

Young Voter Mobilization in 2004

Analysis of Outreach, Persuasion and Turnout of 18-29 Year Old Progressive Voters

Program Director

Ryan Friedrichs

Advisors

David Nickerson, Professor, Notre Dame University

Laura Mervilde, Graduate Student, George Washington University

Tegan York, Graduate Student, George Washington University

Lake Snell Perry Mermin & Associates

MacWilliams Robinson and Partners

A Report for Skyline Public Works

February 15, 2006

Skyline Public Works

2010 Broadway Street, Ste 200

Redwood City, CA 94063

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Tables: Turnout by Race, Gender , Party and Battleground State.....	4
Graph: Overall Turnout by Age	5
Descriptive Evaluation	6
State Selection	6
I. Pennsylvania	7
II. Oregon	9
III. Wisconsin	11
IV. Minnesota.....	14
V. Ohio	16
VI. Nevada.....	18
Experimental Evaluation	20
I. Hangouts and Homes	20
II. Local Face - Local Message	21
III. Text Messages	21
IV. Message Content	22
Future Evaluation Recommendations	23
I. Air Campaigns	23
II. Inside vs. Outside.....	23
III. Election Reform	23
IV. More Experimental Data	23
Appendix I: Organization Data Collection Chart	24

Executive Summary

This analysis used data from 17 organizations to examine the 2004 mobilization of 18 to 29 year-old voters in 6 states: Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Evaluation techniques included randomized experiments, statistical controls and GIS mapping. A total of 1,569 precincts and 236,989 experimental records were part of the analysis.

Results suggest several peer-to-peer field programs reached voters traditional campaigns did not, adding an extra 5% on average to progressive turnout in target precincts.

Descriptive Evaluation Highlights

- PA: partisan and nonpartisan field campaign precincts, respectively, had 5% and 8% higher than average turnout, controlling for voting history and race
- OR and WI: partisan field campaign precincts, respectively, had 7% and 8% lower than average Republican support, controlling for voting history and race
- MN: amid high voting levels, field campaign precinct turnout was 1-2% above average
- OH and NV: turnout in precincts worked was only slightly above average, 0-3%

Experimental Evaluation Highlights

- Hangouts and Homes: a community contact (club, park), plus a door-to-door contact increased treatment group turnout by 7% in one trial and 3% in another
- Local Face - Local Message: out-of-state volunteer calls showed no mobilization effect
- Text Messages: experiment sample sizes were too small to determine any effect
- Message: positive and negative messages had equal turnout and persuasion effects

Recommendations

- Air Campaigns: comprehensive radio, TV and text messages experiments needed by '06
- Inside vs. Outside: test impact of peer-to-peer efforts fully integrated in larger campaigns
- Voting Reform: states with least voting barriers again led progressive turnout, test reforms
- More Experimental Data: far too few groups (4 of 17) built-in real measures of their work

Introduction

The 2004 election saw unprecedented levels of grassroots outreach and media attention focused on young voter mobilization. The goal of this analysis is to examine the impact of that outreach on the persuasion and turnout of progressive young voters.

Existing research indicates voters age 18 to 29 increased their turnout in 2004 more than any age group in the population. Additionally, there was a much higher difference between Presidential battleground and non-battleground state turnout in 2004 than in 2000.

Demographically, young voters moved sharply Democratic, after a virtual tie in 2000. Young women, white and African American voters all showed higher than average turnout. Building on this research, this analysis explores the role partisan and nonpartisan mobilization organizations working in battleground states played in this progressive young voter surge.

Turnout Change by State, 18-24 Yrs

	'00	'04	Change
Non-Battleground	37%	46%	+9%
Battleground	38%	54%	+16%

Turnout Change by Gender, 18-24 Yrs¹

	'00	'04	Change
Male	38%	46%	+8%
Female	43%	52%	+9%

Partisan Change by Age, 18-29 Yrs²

	'00	'04	Change
Dem Presidential Candidate	48%	54%	+6%
Rep Presidential Candidate	46%	45%	-1%

Turnout Change by Race, 18-29 Yrs³

	'00	'04	Change
All Young People	40%	49%	+9%
African American	42%	50%	+8%
Latino	29%	36%	+7%
White	42%	52%	+10%

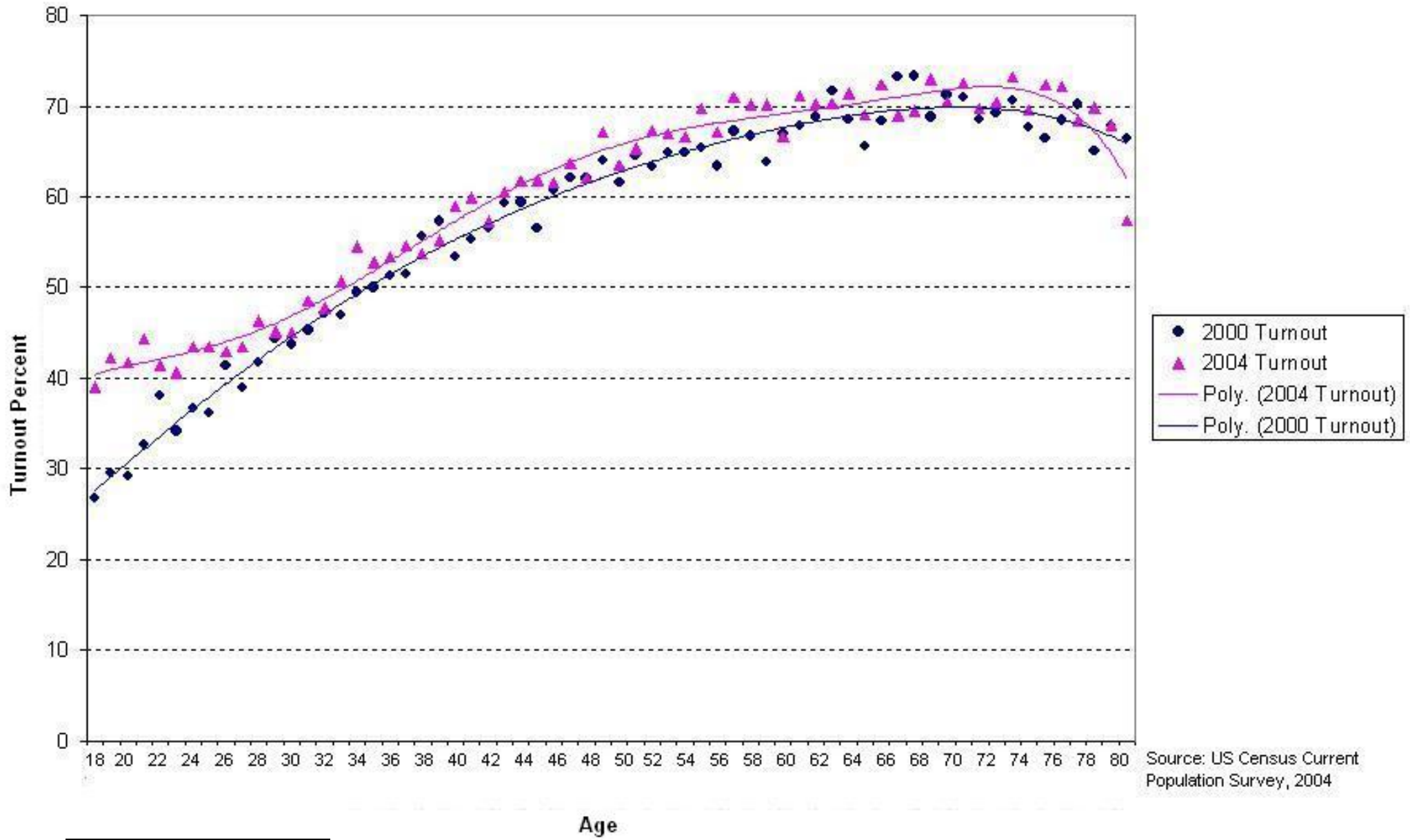
¹ Professor Peter Levine and Emily Hoban, "The Re-Engaged Generation and Beyond," US Census 2000 and 2004 Current Population Survey analysis, CIRCLE, University of Maryland, July, 2005.

