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The Party Decides, or Does It?: An In-depth Analysis of the 2020 Presidential Primaries and the Democratic Party's Influence

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THE PARTY DECIDES, OR DOES IT?: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE
2020 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S
INFLUENCE

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Political Science
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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the 2020 Democratic Presidential Primaries through the lens of Marty Cohen's *The Party Decides* model. The model utilizes five key indicators in helping to predict who the party will decide as the nominee: widespread voter approval, key endorsements, fundraising, media coverage, and success in the Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary. While the model has been an indicator for almost 50 years, two of the five recent primaries have shown that the candidates are the exception to the rule. This paper will either prove whether or not the exception becomes the rule, if the rule is no longer reliable, or if the model will hold true. In analyzing the top five candidates throughout the invisible primary and 10 key primaries and caucuses, this paper will determine the model's reliability.

DEDICATIONS

For my family, for always being my lifeline and biggest supporters, I would not be who I am today without you. Thank you for your guidance and always putting me in a place to succeed.

For all of my professors and mentors I have had along the way. I am fortunate to have learned the life values, perspectives, and wisdoms you hold.

For my friends, thank you for encouraging me to follow my heart when it came to politics, and for the memories we have made along this journey. Never stop fighting for what you believe in.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Donald Trump's nomination in 2016 was a shock to all. In fact, *The Party Decides* model did not predict he would secure the Republican nomination for the coming election. Initially, the Republican Party had favored Former Governor of Florida, Jeb Bush. *The Party Decides* model has been an indicator for Presidential elections since the early 1970's to help determine which candidate from their respective parties will win the nomination. The model utilizes five main indicators in helping predict who the party will decide to nominate: widespread voter approval, key endorsements, fundraising, media and success in the Iowa caucus, followed by the New Hampshire primary. With the 2020 presidential primaries already underway, and the nominee still unknown, *The Party Decides* model currently favors Former Vice President Joe Biden. This paper will explore whether or not *The Party Decides* model is a reliable model for the 2020 Democratic Presidential Primaries and the nomination. Will the party decide, or will the people decide?

According to Cohen et al.'s indicators of *The Party Decides* model, Former Vice President Joe Biden is currently favored for the nomination. However, Sanders still has his loyal base from 2016, will he finally get the nomination? Up-and-coming Senator Elizabeth Warren has not been far behind either candidate and has been favorable to lower and middle class voters, as well as progressives who are not keen on Sanders. This paper will determine whether the primaries and nomination will not only choose Joe Biden, but whether it will crystalize to a competition between Biden, Sanders and Warren.

While *The Party Decides* model has been an indicator for nearly 50 years, two of the five most recent primaries have shown that the candidates are the exception to the rule. This paper will explore whether or not the exception becomes the rule, and the rule is no longer reliable, or if the model will hold true. In 2008, we saw Senator Barack Obama and Senator Hillary Clinton break the rules of *The Party Decides* model. Senator Clinton was nationally known, having been a Senator for the state of New York and the former First Lady of the United States, Americans were prepared to vote for her. Barack Obama, a newly elected Senator from Illinois having been in Congress for only two years, entered the race with little name recognition, and even less support. However, Senator Obama managed to stay in the race in the primaries, and by the end of 2007, he had flipped the Black vote, and became the exception to the rule of the model.

In analyzing the top five candidates during the invisible primary and the primaries to come, this paper will determine if the model has drastically shifted and chosen an underdog. For example, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Senator Kamala Harris are also polling in the top five, but are hanging on by a thread at this point in the invisible primary. With Iowa and New Hampshire setting the playing field for the primaries to come, this paper will analyze the top five candidates': Former Vice President Joe Biden, Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Kamala Harris, and Mayor Pete Buttigieg and their campaigns by tracking their progress throughout eight other key primaries: Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas, Arizona, Florida, Michigan, and Wisconsin, to help determine the model's reliability.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Breakdown of Campaigns: Campaigning has drastically changed from 1788 to now. John Sides has broken down campaigns into four different eras, the first being the Pre-Democratic from 1788-1824, to Mass Mobilization Campaigns from 1828-1892, to Progressive Era Campaigns from 1896 to 1948, and lastly to our current era, the Candidate Campaign starting in 1952.

During the Pre-Democratic Era, George Washington, the first President of the United States was a unique candidate and well qualified. Washington did not have any serious candidates and was the “logical choice” (Sides, 2019). We did not really begin to see a two party system until the election of 1800, when John Adams was elected after George Washington did not seek re-election. The Federalist Party believed in strong federal government, preferred to ally with Great Britain, and was led by Alexander Hamilton, the first Treasury Secretary, and John Adams. The other party, known as the Democratic-Republican Party was against the expansion of the federal government, preferred alliance with France, and was led by Thomas Jefferson, the first Secretary of State, and James Madison. The Pre-Democratic Era was small in its scope of elections in that it limited mass participation, and was dominated by the Democratic-Republican Party.

The Mass Mobilization Era was drastically different from the previous era in that it allowed mass participation, and the Democratic and Republican parties emerged. Sides states that politicians “began to campaign with the goal of winning over this electorate rather than state legislatures,” and in turn changed the meaning of campaigning in 1820’s (Sides, 2019). Andrew Jackson’s campaigning set precedence for campaigns to come by providing a “template.” Sides

explains that there are multiple elements that shape the structure for today's campaigns. The first element of his campaign consisted of being "led by a small group of friends and supporters who were motivated by personal loyalty" (Sides, 2019). The second element is the emphasis on organizing support. The third was how voters were organized. This organizing consisted of public speeches, rallies, picnics, songs, et cetera to help promote support and voting in the mass electorate.

Following the second era, came the Progressive Era. The Progressive Era brought four different components to the table than the previous two. First, it lowered party dominance, and participation. Second, the mobilization of immigrant groups and lower status citizens rose after the New Deal. Third, the Republican Party dominated until 1932 when the Democratic Party took power back. Lastly, it brought primaries and secret ballots. William Bryan Jennings, the Democratic candidate of 1896 changed the game of campaigning. He traveled "18,000 miles by train, made more than 600 speeches, and addressed 5 million people over the course of the campaign," according to (Sides, 2019). This showed that candidates were getting far more involved in "electioneering" and campaigning became more personal. However, during this era voter participation declined because the Progressive Movement believed that "strong party organizations were corrupt and empowered party bosses at the expense of ordinary citizens" (Sides, 2019), and in turn we saw a massive decline. The Australian ballot- protecting the secrecy of voter preferences and preventing parties from monitoring voters- led to this decline. Sides claims that this ballot helped to reduce party control over candidates and voters (Sides, 2019).

Lastly, the Candidate Campaign Era that started in 1952 changed the way campaigns communicated with voters. “Door-to-door canvassing, speeches to crowds by the candidates and their supporters, and other... interactions” shaped the way candidates campaigned (Sides, 2019). With television and radio becoming more popular during this era, it extended another way for candidates to communicate with their supporters and voters around the country. Sides explains that campaigns would seek to raise money to be able to pay for advertisements (Sides, 2019).

Invisible Primary Theory: When examining the traction of presidential candidates prior to elections, Cohen et al. explains how the front-runner tends to win the overwhelming support of the elected officials, top fundraisers, campaign organizers, interest group leaders, and ordinary activists within their party. Cohen et al. explains that the invisible primary takes place months before the beginning of primary voting. Iowa and New Hampshire are the first primary elections to take place, and these are where candidates work to get as much support as possible by the caucus-goers, as well as voters (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

The invisible primary is the time for candidates to make their case heard as to why they will best represent the party and the nation as President of the United States. It is said that those who receive the majority of support in both Iowa and New Hampshire, have set precedence for the primaries to come, and are likely to be the nominee of their respective party (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Nelson Polsby mentions that during the pre-primary phase, “the candidates are not just raising money and hiring campaign staff. They also take the ideological temperature of their party, attempting to shape a message that will appeal to the loyal partisans who turn out to vote in the state primaries and caucuses” (Polsby, 2019). Currently, we have a

competitive invisible primary, as the top five compete for great success in Iowa and New Hampshire.

The Party Decides model: Following the aftermath of 1968, we saw reforms to the nomination process, which was the rise of primary elections. Primary elections took power away from party elites, and gave it back to the people. Cohen et al. provides a different view however, arguing that even though the primaries gave power back to the people, party elites still effectively play an astounding role in the nomination process. Wayne Steger argued that parties play a stronger role in presidential nominations than generally believed (2007, 97). Furthermore, during the invisible primaries, Cohen et al. argues that “in the past quarter century, the Democratic and Republican parties have always influenced and often controlled the choice of their presidential nominees” (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). It is important to know that *The Party Decides* model describes that inner party members who hold power tend to determine the nominee known as “politicians”, which can consist of: governors, big-city mayors, members of party committees, and legislators. More importantly, politicians are not the only people who impact nominations, organizers, interest groups, rank and file voters, fund-raisers and media specialists contribute to what we know as the “political fray” (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

Up until the last five Presidential elections and nomination processes, *The Party Decides* model has been widely excepted. However, recently the model has been viewed as a controversial theory within political science, regardless of it being considered useful over the past 50 years. Due to the exceptions we have seen, especially so in the last two Presidential elections, the merits of the theory now come into play. There are few scholars that suggest the

party plays a strong role, and many scholars argue that the tasks candidates must carry out are far more important and weigh heavily on the nomination. Cohen et al. argues that there are three specific reasons observers have failed to recognize party influence in the nominations of Ronald Reagan, Walter Mondale, Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, Al Gore, and both Presidents Bush. Cohen et al. states that one is “they have been wedded to a conception of parties in which top politicians and party officers are the key players” (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). The second reason is that observers fail to recognize that the national party conventions are not the only ways that parties can affect nominations (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Lastly, he argues that observers and scholars alike overlook the importance of the roles that party leaders, groups, and activists play in their capacity (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). *The Party Decides* model argues that the party will simply throw all of their weight and support behind one candidate when there are multiple strong ones seeking nomination.

The McGovern-Fraser Reform: The McGovern-Fraser Reform occurred in the early 1970’s, following Hubert Humphrey’s nomination. This reform consisted of opening the selection of delegates to the party nominating convention to full and timely participation by ordinary voters. Cohen et al. argues that the McGovern-Fraser Reform transformed campaigning for the presidential nomination in that it became an independent force. Pre-reform, candidates worked through the party regulars who habitually attended these caucuses, but now in the new system, candidates could flood the caucuses with their own people. In other words, this gave power back to the people, and took it away from party insiders (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

One of the most notable candidates that sparked this reform in 1972, was the man himself, Senator George McGovern of South Dakota. Senator McGovern understood the importance of delegates in all 50 states, but also knew he could not be in all 50 states at once. Instead he focused himself on New Hampshire, spending majority of his time there, which helped him to be successful in his nomination.

State Caucuses: Before the reform in the early 1970's (discussed further below), party caucuses were a "legacy of... [the] presidential nomination process" (Polsby, 2019). At the time, delegates were influenced by party leaders in an attempt to control the nomination for their respective parties. Back then, candidates would have what is known as an "intelligence service" that would gauge support of a delegate in three categories: firmly committed, wavering, or might be persuaded to provide second or third-choice support. The major difference between a caucus and a primary is participation. Caucuses require attending a meeting. Caucuses also allow one person to influence another's view.

