

The Rising American Electorate and the 2020 Election

Preliminary Analysis

December 2020

Post-Election Analysis: A Lens on Representation

Equality of Electoral Participation

More equal participation by the Rising American Electorate (RAE).

Electoral Representation

The RAE's voting participation impacts election outcomes in key states.

Mobilization to Drive Change

RAE turnout accelerates their impact.

The "Rising American Electorate" (RAE) includes:
people of color, unmarried women, and younger voters (Gen Z+Millennials).

Principles of Engagement around the Data

1. Employ the best current data to support decisions...and then update.
2. Pressure test the data and the sensitivity of conclusions.
3. Iterate on data and model to create an asset.

Data Sources for this Analysis

Current Data Sources*:

- AP VoteCast to understand who voted and their vote choice in 2020
- Current Population Surveys (via Lake Research Partners) and the Pew Research Center for eligible voters and who voted in 2016
- Government sources for ballots cast

Future Additional Sources:

- Voter history data to understand who voted in 2016 and 2020
- Voter surveys that validate who really voted to confirm vote choice
- Updated 2020 data on eligible voters

*See the end of this presentation deck for more detail on sources.

Presentation Roadmap



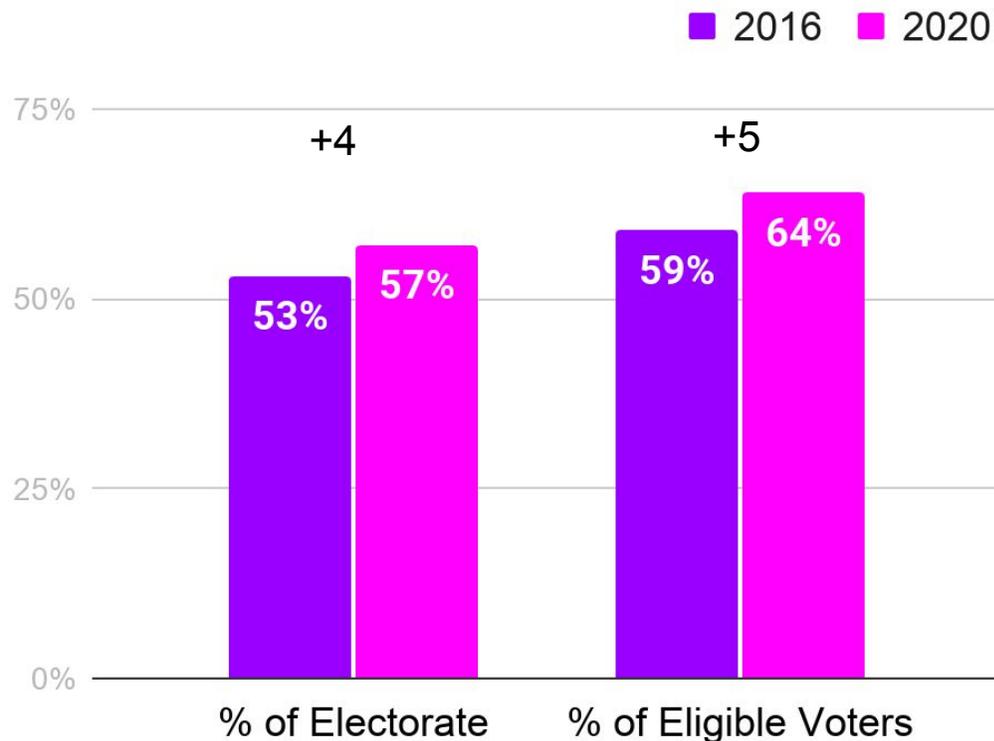
The Changing Electorate

2020 versus 2016



RAE Gains in Electorate, Yet Participatory Gap Remains

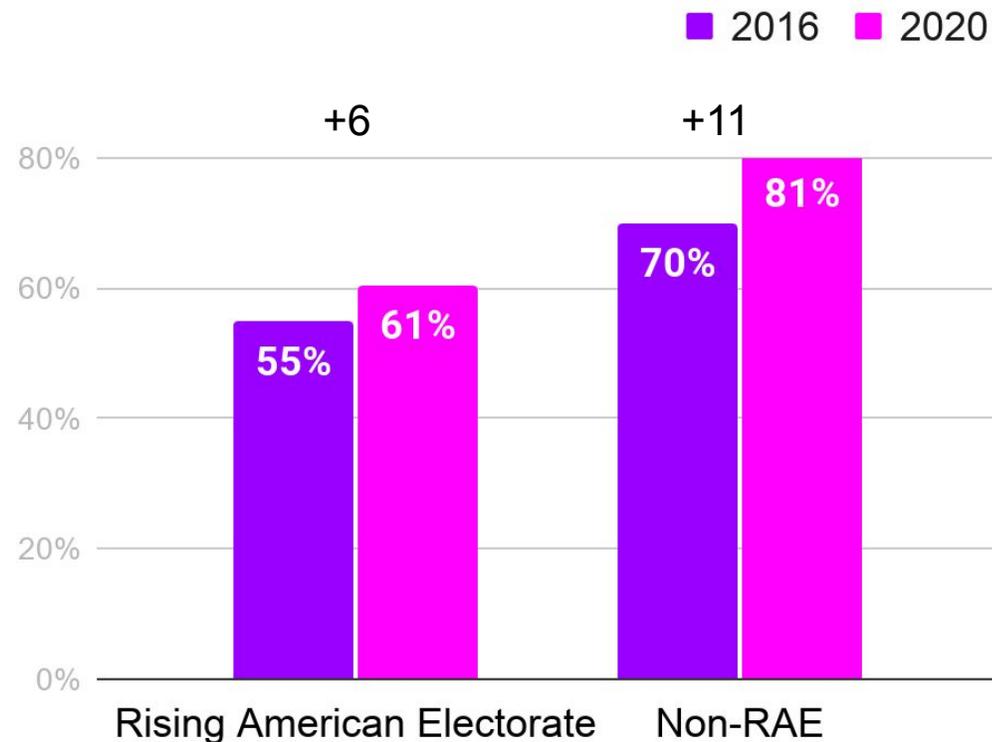
RAE Share of Electorate and Eligible Voters



- The Rising American Electorate increased its share of the electorate (those who voted in the election) from **53% in 2016 to 57%** in 2020, according to initial estimates.
- The RAE's electorate growth nearly matched population growth. The participation gap (the difference between share of the eligible voters and share of the electorate) failed to narrow (**+7 points** in 2020).

