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To: To interested progressives

From: Stanley Greenberg and Page Gardner

## **What happened: and what does it mean?**

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President Elect Joe Biden will win the popular vote by perhaps 5 points and the Electoral College with 306 votes. He did it by reinforcing the Democratic trends in the new diverse states and country, winning Arizona and Georgia by razor thin margins. He did it by taking and holding onto the blue wall states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania in the face of a tsunami of white working-class voters.

What happened and what does it mean?

That is why Democracy Corps, in collaboration with Integral Resources, Inc., conducted this 2,000-phone sample in 16 battleground states from October 31<sup>st</sup> to November 4<sup>th</sup>. Because it has polled in this battleground repeatedly in 2020, we are able to see what happened. We also are able to learn from comparisons to previous cycles using exits and Catalist estimates and our own post-election surveys since Bill Clinton's election.

The big story is Donald Trump led an incendiary, race-laden working class revolt against the elites, fueled by attacks on defunding the police, ads with Black urban violence and his demand for law and order that cost Democrats dearly in rural areas, with older voters and white working-class men, some GOP defectors, some suburban voters, and importantly, produced an unprecedented rush of white working-class voters in the blue wall states. Trump pushed his white working-class men's vote up 7 points at the end to match the support he got in 2016 and pushed up his rural vote 14 points to exceed it.

Trump accomplished that even though the trends in these states and the nation was to be less white and more holding four-year college degrees.

One of the other big stories was the sharp drop in support among Hispanic voters — both in comparison to previous elections and our polling in the weeks earlier. That and the loss with older voters likely made Trump's win in Florida possible and made Biden's win in Nevada closer.

Finally, the generic Democratic vote margin was only even on Election Day. It is clear that was impacted by the surge of white working-class voters in blue wall states, the sharp declines among

seniors and rural voters on law and order. It is hard to imagine not facing House losses when the proportion of whites without a four-year college degree grew from 40 to 62 percent in Iowa, 40 to 53 percent in Minnesota, 54 to 58 percent in Wisconsin, 40 to 55 percent in Ohio, 49 to 54 percent in Michigan, and 48 to 53 percent in Pennsylvania from 2018 (according to NORC exit polls), and the overall advantage in party identification went from 5 points to zero.

Biden is president because of the inexorable trends that are making America more millennial and Gen Z. They grew to a third of the battleground electorate and grew their Democratic vote margin at the end. He won because unmarried women formed a quarter of the electorate and white unmarried women gave Democrats a bigger margin than white women college graduates. Black turnout and near unanimous support for Biden, coupled with millennial and Gen Z and unmarried women, put the Rising American Electorate at the center stage of the Biden victory. White college graduates contributed by giving Biden a much bigger margin than Clinton got in 2016. And finally, Biden won because only 2 percent of Democrats voted for Trump, while Republicans saw three times as much defection to Biden and one in five McCain conservatives and GOP moderates defected as well. He won two-thirds of GOP defectors and three-quarters of Dual Haters.

America may be divided politically, but it is not stagnant. Indeed, 71 percent of these voters who put Biden into office and gave Trump a shot at the blue wall states believe immigrants benefit the country because of their hard work, not cause more harm because they take our jobs, housing, and health care. That is up from (59 percent) when Trump was elected. Three quarters believe women get fewer opportunities than men and are not just asking for special favors. And a majority believes “racial discrimination” is the main reason Black Americans can’t get ahead.

