

Fear of death factors into how we vote

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Rutgers University scientists say their research suggests some people voted for George W. Bush rather than John Kerry because of concerns about death.

Florette Cohen, a graduate student in social psychology and Daniel Ogilvie, a psychology professor, used research based on the 2004 presidential election. They found voters in a "psychologically benign state of mind" preferred Kerry to Bush, but Bush was more popular than Kerry after voters received a subtle reminder of death.

Citing an Osama bin Laden tape that became public a few days before the election, the researchers say many Americans' unconscious concerns about death resulted in some people being scared into voting for Bush.

The researchers collaborated with professors Sheldon Solomon of Skidmore College, Jeff Greenberg at the University of Arizona and Tom Pyszczynski at the University of Colorado.

The study appears in the journal *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*.

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