RAE Turnout Increases Significantly from 2016 to 2020

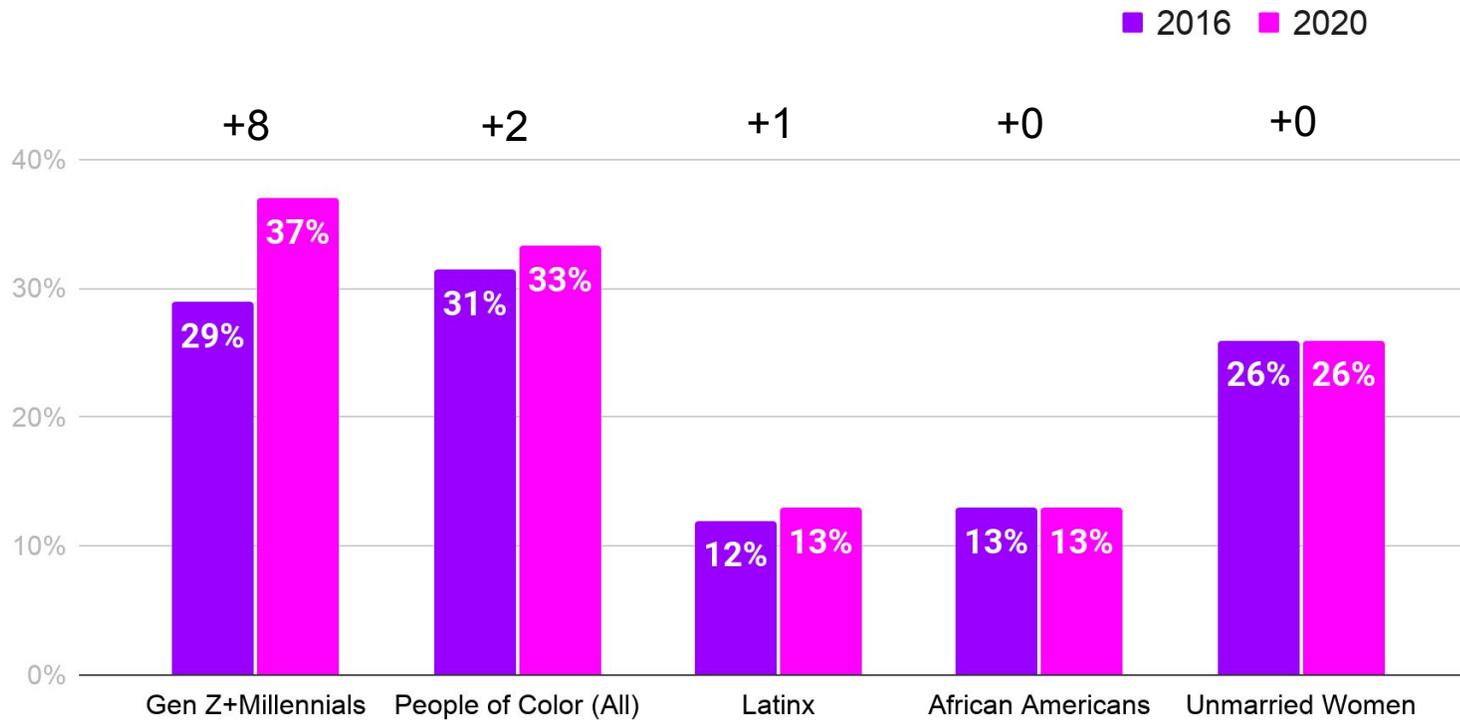
Turnout Rates (Vote Cast as Share of Eligible Voters)



- Rising American Electorate (RAE) increased its rate of turnout **+6 percentage points**.
- “Turnout rate” refers to the proportion of a given group of eligible voters who cast ballots in the election. Examining this figure can help us hold aside population change and size to understand changing voter behavior.
- The reason the RAE did not gain more ground in the electorate relative to share of eligible voters is that those not in the Rising American Electorate increased their turnout **+11 points**, too, in a very high turnout election.

Eligible Voters Include More Gen Z and People of Color

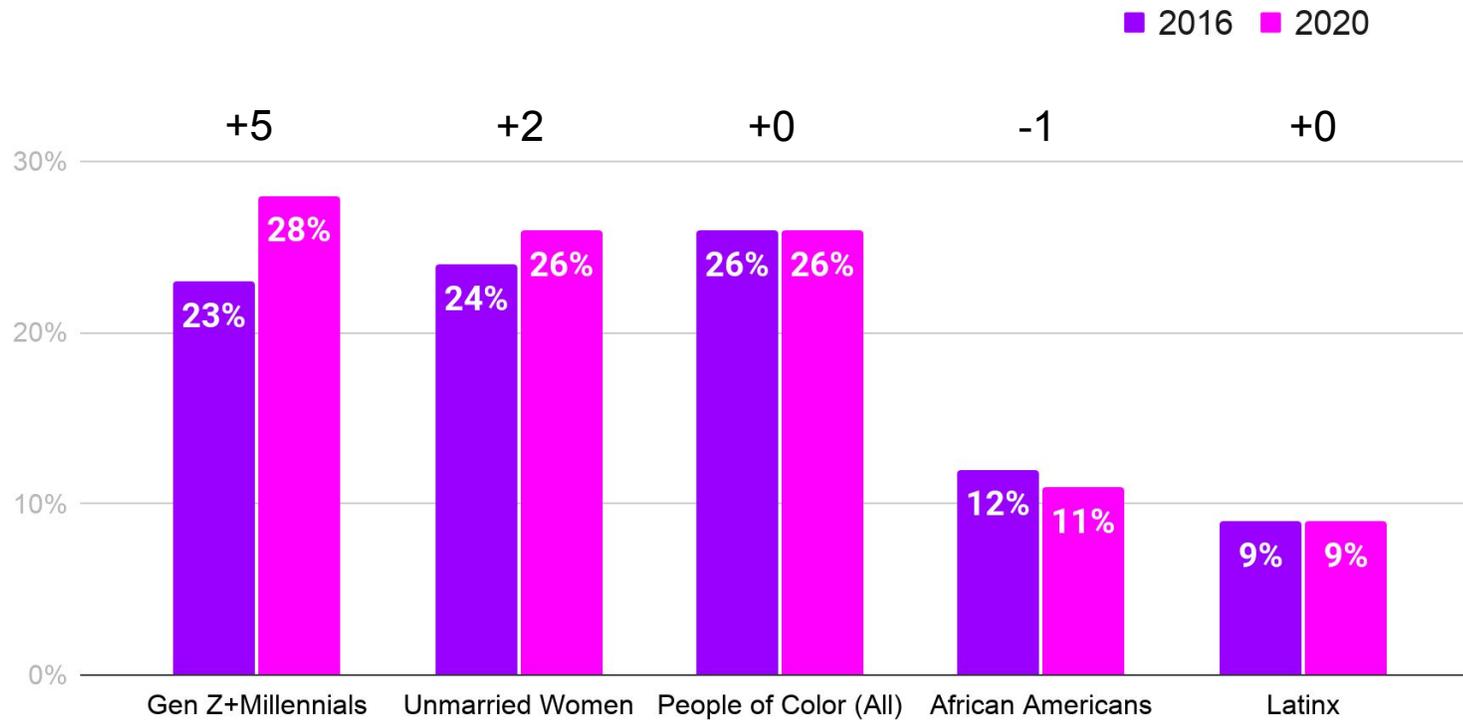
Share of Eligible Voters, Segments within Rising American Electorate