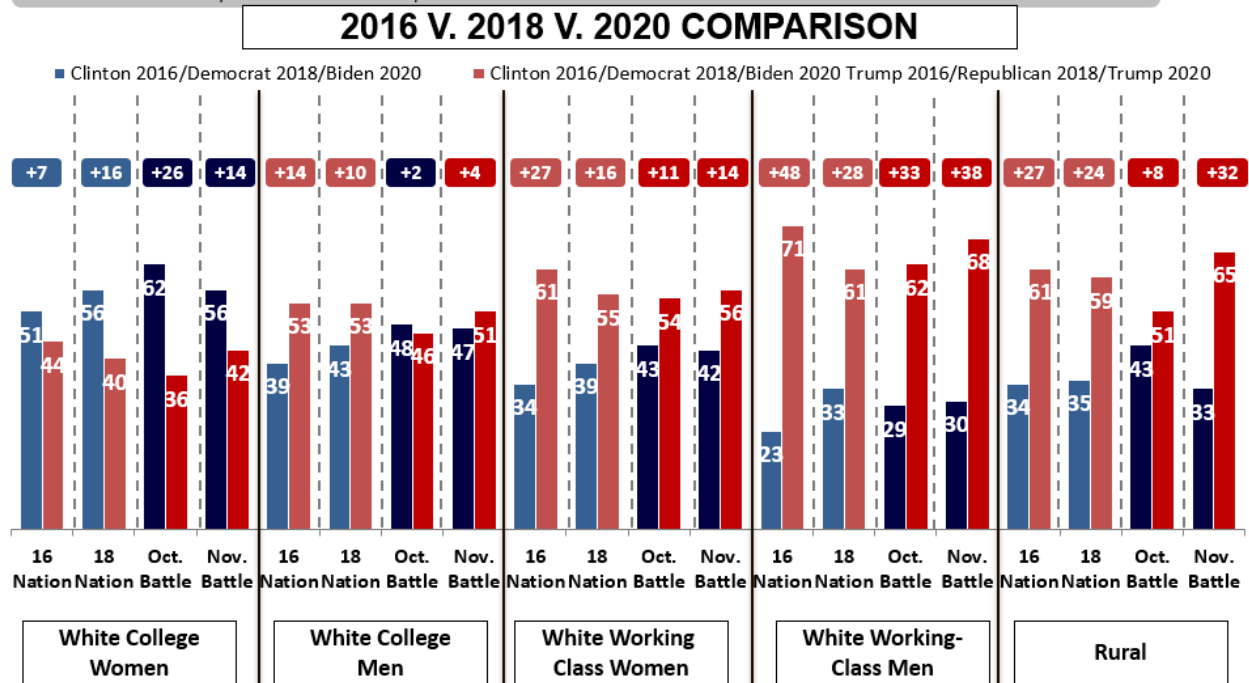
Biden won back the blue wall states because he dramatically outperformed Hillary Clinton with white working-class women who outnumber the men. He lost white working-class women by only 14 points (42 to 56 percent) — and that margin held up even as a wave of white working-class voters surged to the polling places.

Biden drew a sharp contrast with Trump, rooted in his working-class family and values and battling for them, not for Wall Street, CEOs, and big corporations. He pressed higher taxes on corporations and promised working people he respects and listens to them. And they cheered him saying he would make the corporations pay their fair share of taxes. Big majorities want to tax wealth and incomes over \$400,000. Voters were not worried about and do not believe that this country is on the brink of “socialism.” Overwhelming majorities in this electorate wanted more regulation and a country that prioritized addressing climate change.

The pre-election polls were badly wrong because they mostly missed the changed electorate in the blue wall states, the near crash with older voters, white working class men and rural voters. You cannot underestimate Donald Trump’s ability to enflame and change who will come vote and who will take up arms. But you also cannot underestimate how big a say the new America had in this and coming elections.

### White college and WWC women the stars, while rural and WWC men take vote down

Thinking about the election for President and Vice President, did you vote for -- (ROTATE DEM, REP CANDIDATE) Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris or Republicans Donald Trump and Mike Pence



### The new Democratic base: from Blacks, millennials, unmarried and college women to the suburbs

Biden’s and Democratic support builds with 93 percent support with Black Americans and only 6 percent defecting to Trump in the battleground — where all the progressive programs targeted. The national exits put the Black male defection at 12 to 18 percent, though women only 6 to 7 percent, but it is the battleground that matters. Black women lead a women’s tsunami where the strongest Democratic groups are millennial and Gen Z women (+45), unmarried women (+34), college women (+31), and white unmarried women (+16). The Democrats won the suburbs by 20 points.