Following the 2016 primaries, the Democratic National Convention adopted a resolution for the 2020 election that encourages states to "abandon caucuses in favor of primary elections. At least six states that held caucuses in 2016 [such as] Colorado, Idaho, Washington, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Utah [have formed] plans to hold primaries instead in 2020" (Polsby, 2019). Even though the caucus system is losing traction over time, it still remains vital in Iowa, as a key determinant of the New Hampshire primary to follow.

The power of the endorsement: Cohen et al. believes that party endorsements are the single most important factor in presidential nominations. Endorsements are important for a number of reasons, one of those being that it shows trust in a candidate's ability to lead the

nation. Endorsements act as a facilitator by triggering media coverage, and this in turn influences public opinion. The earlier the endorsements take place in an invisible primary, the more powerful they are (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

Endorsements come at many different times from different people and groups during the invisible primary, as well as throughout the actual primaries. Endorsements have different weight to them as well. Cohen et al. states that “endorsements are an important determinant of success in nomination campaigns” (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008), however this does not mean that all of them are beneficial or of value to the campaign.

In 2004, Al Gore endorsed Howard Dean during the invisible primary, which became the front page news for the Washington Post, the New York Times, and other papers. Dana Milbank from the New Republic commented “what does it matter if you have over 100 endorsements so far, but you do not know who they are and they do not hold importance” (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Furthermore, Cohen et al. states “we have given extra weight to particular individuals known to be more important than their official name. For instance, we can refer to Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio- Cortez, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, or Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib. These women are rank-and-file members within Congress, however due to their progressive opinions and beliefs, they have gained widespread support. In turn, they have used this support to endorse Senator Bernie Sanders. What is important about their endorsement timing, is that they did it following his heart attack. The weight of their names and the timing of it shows American voters that Senator Sanders is not only widely accepted within the party, but also supported by members who believe he has the strength to continue running for President, and eventually be President. Polsby mentions, “in 1999, George W. Bush, then governor of

Texas, succeeded in winning the support of all of his fellow Republican governors before the voting in Iowa even began” (Polsby, 2019). This showed that Bush’s campaign was in “good health” because he had widespread support from prominent part leaders.

The impact of press/media: In recent presidential elections, media has played a bigger role in the primaries. Media coverage is said to cause the changes in other variables, and ultimately drives the outcome. Media coverage is also for those who are considered front-runners, and helps to narrow the field. As we saw within the Invisible Primary Theory, candidates seek to get their name and policies in the media as frequently as possible so that voters will know who they are by the time the primary comes around. For instance, when Barack Obama first entered the race in December 2006, Gallup reported only “53 percent of Americans surveyed knew enough about [Obama] to express an opinion of him” (Polsby, 2019). However, by the end of 2007, that number “increased by 87 percent, reflecting the publicity received by [his] campaign over the intervening year” (Polsby, 2019). Polsby mentions that televised debates are another way for candidates to “distinguish themselves” from each other. In 2012, Mitt Romney’s campaign manager, Matt Rhoades recounts how the debates had the ability to shake things up week after week (Polsby, 2019). However, the press and influence of media do not stop there; candidates are working to distinguish themselves by sitting down with reporters to discuss their policies and how they differ from their competitors. In the beginning of November 2019, Senator Bernie Sanders, a top tier presidential candidate for the Democratic party has already shown how he differs from his progressive counter-part, Senator Elizabeth Warren. Sen. Sanders told ABC News that his plan is “far more progressive in terms of protecting the financial well-

being of middle income families” in comparison to then Senator Warren’s newly released Medicare for All plan (Rachel Scott, 2019).

Furthermore, Iowa and New Hampshire provide a base for candidates to move onto the “next round of events” thanks to the heavy news coverage during the invisible primary and actual voting.

Sides explains that the news media are “regular communicators of information designed to reach large audiences” (Sides, 2019). Before news media however, were newspapers. Sides argues that newspapers allow for more in-depth coverage of candidates, their issues, and campaign events in comparison to televised news. Furthermore, Polsby shares that even though newspapers are becoming less and less popular, social media and the internet have allowed for these stories to continue to be shared. Polsby also explains that “over the course of a single campaign, journalistic perceptions of electoral momentum have a decided effect on the positive or negative cast with which the press portrays each candidate at any given time” (Polsby, 2019). For example, Sides, mentions the on-going federal investigation of Hillary Clinton’s emails days before the election. Ultimately, the news portrayed her in a negative way, and thus did not help her campaign nor her ability to garner support.

Polsby shares that during presidential campaigns, “the news media generally maintain a rather close consensus about which candidate are serious contenders, who is ahead or gaining ground, and which issues are important to voters” (Polsby, 2019). For example, Donald Trump’s victory in 2016 “came as a shock to professional experts in the news media who had spent long stretches of the campaign portraying him as a hopeless candidate” dating back to the lack of confidence these experts had when he first announced in the summer of 2015 (Polsby, 2019).

Public opinion polls: Public opinion polls are rather self-explanatory. They gauge the public's view of a candidate, but most importantly, a candidate's viability. Public opinion polls are manipulated by multiple factors, those being party leaders, insiders, endorsement, and media coverage as voters tend to side with a candidate that is receiving all of these forms of support (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

Fundraising: Cohen et al. refers to money as the "mother's milk of politics." He argues that, those who fail at funding will fail in the invisible primary, which will ultimately lead to dropping out. Without money, you are unable to carry out a successful campaign and to put yourself in a position of attaining the nomination (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

There is also an unspoken power to releasing funding receipts before other candidates. The first to release their funds is usually the first to get media coverage. Funding also shares a strong message to American people that a candidate is able to stay in the raise for the long haul.

Money in politics nowadays has changed as the parties have. Particularly on the Democratic side, voters tend to view those who can put money into their campaigns, or raise tremendous amounts of money from wealthy individuals and corporations means that those who only have their vote and voice do not make as big an influence. It is seen as discouraging and a disadvantage to the regular American.

Candidate debates: Both Polsby and Sides agree that candidate debates are "significant events." As this thesis will be analyzing the top five candidates, debates can help to reshape a candidate's race who might not be in the top three, let alone the top tier. Sides argues that campaigns have several goals during debates. The first is to "do no harm," in other words, anything that will drive negative media coverage and "undermines the campaign's effort to

control messaging.” The second is to prepare well in advance for these debates, commonly consisting of mock debates (Sides, 2019). In contrast, Polsby argues that presidential debates reveal two rules from previous debates, and those are: how news media will determine who “won” the debate and who “lost” the debate (Polsby, 2019).

The goal of debates are to allow the public to learn about each candidates’ policy issues and ideas. They also allow “underdogs” to emerge from the bottom of the totem pole in an effort to boost name recognition, and support.

Iowa and New Hampshire: Iowa and New Hampshire remain two the most competitive and telling primaries to date in the presidential nominations. Due to the McGovern-Fraser Reform in the early 1970’s, Iowa’s delegation has given power back to the people and allowed for candidates to have power. Polsby declares that both of these states, although “not entirely representative” have helped demonstrate the power to set some candidates on the path to the nomination and even the White House (Polsby, 2019). The caucus and primary help voters, financial supporters, and media to dictate the path for the primaries to come and determine whether their candidate is worthwhile. Media also plays an overwhelming role during these primaries, even more-so in New Hampshire. By doing so, this further sets the tone for the primaries to come and can either make or break certain candidates’ fate.

In 2016, Senator Bernie Sanders and then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went toe-to-toe until the end of primaries in June. Even though Clinton had won Iowa in a tiny margin of 49.8 to Sanders’s 49.6 percent, Bernie turned around in New Hampshire and beat Clinton in an “outright landslide” with 60 to her 38 percent of the vote (Polsby, 2019). This showed that

Sanders had a strong performance in both states and was worthy of the nomination and votes in primaries to come.

Polsby notes that just because a candidate “loses” Iowa and New Hampshire, it does not mean that a candidate will lose the nomination, nor does it mean that a candidate doing well is sufficient enough for a win, which we saw back in 2008 when Barack Obama was going against Hillary Clinton. Furthermore, Polsby also argues that because of “media spin” and Iowa results, this helps to influence the results of the New Hampshire primary, in other words, it is a domino effect.

In 2008 Senator John McCain was one of the only candidates who placed below third place in both New Hampshire and Iowa, and still managed to land the party nomination, thus proving that although these to small states have power, the party can still sway the decision.

Measures of Success in the primary: After the primaries are already underway, Cohen et al. explains that there are three different measures of success in the primary. This measurement focuses on the delegate count of each candidate, which allows individuals to determine who the nominee might be. These measurements are known as: Fat Lady Share, Best Share of Delegates, and the Final Delegate Share. The Fat Lady Share is explained by which the total number of delegates won thus far indicate a clear victor and active campaigning has ceased. The Best Share of Delegates is when a candidate begins to win some delegates, but then ultimately ends up dropping out prior to the convention. Cohen et al. explains that these delegates usually move to another candidate, creating a water mark. Furthermore. Cohen et al. argues that this helps the model in party influence due to these delegates usually migrating to the candidate of the party insider (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). The last measurement is the Final Delegate Share.

This share, simply put, is the actual share of delegates each candidate has at the party convention. This means that there is a contested convention in which delegates must change their vote.

CHAPTER III: THE INVISIBLE PRIMARY

The invisible primary is a crucial timeframe for candidates seeking the nomination from their respective party. The invisible primary consists of candidates that will raise money, garner support, hold rallies, and earn key endorsements from the national party in order to place themselves in the group of front-runners. This process does not have a specific time-frame, given that candidates will start their campaign anywhere from a year to two years before the general election in an effort to garner the most support, money, and endorsements prior to the primaries and caucuses. Cohen et al. refers to the invisible primary as “candidate-centered” due to the candidates assembling their campaign team in order to be competitive come the first primary (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Evidently, the candidate with the most aggressive and prepared campaign will hit the ground running with their best foot forward.

Additionally, the invisible primary does not consist of one state or place, rather it comprises candidates gearing up for the first caucuses and primaries to show that they are viable to voters, and prepared for office. During this time, candidates will organize across the nation and travel from state to state to meet supporters. As previously mentioned, the current top five candidates are Former Vice President Joe Biden, Senator Bernie Sanders (VT) , Senator Elizabeth Warren (MA) , Senator Kamala Harris (CA) , and Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend Indiana.

Joe Biden has served as a Senator, and Governor prior to serving as President Barack Obama’s Vice President for both terms he held in office. Senator Bernie Sanders has been a member of Congress for over 30 years, in both chambers, and is currently the only Independent in Senate. Sanders previously ran for President in 2016 against Hillary Clinton. Senator

Elizabeth Warren is also a longstanding member of Congress, serving in the Senate for over ten years. Senator Kamala Harris is a first term Senator, having only been in the United States Senate since 2017. Prior to that, Harris was the Attorney General of California from 2011 to 2017. Mayor Pete Buttigieg has served as the South Bend Indiana Mayor since 2012.