- Gen Z and Millennials now make up **37%** of eligible voters, **+8 points** from 2016.
- People of color also increased **+2 points** as a share of eligible voters over the same period.
- These changes help explain the +4 point gain in the RAE's share of eligible voters (previously shown).

More Younger Generations, Unmarried Women in Electorate

Share of Electorate, Segments within Rising American Electorate



- Gen Z and Millennials gained most in the electorate given sizable population growth and rising younger voter turnout.
- Unmarried women increased to **26%**, matching their share of eligible voters with their sharp turnout increase.
- People of color remained steady at **26%**, powered by absolute gains in turnout and population growth.

In Key States, RAE Growth Outpaced Population Growth

- Across seven states where margins were closer, the RAE's growth among those who voted generally exceeds the country as a whole, a product of more significant gains in turnout in these states.
- In four of these states, the RAE's growth outpaced eligible voters, reducing participation gaps.

The Rising American Electorate Across Key States

	% of Electorate:			% of Eligible:			Turnout Rate:		
	2016	2020	pp Δ	2016	2020	pp Δ	2016	2020	pp Δ
Arizona	52%	58%	+6	61%	65%	+4	50%	62%	+12
Florida	55%	60%	+5	61%	65%	+3	60%	67%	+7
Georgia	58%	62%	+4	64%	69%	+5	53%	59%	+6
Michigan	44%	52%	+7	52%	58%	+5	56%	67%	+10
North Carolina	56%	56%	+0	61%	64%	+3	63%	64%	+1
Pennsylvania	47%	48%	+2	51%	57%	+5	58%	63%	+4
Wisconsin	39%	46%	+7	47%	51%	+4	57%	68%	+11
National	53%	57%	+4	59%	64%	+5	55%	61%	+6

Electoral Composition: Key Takeaways

- **The participation gap remains too large.**
 - The RAE's participation is still muted relative to its share of eligible voters.
- **The RAE increased its turnout and share among those who voted.**
 - Population growth, especially of younger generations and people of color, played an important role.
 - Turnout increases, especially of unmarried women, kept the RAE growing in a high turnout election overall.
- **Voter mobilization mattered to explain RAE Impact.**
 - High turnout elections do not guarantee greater equality in participation.
 - The participation gap fell from 2016 to 2020 in many key states as a result of strong turnout gains, suggesting mobilization efforts in those states have an impact.

The Rising American Electorate's Impact in 2020

Viewing Vote Choice Margins Relative to
Population Size



Vote Choice and Electorate Share Combine to Drive Margins

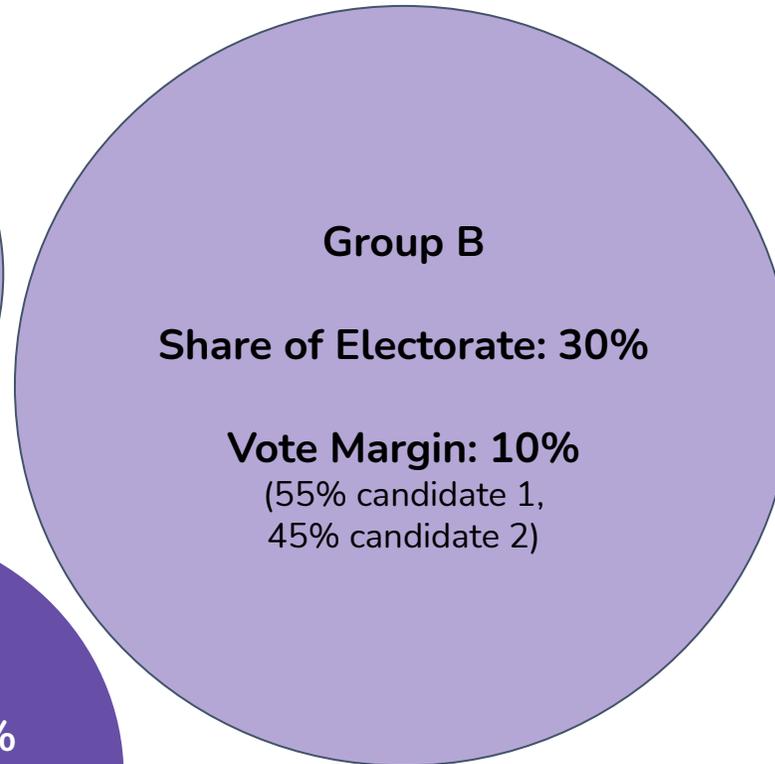
Illustrative Example

Bubble size =

Share of Electorate

Bubble shade =

Size of Vote Margin (%
for Candidate 1 minus
% for Candidate 2)



Group B has more impact than Group A because it is more sizable in the population.

Group C has more impact than Group A because it more strongly supports candidate 1.

Group B and Group C have roughly the same impact.

Measuring the Electoral Impact of Segments

$$\text{Share of Electorate} \times \text{Vote Margin: \% Biden - \% Trump} = \text{Margin Contribution (pp)}$$

The RAE had Significant Electoral Impact in 2020

	Share of Electorate	×	Vote Margin: % Biden-%Trump	=	Margin Contribution (pp)
Rising American Electorate	57%		+22		+13
Non-RAE	43%		-22		-9

One can assess the relative impact of groups in the electorate by taking their size multiplied by their vote choice.