Unmarried women continued to be a quarter of the electorate, and white unmarried women no longer struggle at the edge of the base, gave 57 percent of their vote and a 16 point margin. They held their 2018 mid-term gains.

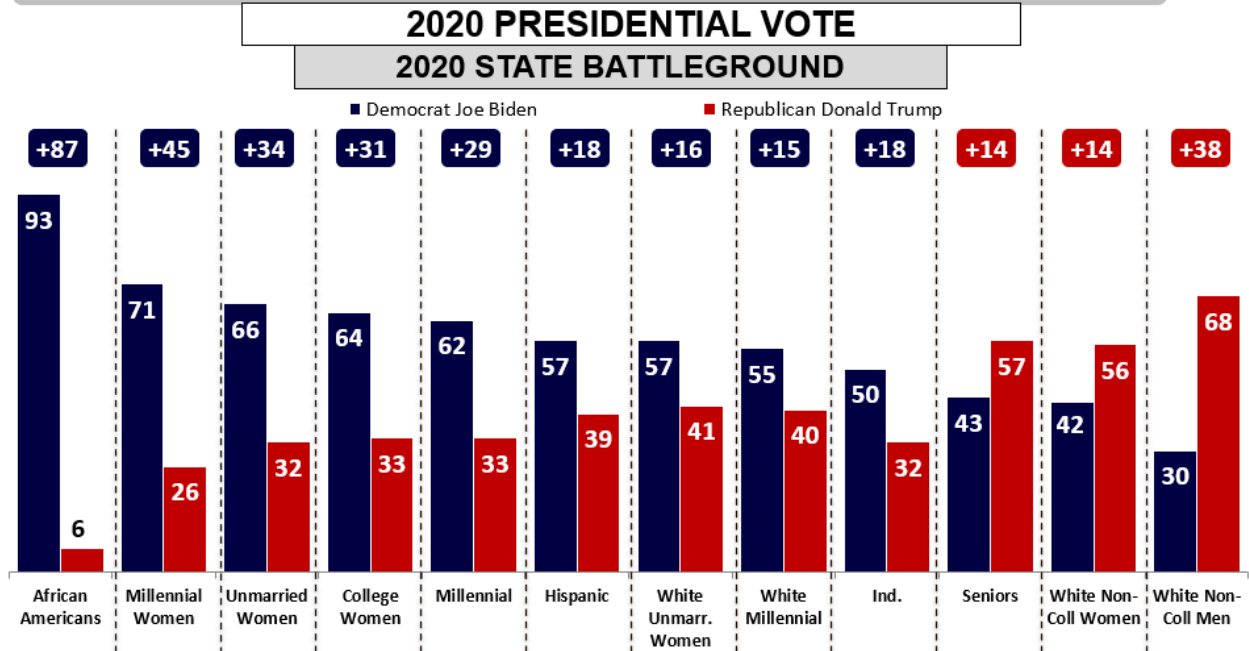
That made the marriage gap a significant factor in this election. In 2016, the gap in margin between white unmarried women and white married women was 25 points: Clinton won white unmarried women by 3 points and lost white married women by 22 points. But in 2020, the marriage gap was 32 points! That is the result of white unmarried women emerging as part of the Democratic base and a majority of Republicans being married.

Millennials and Gen Z voters delivered. They formed 30 percent of the electorate and gave Biden a stunning two-to-one victory (62 to 33 percent). Their margin grew from 18 to 29 points at the end, despite the change in the electorate.

Hispanics gave Biden an 18-point advantage (57 to 39 percent), though nationally, Biden ran much better.

### Women drove Biden’s margins; seniors and white working-class men Trump’s

*Thinking about the election for President and Vice President, did you vote for -- (ROTATE DEM, REP CANDIDATE) Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris or Republicans Donald Trump and Mike Pence*



### What America believes

Do not assume that Trump’s win with a more white working-class electorate, fueled by calls for law and order, defund police and visuals of Black violence, translates into voters wanting a more conservative agenda on the role of government.