In an effort to capitalize on the general themes from Cohen et al.'s model, this chapter will be broken down by the key indicators that help to determine the nominee: Endorsements, media coverage, public opinion polls and fundraising. Cohen et al. argues that these quantitative measurements of the four components of the invisible primary will allow us to see how each component has an effect on one another (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Information regarding the invisible primary has been gathered through local and national news, national polls, accredited pollsters, social media, such as Twitter, and candidates themselves regarding their platforms and fundraising strides.

Biden

Biden received the greatest number of endorsements during the invisible primary. In fact, his name was already buzzing in the media before he even announced because people believed he would be the right candidate to run. Biden had been endorsed by former party leaders, senators, and governors prior to entering the race. Biden's total number of endorsers throughout the invisible primary was 78 party insiders, or leaders if you will (FiveThirtyEight, 2020). While this number might seem low, it was the highest number in comparison to other front-runners, showing that party insiders and elites were beginning to back a specific candidate.

Following the first debate, the media reported that Biden did not have a great performance, and claimed that because he was campaigning on electability, it left little to no

room for any vulnerabilities, otherwise the media and viewers would pick up on it and feed off of it (Allen, 2019). Biden's performances in debates had a direct impact on media coverage and portrayal of his candidacy. In September, the New York Times recalled in earlier debates whether his age would get the better of him, however reported that these were no longer concerns (Goldmacher & Epstein, 2019). In this instance, the media did not play a heavy role in Biden's campaign given his continued voter support.

Throughout this invisible primary, Biden's polls rarely faltered to the point of him not being the front-runner. There were certainly some shifts, but on average, he remained the top candidate throughout. Even though his debates were questionable to some, his support never wavered. If you refer to Figure-1, you can see that throughout the majority of the invisible primary, Biden averaged a national poll at roughly 28 percent. Given how large the field was this election, it's rather impressive.

Cohen et al. refers to polls as the party elite and leaders' influence on citizen support given the endorsements a candidate will receive from them throughout (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Biden's endorsements began as early as January 2019, three months prior to his declaration of candidacy proved that Biden already had support of party insiders and that he would be the candidate to beat.

It is interesting to see how funding impacted Biden's campaign. Given that Biden entered the race at the end of April, he missed over a quarter of fundraising already, which put him at a disadvantage to his opponents. His funding also declined from when he announced in April, having raised over \$4 million, however in June alone he raised \$1 million. This raised concerns for his credibility as a candidate but he ended up bouncing in the quarters to come.

Biden's biggest funding haul was during the fourth quarter, in which he raised \$22.8 million, a climb from his previous quarter at \$15.7 million. As we know, money is power in politics. The more money an individual has, the more they are able to campaign, whether it be through television ads, social media ads, mailing cards, rallies, campaign equipment, etc., there is always an advantage to having money. Biden's total funding during the invisible primary was \$61 million, a staggeringly low number in comparison to his opponents.

Cohen et al. argues that there certainly could be a correlation between media coverage and fundraising, whether it be media having an effect on fundraising or vice versa, meaning both of these measures could positively and negatively impact a campaign (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). However, it does not seem that it did either for Biden. 63.4 percent of Biden's donors were classified as big donors, meaning an individual contributed more than \$200 in one donation. Given, that his small donors comprised 36.3 percent of his funds meant that he would have to rely more on wealthy donors than devoted supporters. Biden's fundraising is similar to that of Hillary Clinton's in 2016, both relying on wealthy donors for support, and Clinton ended up being the nominee. So what can that tell us about money's role in politics? Without big donors, it seems that a candidate will continue to struggle and always owe someone.

Ultimately, Biden's success in the invisible primary was due to public opinion polls. Without those polls, he would easily have fallen to fourth place. It will be interesting to see how he will perform in Iowa and New Hampshire, the first caucus and primary to kick off the season. As of now, Biden is predicted to place second to Sanders in Iowa, with his national average decreasing to 26 percent. His performance will depend on the 23 endorsements he received in January alone.

Sanders

Sanders has struggled to receive significant endorsements, however given his Democratic-Socialist stances, it seems apt. Throughout the invisible primary, Sanders received just 27 endorsements spanning from January 2019 to January 2020. Based on the model, what can this possibly tell us? The model explains that endorsements act as a catalyst to influence media coverage, which triggers public opinion/support and finally fundraising. Additionally, the model says that if a candidate lacks endorsements, then media will not cover their campaign as heavily as others (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

However, that was not the case for Sanders. Sanders's movement has always swept media because it shows a different side of democracy. Instead, his widespread support from the beginning coupled with his astounding small donor fundraising gave him continued media coverage. Cohen et al. explains that there are alternative routes to the intended model, and this is in fact one of them. Media took storm in October when Sanders had a heart attack, raising major concerns about his ability to hold office given his health. Days after, Sanders sat down for a one-on-one with ABC News explaining what he will be doing and provided full disclosure regarding his health. This immediately eased voters and the media, as it did not play any significant factor in his candidacy. In fact, three out of the four members of "the squad", Reps Ocasio-Cortez, Omar, and Tlaib endorsed him to show that he was still electable, and this in turn increased his polls to a national average of 25 percent (Emerson Polling, 2019).

If you refer to Figure-1, you can see that Sanders's national average never actually dropped following his heart attack, despite what some accredited pollsters reported. In fact, the only time Sanders actually saw a drop in public opinion was when Biden entered the race. This

speaks for his support and ability to be a serious contender for the Democratic party. Cohen et al. argues that in order for a party to nominate a candidate, they must show widespread support. While it seems that Sanders was capable of that, we recall that majority of his base are Millennials, and Gen Z voters.

Sanders's fundraising was exceptional throughout the invisible primary, raising over \$108.9 million dollars within a year. As previously mentioned, Sanders's funds came primarily from small donors at 55.7 percent, an unprecedented number. What this means is that he does not have to depend on wealthy donors to carry out a serious and front-running campaign, and boils down to only promising what he has stated in his policies for his supporters. Polsby argues that a well-funded campaign signals to the press corps that the candidate should be taken seriously as a contender for the nomination (Polsby, 2019). And he did just that.

Sanders is entering the Iowa caucus more prepared than ever. Back in 2016 he lost to Hillary by the tiniest margin, however he came back and nearly doubled her in New Hampshire. The question is whether the pattern will repeat itself or not. It seems that even though Sanders does not hold a lot of key endorsements, he still is able to come out as a front-runner. We will see if this indicates the model has changed and does not heavily rely on endorsements in the caucuses and primaries to come.

Warren

Elizabeth Warren received 32 endorsements during the invisible primary, a considerably low number, however better than Sanders's. Warren's main endorses came from Congress and DNC Members across the nation. This certainly shows that Warren is able to garner support from party insiders and leaders, however it does not indicate that this entirely influenced her media

coverage. Some of Warren's most successful endorsements were those of Unions. Cohen et al refers to union endorsements as "the most coveted of endorsements in the Democratic Party" because of [unions] abilities to directly sway their members' opinions and their expertise in political campaigning (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). For Warren to be able to secure union leader endorsements meant that hundreds of thousands of voters would ultimately support her.

Warren's media coverage was rather fair, but slim throughout the invisible primary. It is important to note other factors played a role in this, such as her being a woman. Women tend to face more scrutiny than their male counterparts, and so media that does encircle the candidate is likely to be more negative and critical. However, Warren managed to remain a front-runner throughout the entire invisible primary, holding a steady third behind Biden and Sanders. When Warren first entered the race, the media covered the support and energy that she brought to any stage or rally, her ability to mobilize and energize voters. Warren's consideration of labor and community organizers concerning the AFL-CIO union weighed heavy on her potential endorsement from them back in December as it loomed in media coverage for weeks.

Following Sanders's heart attack in October, Warren's national average actually rocketed to 23 percent in comparison to Sanders's then 14 percent, showing that voters who were wary between the two candidates, would resort to Warren if needed. Warren's national average was incredibly fluid throughout the invisible primary. In contrast to Biden and Sanders's national averages, Warren's climbed from 14 percent to peak at 23 percent, and then began to falter into January just before the primaries.

At the end of the third quarter, Warren had raised more than \$24.6 million from her \$19.2 in quarter two, showing that her grassroots method of building “[this] campaign from the ground up,” was not only working, but was also successful. The New York Times reported that this was building a strong case that she was slowly but surely on the rise for the top candidate (Kaplan, 2019). However, at the end of quarter three, Warren’s fundraising took a nose dive, potentially explained by the lack of endorsements and media coverage conveying a serious candidacy. Warren’s quarterly funding decreased from the previous \$24.6 million to \$21.2 million, over a three million difference.

Warren was not predicted to take first or second in the Iowa caucuses, however she was expected to take third according to the New York Times (The New York Times, 2020). Per Cohen et al.’s model, a candidate must do well in Iowa in order to create a domino effect with the remaining primaries and caucuses to attain the nomination. Depending on Warren’s performance, this will determine whether or not she has a clear path to the nomination.

Harris

Kamala Harris had a total of 22 key endorsements throughout her run. Some of Harris’s key endorsers were DNC Members and U.S Representatives. Harris was unique because she is a Black/Indian woman that was young and Moderate, a good counter option to Biden. However, Harris did not have a significant amount of endorsements from key party insiders and leaders to give her the boost she needed.

Harris had to be resourceful when it came to receiving media coverage, relying on debates and interviews heavily. Given that she was a new face to not only the nation, but to the U.S. Senate, it seemed that her time to run was pre-mature. Harris’s main break in media

followed the first debate when she took down Biden regarding bussing, sharing her story as one of the first busses to be bussed in during de-segregation. This gained a lot of traction and even helped voters to learn about who she is and why she was running.

Following the first debate in June and the media coverage, Harris's national average climbed from seven to 11 percent (FiveThirtyEight, 2019). By October, [Harris's] national average had dropped to five percent, and continued to do so. So what exactly happened?

Harris's fundraising was shaky from the start. Harris had sworn that she would not accept any Political Action Committee (PAC) donations, which was said to be a major contributor to her lack of funding. However, this was certainly not the only factor. As previously mentioned, Harris is Black and Indian, and a woman, giving her multiple disadvantages heading into the race. Harris was also new to national politics, having only been in the U.S. Senate since 2017 with rarely any name recognition. Harris finished the first quarter with \$12 million, followed by another \$12 million in the second quarter after raising more than \$2 million in online donations from the beginning of the June debate. Her campaign also raised \$1.2 million online the weekend prior, totaling \$3.2 million raised in just five days (Siders, 2019). Fundraising is expected to increase as the invisible primary continues on, however Harris's seemed to plateau at \$12 million. After the third quarter, Harris's funding had dropped from \$12 million to \$11.6 million (Merica, Dan; Wright, Jasmine; Lah, Kyung, 2019) indicating that her campaign was in serious free fall.

In December, Harris suspended her campaign, claiming she could not see a clear path to the nomination, nor could she lie to the American people regarding the state of her campaign funds. In this particular instance, it is clear that Harris did not have any of the key indicators to

succeed, and would not have ended up performing well at all in Iowa given the national polls and funds.

Buttigieg

Pete Buttigieg was a new and unfamiliar face to voters and viewers. Garnering only seven key party endorsements during the invisible primary, it was clear that endorsements were not going to be the leading factor in his path to the nomination. Again, it is important to note that not all paths are straight and narrow in attaining the nomination, according to Cohen et al.

