a vote short of 2000 but already artificially high, given current party trends. The Country Folk give Bush an 18-point lead in the race (58 to 40 percent for Kerry), 9 points greater than the Republican margin in party alignment; Deep South voters give Bush a 29-point lead (63 to 34 percent), 7 points greater than party support; F-You Old Men back Bush by 17 points (57 to 40 percent), 7 points above party. While the Deep South may be a holdover from Old South days, the problems among rural voters and older blue-collar ones are more serious.

The battle for the Republican base will be settled among the Country Folk and F-You Old Men.³ The former constitute one-fifth of the electorate and will play a big role in deciding what happens in New Hampshire, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Louisiana, and Nevada. The latter are the male seniors who will help determine whether Bush’s senior strategy works out as designed. Both groups remain culturally among the most conservative – most hostile to Bill Clinton, more likely to wave the conservative bloody flag, and most hostile to homosexuality and gay marriage.

³ “Country Folk” are whites who live in counties located outside of metropolitan areas. “F-You Old Men” are white seniors 65 and older.

But these voters, despite their place in the Republican world, are uncomfortable with Bush’s direction and leadership, mostly because of his adventurism abroad, economic and trade policies, and favoritism to corporations. A remarkable 47 percent of these white rural voters want to go in a “significantly different direction than Bush (versus just 51 percent who want to continue on the same path); a like number, 46 percent, of these white male seniors feel the same (with 52 percent wanting to continue to follow Bush). These are not base numbers. The current level of support is very artificial and exposed, given these attitudes and partisan dynamics.

The Republican Loyalist World Bush Vote and Continue Bush Direction



The Kerry campaign has plenty of opportunities to erode Bush’s performance with these voters and jeopardize Rove’s base strategy. The Country Folk are the most anti-corporate in the Republican base (25 percent warm and 39 percent cool thermometer readings). By 55 to 40 percent, they reject the assertion that Bush’s economic policies are proving successful, affirming instead that the middle class is not sharing in the income and employment gains. They are particularly upset with rising health care costs and the fact that people are financially squeezed. Over half agree (55 percent) that Bush is neglecting domestic problems.

The F-You Old Men sound a lot like Perot voters. They are very upset about our ballooning deficits, they are angry about job losses and US outsourcing and very hostile toward NAFTA and international trade. Similar to the rural voters, over half (55 percent) of F-You Old Men say Bush is neglecting our problems at home. Like all older voters,

especially women, they are upset with the Iraq war: by 50 to 43 percent, they say the war was not worth it.

Bush needs to perform better with these groups just to replicate the country-wide parity of 2000, but he is short of that number and already well above what one would expect based on current partisan sentiment. Bush's numbers could crash in the coming months if Kerry offers a pro-middle class, populist economic critique, prioritizes addressing America's problems, sets out a new direction in Iraq, and reassures Americans on his own vulnerabilities (taxes and defense, for example). All of this is plausible, which is why Bush must make his voice heard on economic progress and, failing that, keep these voters from wandering away from cultural issues. But that too has its risks, as independent voters may find the Bush project even more distant.

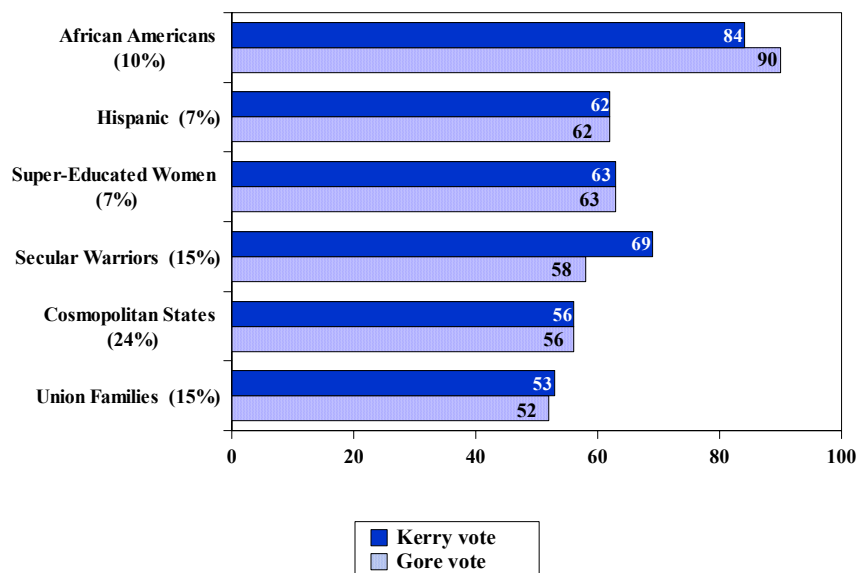
The Democratic Loyalist World – consolidated and more stable