² CIRCLE staff, "Youth Voting in the 2004 Election," University of Maryland, January, 2005.

³ Professor Mark Hugo Lopez, "The 2004 Youth Vote", 1988 to 2004," US Census 2000 and 2004 Current Population Survey Analysis, CIRCLE, University of Maryland, 2005.

Graph 1⁴

2000 and 2004 Eligible Voter Turnout by Age



Source: US Census Current Population Survey, 2004

⁴ Professor David King, US Census Current Population Survey analysis, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, May 2005.

Descriptive Evaluation

As so few organizations built experimental measures into their 2004 work, the majority of this analysis is a precinct-by-precinct descriptive comparison of the areas targeted.⁵ Wherever possible the analysis used statistical controls for the impact of voter history, partisanship and race.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps present a visual representation for each state of: 1) areas targeted by organizations, 2) overlap in target areas, and 3) voter turnout or partisan support changes in the area. All maps, except Minneapolis, use precinct data aggregated by state house district for ease of viewing.

State Selection

The evaluation team used the following criteria to select its 6 evaluation states:

- Level of 2004 young voter mobilization activity
- Geographic, racial and ethnic diversity
- State voter file quality and availability
- Election and voting system diversity
- Interests of mobilization organizations
- A balance of high and low 2000 and 2004 turnout levels
- Number of competitive elections and initiatives on 2004 ballot
- Relevance to 2004 Presidential election

The state evaluations are in the order of how interesting and unique their analysis proved to be: Pennsylvania, Oregon, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio and Nevada.

⁵ See Appendix I for a full chart of organizations and data included in the evaluation.

I. Pennsylvania

The PA map and Table 1 show a sharp increase in turnout levels in the Philadelphia area. The 12 target precincts of nonpartisan USSA and the partisan Young Voter Alliance’s 121 target precincts show a disproportional rise in turnout, with controls for turnout history and race.

Table 2 shows partisan Young Voter Alliance precincts with reduced Republican support, controlling for voting history and race, in contrast to nonpartisan National Voice and USSA.

Table 1 – Turnout: PA, Voter Turnout Change vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	2000 Turnout	2004 Turnout	% Change '00-'04 vs. Average Precinct	Control for Turnout History	Control for Race & Turnout History
Everybody VOTE	33	56%	78%	+0.5%	+0.7%	+0.1%
National Voice (ACORN & PFAW)	410	55%	63%	-12%	-1.6%	- 0.1%
USSA	12	35%	64%	-9.3%	+9.5%	+8.4%
Young Voter Alliance	121	47%	72%	-2.1%	+6.1%	+5.3%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 1%, variance explained by model (R²) = 66%

Table 2 – Persuasion: Pittsburgh, Republican Support vs. Average Precincts⁶

Organizations	Precincts	% Support vs. Average Precinct	Control for Voting History	Control for Race & Voting History
Everybody VOTE	33	-1.1%	-1.8%	-0.4%
National Voice (ACORN)	109	-21%	-1.5%	+1.1%
USSA	7	-3.9%	+1.7%	+1.6%
Young Voter Alliance	36	-5.9%	-2.9%	-1.1%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 1%, variance explained by model (R²) = 90%

⁶ Only Allegheny County provided partisan turnout data by precinct, limiting the persuasion analysis to Pittsburgh.

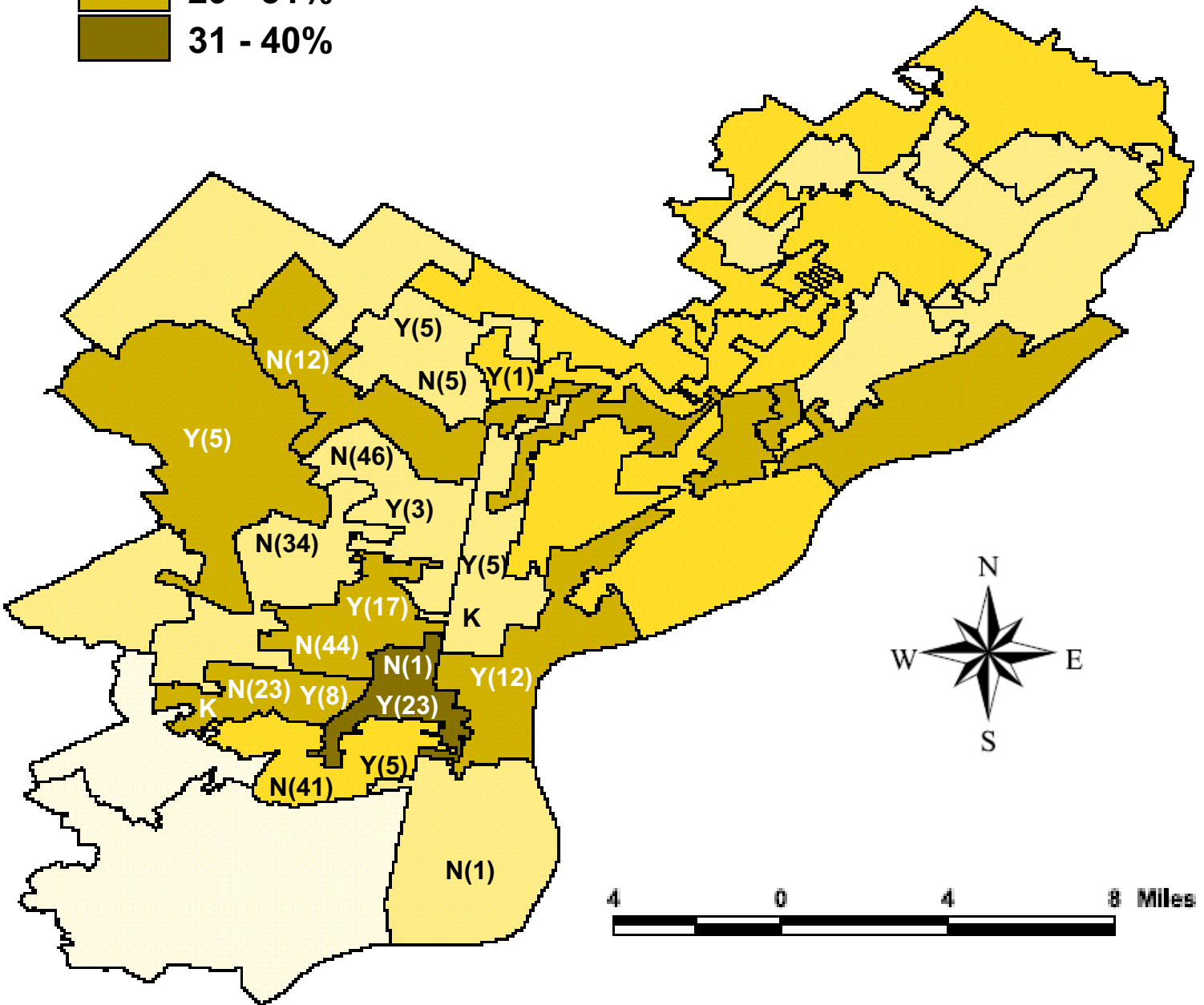
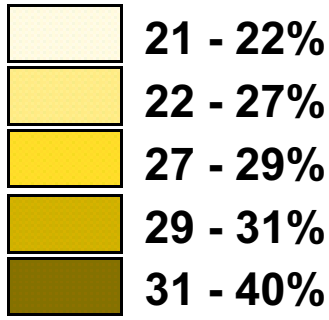
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Voter Turnout Change 2000-04 - State House District

