REFLECTIVE DEMOCRACY

CAMPAIGN

Confronting the Demographics of Power:

AMERICA'S CITIES 2020

August, 2020

America's cities are facing epic battles, largely shaped by the demographics of political power: who gets to set policy, and who must live - or die – with the outcome.

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In Atlanta, a Black woman mayor seeks to protect her majority-Black constituents from the pandemic, and Georgia's white male governor sues her.

In Portland, people protest racist policing. The White House responds with paramilitary violence.

Meanwhile in Minneapolis, a city council **whose race and gender reflect the city's population** votes to replace its police force with a Department of Community Safety & Violence Prevention.

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# Are America's cities governed by leaders who reflect the people they serve?

We studied the race and gender of elected leaders in America's 100 largest cities as of May, 2020, and **found unprecedented momentum for reflective democracy**.

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A POWER SHIFT IS HAPPENING

Compared to 2016, city leaders are less likely to be white men.

At just 19 percent of the total population in America's largest 100 cities, white men currently hold 36 percent of city elected offices – *down from 42 percent in 2016*.

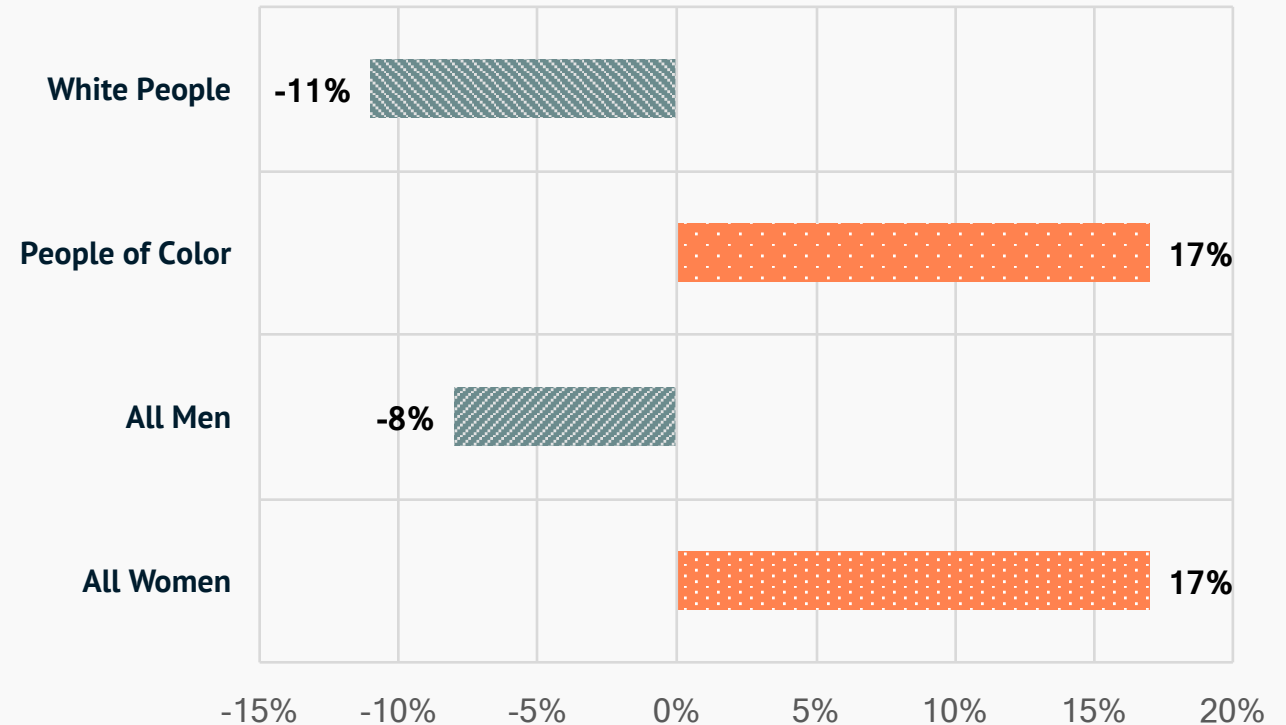### ELECTED OFFICIALS IN AMERICA'S 100 LARGEST CITIES 2016 VS. 2020: Shifting Power
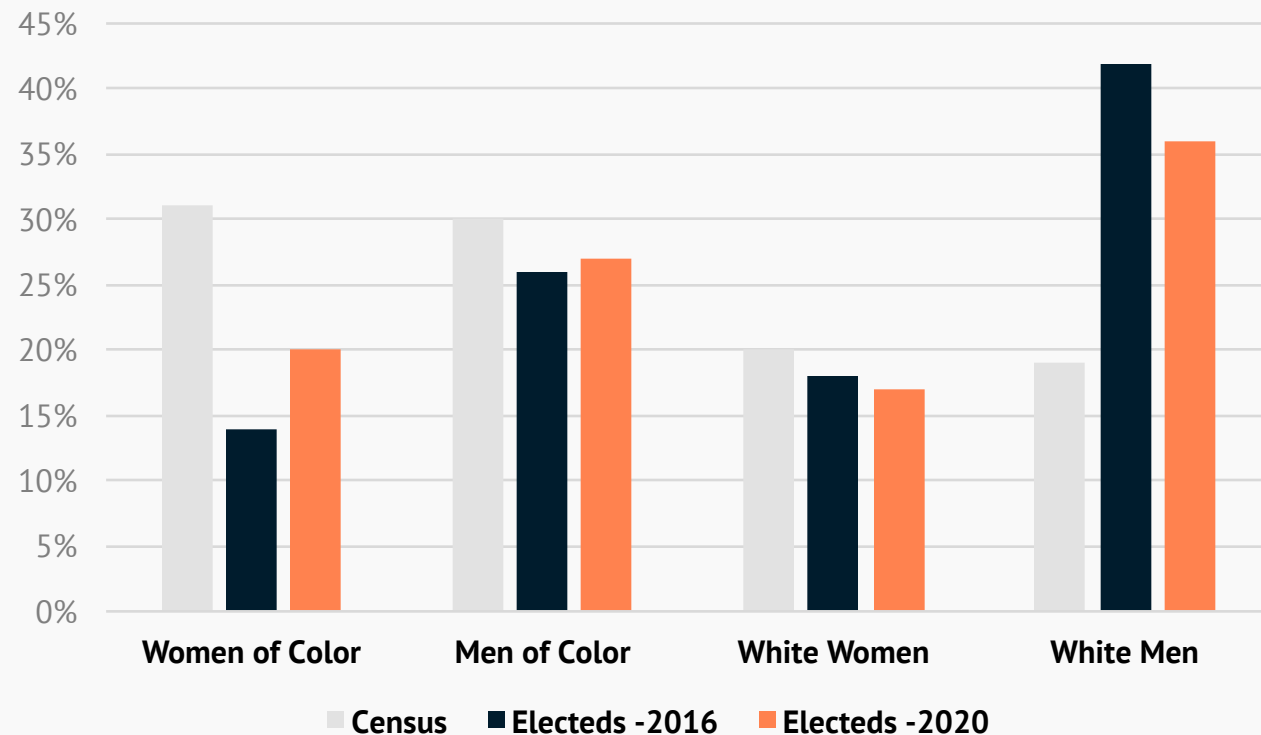
City elected officials include mayors, legislative bodies like city councils, and a varying array of other officials from Assessor to Treasurer.