Things are more peaceful in the Democratic world. Core Democratic voters are as firmly behind Kerry as Republicans are for Bush (90 percent and 92 percent, respectively). Virtually all of the social groups in the Democratic Loyalist World – African Americans, Hispanics, Super-Educated Women (holding post-graduate degrees), Cosmopolitan states, Secular Warriors (voters who eschew church and guns) and Union Families (white union members and household members) – have become more anti-Bush in 2004. Not surprisingly, Kerry is running very well here.⁴ Virtually all of these groups are supporting Democrats at the level they did in 2000, giving Kerry margins over Bush comparable to their current net alignment with the Democrats in general.

⁴ The Democratic Loyalist World is comprised of African Americans, Hispanics, "Super Educated Women" (women holding a postgraduate degree), "Secular Warriors" (voters who rarely or never attend church and who do not own a gun), voters in Cosmopolitan states (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NY, NJ, CA), and Union Families (white union members and voters with at least one union member in their immediate family).

The Democratic Loyalist World

Support for Kerry and Gore



Despite great Republican efforts, there has been no erosion of support among Hispanic voters.⁵ Although Kerry is currently under-performing among African-Americans (which form 10 percent of the electorate), compared with their party sentiment and the vote in 2000, but this is normal at this point in the race. Kerry is currently getting 84 percent of the black vote, a few points short of the groups' alignment with Democrats (88 percent identification) and vote for Congress (89 percent support for a Democrat). Kerry will assuredly make future gains here.

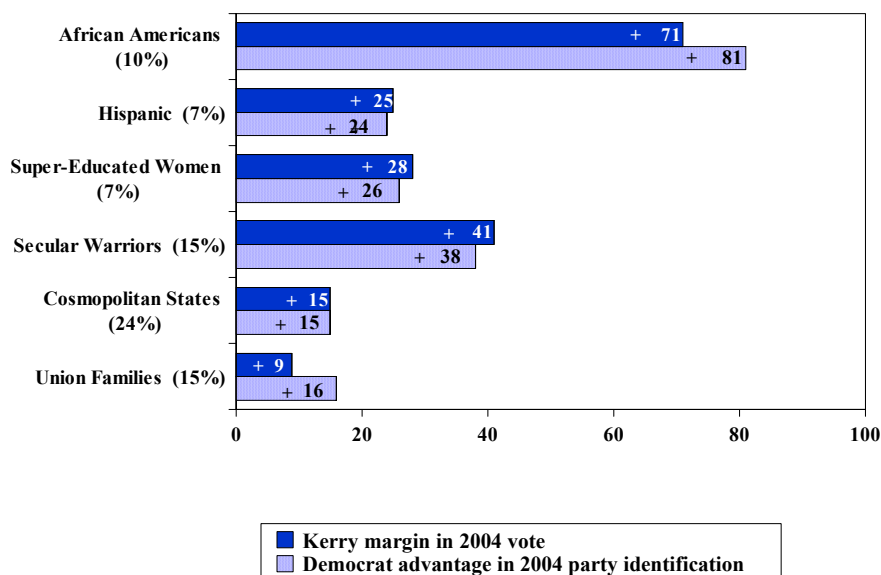
The secular warriors who form fully 15 percent of the electorate are over-performing for Kerry – no doubt in response to the cultural politics of the Bush Republicans. With Kerry getting 69 percent of their vote, they are running 11 points ahead of where they were in 2000. But the Kerry margin is just a couple of points above the Democratic party advantage, suggesting that these voters are hardly cross-pressured about voting for Kerry. Their attitudes are fully consistent with maintaining this level of support.

⁵ These results are based on the 2004 data base, but the same was true for the study conducted by Democracy Corps among Hispanic voters. The survey of 1,564 Hispanic likely voters was conducted February 5-16, 2004 and contained an oversample of 559 Hispanic likely voters in Southwestern swing states (Arizona, New Mexico and Nevada) and an oversample of 363 non-Cuban Hispanics in Florida.