To be clear, law and order was a very real factor. He had a 2-point advantage on who would do better with law and order — in a race where Biden won by 4 points in the battleground. On who believes it intensely, Trump’s advantage was 8 points. And with white working-class women and men, Trump’s advantage well-exceeded their vote margin: over 50 percent of the women and 70 percent of the men say Trump much better.

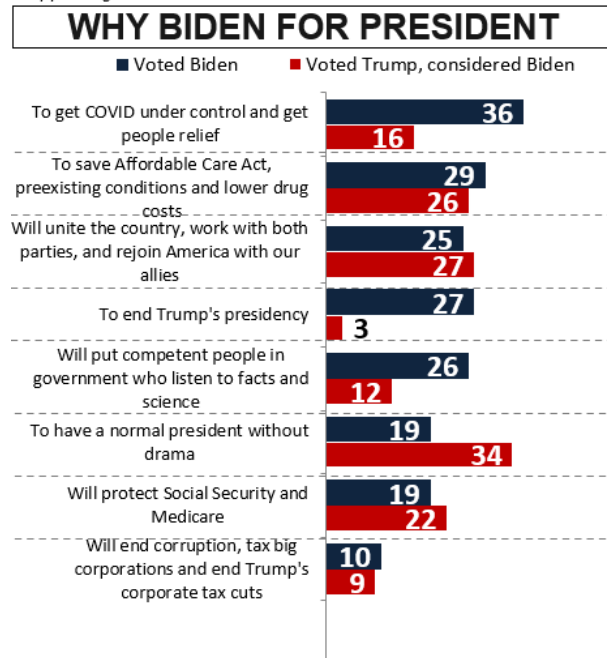
So, Trump was ruthlessly effective in driving cultural web issues, full of resentment and fear of Blacks and a fear of a changed America that leave whites without power.

But what does it say about what these voters want from government or to see a new Biden administration take on?

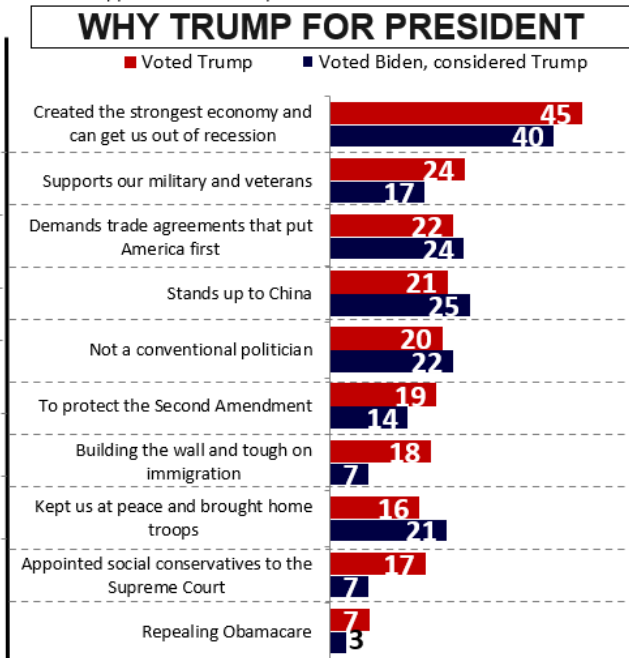
Fear that Biden “will bring socialism” or “will kill the economy with regulations” was not a very important factor in their vote against Biden. Respondents could choose three reasons in a list of ten on why they voted against Biden, but only 31 percent choose “will bring socialism.” It surely would have been lower had I not mistakenly left his “defunding the police” in the list.

### Biden’s vote driven by COVID, ACA and ending racial divisions

Now let me read you a list of reasons to support Joe Biden. Which THREE describe the most important reasons why you considered supporting Joe Biden



Now let me read you a list of reasons to support Donald Trump. Which THREE describe the most important reasons why you opposed or will support Donald Trump?