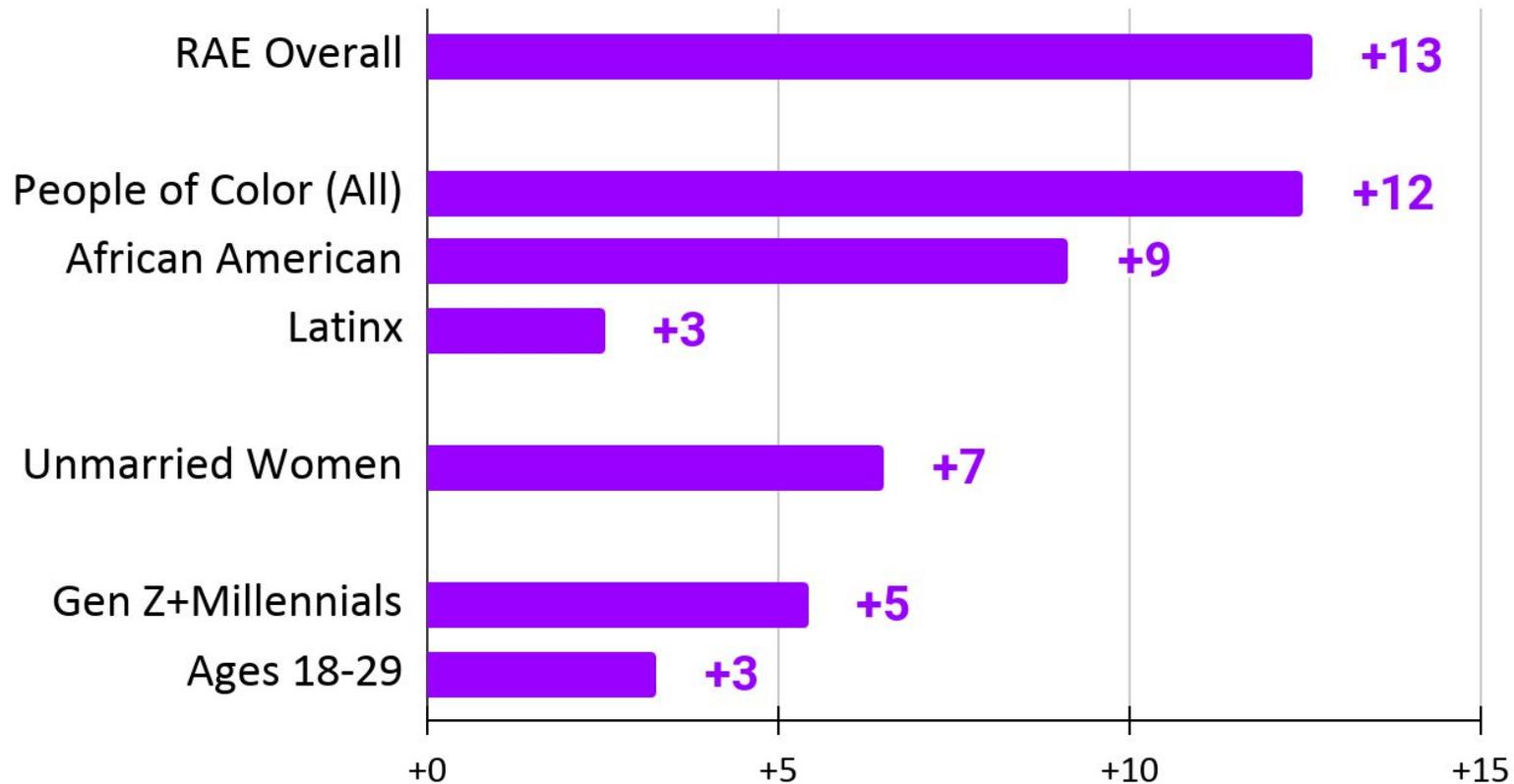
When one sums these groups, one can see the overall vote margin in the survey results used here.*
 The math here shows the Rising American Electorate's margin toward Biden relative to Trump was matched by the non-RAE in the other direction.
 But the RAE's more sizable electorate share (57%) explains Biden's overall margin.

Margin Contribution RAE	+	Margin Contribution non-RAE	=	Overall Margin: %Biden-%Trump
+13		-9		+4

*As long as the groups are mutually exclusive and completely exhaustive.

All Segments of RAE Drove Overall RAE Margin Contribution

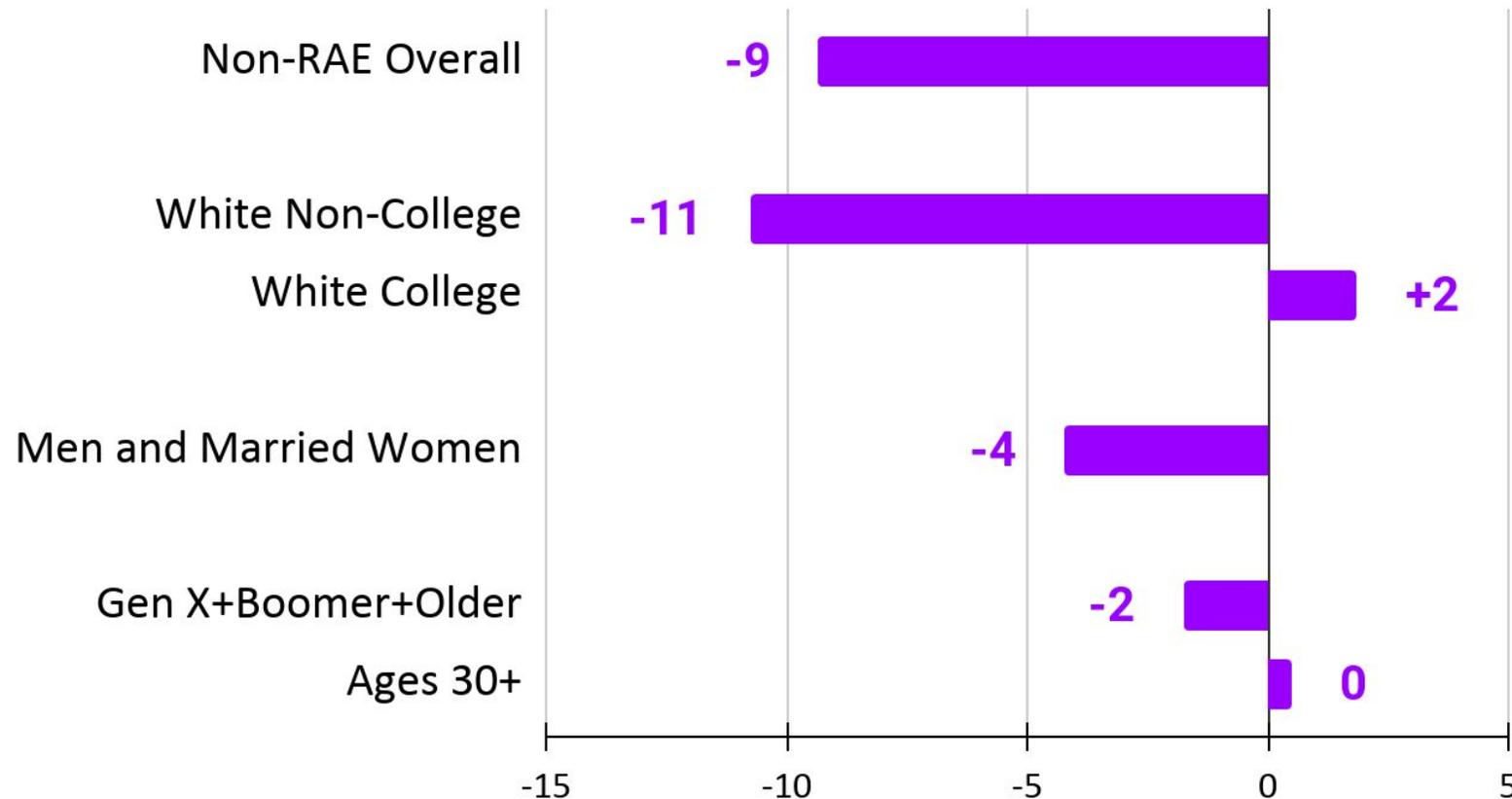
Margin Contribution (%Biden-%Trump) in the Rising American Electorate