The Democratic Loyalist World

Support for Kerry and Party Identification

Net Advantage



Kerry may be genuinely underperforming with one group, Union Families, though more recent surveys suggest that this may no longer be true. With major organizing efforts, union turnout has increased in recent presidential elections, but the white union household vote for Democrats has been disappointing, particularly in 2000. Gore won white union households by just 8 points, taking 52 percent of the vote. In these surveys, union households support Kerry at the 2000 vote level, but this is a disappointing result given current partisan trends. Union Families align with the Democrats by 16 points today and vote Democratic for Congress by 14 points, but vote for Kerry over Bush by just 9 points. This is consistent with the Gore margins, but hardly what progressives are hoping for in November.

It is very possible that the white union vote will climb toward the Democrats' overall advantage among white union households, spurred by intense organizing efforts in and outside the labor movement. But there is a reason why Gore lagged behind in 2000, which could be a contributing factor here as well. In the Democratic Loyalist World, Union Families are the most supportive of the Iraq War and the least critical of Bush on foreign policy and the War on Terrorism. They are culturally much more conservative – on acceptance of homosexuality and feelings about gay marriage.

But these Union Families are angry voters who want to vote for change: by 56 to 42 percent they want to move in a significantly different direction than that offered by Bush. They reject Bush's economy, are intensely anti-corporate and anti-NAFTA; are

desperate for action on health care costs; and see Bush as neglecting America. On all of these issues, union members and their families are among the strongest of Democratic partisans. Again, Kerry can make important gains here if he is reassuring on some issues, but also tough on trade, prioritizes America and advances a pro-middle class, populist economic critique.

The Contested World – looking to Blue Collar America

While it is true that America is more polarized and the partisan blocs more consolidated, it is not true that America lacks contested and swing voters. The contested space may be constricted, but with the country at parity, a lot of groups and voters matter. Indeed, some important things are happening in the contested world, including a potential Democratic shift among the best-educated and most secular, among seniors and Catholics and potential tumult among all of the blue-collar social groups.

And the contested space is contested. Overall, the groups that form the contested world divide evenly on the key question: 48 percent want to go in a significantly different direction and 49 percent want to continue with Bush's path.

The Bush campaign has a well-developed strategy for reaching across the contested world to the Democrats without jeopardizing their appeal to the Republican loyalists. Unfortunately for the White House, none of these efforts have borne fruit. They have targeted Hispanics (with immigration reform and more), but as indicated earlier, Bush has made no gains with Hispanics up to this point. They targeted suburban and college-educated women (with "No Child Left Behind"), but Well-Educated Women (college educated but without post-graduate degrees) are no closer to the Republicans now than in 2000. Indeed, recent Democracy Corps polls show them moving away. Seniors were offered the biggest prize of all, a prescription drug package, but the Golden Girls (white senior women), are voting for Bush in the same numbers as 2000, when Gore carried them by 6 points.⁶ In fact, these senior women, who identify with the Democrats by 7 points and vote Democratic for Congress by 10 points, could move further away from Bush.

If Kerry wins these battles – for Hispanics, college women and seniors – the Republican base strategies may seem very narrow and are unlikely to get Bush past the vote he achieved in 2000.

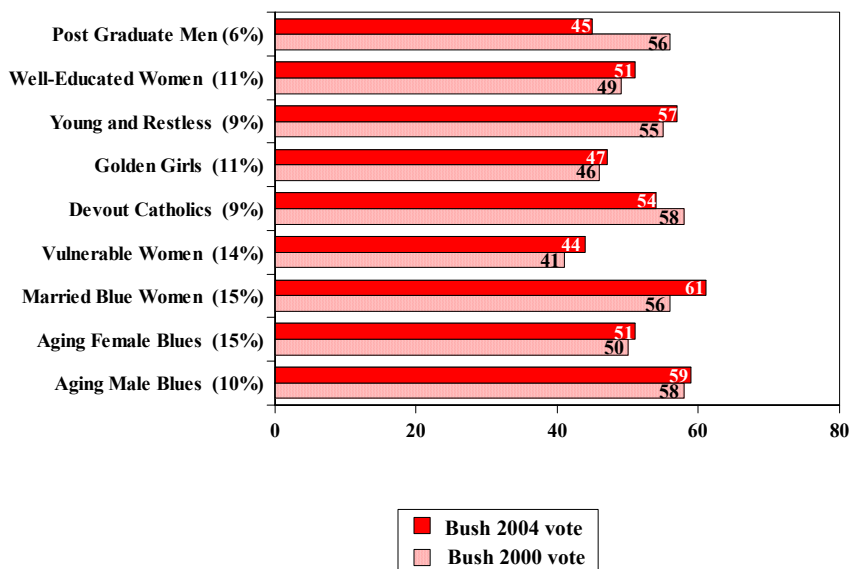
In fact, Bush has already given up some ground in areas where he might have expected to do well. Bush is getting slightly less support with Devout Catholics (54 percent, compared to 58 percent four years ago). While we are not entirely sure of the rea-

⁶ In the Republican world, we have already talked about the F-You Old Men, who are at risk because of Iraq, pro-corporate policies and perhaps also problems with retirement issues.