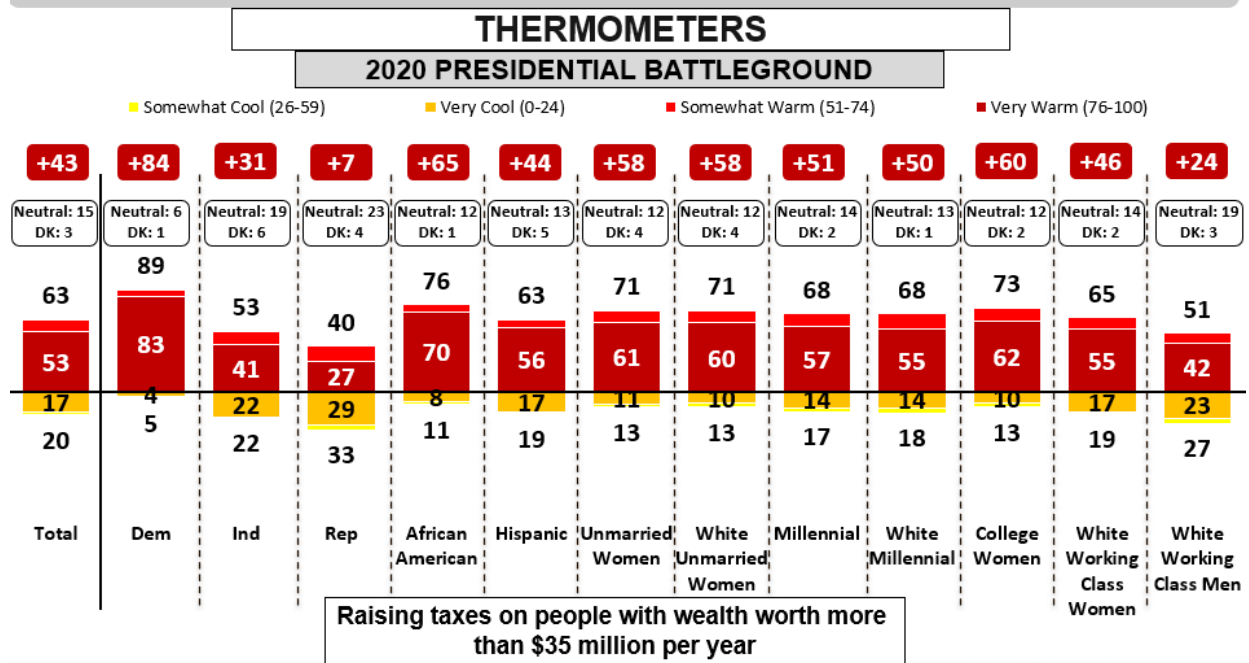
When I gave voters a similar list on why they voted for Trump, 45 percent chose, “created the strongest economy and can get us out of recession.”

Over 63 percent embrace raising taxes with people worth more than \$35 million; only 20 percent are cool to the idea. White working-class men favored it by two-to-one.

A sizable majority of 53 percent of this battleground electorate believes government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest, with only 41 percent believing it causes more harm than good.

## Raise taxes on wealth supported 3-to-1, including 2/3 WWCW and 1/2 WWCW

Now, I'd like you to rate your feelings toward some people, organizations, and ideas, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold.