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A POWER SHIFT IS HAPPENING

Since 2016, people of color increased their share of elected offices in 58 of the 100 largest cities across the US.

In **15 of these cities**, the rate of increase was 100% or more.

St. Paul, MN
13% → 50%

Lincoln, NE
13% → 25%

Denver, CO
23% → 50%

Richmond, VA
17% → 50%

Anaheim, CA
14% → 43%

Aurora, CO
9% → 27%

Tulsa, OK
9% → 18%

Fayetteville, NC
40% → 80%

Mesa, AZ
14% → 29%

Oklahoma City, OK
11% → 22%

Riverside, CA
13% → 38%

Plano, TX
13% → 38%

Irving, TX
11% → 22%

St. Petersburg, FL
11% → 22%

Corpus Christi, TX
33% → 67%

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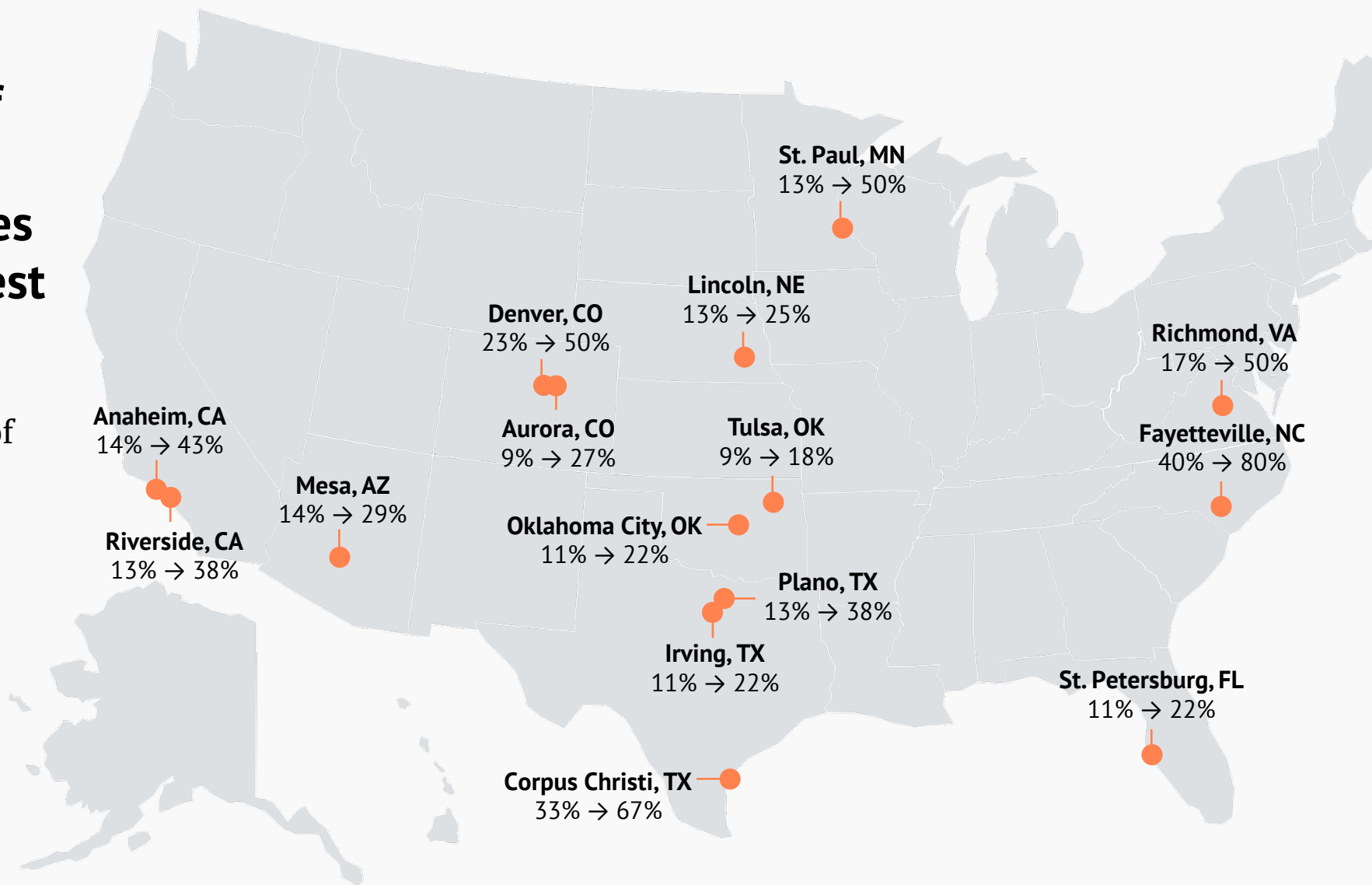
A POWER SHIFT IS HAPPENING

Since 2016, women increased their share of elected offices in 49 of our 100 largest cities.

In **12 of these cities**, the rate of increase was 100% or more.