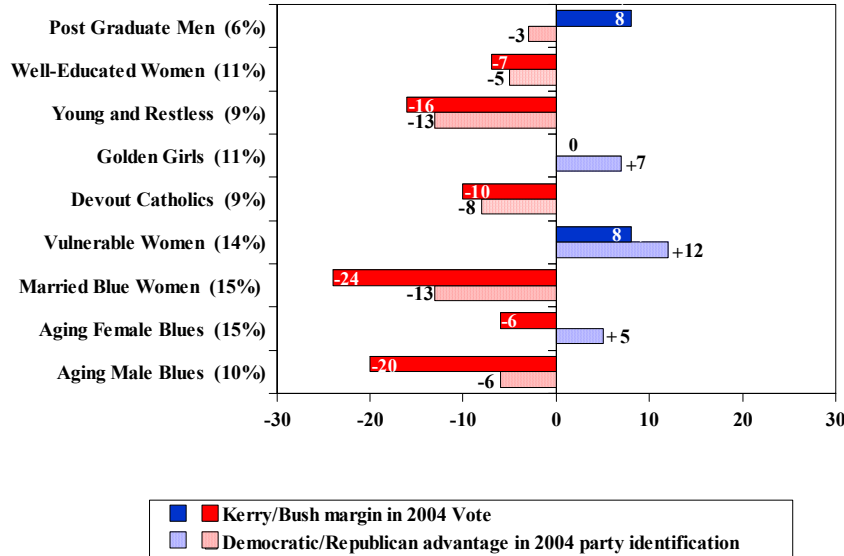
son, it could be because of Iraq or other issues, but just 49 percent of Devout Catholics want to continue in Bush's direction.

Post-graduate Men represent only 6 percent of the electorate, though they are just one more indicator of what is happening in the better-educated more secular world. They have been alienated by the Bush political strategy. Bush is getting only 45 percent of their votes, trailing his 2000 performance by 11 points. This is also a case of Kerry over-performing, well-ahead of the Democratic position on party alignment and congressional vote. These voters are pushed away by the deficits, go-it-alone foreign policy and cultural politics of the Bush administration. While they are over-performing for Kerry, they may be hard for Bush to get back.

The Contested World Support for Bush: 2004 and 2000



The Contested World
 2004 Vote and Party Identification
 Net Advantage



Bush has had a number of areas of success in the Contested World, where he has gained support over his 2000 showing. But in each case this is also creating potential instability in the Bush vote.

Among the Young and Restless (white voters under 30), Bush is winning 57 percent of their vote. This year he has built up a 16 point lead (57 to 41 percent), which is a gain from 2000 when Bush took 55 percent. Bush is running slightly ahead of his party here. This is due entirely to their elevated support for the Iraq War, which is strongly age-correlated. They are much more likely than other votes to identify with the idealism of the mission and the young troops. But this is dangerous territory for Bush. In our most recent Democracy Corps poll, young voters pulled back most sharply from the war, as perhaps this idealism was tarnished. These are voters focused on jobs and very doubtful about economic progress. They are also the most socially tolerant, with a large majority saying that Americans should accept rather than discourage homosexuality. They are hostile to culture war, if this becomes the means through which Bush attempts to win this election.

Bush's base cultural strategy has driven up support with white blue-collar married women (Married Blue Women), who would be the principle beneficiaries of his values appeals and tax cuts. Bush is getting 61 percent of their votes, compared to 56 percent in 2000. They are a big target, representing 15 percent of the electorate, and give Bush the potential for gains outside the loyalist world.

But Bush has a problem all across the downscale and blue-collar world and the largest portion of the contested electorate. In every group – Vulnerable Women (white single non-college and low wage women), Married Blue Women (white married non-college women), and Aging Female and Male Blues (white non-college voters over 50 years) – Bush’s margin over Kerry towers over the Republican advantage in this current period.

Perhaps Bush can hold his lead among Married Blue Women, but it will be a challenge. With Kerry under attack, these women are over-performing for Bush, giving him a 24-point margin over Kerry (61 to 37 percent). But that is 11 points stronger than party alignment and 11 points above the congressional vote. These are the most culturally conservative and still hold on to the most anti-Clinton feelings. With some aspects of the Bush tax package centered on families with children, they are more inclined to Bush on taxes and be less critical about the economy.