Precincts Targeted

- Kerry for President, College Campaign = K
- National Voice (ACORN) = N
- Young Voter Alliance = Y

() = total precincts worked



II. Oregon

Table 3 and the OR map show a surge of young progressive voter mobilization in the Portland area. Precincts targeted by the OR Bus Project, USSA and especially those of the 21st Century Democrats, show a disproportionate turnout increase, controlling for turnout history.

As for persuasion in Table 4, controls for race were not available for OR. So while precincts targeted by National Voice and the 21st Century Democrats show a disproportionate decrease in Republican support, this may be due to the racial make-up of their targeted areas. USSA did not operate in the areas where partisan support data was available.

Table 3 – Turnout: OR, Voter Turnout Change vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	2002 Turnout	2004 Turnout	% Change '02-'04 vs. Average Precinct	Control for Turnout History
21st Century Democrats	12	30%	90%	-0.5%	+3.6%
National Voice (ACORN & US Action)	24	41%	86%	-4.6%	-1.2%
Oregon Bus Project	8	30%	88%	-1.2%	+1.6%
USSA	4	35%	90%	-0.2%	+1.5%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 1.1%, variance explained by model (R²) = 60%

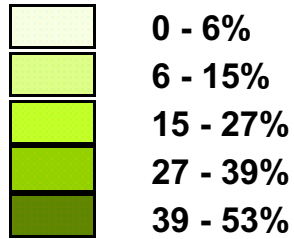
Table 4 – Persuasion: OR, Republican Support vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	% Support vs. Average Precinct	Control for Population & Voting History
21st Century Democrats	12	-18%	-1.3%
National Voice (ACORN & US Action)	24	-35%	-4%
Oregon Bus Project	8	-9.8%	+1.9%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 2.7%, variance explained by model (R²) = 73%

Portland, Oregon

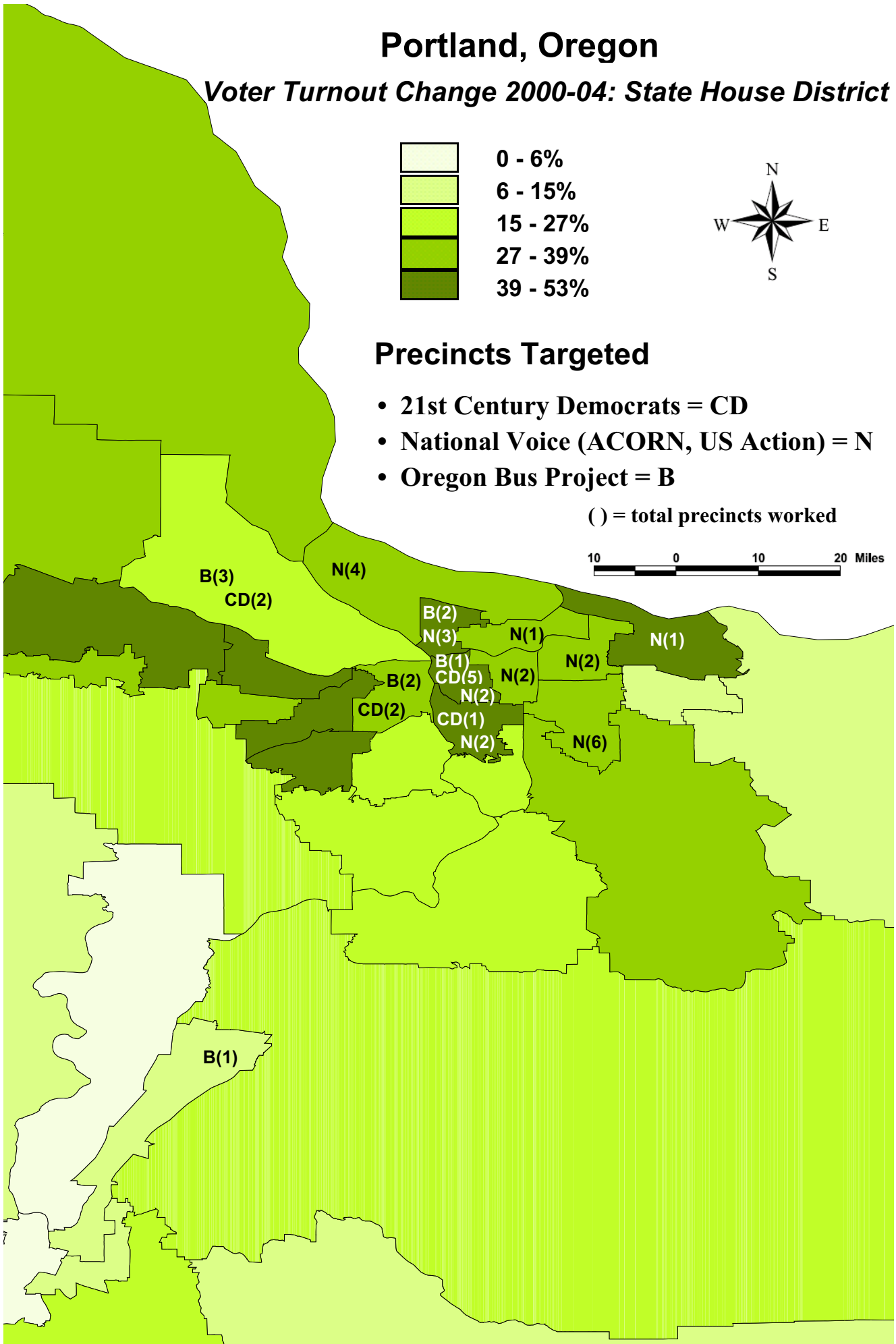
Voter Turnout Change 2000-04: State House District



Precincts Targeted

- 21st Century Democrats = CD
- National Voice (ACORN, US Action) = N
- Oregon Bus Project = B

() = total precincts worked



III. Wisconsin

The WI maps and Table 6 indicate Republicans in 2004 drastically lost vote share in the Madison and Milwaukee areas. The 64 precinct targets of the partisan Young Voter Alliance show in a disproportional loss of this support, with controls for voting history and race.

Table 5 shows little extra mobilization in targeted precincts (not surprising given the state's very high overall turnout) except for nonpartisan, campus based USSA.