20% → 43%
Fremont, CA

29% → 71%
Las Vegas, NV

29% → 57%
Gilbert, AZ

11% → 22%
Oklahoma City, OK

13% → 27%
Dallas, TX

22% → 44%
Houston, TX

27% → 55%
San Antonio, TX

13% → 32%
Milwaukee, WI

9% → 27%
Fort Wayne, IN

29% → 57%
Boston, MA

10% → 50%
Fayetteville, NC

33% → 67%
St. Petersburg, FL

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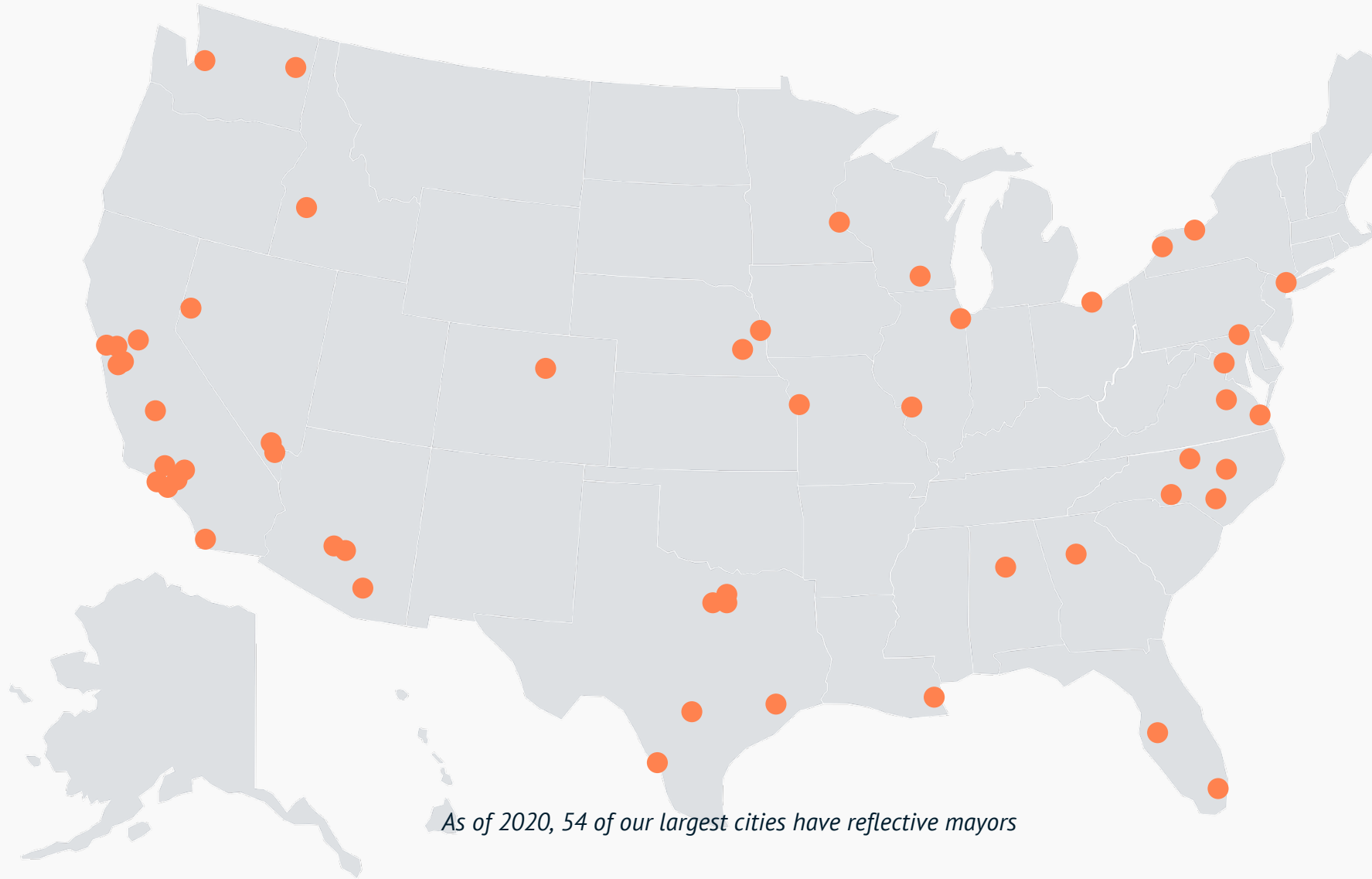*August, 2020* | **Learn more at WhoLeads.Us**
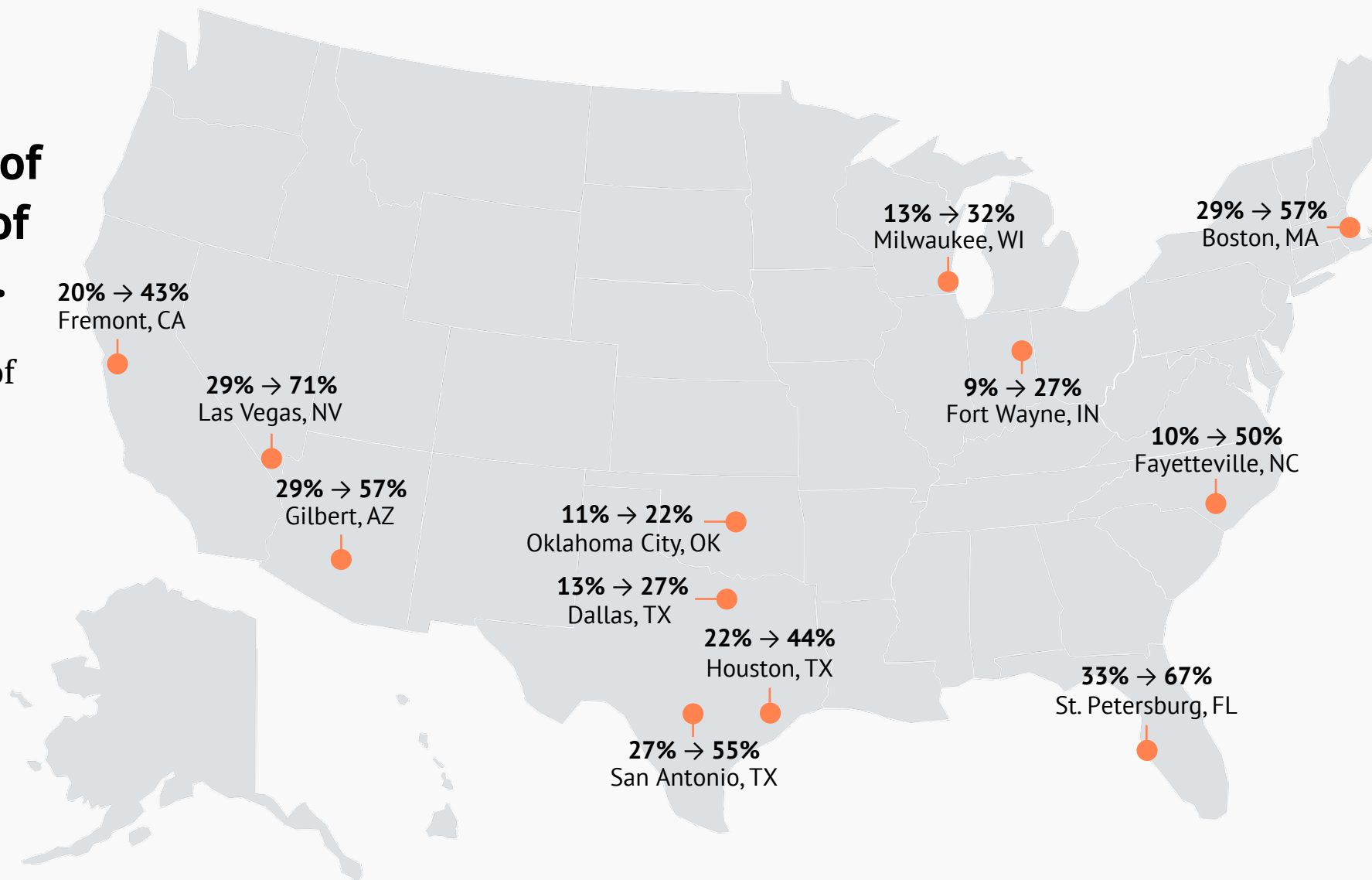
A POWER SHIFT IS HAPPENING