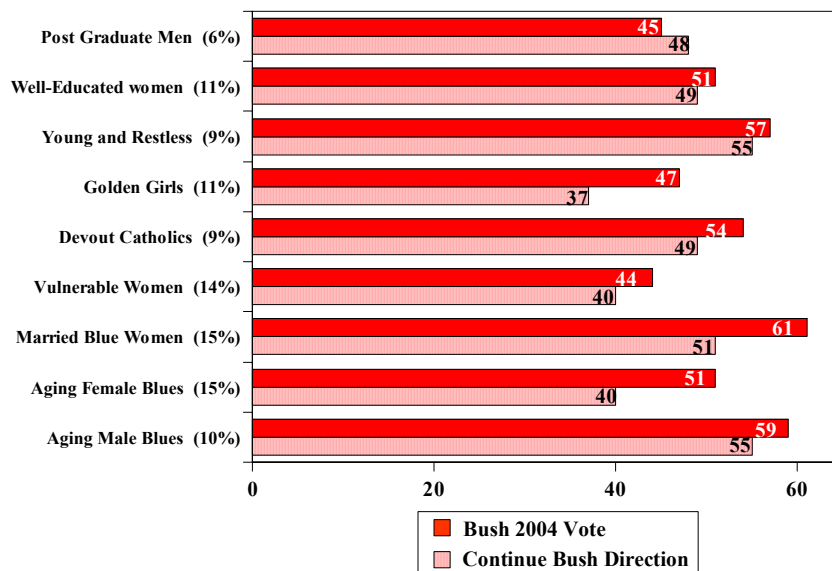
The Aging Blue Men, on the other hand, are going to be a battle zone. They are voting for Bush today, as in 2000 (59 percent of the vote), giving him a 20 point margin. But this is way above the current 6-point advantage in party identification. These are the most anti-gay, and no doubt they will hear a lot about the wedding announcements in Massachusetts. But a majority of these voters think the economy stinks for the middle class; an even larger majority thinks the Iraq War was not worth it; they are anti-corporate, upset about job outsourcing and hate NAFTA. As we see below, only 55 percent want to continue in the direction laid out by Bush. The very strong Bush numbers could easily slip here, depending on how the battle unfolds.

There are other areas of this downscale world where the potential for a Bush fall is even greater.

The Vulnerable Women (white, unmarried non-college and low-wage women) are poised to vote Democratic this year. Here, Kerry runs ahead of Bush by 8 points (52 to 44 percent). While this is close to their 2000 vote and party identity numbers, they are in an angry, anti-incumbent mood. Only 40 percent want to continue with Bush’s direction. Their desire for change centers on health care and the economy. There is no group more insistent that middle class people are squeezed and making no headway, and that employers are paying fewer benefits and leaving them financially pressed.

The Contested World

Bush Vote and Continue Bush Direction



Finally, there are the Aging Blue Women (white and blue collar, over 50 years of age), forming 15 percent of the electorate. They are the biggest target here, forming 15 percent of the electorate. Bush has matched Gore's vote here, but it could collapse. Bush has a 6-point lead here, but these women are more likely to identify with the Democrats by 5 points and vote Democratic for Congress by 7 points. Kerry has a big opportunity for gains here, perhaps the biggest anywhere in the contested electorate. A majority of 52 percent say Iraq is not worth it and 59 percent believe that Bush has neglected problems at home; an even larger majority of 62 percent say that only the rich have gained from this economy. They are more anti-corporate than union households or any other segment of the electorate. Health care is their number one economic worry and main critique of Bush. By a 56 to 40 percent majority, they want to go in a significantly different direction, a 16-point margin for change among a swing group that currently supports Bush by 5 points.

Looking across the landscape of the Contested voters, Bush has difficult gains to defend, while Kerry seems to have both opportunities to confound Bush's support among his strongest support groups (Young and Restless and Aging Blue Men) and to make additional gains of his own with Post-graduate Men, Devout Catholics, Vulnerable Women, Golden Girls and Aging Blue Women.

To stay competitive, Bush has to make Kerry unsuited for the presidency, convince a skeptical electorate of progress on the economy and Iraq, and wage and win the culture war. Kerry has to reassure anxious voters on some key questions (values, taxes

and defense) and reduce the intensity of the culture war and show he will address the economy and health care, stand with the middle class rather than corporate interests and build a strong America.