Similar to Harris, Buttigieg needed the debates to help him gain media coverage. In fact, Americans were truly able to learn about who he was through the debates, and this in turn helped him climb in polls. Buttigieg's media break happened following the October debate when all the candidates turned their fire towards him. This is significant, because indicators show that the candidate who receives the most fire tends to be the front-runner or a rising candidate. The New York Times reported on Buttigieg's climbing poll numbers as the reason he was facing so much scrutiny (Glueck & Burns, 2019). We can see here that based on Polsby's claim, it appears that the media is starting to take Buttigieg seriously as a contender for the nomination.

Referring to Figure-1 (orange line), Buttigieg's national average when he first entered the race was at roughly one percent. However, by October it had climbed to nearly five percent. By the time the Iowa caucus came in January, Buttigieg had further climbed to an average of eight percent. However, when looking at public opinion polls specifically in Iowa, Buttigieg was in a good place at 19 percent (FiveThirtyEight, 2020). This meant that his public opinion poll would likely rise after Iowa as long as he did well.

Buttigieg's fundraising was rather impressive given he has never run for a position outside of local office, nor did he have the name recognition. In the first quarter, Buttigieg reported just \$7.1 million raised, however come second quarter, he more than tripled that at \$24.8 million (Merica, Dan, 2019). So what exactly happened here? There are a number of factors that played into this drastic change, but one of them being his debate performances and the media coverage leading to public opinion polls changing rapidly. The media's outlook on Buttigieg's campaign funding suggests that they started to take his candidacy seriously, especially considering CNN's title claiming Buttigieg "top-tier status" (Merica, Dan, 2019). Buttigieg had wide support, particularly from Republicans, a sure sign that if a Republican were not going to vote for Donald Trump, then he might just be the nominee to go with in order to win. Buttigieg was also seen as a young Joe Biden in the media, which certainly resonated with voters, allowing them to recognize that if they agreed with Biden's policies, but not his electability, Buttigieg would be the closest candidate to Biden.

Buttigieg reported a dip in funds during the third quarter, raising \$19.1 million but managed to finish the fourth quarter with more than \$24.7 million. Heading into Iowa, Buttigieg was predicted to do well, as his national average and Iowa support continued to flourish, it was just a matter of how well [Buttigieg] would do, either surpassing Biden, or following his coattails.

Who's ahead in the national polls?

Updating average for each Democratic candidate in 2020 primary polls, accounting for each poll's quality, sample size and recency

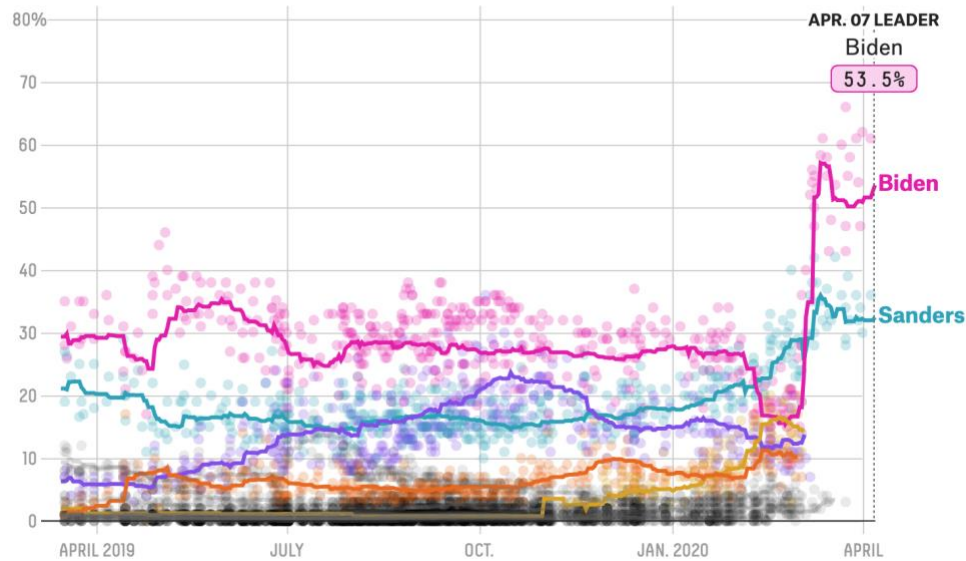


Figure 1-National Polls from April 2019 to April 2020

Source: (FiveThirtyEight, 2019)

Where We Are Now

As of December 2019, Former Vice President Joe Biden remained as the front runner for the Democratic nomination, however Senator Elizabeth Warren has made great strides and polled higher than Biden in multiple states. Mayor Pete Buttigieg has also climbed in the polls, becoming highly favorable in Iowa. Senator Bernie Sanders remains trailing closely behind Biden. With Harris out of the race, Klobuchar's campaign has come to light and she too has started to climb in polls. We have also seen multiple candidates jump in, such as Michael Bloomberg, while others have dropped out.

With Biden on the ropes and Bloomberg's incredibly late entrance, it would seem to be an indicator of Biden being weak. In fact, the DNC announced that they would open up the

debate requirements to allow [Bloomberg] to perform. As Sanders continues to ascend with no other strong and favorable Moderates in the race, and it appears as though the DNC is looking for that potential in Bloomberg. With just one month before Iowa and little to no candidates dropping, it is abundantly clear that the party has not decided.

What the invisible primary tells us is that this process is incredibly fluid and ever changing with every week that passes. It will be close calls in Iowa and New Hampshire, with no clear candidate predicted to attain the nomination this coming July.

CHAPTER IV: IOWA AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

IOWA

Iowa is unique for three specific reasons. The first one being that Iowa is the first state to vote. With candidates campaigning for roughly a year now, America gets to see the results of each campaign's work. Secondly, Iowa doesn't follow the normal primary process, instead they have caucuses. Caucuses require voters to attend meetings (Polsby, 2019). Lastly, Iowa gives power back to the people. In Cohen et al.'s *The Party Decides* model, [Cohen] discusses that these delegates and the proportion of votes allows for three to five candidates to have delegates at the convention, and ultimately pave the way for nomination and shape the way voters from other states may look at the nomination process (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

The way the Iowa caucus works is each caucus is broken down by precinct, and there are 1,765 in Iowa this year, with over 90 satellite precincts, and 28 of those precincts are not in the state of Iowa, for those who are unable to be in their specific precinct for a multitude of reasons. Caucus-goers then break themselves up into different groups based on their preferred candidate. At most precincts, a candidate must receive at least 15 percent of the votes at the caucus sites respectfully to be considered "viable." Then, those votes are locked in, meaning those who voted for that specific candidate cannot switch their candidate in the second round. The second round consists of those who voted for a candidate that did not receive 15 percent or more of votes and so they must move to either a candidate that has reached viability, or a candidate that is close to viability. This round is known as realignment (Epstein, 2020).

Once all votes are handed in at a precinct, they are then translated into delegates. This requires the state party and Democratic Convention math to determine who gets how many delegates out of 41 total for Iowa. While there is no specific winner, due to anywhere from three

to five candidates moving forward, the candidate that has the most delegates tends to take it as a win (Epstein, 2020).

As of Friday February 7, 2020, 99 percent of the precinct votes were available, confirming that Buttigieg had received 26.2 percent of the delegates (13) and Bernie Sanders trailed by .1 percent with 12 delegates, thus concluding a tie for Iowa (The New York Times, 2020). Given that Sanders was predicted to take the lead in Iowa in the weeks leading up to the caucus, it seems that history repeated itself when Buttigieg won by 0.1 percent. CNN credit's Buttigieg's win to his ability to "invoke the legacy of President Barack Obama, another youthful, politically inexperienced candidate" and thus giving him the leg up to perform so well in Iowa (Reston, 2020). Elizabeth Warren entered Iowa with a consistent 15 percent of support from five accredited polls, such as Monmouth University, Suffolk University, and Siena College, however she exceeded all of them by finishing in third with 18 percent of the vote. Warren was interviewed by MSNBC on Tuesday night just before the State of the Union Address from New Hampshire and was asked how she felt about seemingly being at third with just 52 percent of the results in. Warren expressed that she was feeling good and just happy to be building a great grassroots campaign. It's an interesting perspective to take on the Iowa caucus, yet rather accurate. Iowa is constantly looked at as the indicator of all primaries to follow, however this primary shows that this is an incredibly tight race and the apparent victor will not be discovered for some time.

Biden on the other hand was a complete let down. Before the primary, Biden was predicted to have anywhere from 23 (Monmouth University) to 25 percent (Suffolk University), which would have put him in second place. However, it became apparent on the first night of the

Iowa caucus, that he was not going to perform well at all. Biden finished with only 13.8 percent of support and claimed just six delegates for the convention to come. The next question is a matter of his candidacy being able to recover from this, if it will impact his performance in South Carolina, and if he had a place in the primaries (The New York Times, 2020).

Entrance polls for Iowa revealed that 42 percent of voter were male and 58 percent were female. 26 percent of males favored Sanders, and 24 percent of females favored Buttigieg. 16 percent of men and women respectively favored Biden, while Warren had roughly 14 percent male and 18 percent female voting for her (Cable News Network, 2020).

Given that Iowa is a white state and does not have enough people of color to pull data from, Buttigieg had the most white voters at 23 percent, followed by Sanders at 21. Warren trailed behind at 17 percent, and Biden at 16. However, when race was broken down at white versus non-white, Sanders had the most support of non-white voters at 43 percent of the total 9 percent that voted. Buttigieg followed at 15 percent (Cable News Network, 2020).

As for the age range, Sanders had 48 percent of voters from 17 to 29 years old, which made up roughly 24 percent of the vote, as well as 33 percent of voters aged 30 to 44. This shows that Sanders in this instance had two generations that continued to vote for him, showing that he technically had broad support according to Cohen et al.'s model: *The Party Decides*. Buttigieg had a staggering 26 of 28 percent voters that were between the age of 45 and 64, whereas Biden had 33 percent of those who were 65 and older. When looking at the age breakdown of two categories, Sanders sweeps the rest of the candidates at 44 percent of the vote from voters aged 17 to 44. Biden swept the voting range of 45 and older, followed by Buttigieg (Cable News Network, 2020).

When looking at education, Biden had 25 percent of voters that never attended college, while Sanders swept those who had some college and an associate's degree at 37 and 24 percent respectively. Buttigieg had 24 percent of the support of those who had a bachelor's degree.

As for those who identified as Liberal, Sanders won 28 of a total 68 percent of the vote. Biden and Buttigieg tied at 25 percent of Moderates (Cable News Network, 2020).

Based on *The Party Decides* model, if a candidate were to be chosen just on the Iowa caucuses, Buttigieg would be the nominee. Given that he had wide support within Iowa from folks in all age ranges, ideologies, and education, he would be a favorable nominee to the party. Cohen et al. argues that in order that activists and voters “want someone who can speak in an engaging fashion... and that the successful candidate must pledge fealty to the party's core values” (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008), and Buttigieg did a good job with that. Given his ability to resemble a young Joe Biden, someone who is passionate and believes in the Democratic Party, he was able to engage with voters on both sides of the spectrum. However, will this be enough?