- The margin contribution for groups within the Rising American Electorate (RAE) can be calculated as on the previous slides.
- This exercise shows all groups in the RAE contributed to the overall margin.
- People of color and unmarried women had especially large impacts on the overall margin.

Outside RAE, White Non-College Voters Impacted Margin

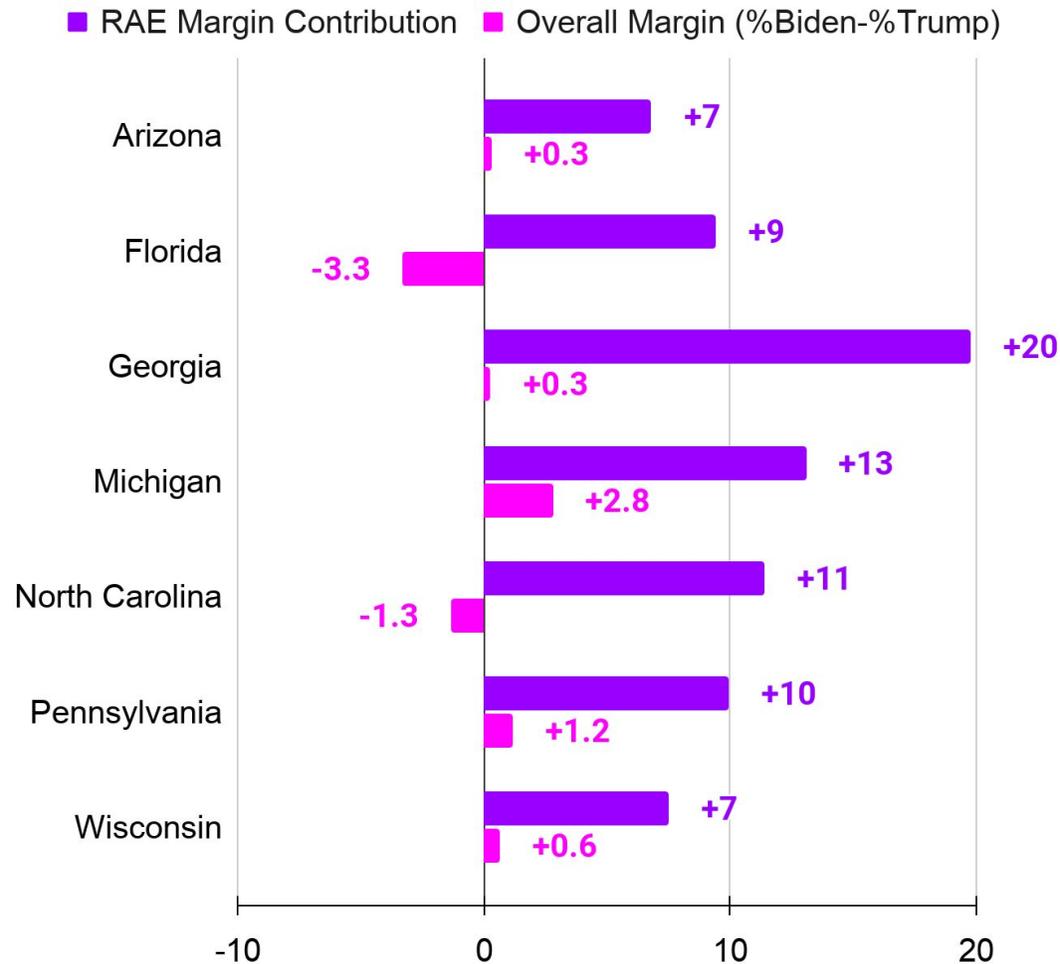
Margin Contribution (%Biden-%Trump) in the Rising American Electorate



- Most non-RAE segments had a more muted impact on the margin than segments in the Rising American Electorate.
- White non-college voters are the exception, one point shy of matching the large margin contribution of people of color (previously shown).
- The impact of white non-college exceeds the non-RAE because white college voters leaned more toward Biden.

RAE Margin Contribution in Key States Relatively High

Margins by State (%Biden-%Trump)



- In seven key states to the presidential election outcome, the RAE's margin contribution is +7 percentage points or higher, a significant figure considering the tight margin of victory in most of these states.
- Georgia is especially striking, a product of both the size of the RAE and margin.
- Michigan, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania all saw double digit margin contributions from the Rising American Electorate.

Electoral Impact: Key Takeaways

- All segments within the RAE contributed to the election outcome.
- This reflects the RAE's majority as well as clear vote choice.
- People of color and unmarried women had large impacts especially in contrast to white voters and men and married women.
- In key states, the RAE's role was strong relative to close margins of victory.

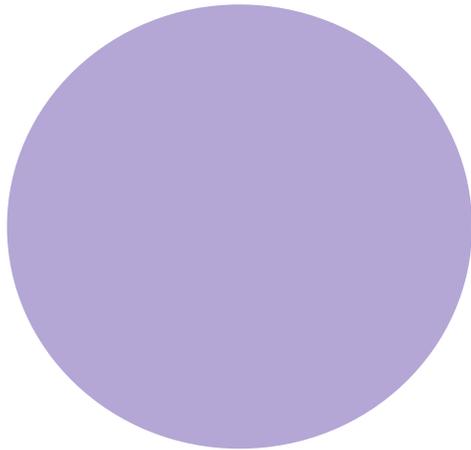
A photograph of a man with glasses and a beard smiling and talking to a woman with curly hair. The image is overlaid with a purple gradient. The text is white and positioned on the left side of the image.