The face of America's mayors is changing

In 2016, women and people of color served as mayors in 39 of the largest 100 cities.

By 2020, **that number had increased to 54.**

As of 2020, 54 of our largest cities have reflective mayors

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While the demographics of power are shifting, grave imbalances persist.

In most American cities, women and people of color still are not reflected in government.

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White over-representation remains the norm in most major cities

In 79 of the 100 largest cities, the percentage of white people in office exceeds the percentage of white people in the population.

Of the ten largest cities in America, only Philadelphia, San Antonio, and San Jose have elected leaders who reflect the racial makeup of their cities.

PLOTTING THE RACIAL BALANCE OF POWER:
Ten Largest Cities
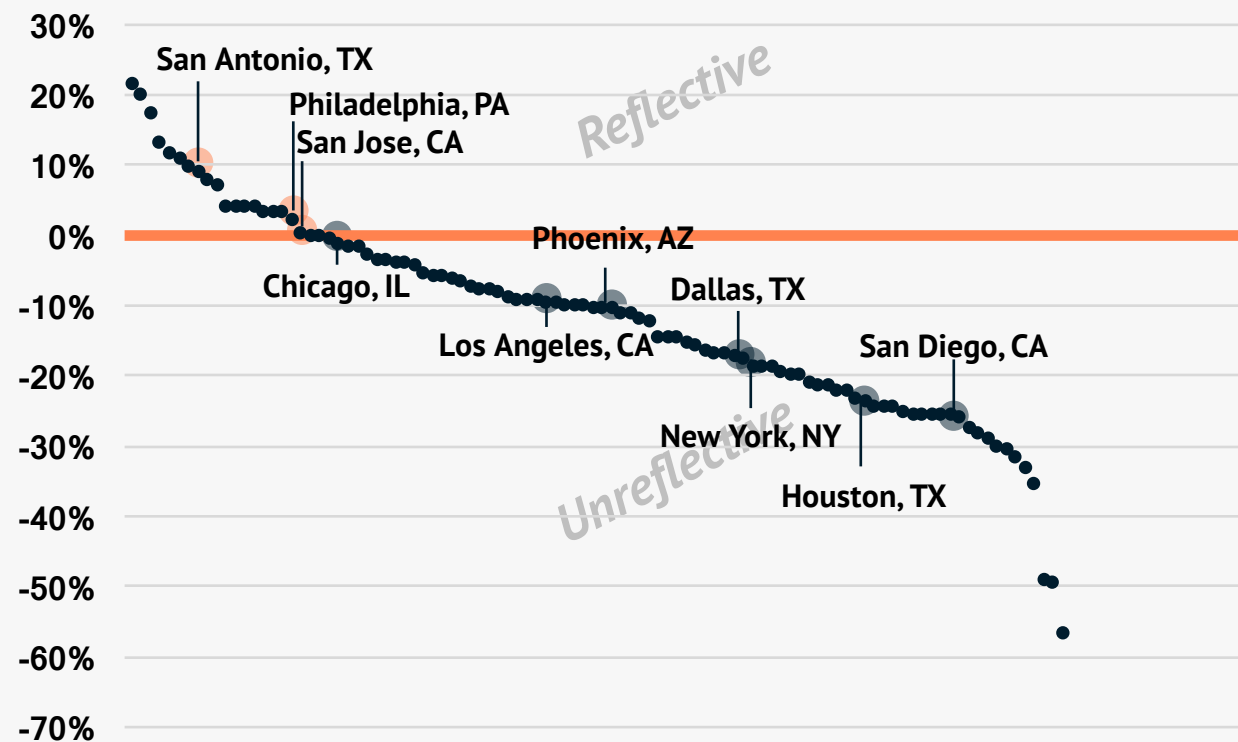
We plotted the percentage differential between people of color in the population, and people of color in elected office in America's largest 100 cities

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IMBALANCE PERSISTS

White over-representation can be extreme

In some cities, the degree of white over-representation essentially locks people of color out of power.

City	White officials	White population
Garland, TX	89%	32%
Glendale, AZ	86%	50%
Raleigh, NC	87%	54%
Tulsa, OK	82%	56%
Irving, TX	78%	27%
Aurora, CO	73%	47%
Stockton, CA	71%	22%
Albuquerque, NM	70%	41%

PLOTTING THE RACIAL BALANCE OF POWER:
Extreme White Over-representation
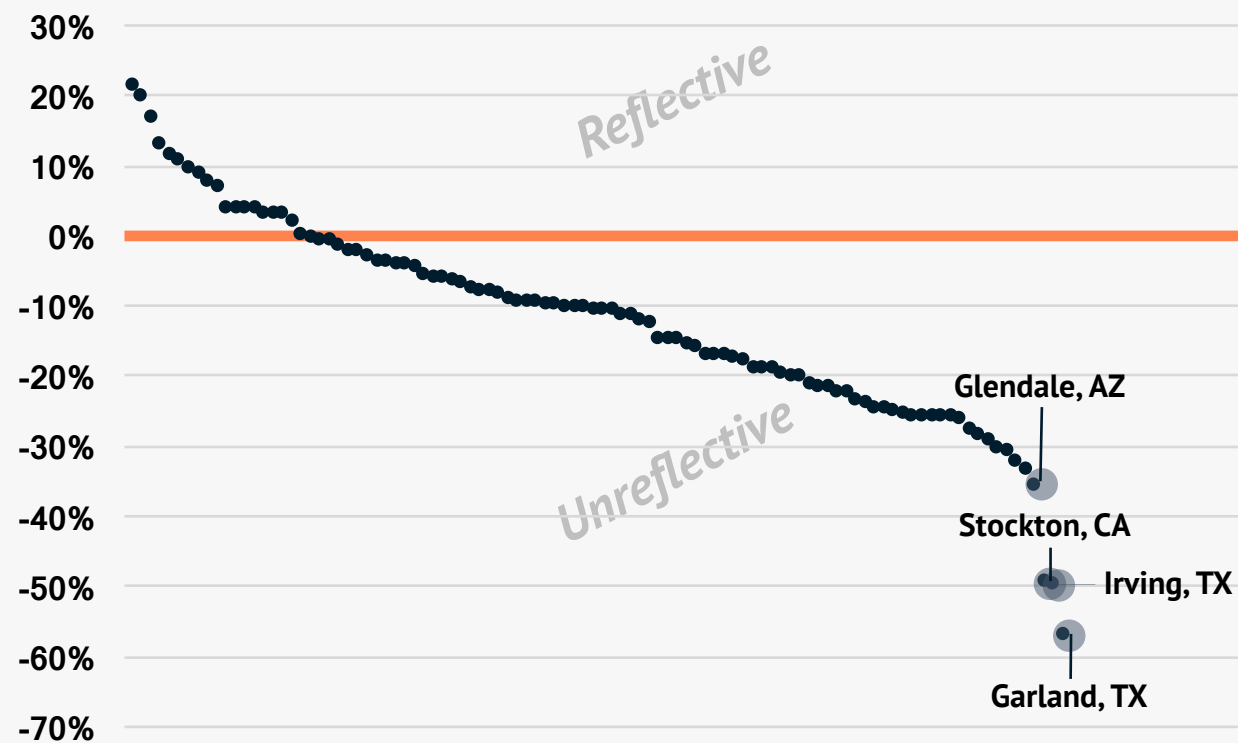
Reflective