Biden is still favored to win the nominee based on Cohen et al.'s model, given that the party holds the power of the nomination in key party members. Biden currently, holds the most endorsements from members of Congress, as well as governors around the country. When looking at endorsements, Cohen et al. argues that endorsements heavily influence the other three factors of the primary: public opinion polls, fundraising, and media coverage.

As for the model, Cohen et al. suggests that Iowa brings great media coverage and thus helps the party to decide on who the nominee will be, because voters tend to follow. New Hampshire will be the first primary held, where Sanders is predicted to win by a wide margin

from his continued support and previous landslide over Hillary Clinton in 2016. Will this remain true? Or will Buttigieg beat him again?

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Leading up to the New Hampshire primary, the New York Times predicted that Bernie Sanders would win New Hampshire. Of course it's no surprise, given that he won New Hampshire at 60 percent to Hillary's 37 percent back in 2016. However, AtlasIntel reported that based on a survey they conducted just before the primary, Buttigieg and Sanders were actually tied to win the primary. Following them, surprisingly, was Amy Klobuchar, Joe Biden, and then Elizabeth Warren (AtlasIntel, 2020). Ultimately, Sanders only won by a two percent lead with Buttigieg following closely behind.

The Washington Post released the exit polls and analysis of the New Hampshire primary, showing that Sanders won those who identify as very Liberal, ages 18-29, and those who make an income of less than \$50,000 by an average of a 25.5 percent lead. Sanders also had significant support from those who were between 30 and 44 years old. Buttigieg won the votes of those who had an income of \$100,000 or higher by a 13 point lead, as well as those who prefer a candidate that can beat Donald Trump by a seven point lead (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

Sanders's most supportive groups identified as ages 18-29 at 47 percent, very Liberal at 46 percent, supporting the change to a single government health plan at 39 percent, and those who were between the ages of 33 and 44 at 39 percent. In contrast, Warren only received 19 percent of voters who identified as very Liberal in one of her best support groups. However, Warren also had support from college graduates at roughly 12 percent (Alcantara, Clement,

Guskin, & Keating, 2020). It seems that even though Warren and Sanders are considered to have similar view points, voters are still preferring Sanders's policies.

Surprisingly, Amy Klobuchar came in third for the primary, something few voters expected to happen, however when looking at the exit polls it makes sense why she did as well as she did in the primary. According to the Washington Post's exit polls, Klobuchar won voters who said they attended religious services weekly by a 10 point lead, those who identify as Republican and those aged 65 or older by a seven point lead. What's more interesting is that Klobuchar's top five groups of voters were those who identified as Republicans at 29 percent of her voters. This is crucial to see at this point heading into the general election, because the ideal goal is to not only garner widespread support, but to garner bipartisan support. Especially heading into the 2020 general election, the goal of the DNC is to beat Donald Trump, so if Republicans believe Klobuchar has a chance, then she very well might (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

Biden's exit polls show that voters trust his expertise in foreign policy and tend to be ages 65 or older. He also attracts those who attend religious services both weekly and occasionally at a total of 25 percent. Where Biden lacks is those who consider themselves very Liberal, those who are ages 18 to 29 and those ages 30 to 44 at roughly 4.5 percent (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020). However, given the model, it would suggest that Biden does not pull voters from the same groups, he seems to be branching out in comparison to Iowa's caucus.

The exit polls also reveal important information about where voters lie heading into the general election, polling shows that more than six out of 10 voters said they "preferred a candidate who could beat Trump over someone who agrees with them on issues, (Alcantara,

Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020),” and that is very telling of this primary and election. The goal of the DNC is to not necessarily find a candidate that is indicative of all their values, but rather has what it takes to beat Donald Trump. Based on the exit polls roughly 63 percent of voters prefer a candidate that can beat Trump, while 33 percent of voters prefer a candidate that agrees with them on major issues. Currently Sanders takes the lead at 38 percent support for those who prefer a candidate that agrees with them on major issues, while Buttigieg leads at 28 percent of those who believe he can beat Trump (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

More than half of the voters said that they decided who they were going to vote for in the last few days, whereas 49 percent of voters knew they are were going to vote for Sanders more than a few days prior to the primary at 35 percent. It is important to note that roughly 60 percent of Americans are still undecided about who they will vote for, so the key state primaries will be indicative of who voters will support (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

New Hampshire is not necessarily an accurate primary when looking at the demographics, therefore it should not be as influential as it is, however given that it comes first, it does hold a significant amount of power in the primaries. Based on *The Party Decides* model New Hampshire is set to shape the primaries and influence voters to come, and it appears that Bernie Sanders is the one to beat (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

UPDATES

Amidst the New Hampshire primary, Andrew Yang dropped out of the race. He stated, “I am the math guy, and it is clear tonight from the numbers that I am not going to win this race. So tonight I am announcing that I am suspending my campaign” (Stevens, 2020) . Michael Bennet also dropped from the race on the night of the New Hampshire primary after seeing that he was

in fact not going to win and was not a viable candidate at all for the general election (Turkewitz & Astor, 2020). We can start to see that the party is slowly narrowing, but still has a ways to go before the nominee is chosen.

Following Iowa and New Hampshire, Biden's fundraising was in a dire need of support, having only raised \$8 million in January and so far \$13 million in February (Cole & Saenz, 2020).

The current delegate count resides with Buttigieg in the lead with 23, Sanders following with 21, Warren with eight, and Biden with six. Refer to Figure-2.

Election 2020 — Democratic Delegate Count

Dem Delegate Count, [Map](#) | [Dem Popular Vote](#) | [Latest 2020 Polls](#)



State	Date ▾	Delegates*	Biden	Sanders	Warren	Bloomberg	Buttigieg	Klobuchar	Gabbard	Primaries/ Caucuses	Open/ Closed
Pledged Delegates (1,991 Needed on 1st Ballot)	-	3979	1217	914	81	55	26	7	2		
Iowa	February 3	41 (8)	6	12	8	0	14	1	0	Caucus	Semi-open
New Hampshire	February 11	24 (9)	0	9	0		9	6	0	Primary	Semi-closed

Figure 2- Iowa and New Hampshire Delegate Count

Source: (RealClearPolitics, 2020)

CHAPTER V: NEVADA AND SOUTH CAROLINA

NEVADA

Nevada is arguably the first important caucus for the nation. While Iowa and New Hampshire kick off primary season, neither states are indicative of America and its voters, which is especially relevant for the Democratic Party. Nevada fosters roughly 29 percent Hispanic or Latino identifying voters, and 8.78 percent Black or African American identifying voters. This is a crucial primary because it allows the country to really see how electable and viable a candidate is to more than just two states that are at least 90 percent white.

The Associated Press announced that Bernie Sanders won the Nevada caucuses. Heading into the caucuses, Sanders was predicted to win by numerous news outlets and accredited pollsters. FiveThirtyEight predicted that Sanders would have about a 39 percent chance at winning a delegate majority as the Democratic Primary front-runner.

Following the Nevada debate on Wednesday night, MSNBC reported that Elizabeth Warren was predicted to take second or at least third. However, Warren ended up coming in fourth. Warren's campaign in Nevada went awry when six women of color quit and even spoke out about the issues they had with the campaign that led them to leave. A former staffer said she felt that she was there to "bring color into the space but not the knowledge and voice that comes with it (Thompson, 2020)." This alone shows that while candidates are certainly making efforts to include people of color and minorities to help their candidacy and give people of color the microphone they have always deserved, that the politics of a campaign play a bigger role.

Joe Biden was predicted to do well all along. Having strong support from people of color has never been a concern, it was just a matter of whether or not he would be able to beat

Sanders's momentum heading into Nevada. Biden's disappointing performance in Iowa and New Hampshire showed that he may not be as viable a candidate as the American people thought he was. But following his "okay" performance in the Nevada debate, voters and the media were reassured that he was still in this race, and that he still holds support of Hispanics/Latinos and Blacks/African Americans. According to the Univision poll released this past Tuesday, Biden had roughly 21 percent of Latino support nationally, and 22 percent in Nevada, trailing behind Sanders at 30 percent nationally and 33 percent in Nevada (Univision Poll, 2020).

Cohen et al. argues that in order to win the nomination, a candidate must do well in Iowa and New Hampshire, however there is little mention of the importance of Nevada. As we know, gaining support means nothing if you do not have minority groups supporting you, especially for the Democratic Party. So why do Latinos and Hispanics lean towards Sanders? Based on his aggressive and bold policy, especially on the topic of immigration reform and being an ally of the Hispanic/Latino community for over 20 years, it's no wonder he has the support.

Here's how Sanders ultimately ended up sweeping the Nevada Caucuses. At just about every single group, Sanders won. Of course it was expected for Sanders to do well with younger voters, very Liberal, and Hispanic/Latino groups, however he also did well in some unexpected groups. At 39 percent of the group vote, Sanders won those who identify as Independents. This is interesting to note because these are entrance polls, it means that these voters did not switch their votes during caucus. *The Party Decides* model capitalized on wide support, and up until now, Sanders has faltered in this area, garnering support specifically from young, very Liberal voters. Biden on the other hand only garnered support from two major groups, those who were aged 65 and older, and those who were black (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

As previously mentioned, we were never concerned about Biden's support with Black voters given his history with Obama, however Biden does struggle to garner Hispanic/Latino support. The real test will be to see if he is able to change that heading into the Florida and Arizona primaries where the Hispanic/Latino vote is at a greater percentage. If he is unable to do so, then the merits of his campaign and electability will change drastically.

Sanders's worst group supporters were those who were aged 65 or older, where Biden won, and those who opposed changing to a single government health plan, also those who supported Biden. Biden's worst group of supporters were those who agree with the candidate on issues, those who were Independent, and those that were aged from 17 to 44 years old (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

Buttigieg on the other hand garnered support from groups that are not generally looked at but are still important and play a role in other states. Buttigieg's best groups were those whose top issues were foreign policy at 26 percent, identified as Moderate or Conservative at 19 percent, and those who were white at 19 percent. His worst groups were Hispanic/Latino at 11 percent, those whose top issue was income inequality at 8 percent, and those who are Black at 2 percent (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020). Buttigieg's poor performance with people of color certainly raises concerns for his electability, and will indicate to future voters of color that he is not viable. Again, Cohen et al. argues that people of color will look for the candidate that can both win white voters, as well as other people of color, thus showing they are viable (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

Warren had a poor performance, her debate performance was promising and so was her ability to fundraise more than \$14.5 million within 24 hours of the debate, however her caucus

performance speaks to her ability or lack-there-of to be the nominee come summer time.

Warren's best groups were those who regularly use twitter and top issue as income inequality at 19 percent, those who are very Liberal and aged 30 to 44 at 17 percent, and those who decided in the last few days at 16 percent. Warren's worst groups were Hispanic/Latino, and foreign policy at four percent (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

Cohen et al. argues, "money drive politics" and that money also influences the other factors during both the invisible primary and primaries themselves. After Warren raised \$14.5 million from the debate night, one would assume that would have helped her in the polls and with endorsements, like Cohen et al. suggests. However, it did not help her in either of these categories, which eventually contributed to her poor performance in the Nevada caucuses.