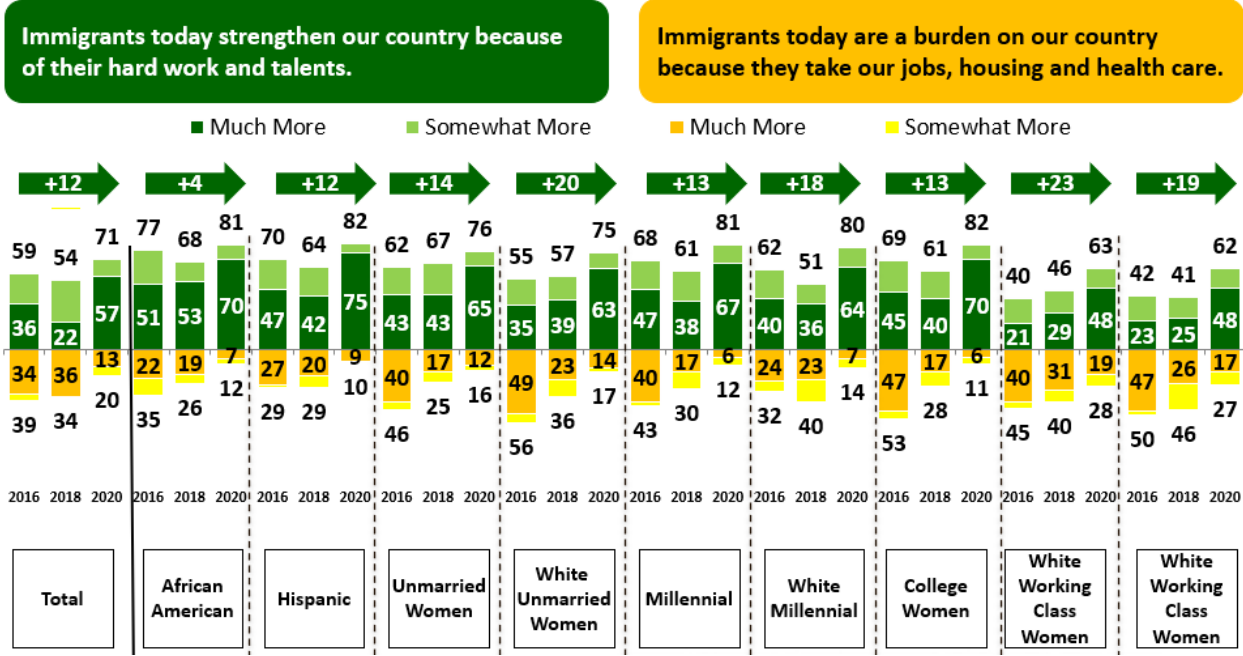
This battleground electorate gives the new government a mandate to press for equality for women: three quarters believe “women get fewer opportunities than men for equal pay and good paying jobs,” and not that women are seeking special favors.

And in an election where Trump warred against fracking and Biden’s transition to green energy, a real majority of 52 percent believes “climate change” is such a “severe threat” that it should be an “immediate priority for President and the Congress,” with 44 percent saying it a “threat that will need to be addressed in the years ahead, but should not be a top priority right now.” Interestingly, the white working-class voters were divided on this issue — perhaps thinking there is an economic future in addressing the issue.

In an election where Trump downplayed immigration (and did better with Hispanics), a remarkable number of people now say, “immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents,” rather than a “burden” because they “take our jobs, housing and health care.” The proportion saying the country benefits from immigration jumped from 54 percent in the midterms to 71 percent in the presidential, with almost 60 percent now believing it strongly. And now half of Republicans side with more immigration.

## Trump has steadily made America more pro-immigration

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?



While Trump made the election turn on law and order and “Black Lives Matter” protests turned violent, the battleground voters still have a favorable view of the movement: 47 percent warm and 38 percent cool. The white working-class women view them positively by 5 points — much more positive than their 14-point margin for Trump.

And a surprising plurality of 50 percent say “racial discrimination is the main reason why many Black people can’t get ahead these days,” with only 39 percent agreeing, “Black people who can’t get ahead in the country are mostly responsible for their own conditions.” Support rises to two-to-one for discrimination in the case of the Rising American Electorate and among white millennials and GenZ voters, but white working-class women are divided on the issue.

Trump’s law and order campaign just has not disabled voters’ consciousness about our exceptional history.



## Battleground America united on America’s diversity and immigration as a strength and promoting equality for women and Black Americans

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