The Impact of Turnout Growth and Population Changes

Turnout and Population Change Impact Electorate Size

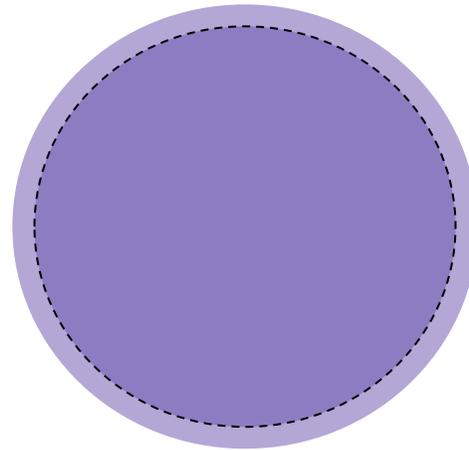
Illustrative Example

We can start with the 2020 electorate for a given segment...



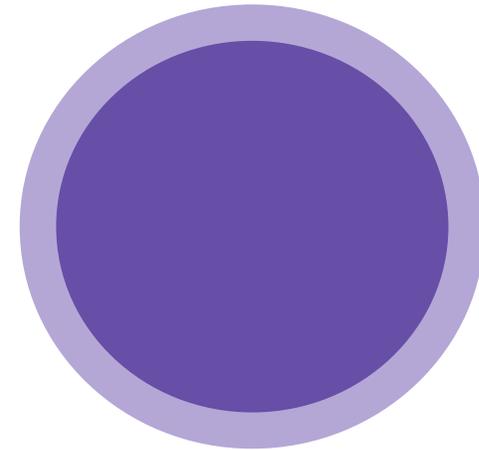
2020 Electorate

...and calculate how much bigger or smaller the electorate would be as a result of turnout alone...



Turnout Change
2016 to 2020

...and can also calculate the electorate's size just related to eligible voter population growth holding turnout constant.



Population Change
2016 to 2020

Calculating the Electoral Impact of Turnout and Pop. Change

$$\text{Margin Contribution (pp)} \times \text{Change in Electorate from Turnout Growth} = \text{Margin Contribution from Turnout Growth}$$

$$\text{Margin Contribution (pp)} \times \text{Change in Electorate from Population Change} = \text{Margin Contribution from Population Change}$$

Turnout and Population Change Fueled RAE Impact

	Margin Contribution (pp)	×	Change in 2020 Electorate from Turnout Growth	=	Margin Contribution from Turnout Growth
Rising American Electorate	+12.6		9%		+1.2
Non-RAE	-9.3		13%		-1.2

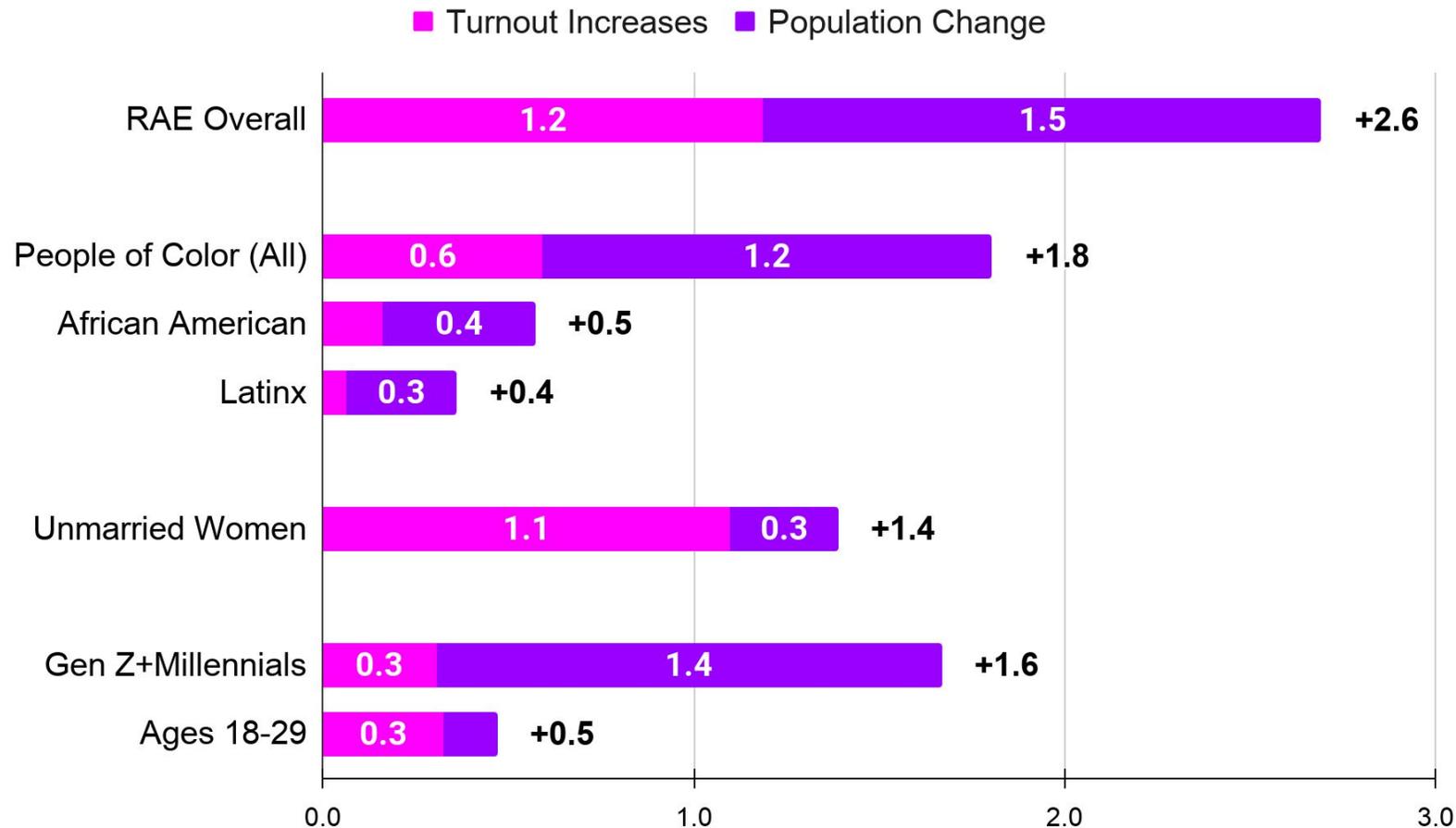
Multiplying margin contribution (%Biden-%Trump) for a segment by share of the 2020 electorate present as a result of turnout growth quantifies the impact of turnout growth on outcome.