Table 5 - Turnout: WI, Voter Turnout Change vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	2000 Turnout	2004 Turnout	% Change '00-'04 vs. Average Precinct	Control for Turnout History	Control for Race & Turnout History
Kerry for President, College Campaign	22	50%	65%	-2.4%	-1.6%	-5.5%
National Voice (ACORN & US Action)	52	57%	68%	+3.3%	+3.4%	-0.6
USSA	12	69%	80%	+8%	+2.9%	+5.7%
Young Voter Alliance	64	56%	63%	-7.5%	-8.6%	-2%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 2.6%, variance explained by model (R²) = 61%

Table 6 – Persuasion: WI, Republican Support vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	% Support vs. Average Precinct	Control for Voting History	Control for Race & Voting History
Kerry for President, College Campaign	22	+0.4%	+1.2%	+1%
National Voice (ACORN & US Action)	52	-19%	-16%	-0.1%
USSA	12	+1.8%	1.5%	-0.4%
Young Voter Alliance	64	-7.9%	-9.2%	-6.5%

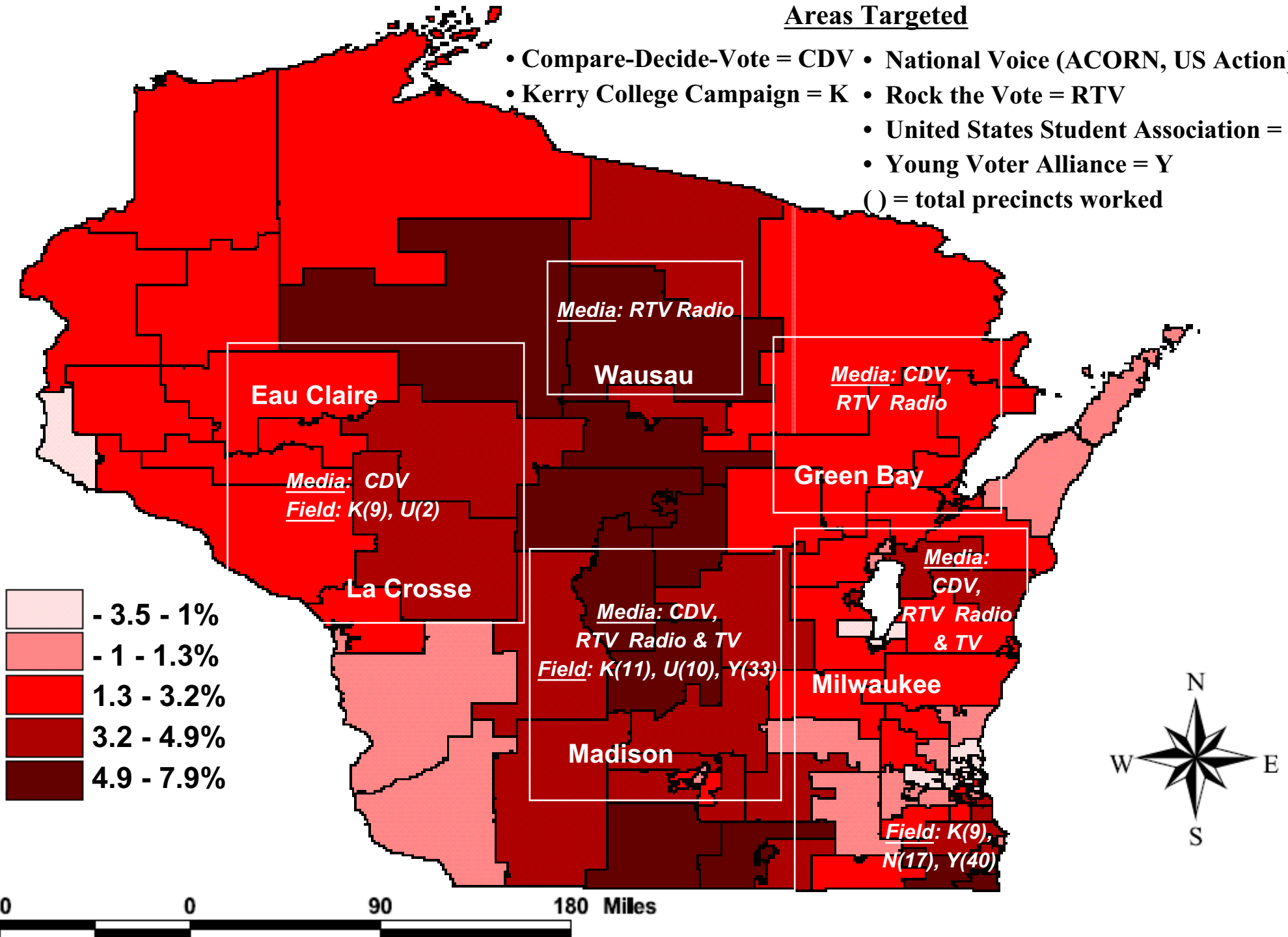
* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 1.4%, variance explained by model (R²) = 83%

Wisconsin

Change in Republican Vote Share 2002-04: State House District

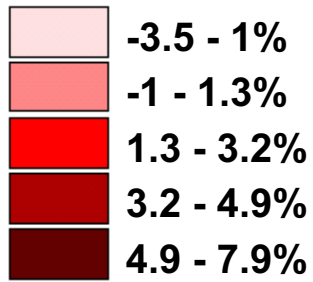
Areas Targeted

- Compare-Decide-Vote = CDV
- National Voice (ACORN, US Action) = N
- Kerry College Campaign = K
- Rock the Vote = RTV
- United States Student Association = U
- Young Voter Alliance = Y
- () = total precincts worked