Klobuchar did poorly as well, with garnering support from groups that opposed single government health plan and those ages 65 and older at 17 percent, and those who preferred a candidate that could beat Donald Trump at 13 percent. It was abundantly clear that she not only fell short but simply failed at garnering support from those of color (Alcantara, Clement, Guskin, & Keating, 2020).

Similar to Iowa being an indicator for the New Hampshire primary, Nevada is an indicator for the South Carolina primary. The reasoning behind this is that the percentage of people of color in Nevada and New Hampshire are greater, and so when South Carolina voters see that Sanders and Biden both still hold the most support of Latinos, Hispanics, Blacks, and African Americans, they are likely to stick with them due to viability. MSNBC's televised report of the Nevada caucus explains that people of color look for viability, especially back in 2008 when Barack Obama ran for President, the black vote stuck with Hillary Clinton all through the

primary, but once they saw that Obama was viable in Iowa and New Hampshire, they knew there was a real chance at him getting the nomination (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

So far Biden has been holding the majority of the support in South Carolina, initially polling at 37 percent in mid-February, however two days before the primary, Winthrop University, an accredited pollster, reported that Biden was now leading South Carolina at just 24 percent, and Sanders followed behind with a five percent gap (Winthrop University, 2020). FiveThirtyEight also conducted a poll of South Carolina's average with Biden at 24.3 percent, and Sanders closing in at 21 percent (FiveThirtyEight, 2020). South Carolina will be a major turning point for the candidates, and particularly Biden during the nomination process. As previously mentioned, Biden still holds the lead in South Carolina, so it's just a matter of how much he wins in South Carolina.

UPDATES

Mike Bloomberg took the debate stage for the first time since launching his campaign just ten weeks ago. He was not on the ballot for Nevada, however his polls have gone up from a previous nine percent to a now 15 percent, surpassing Warren who is currently at 13 percent (ABC News, 2020).

The night of the debate, Elizabeth Warren raised more than \$14.5 million in the span of a day. Warren had a great debate night heading into the caucuses this weekend, however it did not seem to be enough to raise her stake in the nomination (Thompson, 2020).

SOUTH CAROLINA

The Party Decides model suggested that Joe Biden would win South Carolina given his continuous lead in numerous accredited polls via FiveThirtyEight. Initially he was predicted to

win with an average of 40 percent, however finished with winning 48 percent of the vote in South Carolina (FiveThirtyEight, 2020). The main takeaways from South Carolina were race, generation, and where voters fell on the ideology spectrum. Given that South Carolina is historically more Moderate, it is no surprise that Biden did so well here.

The Party Decides model in this instance was correct. Accredited pollsters headed into the primary knowing that Biden was going to win, it was just a matter of how much. Given that Biden had done rather poorly in the previous primaries and caucuses, (IA, NH, and NV), the South Carolina primary was going to be a major turning point for his campaign and steps following, whether it was negative or positive. However, Biden continued to hold out on the Black vote here in South Carolina as his saving grace and most loyal base.

The most common theme of *The Party Decides* model is likability and support from all groups within the Democratic party, meaning different race, ethnicities, backgrounds, and even ideologies. Biden certainly was not doing well in majority of the criteria when it came to the previous primaries, however he was able to turn it around in South Carolina.

Cohen et al. refers to the eventual nominee and primary process as the “restaurant game”. This game consists of “diners trying to coordinate on a common eating place,” thus they might favor a restaurant that has a diverse menu with a lot of options, because it appeals to everyone (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Up until South Carolina, it seemed that Sanders was representative of this model given his diverse support in age, gender, race, and ideology – particularly from Nevada. However, Biden seems to be the resounding candidate after sweeping South Carolina.

Biden did exceptionally well in garnering roughly 61 of the total 56 percent of Black voters in the state. Biden also won groups whose top issues were race relations at 40 percent, health care at 28 percent, and preferring a candidate who can beat Donald Trump at 35 percent. It is also important to note that Biden's supporters were very Liberal at 13 percent, meaning that he not only garners support from those that are Moderate, but also those that consider themselves "Sanders Liberal" (Clement, Keatin, Uhrmacher, Alcantara, & Guskin, 2020).

Biden's exit poll groups are incredibly vast in comparison to Sanders's, as you can tell that South Carolina favors a much more Moderate candidate than a Progressive/Democratic-Socialist. Sanders did well with voters in the age range of 17 to 29 and those who never attend religious services, comprising his usual base. Even then, Biden was able to beat Sanders in an age group he has notoriously done well in – those aged from 30 to 44. Biden beat Sanders in this category at 33 percent, with a four point lead over Sanders (Clement, Keatin, Uhrmacher, Alcantara, & Guskin, 2020). Again, we can see the general theme of *The Party Decides* model, that Biden continues to engage voters in unexpected groups, thus widening the gap between himself and Sanders.

One reason that Sanders has continued to do exceptionally well during this primary and remained a top candidate is due to the youth vote, however in accordance with *The Party Decides* model, a candidate cannot secure the nomination if they only excel with one particular group within different demographics. Sanders's best groups were those who support changing to a single government health plan and those who were very Liberal at 29 percent. On the other hand, some of his worst groups were those who were Moderate or Conservative at 14 percent, and aged 65 or older (Clement, Keatin, Uhrmacher, Alcantara, & Guskin, 2020). We can see that

the continued pattern of his supporters remain very Liberal and in the younger generations. The Washington Post reported that older voters made up 71 percent of the vote at 45 or older, which certainly gave Biden the upper hand given that older voters tend to be more moderate or conservative in their beliefs (Clement, Keatin, Uhrmacher, Alcantara, & Guskin, 2020).

Warren disappointed supporters again. With some of her best groups being younger generations and those who were very Liberal, her base was continuing to thin with every primary she faced. Even when looking at the race of voters, Warren only had nine percent of the White vote and five percent of the Black vote. When looking at the different age groups, Warren also came in fifth every time in comparison to the other candidates (Clement, Keatin, Uhrmacher, Alcantara, & Guskin, 2020). It was becoming abundantly clear that Warren was no longer a viable candidate for the Democratic Party, and her candidacy was in serious turmoil. Cohen et al. reminds political scientist that if you do not have the voter support, how can you be viable in the general election.

UPDATES

Amy Klobuchar and Pete Buttigieg suspended their campaigns just before the first super Tuesday and immediately endorsed Joe Biden. This speaks volumes to the party's ability to consolidate behind one candidate. Cohen et al. explains that the power and timing of an endorsement are everything, and ultimately impact all other factors for a campaign and the candidacy. In particular, Cohen et al. suggest that, "this influence is over and above [endorsers'] role in shaping the field of contestants (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). It is easy to assume that given both Klobuchar and Buttigieg's base would vote for Biden following their successions to him as the clear Moderate for the party.

South Carolina concludes the primaries for the month, meaning more money will flow in the following months. Biden's staff reported that after the South Carolina primary, their campaign raised \$5 million within a day. Their overall funding for the month was \$18 million in comparison to Sanders's massive haul of \$46.5 million for the month (Cole & Saenz, 2020). Polsby suggests that money is a more powerful factor in deciding Presidential nomination contests than the general election, which proves true in this exact instance (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). Up until now, Biden was on the brink of a failing campaign and his success in South Carolina triggered fundraising to drastically increase. Without the funding boost, he would have been at a disadvantage to Sanders given the continuous cash flow from the previous wins.

Referring to Figure-3, Biden finally earned some delegate wins following South Carolina, bringing his total to 54, with Sanders in the leads at 60, Buttigieg with 26 and Warren with six.

Election 2020 — Democratic Delegate Count

Dem Delegate Count, [Map](#) | [Dem Popular Vote](#) | [Latest 2020 Polls](#)



State	Date	Delegates*	Biden	Sanders	Warren	Bloomberg	Buttigieg	Klobuchar	Gabbard	Primaries/ Caucuses	Open/ Closed
Pledged Delegates (1,991 Needed on 1st Ballot)	-	3979	1217	914	81	55	26	7	2		
Iowa	February 3	41 (8)	6	12	8	0	14	1	0	Caucus	Semi-open
New Hampshire	February 11	24 (9)	0	9	0		9	6	0	Primary	Semi-closed
Nevada	February 22	36 (12)	9	24	0		3	0	0	Caucus	Closed
South Carolina	February 29	54 (9)	39	15	0		0	0	0	Primary	Open

Figure 3- Nevada and South Carolina Delegate Count

Source: (RealClearPolitics, 2020)

CHAPTER VI: SUPER TUESDAYS

SUPER TUESDAY I, MARCH 3

The main highlights from this Super Tuesday- comprising of 14 states- was Biden essentially sweeping the primary by winning 10 states, and more importantly winning Texas. Bernie won the remaining four states of the primary, forcing a clear path for the remaining candidates and more importantly showing how viable Biden is.

The ideal nominee according to Cohen et al. and Polsby, is someone that can appeal to voters that are Moderate, meaning a candidate who can obtain votes across party line. Given that Texas is historically a red state, nearly turning purple back in the 2018 midterms, Biden's ability to do well in Texas is certainly promising if he were to attain the nomination.

Biden did well in Texas for a few reasons, one of them being he is the only Moderate left in the race. As previously mentioned, Texas's ideology leans right, but those who identify as a Democrat are far more Moderate than Liberal. 53 percent of Moderates ended up voting for Biden. Roughly 28 percent of voters that identified as Liberal voted for Biden, and 25 percent of conservatives voted for him as well (The New York Times, 2020).

Biden also did significantly well with voters who opposed replacing all private health insurance with a single government plan for everyone at 50 percent. Additionally, Biden had 48 percent of voters that agreed the next president should return to Obama's policies, showing that voters are looking for a moderate candidate rather than a candidate with more liberal policies. 14 percent of voters also cared about race relations, and voted with Biden at 43 percent because of his ability to advocate for people of color. 86 percent of voters also agreed that Biden best understands the concerns of racial ethnics and minorities.

Sanders did well with the youth vote, in contrast to Biden who won because of the amount of voters aged 45-64. Sanders won the youth vote at a staggering 65 percent to Biden's 11 percent, ranging from 11-29. More males ended up voting for Sanders at 38 percent, whereas women voted for Biden at 34 percent. This is important to note because there are currently more women in the United States than there are men at 52 percent. Additionally, Sanders did better with Hispanic/Latino identifying voters and Asians than Biden did. At roughly 31 percent of the vote, Sanders had 45 percent of Hispanic/Latino voters, with 57 percent of Asian voters at 2 percent of total votes. Refer to Figure-3.

Texas also saw more voters aged 65 years or older for 2020 than they did for 2016. At an increase from 18 percent to 24, it is clear that Democratic voters within Texas are looking for a more Moderate candidate than one with more liberal policies (NBC News, 2020).