	Margin Contribution (pp)	×	Change in 2020 Electorate from Population Change	=	Margin Contribution from Population Change
Rising American Electorate	+12.6		12%		+1.5
Non-RAE	-9.3		-9%		+0.8

The same exercise can be completed for population change. These calculations reveal that the RAE's population change and turnout growth had a meaningful impact on the election outcome. In contrast, the non-RAE showed little impact from these changes. It shrank relative to 2016, cancelling most of the impact of its turnout increases.

Impact across RAE from Turnout and Population Increases

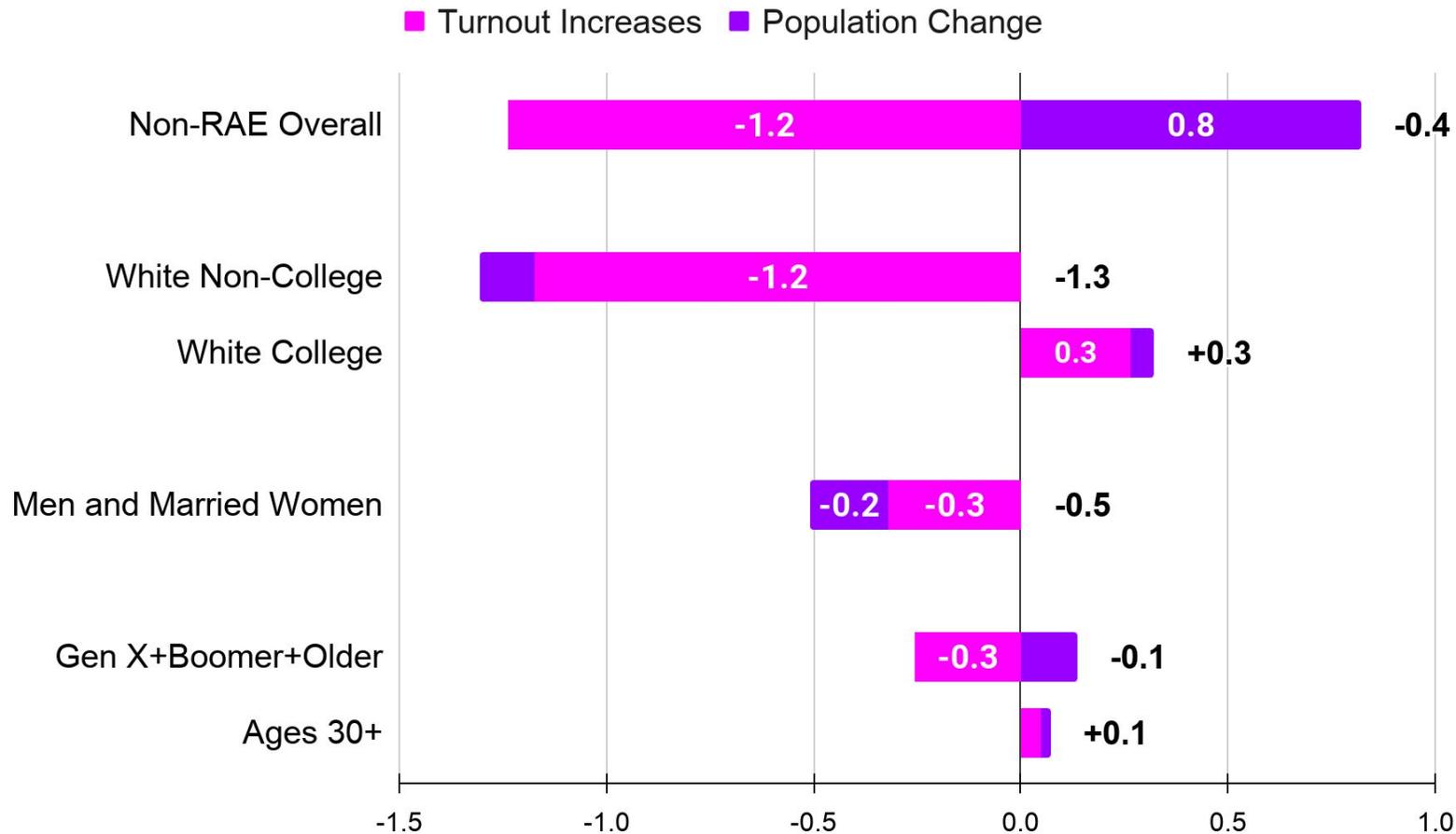
Margin Contribution (Biden-Trump) from Turnout Increases and Population Change



- People of color, unmarried women, and younger voters all saw greater impact on the Biden-Trump margin from growth in population and turnout increases.
- Turnout increases are an important part of this story, even among younger adults.
- Overall, even holding aside population change, increasing turnout rates in the RAE added **+1.2 points** for Biden relative to Trump.