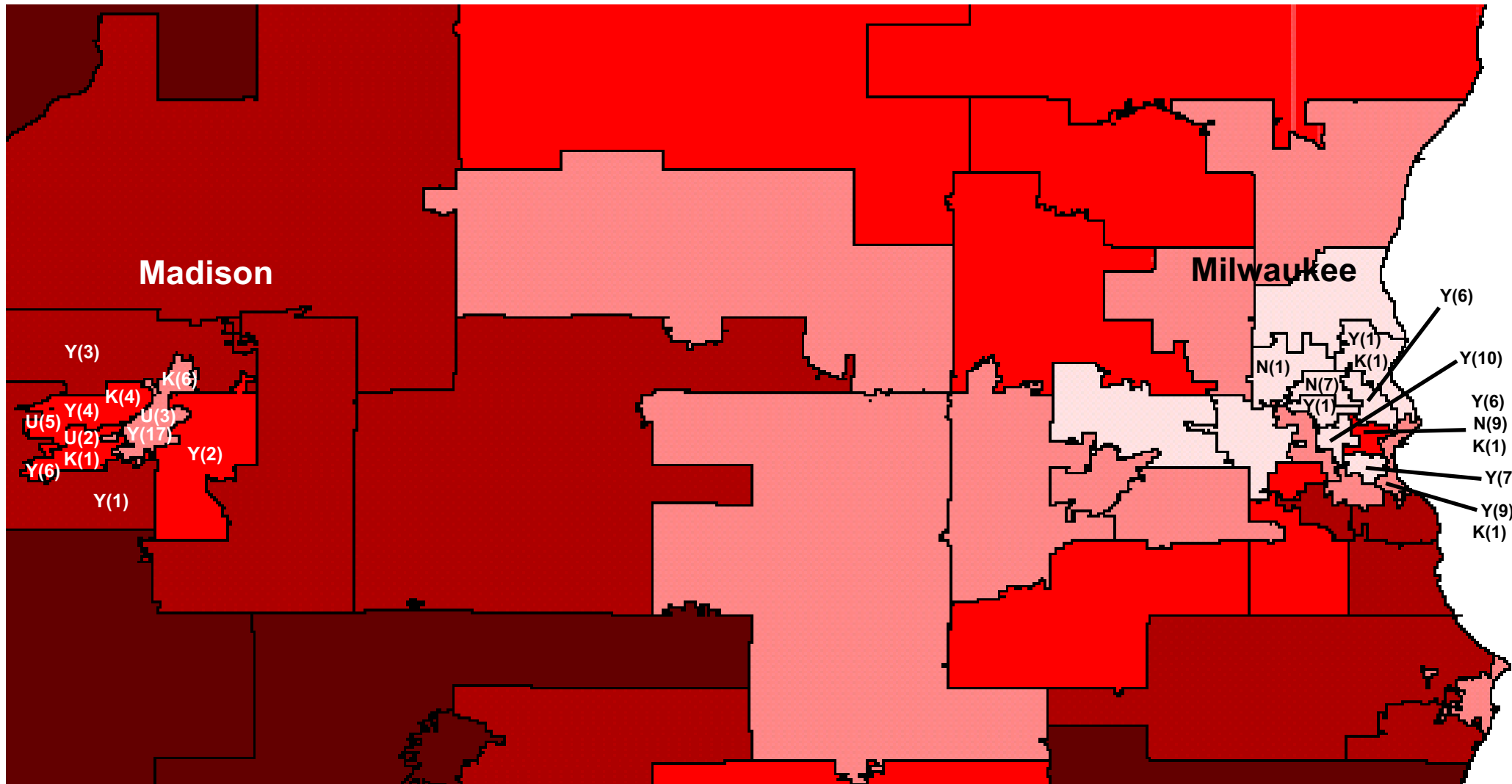
Wisconsin: Madison & Milwaukee

Change in Republican Vote Share 2002-04: State House District



Precincts Targeted

- Kerry for President, College Campaign = K
 - National Voice (ACORN, US Action) = N
 - United States Student Association = U
 - Young Voter Alliance = Y
- () = total precincts worked



IV. Minnesota

Like WI, MN turnout was so high – the highest in the nation – that little extra voter turnout impact appears in targeted areas. Most effects in Table 7 remain within the standard error.

Persuasion, however, is a different story. The partisan Stonewall Democrats show a disproportional decrease in Republican support in their target precincts, with controls for voting history. Nonpartisan National Voice shows a similar decrease, but that effect would likely vanish, as it did in WI and PA, with controls for race.

Table 7 – Turnout: MN, Voter Turnout Change vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	2002 Turnout	2004 Turnout	% Change '02-'04 vs. Average Precinct	Control for Turnout History
21st Century Democrats	12	37%	83%	-4.1%	-1.6%
Kerry for President, College Campaign	8	45%	89%	+2%	+1.3%
National Voice (ACORN)	24	23%	76%	-11%	-5.1%
Stonewall Democrats	8	54%	88%	+1.6%	-0.8%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 1.5%, variance explained by model (R²) = 33%

Table 8 – Persuasion: MN, Republican Support vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	% Support vs. Average Precinct	Control for Voting History
21st Century Democrats	12	-12%	-1.2%
Kerry for President, College Campaign	8	+18%	+5.3%
National Voice (ACORN)	24	+11%	-2.6%
Stonewall Democrats	8	-10%	-2.5%

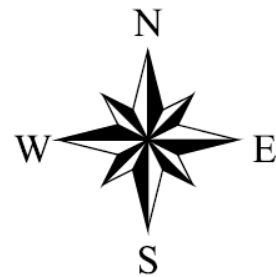
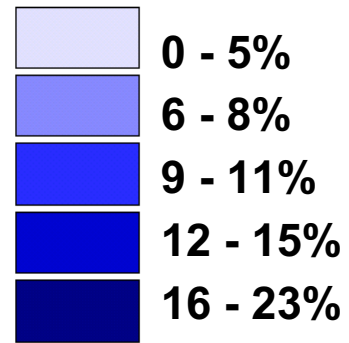
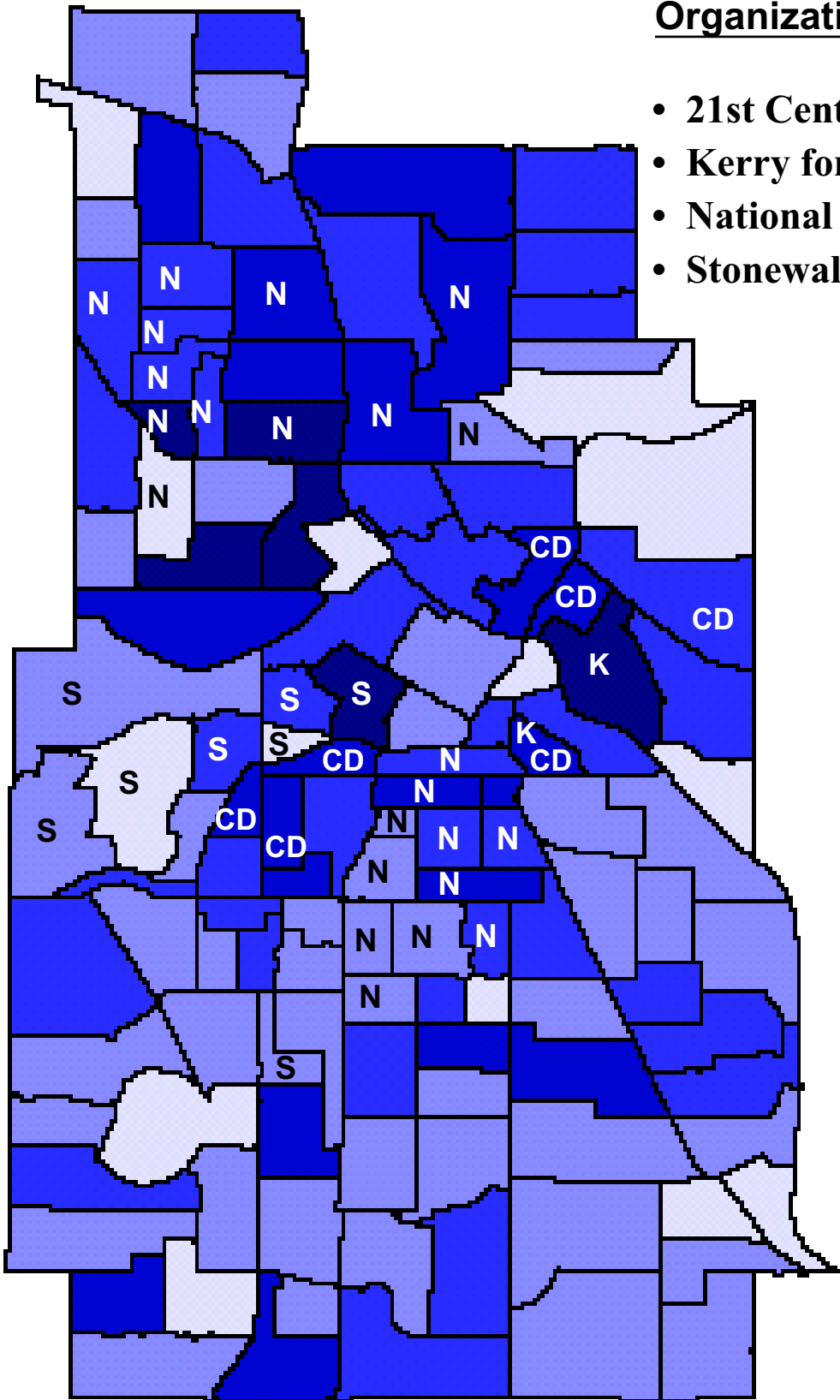
* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 1.8%, variance explained by model (R²) = 79%

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Voter Turnout Change 2002-04 by Precinct

Organization Precinct Targets

- 21st Century Democrats = CD
- Kerry for Pres, College Campaign = K
- National Voice (ACORN, JRLC) = N
- Stonewall Democrats = S



V. Ohio

Both tables paint a mixed picture of mobilization in OH and in Columbus specifically.