Unreflective

Glendale, AZ

Stockton, CA

Irving, TX

Garland, TX

We plotted the percentage differential between people of color in the population, and people of color in elected office in America's largest 100 cities
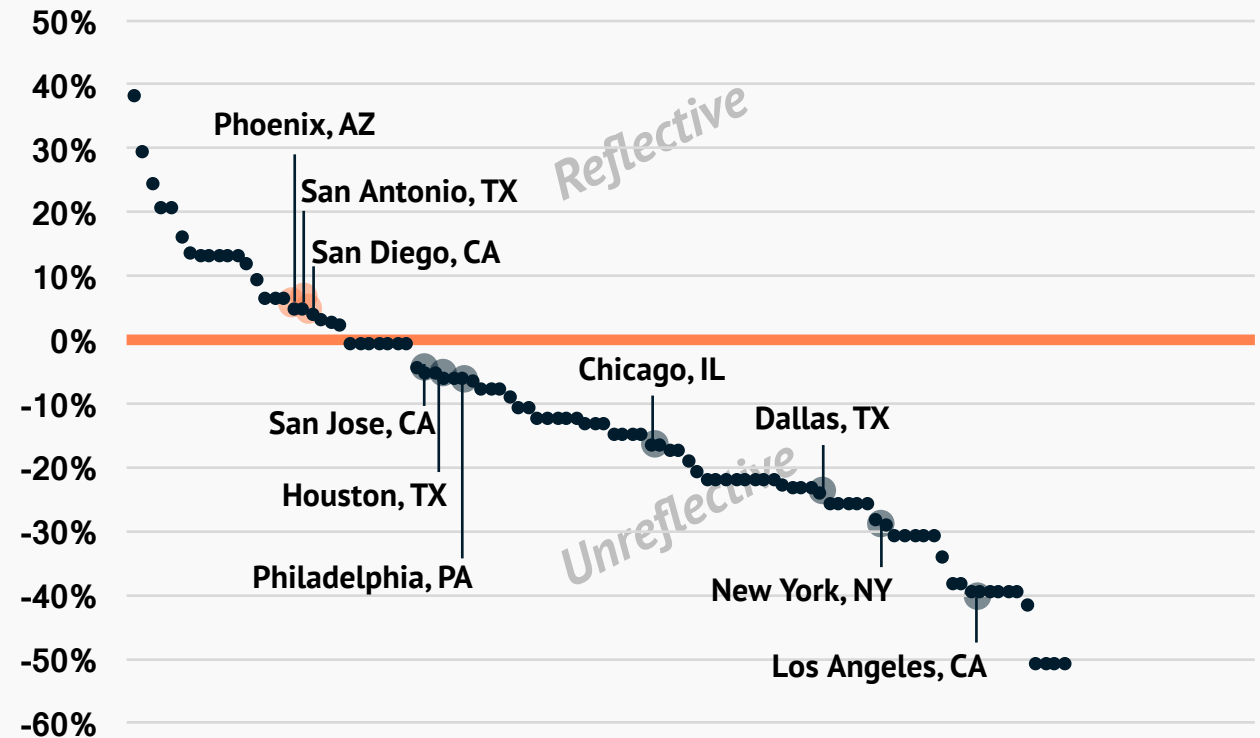
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IMBALANCE PERSISTS

Men control more than half of America's major cities

At 51% of the population, women are fairly reflected in the governments of 23 of America's largest cities.