Low Impact from Turnout and Population Change for Non-RAE

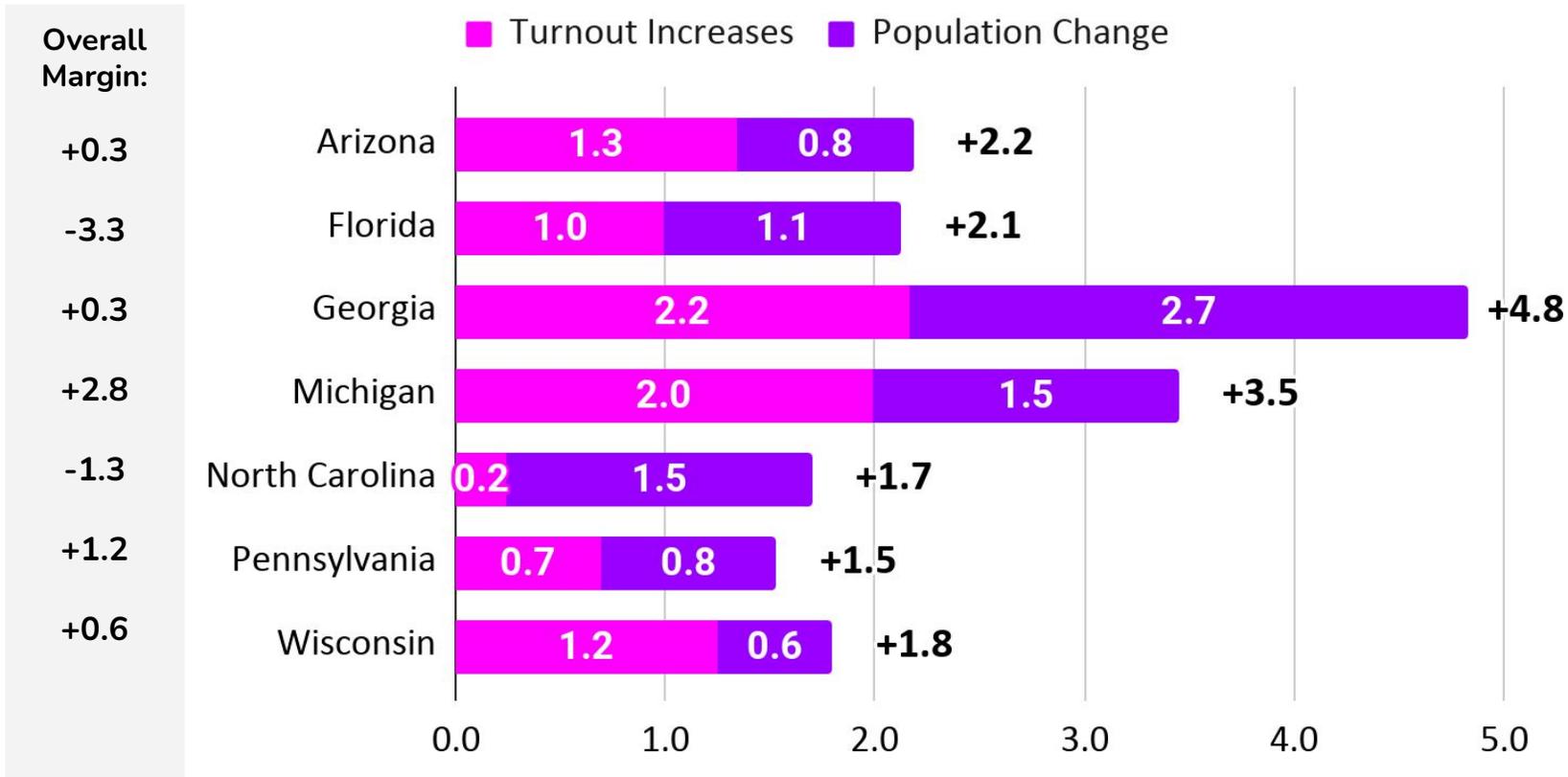
Margin Contribution (Biden-Trump) from Turnout Increases and Population Change



- Turnout or population changes for segments outside the RAE generally had low margin impact.
- The one exception is white non-college voters, where these changes yielded -1.3 points away from Biden and toward Trump, mostly because of turnout increases.

RAE Growth Significantly Impacted States with Close Margins

RAE Margin Contribution (Biden-Trump) from Turnout and Pop. Change



- In states with closer margins, the turnout and population increases of the RAE played an important role in the outcome.
- In five of the seven states, RAE turnout increases added a point or more to the margin for Biden relative to Trump.
- In five of the states, the impact of these forces alone exceeded the Biden-Trump margin of victory.

Turnout and Population Change Impact: Key Takeaways

- Turnout increases and population change played a key role in the RAE's impact in the 2020 election.
- The non-RAE's impact from turnout growth matched the RAE, but they shrank in the eligible population, canceling out much of this impact.
- In key states with close margins, in many cases these changes alone exceeded the margin of victory.

Post-Election Analysis: A Summary of Initial Findings

Equality of Electoral Participation

The RAE's impact will expand as we close the participation gap.

Electoral Representation

The RAE's voting participation had a strong influence on election outcomes in key states.

Mobilization to Drive Change

RAE turnout nationwide and in key states magnified its impact.

Data Sources for the Analysis

2020 Electorate and 2020 Vote Choice

Reported by or derived from AP VoteCast*, provided by the Associated Press and conducted by NORC.

2016 Electorate and 2016 and 2020 Eligible Voters

Overall and for RAE, African American, Latinx, unmarried women, generations, ages 40+, and marital status/gender provided by Lake Research Partners analysis of Current Population Surveys.

Remaining electorate and eligible voter figures reported by or derived from from [Detailed Tables](#) (accessed Nov. 7, 2020) of, "Democrats Made Gains From Multiple Sources in 2018 Midterm Victories" Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (Sept. 8, 2020)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2020/09/08/democrats-made-gains-from-multiple-sources-in-2018-midterm-victories/> and "An Early Look at the 2020 Electorate," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (Jan. 30, 2019), <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/an-early-look-at-the-2020-electorate/>.

Total Ballots Cast (Not Reported Directly, but to Derive Turnout Rates)

National: Total ballots for 2016 from the [Clerk of the House of Representatives](#), last accessed on Dec. 9, 2020.

States: From available state government figures, including [Arizona](#), [Florida](#), [Georgia](#), [Michigan](#), [North Carolina](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Wisconsin](#). All accessed on Nov. 26 with the exception of North Carolina (accessed Nov. 20, 2020), Pennsylvania (Dec. 9, 2020) and Wisconsin (Dec. 3, 2020).

Turnout Rates

Calculated based on eligible voter and electorate shares based on eligible voter figures and total ballots cast, sourced above.

*See details on next slide.

Data Sources for the Analysis: AP VoteCast Detail

Overview:

AP VoteCast is a survey of the American electorate conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago for Fox News, NPR, PBS NewsHour, Univision News, USA Today Network, The Wall Street Journal and The Associated Press. **The survey of 110,485 voters was conducted for eight days, concluding as polls closed.** Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. The survey combines a random sample of registered voters drawn from state voter files; self-identified registered voters contacted using NORC's probability based AmeriSpeak® panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population; and self-identified registered voters selected from nonprobability online panels. **The margin of sampling error for voters is estimated to be plus or minus 0.4 percentage points.** Find more details about AP VoteCast's methodology at <https://ap.org/votecast>. Data reflects stage 7 data, adjusted to reflect preliminary vote totals as of 12 pm on Nov. 16, 2020.

State Data Details in this Presentation:

State Samples	Sample Size (Responses)	Margin of Error (Percentage Points)
Arizona	3772	2.0
Florida	3698	2.0
Georgia	3291	2.2
Michigan	3571	2.0
North Carolina	3731	1.9
Pennsylvania	4134	1.8
Wisconsin	3506	2.0

Thank You