Cohen et al. uses a measurement of success in the primaries that is broken up into three categories. One of them is referred to as the "Best Share of Delegates". In this instance, Biden currently won some major delegates from this Tuesday alone. Given the candidates that have dropped and since then endorsed Biden, their delegates will likely switch to back him, giving him a greater lead over Sanders (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

Age and race divide Biden and Sanders in Texas

Vote share for each candidate by race and age in Texas, according to preliminary exit polls

GROUP	SHARE	BIDEN	BLOOMBERG	GABBARD	SANDERS	WARREN
Black 18-29	2%	30%	4%	8%	45%	5%
Black 30-44	3	49	8	—	30	9
Black 45-64	9	68	12	—	12	4
Black 65+	6	62	26	—	7	4
White 18-29	5	9	3	—	69	12
White 30-44	10	13	4	1	48	23
White 45-64	17	34	12	1	24	14
White 65+	12	44	19	1	13	11
Latino 18-29	8	10	13	—	66	5
Latino 30-44	8	14	10	2	55	9
Latino 45-64	9	36	20	1	30	7
Latino 65+	6	36	24	—	31	2
All other	4	22	10	—	43	14

Only showing candidates who haven't dropped out.

SOURCE: EDISON RESEARCH

Figure 4-Age and Race Divide in Texas Primary

Source: (FiveThirtyEight, 2020)

UPDATES

Following the first super Tuesday, Elizabeth Warren suspended her campaign after re-evaluating the status of her candidacy and viability. Warren no longer had the wide support she once had before the primaries, and her poor performance in South Carolina showed that she did not have the support of minorities, voters she had praised her campaign on continuously including throughout her candidacy.

Biden reports that in just five days he raised more than \$22 million and almost matching his fourth quarter fundraising in 2019 (Mucha, 2020).

Biden received some key endorsements following South Carolina to today's Super Tuesday, earning 33 additional endorsements from party insiders. More importantly, Former

candidates Kamala Harris Cory Booker, Pete Buttigieg, Amy Klobuchar, Beto O'Rourke and Mike Bloomberg endorsed [Biden] amidst his success (FiveThirtyEight, 2020).

Biden was previously behind in delegate count versus Sanders, however after his big sweep, he won 652 delegates, bringing his total to 706 (McMinn, 2020). This puts him ahead Sanders, who is currently at 573 total, thus currently the winner of delegates. Cohen et al.'s measurement of delegate share currently indicates that Biden and Sanders are both at the Final Delegate Share, meaning the current breakdown indicates the eventual nominee does not have a clear path (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

SUPER TUESDAY II, MARCH 10

Some of the main takeaways of this super Tuesday, was Biden's five out of six win and Sanders's win in North Dakota. With only three candidates in the race, and two of them actually having a real shot at the nomination, the options have narrowed considerably with the time remaining until the convention.

Remarkably, Biden won every single county within Michigan. Michigan was a tight race if based on demographics. When looking at age, voters ranging from 45 years old and up, Biden dominated. However, when looking at those from 44 to 18, Sanders had an incredibly larger margin. Biden also surpassed Sanders in both college graduates and no college degree. Biden also won the Black vote as well, but lacked in the Hispanic/Latino vote (The New York Times, 2020).

The capitalization of the Black vote is not the same for the Hispanic/Latino vote. Nevada is the first state that we see has a truly diverse population, and is mainly Hispanic/Latino. Sanders continues to win the Hispanic vote in each state so far, however the overall population

of Hispanic voters is lower than that of Black voters. For instance, Michigan has double the amount of Black voters than it does Hispanic voters (The New York Times, 2020). Again, we refer to the model's assessment of wide support that indicates the nominee. However, it does not explain the specifics of it. Based on the model, it would suggest that Biden will be the one to seek the nomination due to his broad support in gaining votes from all races and ethnicities that vote, even if he doesn't lead in support for some of them. If Biden were leading in support from White voters repetitively, with no support from other races, then he would not be considered a candidate that has wide support, however he would still have a chance at the nomination.

What's more, is Biden's ability to win five out of six states on this Tuesday is incredibly telling of his electability. Following his endorsements from key party members such as Amy Klobuchar, Mike Bloomberg, and even Pete Buttigieg, shows that he is the obvious front runner. Winning the South not only proved he was the clear front-runner, but it also confirmed that the party is starting to consolidate behind one candidate as more and more former candidates endorse and even campaign on Biden's behalf.

Heading into the next Super Tuesday, we will be able to see whether or not Biden will continue to prevail, or if Sanders will be able to turn it around. But for now, it seems that *The Party Decides* model has chosen Biden.

UPDATES

Biden won an additional 214 delegates, bringing his total to 920. Sanders currently has 765, trailing Biden by nearly 200. The momentum Biden holds is only going to continue to pick up after receiving 76 endorsements within a week (FiveThirtyEight, 2020).

SUPER TUESDAY III, MARCH 17

Biden swept the primaries this Tuesday. Initially, there were to be four states, however due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Ohio's governor postponed voting until June. Biden won some key states today, both Arizona and Florida. Given Sanders's continued support from Hispanic voters, one would think he would do well in both of these states given the heavy Hispanic population they host. However, Biden ended up sweeping voters in both states.

Biden won Florida by 62 percent, completely sweeping Sanders off the map of Florida. Given that Florida is a red state, it is no surprise that Biden was projected to win Florida. In fact, Biden won every single county within Florida as well. Surprisingly, based on the New York Times's exit polls, Biden had a significant amount of millennial and youth support, only faltering to Sanders by one percent (The New York Times, 2020). However, when it came to those aged above 45, Biden swept Sanders by 71 percent. We can certainly see that there is a pattern amongst age groups as the younger voters tend to lean towards Sanders and his liberal policies, whereas boomers tend to lean more Moderate. Given, the new rising youth vote, particularly in Florida, we expected to see Sanders perform better than the one percent lead he had in support.

Amongst voters of color, Biden surpassed Sanders in totality. Voters who are Black, Latino or Hispanic, or identify as other make-up 43 percent of Florida's voters and Biden surpassed Sanders by at least 26 percent (The New York Times, 2020). Florida is an incredibly important state to win, given that it is primarily red and primarily Moderate, the candidate to win Florida is argued to be able to win the nomination and the election.

Biden's start to the primaries were certainly rocky, his ability to show whether or not he was a viable candidate did not come out until after South Carolina's primary, where it seemed

that with Sanders winning Nevada, would prove he was not only viable, but the candidate to beat.

Education did not seem to be a heavy factor, as those who did not have a high school diploma, some college, college graduate, or postgraduate study all voted for Biden with a 36 percent minimum lead. When looking at the variables to determine if gender and education level play a role in their vote, it didn't seem to make a difference either because Biden still won (The New York Times, 2020).

As for Arizona, Biden won with roughly 44 percent of the vote. Unfortunately, former candidates were still on the ballot, which impacted the percentage breakdown in total. In contrast from Florida, Sanders won two counties in Arizona. Based on gender, Biden won both at 44 percent. Women voters dominated male voters by more than 20 percent, giving Biden an edge to do well. Sanders did well with voters ranging from 18 to 44 years old, which was to be expected. He dominated Biden by nearly 40 percent here, however Biden still carried with voters aged 45 and up at 66 percent of the total vote (The New York Times, 2020).

Sanders performed well with Hispanic/Latino voters this time, however it was by a very small margin of four percent. Given that black voters made up roughly seven percent of total votes, there was not enough data to conclude which candidate performed better. Overall, Biden did better with voters regardless of race or ethnicity.

Given that Biden ended up sweeping this super Tuesday in all three states, Biden currently holds 1215 of the delegates to Sanders's 909 (Jin, 2020). It appears that Biden is now unbeatable, and Sanders will need to reevaluate his viability.

With the Super Tuesdays concluded for the season, Biden is now to be considered “Fat Lady Sings” phase of Cohen et al.’s delegate measurement of success in the primary. Biden is now the “clear victor” and active campaigning has essentially ceased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, both candidates have utilized digital organizing as a source of keeping voters engaged, as Sanders is still evaluating his campaign.

Ultimately, Biden’s overwhelming success is due to what Cohen et al. calls “elite party elected officials.” These officials were formerly candidates, and have in turn used both national supporters and constituent support to consolidate behind Biden. According to Cohen et al., these elite officials have a “potent signaling effect on the partisan electorate as to which candidate should be supported” (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008). It is becoming more and more clear that this race is now the Democratic Party versus Bernie Sanders.

UPDATES

Biden’s fundraising increased tremendously this month. Biden’s campaign reported that for the first half of March, the campaign had a massive haul of \$33 million (Greenwood, 2020). This is certainly due to his continuous wins throughout the Super Tuesdays.

Following the Super Tuesdays, Biden received 14 additional endorsements, one in particular from civil rights activist John Lewis, a party elite. Biden’s continued support indicates he is the clear victor of the 2020 primary.

CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are certainly a few things to note regarding this primary and the reliability of the model. From what was first predicted, it seemed that Biden was going to be the easy pick of the pool, however we lost him there for a while. *The Party Decides* model explained that Biden would be the nominee due to his ability to lead in the public opinion polls throughout the entire primary (indicating widespread support), including the invisible, his ability to garner wide support from key groups in the party, and to increase fundraising. Ultimately, Sanders dropped out in the beginning of April, making Biden the nominee finite. However, There are some critiques and reforms that can be noted regarding the model for future elections to come.

The insignificance of Iowa and New Hampshire and possible reforms: *The Party Decides* model has long predicted that a candidate will attain their party's nomination when they do well in Iowa and New Hampshire. A reminder that doing well does not necessarily mean winning, it means that a candidate has a good share of the vote, dependent upon how many candidates are in the race. The reasoning behind that is because Iowa and New Hampshire are the first caucus and primary in the nation. Cohen et al. argued that doing well in both these primaries would build momentum for the primaries and caucuses to come, giving voters a bird's eye view as to who was viable and likely to become the victor (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008).

For instance, in 2008, Barack Obama was trailing behind Hillary Clinton every step of the way. Clinton seemed to be the apparent winner and had everything to lose. However, when it finally came time for Iowa, a white state, Obama actually came out as the front-runner. And he did it again in New Hampshire, so when it came time for other states like Nevada and South Carolina with a much more representative population, Black and Hispanic voters ended up

supporting him. It all boils down to viability. Given that Iowa and New Hampshire represent the White vote, it seems that they are not true indicators of the Democratic Party specifically. As for the Republican Party, these states are indicative of a candidate's success.

Additionally, we saw in 2008 that McCain went on to win the Republican nomination after coming in fourth for Iowa. This indicated that the importance of Iowa was not as big a factor as this model claims it to be.

Nevada and South Carolina: The model fails to look at the importance of Nevada and South Carolina where representation of minorities such as Blacks and Hispanics are counted. The model seems to work however, just not for the Democratic Party in this instance. Could this mean that the model needs to cater to each party? For future Democratic primaries, it certainly should.