Table 10 shows Republicans were successful in the persuasion battle in OH central cities, where most organizations worked. In Table 9 nonpartisan USSA and partisan Young Voter Alliance precincts do show statistically significant turnout increases, controlling only for voting history.

Also, the OH map shows Columbus database concentrations of Music for America (50%) and Rock the Vote (25%) were in one house district, which showed a dramatic turnout increase.

Table 9 – Turnout: OH, Voter Turnout Change vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	2000 Turnout	2004 Turnout	% Change '00-'04 vs. Average Precinct	Control for Turnout History	Control for Partisanship & Turnout History
21 st Century Democrats	40	46%	53%	-5.2%	-3.3%	-5%
National Voice (ACORN & US Action)	395	60%	56%	-0.7%	-0.1%	+0.7%
USSA	16	46%	63%	+3.8%	+6.9 %	+6.2%
Young Voter Alliance	132	58%	58%	+1.9%	+2.7%	+3.1%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 1.9%, variance explained by model (R²) = 2.6%

Table 10 – Persuasion: OH, Republican Support vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	Precincts	% Support vs. Average Precinct	Control for Past Partisan Turnout
21 st Century Democrats	40	-3.3%	+2.7%
National Voice (ACORN & US Action)	395	-4.2%	-0.7%
USSA	16	+1.7 %	-0.3%
Young Voter Alliance	132	+2.5%	+2.4%

* The average standard error for the final column is +/- 2.6 variance explained by model (R²) = 36%

Columbus, Ohio

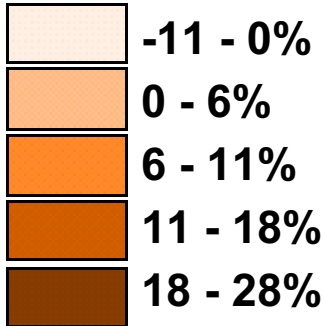
Voter Turnout Change 2000-04: State House District



Precincts Targeted

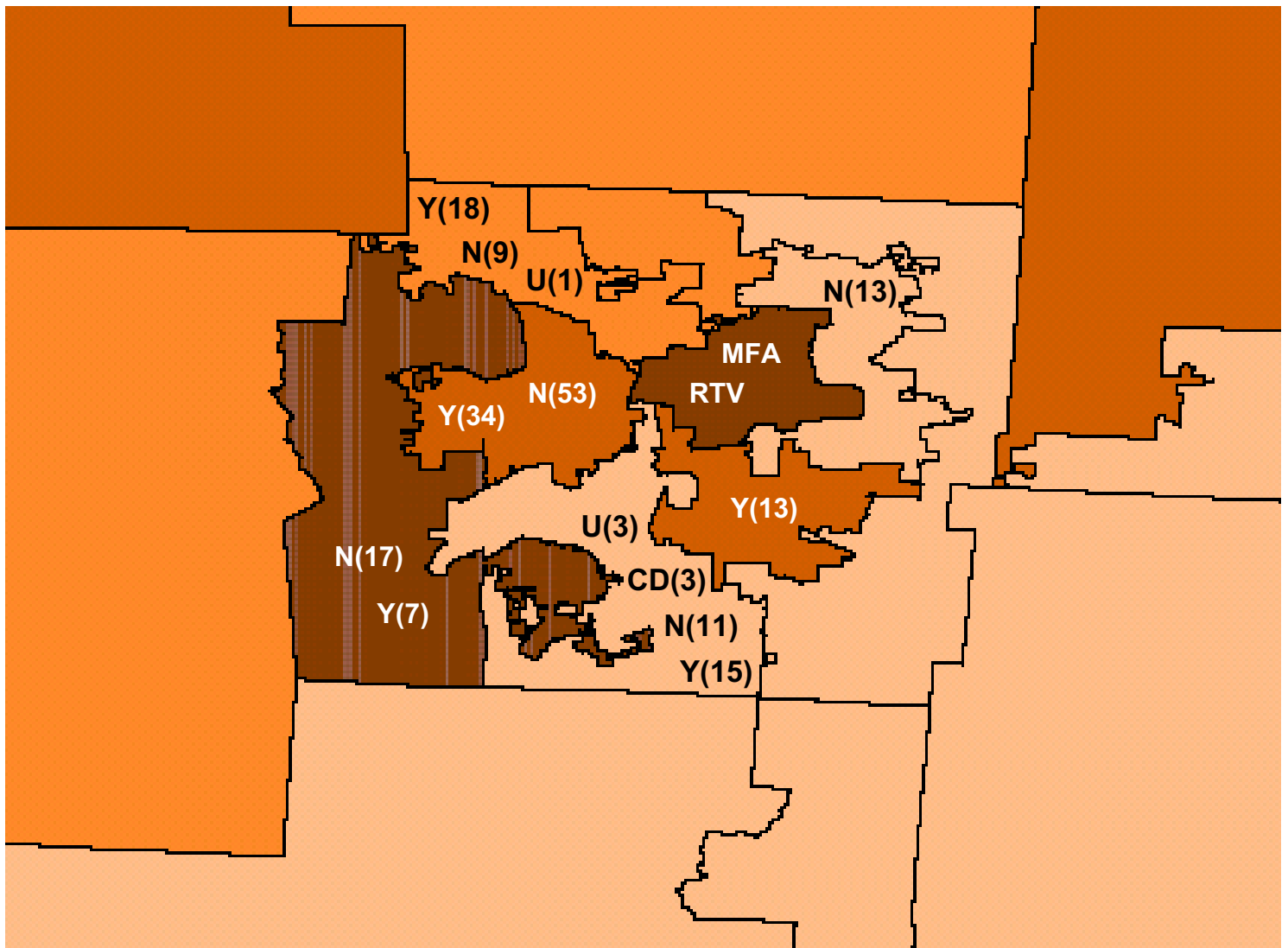
- 21st Century Democrats = CD
- National Voice (ACORN, Earth Day, NAACP) = N
- United States Student Association = U
- Young Voter Alliance = Y

() = total precincts worked



Database Concentrations

- Music for America = MFA
- Rock the Vote = RTV



VI. Nevada

The NV map shows disproportional voter turnout increases in the suburbs and exurbs outside the city centers of Las Vegas and Reno. While partisan change data was not yet available for all NV counties, city center turnout was critical to progressive young voter mobilization in every other evaluation state.