In 77 of these cities, men dominate government.

PLOTTING THE GENDER BALANCE OF POWER:
10 Largest Cities

We plotted the percentage differential between women in the population, and women in elected office in America's largest cities

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Some cities have all-male governments

In 45 of America's largest cities, men hold 2/3rds of seats, or more. These cities include Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco.

In four cities -- including Miami, FL -- our research shows zero women in elected office.

PLOTTING THE GENDER BALANCE OF POWER:
Gender Imbalance In The Extreme
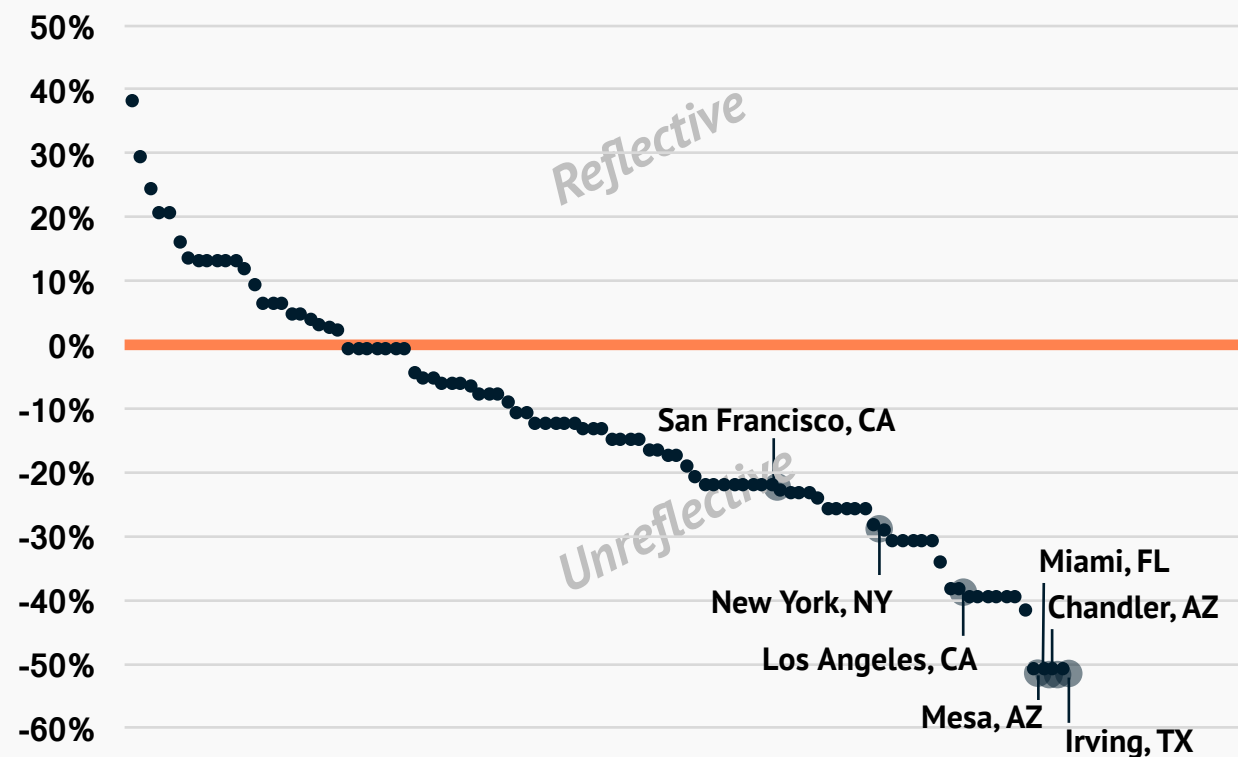
We plotted the percentage differential between women in the population, and women in elected office in America's 100 largest cities

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People of color and women are gaining political power in the cities where they live.

As city governments change, will policies change?

Will right-wing demonization of cities escalate?

Do demographic power shifts in cities signal momentum for reflective change in the 2020 national election?

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The Reflective Democracy Campaign's groundbreaking research and analysis help shape the national conversation about race, gender, and politics, shining a light on both the stark imbalances distorting our democracy and the current wave of victories by candidates who reflect the American people.

Sparking activism against the structural barriers that keep people of color and women from the halls of power, our data, reports, infographic toolkit, and other resources are freely available at WhoLeads.Us.

For detailed summary reports, methodology, and the complete data set visit: WhoLeads.Us/citydata

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