Table 11, however, does find disproportionate increases in voter turnout in state house districts where partisan Music for America and nonpartisan Rock the Vote had the concentrations of their member databases. These turnout figures lack controls for turnout history and race, but are similar to the database concentration effects shown on the Columbus map.⁷

Compare-Decide-Vote bought ads represented on the WI and NV maps and also ran ads in MN. These ads ran on cable and broadcast television and comprehensively covered both states, making viable control groups impossible to create to weight the impact of the ads. Rock the Vote radio and television ads in WI and OH and encountered this same challenge.

Table 11 – Turnout: Las Vegas, Voter Turnout Change vs. Average Precincts

Organizations	State House District Concentrations	2002 Turnout	2004 Turnout	% Change '02-'04 vs. Average District
Music for America	4	62%	84%	+3.7%
Rock the Vote	7	58%	80%	+2.9%

⁷ Nevada partisan and demographic data should be available by the end of August 2005 and will be part of future evaluation drafts.

Nevada

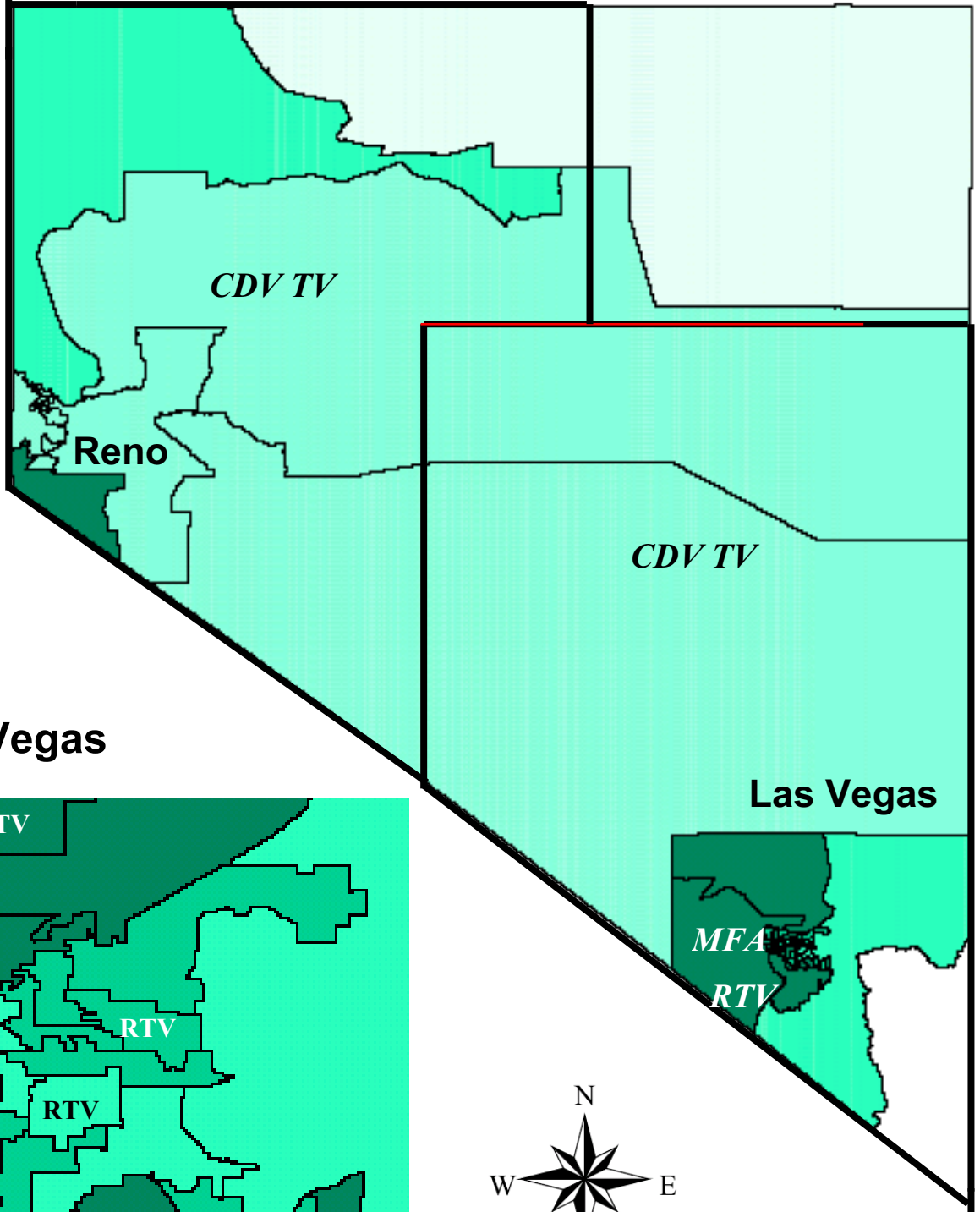
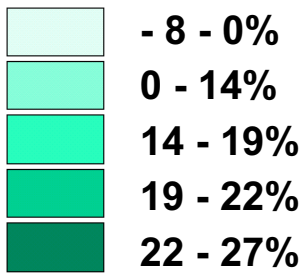
Voter Turnout Change 2002-04 - State House District

Database Concentrations

- Music for America = MFA
- Rock the Vote = RTV

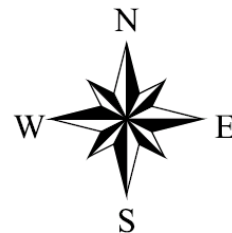
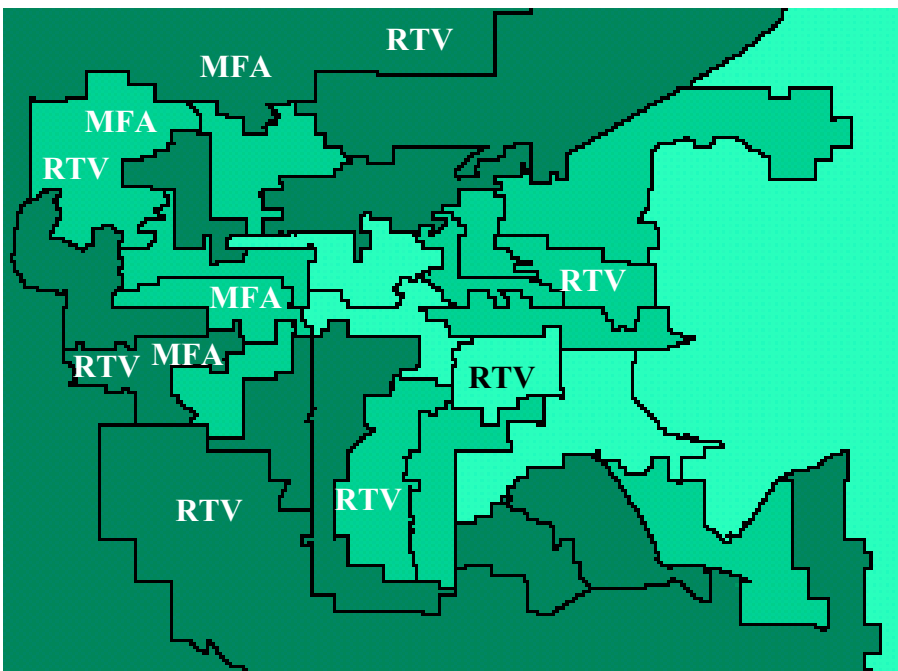
Areas Targeted

- Compare-Decide-Vote Ads = CDV



Las Vegas

Las Vegas



Experimental Evaluation

Only 4 of the 17 organizations that submitted data used randomized experiments to measure the impact of their work. However, those that did submit experimental data tested several cutting edge tactics. Each study randomly assigned individuals to treatment and control groups. Treatment groups received the outreach under examination and control groups did not.

Random assignment makes the treatment and control groups identical for all intents and purposes, except for the campaign tactic in question. The difference in the turnout rates of the two groups is therefore as good a measurement of the effect of the outreach as is possible.

I. Hangouts and Homes

Table 12 weighs the impact of outreach to a young person at an established community venue – club, barbershop, basketball league – with subsequent in person follow-up at their home. The control group did not receive the follow-up (ie. the full program) while those in the treatment group did. This 1-2 punch led to 3% to 7% higher turnout rates in the treatment group.

The randomized controls remove all outside factors that could drive this turnout change. It appears that this outreach found and significantly mobilized voters that no other effort did.

Table 12 - Impact of a Community Venue + Door-to-Door Contact

States	Records	Voter File Match	Control Group % Voted	Treatment Group % Voted	Difference
Florida	4,412	20%	54%	61%	+7%
Wisconsin	7,390	27%	83%	86%	+3%
Pooled Totals	11,802	25%			+4%

* The pooled standard error for the final column is +/- 2.1%

II. Local Face - Local Message

Table 13 examines the effect of out-of-state, peer-to-peer volunteer get-out-the-vote calls days before the election. Only calls to PA were above the standard error and the pooled results show no difference between treatment and control groups. Previous research has found an impact using local volunteers for such calls, perhaps the lack of a location hindered the effort.⁸

Table 13 - Impact of an Out-of-State Volunteer GOTV Call

States	Records	Voter File Match	Control Group % Voted	Treatment Group % Voted	Difference
Pennsylvania	9,056	85%	70.6%	71.9%	+1.2%
Florida	23,089	63%	59.7%	59.4%	-0.3%
Wisconsin	4,160	53%	93.3%	91.4%	-1.9%
Pooled Totals	36,305	67%			-0.3%

* The pooled standard error for the final column is +/- 0.7%

III. Text Messages

Table 14 shows the wildly mixed impact of get-out-the-vote text messages sent with polling location information to young voters days before the election. Sample sizes were unfortunately too small to accurately gage a mobilization effect. However, they do warrant additional research.

Table 14 - Impact of a GOTV Text Message Contact

States	Records	Voter File Match	Control Group % Voted	Treatment Group % Voted	Difference
Florida	33	46%	33.3%	66.7%	+33.3%
Wisconsin	415	44%	97.4%	92.3%	-5.1%
Pooled Totals	448	44%			-4.7%

* The pooled standard error for the final column is +/- 3.4%

⁸ Professors Donald Green and Alan Gerber.. "Getting Out the Youth Vote," a report for the Pew Charitable Trusts and Yale University's Institute for Social and Policy Studies, December 29, 2001.

IV. Message Content

Table 15 measures the mobilization impact of positive versus negative campaign messages. Those in the negative treatment group received anti-Republican issues messages, while those in the positive treatment group receive pro-Democrat messages.

Both messages came through volunteer calls young voters on: 1) lists gathered in the field, or 2) lists purchased from a vendor. Overall, there appears to be little detectable difference in the mobilization or persuasion effect of one message type over another.

However, those on the field list seem to be mobilized by a negative message and persuaded by a positive message to a greater degree than those on the vendor list. This could be because issues important to voters on the field list were identified ahead of time and used in the outreach, while voters on the vendor list were only asked about their issues during the outreach.⁹

Table 15 - Impact of a Negative vs. Positive Volunteer Phone Message

Message Type	Records	% Voted Field List	% Voted Vendor List	% Kerry Field List	% Kerry Vendor List
Negative Message	3,827	56%	39%	57%	73%
Positive Message	3,764	53%	40%	60%	73%
Difference		+3%	-1%	-3%	0%

* The pooled standard error for the final row is +/- 1.9%

⁹ Thank you to Notre Dame Political Science Professor David Nickerson for sharing the initial findings of this message experiment with the evaluation team. These results as well as those of Table 12 will eventually develop into full academic papers.

Future Evaluation Recommendations

I. Air Campaigns

The two organizations that submitted radio and TV data, Compare-Decide-Vote and Rock the Vote, purchased blanket buys that prevented control group analysis. Rigorous analysis of the dollars-per-vote impact of air campaign strategies is an absolute must for 2005 or 2006.

II. Inside vs. Outside

All organizations that participated in this evaluation, aside from the Kerry for President College Campaign, operated outside the traditional campaign structures. This peer driven, outsider element of these efforts may have been part of the key to their success, but models for also working inside larger state and national campaigns need further development.

III. Voting Reform

Once again voter mobilization, young and old, in Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and other election reform leaders is among the highest in the nation. Experimental research on states that lower election barriers, and the reform campaigns themselves, will help conclusively establish causal links between open voting systems and progressive turnout.

IV. More Experimental Data

Randomized experiments represent the gold standard, the medical research standard for evaluation. Far too few organizations in 2004 used this tool to genuinely understand the effect of their work. If progressive leaders truly care about the outcomes and impact of their work, then they must become as serious about evaluation of their efforts as they are about implementation.

Appendix I: Organization Data Collection Chart

Young Voter Evaluation Program - Data Collection						
Organization	Evaluation States	Shared	Data Type	Descriptive Records Shared	Randomized Controls	Experimental Records
21st Century Democrats	MN, OR, OH, PA, WI	Y	precincts	530,389 people, 58 areas	Y	141,457
America Coming Together	All	N	---	---	---	
College Democrats of America	none	Y	final report	---	N	
Compare - Decide - Vote	MN, NV & WI	Y	precincts	10 cable, 11 network markets	N	
Citizen Change	MN, OR, OH, PA, WI	Y	final report	---	N	
Downtown for Democracy	OH	Y	database	8,334 people	N	
Everybody VOTE	PA	Y	database	3,625 people		
Kerry for President, College Campaign	All	Y	precincts	65 areas	N	
League of Young Voters	MN, OR, OH, PA, WI	Y	final report	8559 people	N	
MoveOn SA/PAC	All	Y	database	24,260 people	Y	61,111
Music For America	All	Y	database	53,688 people	N	
National Voice	MN, OR, OH, PA, WI	Y	database	905 areas	N	
New Voters Project	NV, OR, WI	N	---	---	---	
Oregon Bus Project	OR	Y	precincts	24,137 people, 26 areas	N	
Punk Voter	All	Y	final report	---	N	
Rock The Vote	All	Y	database	1.2 million people, 10 cable markets, 7 radio stations	N	
Ruckus Society / Radical Designs	MN, OH, OR	Y	database	19,096 people	Y	1,927
Stonewall Democrats	MN, OR, OH, PA, WI	Y	precincts	20,474 people, 130 areas	N	
United States Student Association	OH, OR, PA, WI	Y	precincts	17,170 people, 46 areas	N	
Young Voter Alliance / YDA	MN, OR, OH, PA, WI	Y	precincts	13,521 people, 339 areas	Y	32,494