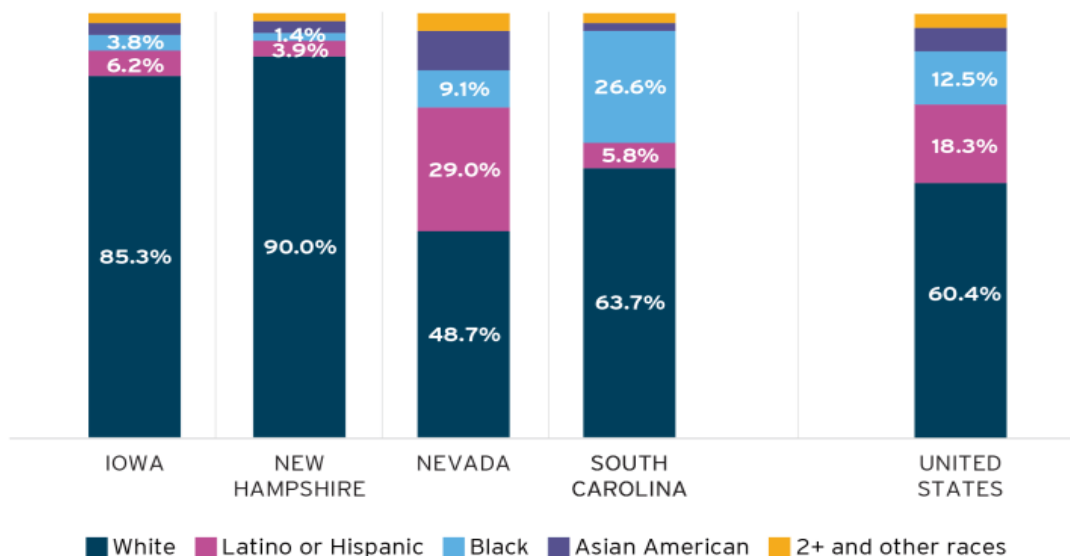
Up until South Carolina, the party had not yet spoken. The greatest downfall of the model is that it ignores the most loyal base of the Democratic Party, the Black vote. The Black vote has long supported the Democratic Party, and always supported the winning candidate. Referring back to Obama's run in 2008, the Black vote could be seen as an exception to the rule. All paths led to Hillary, and the Black vote supported it, until they saw Obama's success in Iowa and New Hampshire. In this instance, the situation was completely different. Black voters were hesitant to support a Black candidate given the actual likelihood of a white voter supporting [Obama]. As it pertained to Biden, Biden had the Black vote all along because of his history with Obama, thus the lack of concern when it came to South Carolina. However, this poses another question for Biden and the model.

Given the rate at which Biden's campaign was going following the first three caucuses and primary, the media and supporters knew that South Carolina would be his saving grace, but would the buck stop there following the first Super Tuesday? In other words, what would have happened to his candidacy if South Carolina were not the fourth state? It is likely that he would have had no choice but to drop from the race because there was no clear path for him. This is why it is important to look at the Black vote and capitalize on it from the beginning. The Black vote matters and it always has, so why does the model ignore this? This proves that if a reform were to come about regarding South Carolina's primary, it should certainly be the first primary of the season rather than New Hampshire. Furthermore, winning South Carolina seems to be the key to winning the nomination. Obama '08, Clinton '16, and now Biden '20 have won and later on been selected as the nominee.

As for the Hispanic vote, in Figure-5, you can see how prominent Hispanics/Latinos are in Nevada. Yet there is a lack of recognition regarding the importance of Nevada for the Democratic Presidential primary. In conclusion, the model should focus on Nevada and South Carolina as the true test of the Democratic primary. Moreover, it seems that the model should focus on South Carolina as the first primary for both parties.

FIGURE 2

Racial profiles of early primary/caucus states and total US



Source: US Census Population Estimates 2018

B Metropolitan Policy Program
at BROOKINGS

Figure 5- Racial Breakdown of Early Primary/Caucus States

Source: (Frey, 2020)

Media's role: The media's role in the primary was significant, but not until after the South Carolina primary, particularly for Biden. After Sanders essentially swept Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada, the media raised concerns about Biden's path to victory, claiming he was no longer a serious contender. However, Biden's ability to beat Sanders in a landslide in South Carolina and the first Super Tuesday, showed that he was still in the race and had widespread support. The media changed its tune and began to raise questions about Sanders's viability, which led to his ultimate succession to Biden after losing terribly in the following Super Tuesdays. It seems that the media should also take note that Iowa and New Hampshire are not as valid for the Democratic Party as it is for the Republican Party. Cohen et al. and Polsby

were right when they claimed that media influences public opinion and fundraising, and influences endorsements in turn. Recalling on Cohen et al.'s analysis of the factors, endorsements can influence media coverage, and media coverage can influence endorsements, which is ultimately what happened for Biden.

Caucuses vs. Primaries: The caucus system seems to be incredibly outdated and out of touch of the way voting should be conducted in the 21st century. The Iowa caucus faced a major issue with counting votes after caucus-goers spent hours ultimately playing a game of four corners to break down the delegate support. It also decreases the amount of people who might have intended on voting, given that caucus-goers enter with intentions of voting for one candidate, and coming out having supported another because of the caucus systems. In contrast to primaries, caucus-goers will caucus for an uncertain amount of time in which this may discourage people who have a long day worth of work prior.

It's important to question whether or not Sanders would have won North Dakota if it did not still hold a caucus. We recall that the Democratic National Convention encouraged states to shift away from the caucus system and to move to the primary system for future elections. If this had been enforced for every single state, would Sanders have won any of the states he won that were a caucus system? The answer is unclear, but it would be a yes and no situation. North Dakota is a more Moderate state, which means that if a voter had to cast their decision without caucus influence, they may have voted for Biden instead. Sanders would have certainly still won Nevada given his base, but he might not have won Iowa. Remember, caucuses allow voters to influence other voters through conversation, the primary system does not allow that. So it is

difficult to tell if Sanders would have won Iowa, or if it would have gone to Buttigieg in full. This scenario remains a hypothetical until the primary system becomes enforced in totality.

The significance of endorsements: Biden was always sweeping in endorsements in comparison to the other candidates. However, his endorsements really came into power during the South Carolina primary. Biden received over 30 endorsements from February 28th, the day before South Carolina, to the day before the first Super Tuesday March 3rd. This was an enormous win for Biden because these endorsements came from party insiders and elites. You'll recall that Polsby and Cohen et al. argued endorsements from party insiders and elites not only encourage voters but other members of the party to support a specific candidate.

Biden's success in South Carolina could be argued by Rep. James Clyburn's endorsement just before the primary. As a long-time member of Congress, and holding the power for the Democratic Party in South Carolina, Clyburn's endorsement certainly holds more weight than other endorsements leading up to the primary. This also indicated a turning point for Biden's campaign. Due to the large number of endorsers that came just before, during and after South Carolina, we can start to see the party consolidate behind one candidate, the predicted victor of the primary. It is also important to note that former 2020 candidates endorsed Biden, giving him further support immediately after their own campaign suspensions. Throughout the Super Tuesday weeks, Biden received nearly 120 endorsements, further indicating that the party had decided.

Following Sanders's concession to Biden in mid-April, Sanders endorsed Biden. Shortly after came President Barack Obama's endorsement and lastly Senator Elizabeth Warren's. Not

only had the party decided, but any estranged voters were just reminded that a greater force is at work: to beat Donald Trump.

In contrast to the Democratic Primary, endorsements don't seem to hold as much power for the Republican Party. Endorsements tend to hold weight when they come from media puppets, right wing radios and influencers such as Nikki Haley, when she endorsed Trump back in 2016. This suggests that the model may not be reliable for parties as a whole, as both parties are institutionally different from one another. Perhaps, there needs to be a model for each party instead.

Fundraising: Polsby explained that doing well in Iowa and New Hampshire is important in order to attract the media and money necessary to continue winning and competing (Cohen, Karol, Noel, & Zaller, 2008), which seemed to be indicative of Biden's financial state in January and February, where he only raised \$9 million and \$18 million respectively.

Without Biden's wins in South Carolina, his funding would have been in considerable trouble, raising concerns for a path to victory. However, the influx of money he continued to raise after continuously winning, proved that money follows the winner and holds all the power to a successful nomination.

The transformation of the delegate count: Biden lacked the one thing he needed the most for the primary, a high delegate count. Widespread support is only as good as a person's vote, without this, there is no clear path to the nomination. At the beginning of the primary season, Biden came in last up until South Carolina, where he finally caught a break and won 39 delegates. Following South Carolina, Biden managed to rack up over 1200 delegates, and further separating himself from Sanders. As previously mentioned, Biden had put himself in a position

to be the clear victor. The delegates and support that started in South Carolina ultimately took a snowball effect, resulting in further campaign donations, endorsements, and media coverage. As you can see in Figure-5, there is a clear transformation of Biden's performance beginning at South Carolina. Without South Carolina, Sanders could have easily left Biden in the dust.

Election 2020 — Democratic Delegate Count

Dem Delegate Count, [Map](#) | [Dem Popular Vote](#) | [Latest 2020 Polls](#)



State	Date	Delegates*	Biden	Sanders	Warren	Bloomberg	Buttigieg	Klobuchar	Gabbard	Primaries/Caucuses	Open/Closed
Pledged Delegates (1,991 Needed on 1st Ballot)	-	3979	1217	914	81	55	26	7	2		
Iowa	February 3	41 (8)	6	12	8	0	14	1	0	Caucus	Semi-open
New Hampshire	February 11	24 (9)	0	9	0		9	6	0	Primary	Semi-closed
Nevada	February 22	36 (12)	9	24	0		3	0	0	Caucus	Closed
South Carolina	February 29	54 (9)	39	15	0		0	0	0	Primary	Open
Alabama	March 3	52 (9)	44	8	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
American Samoa	March 3	6 (5)	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	Caucus	Closed
Arkansas	March 3	31 (5)	17	9	0	5	0	0	0	Primary	Open
California	March 3	415 (79)	172	221	12	9	0	0	0	Primary	Semi-closed
Colorado	March 3	67 (13)	18	25	8	9	0	0	0	Primary	Semi-closed
Maine	March 3	24 (8)	11	9	4	0	0	0	0	Primary	Closed
Massachusetts	March 3	91 (23)	37	29	25	0	0	0	0	Primary	Semi-closed
Minnesota	March 3	75 (16)	38	27	10	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
North Carolina	March 3	110 (12)	68	37	2	3	0	0	0	Primary	Semi-closed
Oklahoma	March 3	37 (5)	21	13	1	2	0	0	0	Primary	Semi-closed
Tennessee	March 3	64 (9)	33	20	1	10	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Texas	March 3	228 (33)	111	102	5	10	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Vermont	March 3	16 (8)	5	11	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Virginia	March 3	99 (25)	66	31	2	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Utah	March 3	29 (6)	7	16	3	3	0	0	0	Primary	Semi-open
Democrats Abroad	March 3-10	13 (4)	4	9	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Closed
Idaho	March 10	20 (5)	11	9	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Michigan	March 10	125 (22)	73	52	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Mississippi	March 10	36 (5)	34	2	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Missouri	March 10	68 (10)	44	24	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
North Dakota	March 10	14 (4)	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	Caucus	Open
Washington	March 10	89 (19)	46	43	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open
Northern Marianas	March 14	6 (5)	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	Caucus	N/A
Arizona	March 17	67 (12)	39	28	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Closed
Florida	March 17	219 (29)	162	57	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Closed
Illinois	March 17	155 (29)	94	60	0	0	0	0	0	Primary	Open

Figure 6-Post-Super Tuesday Delegate Count

Source: (RealClearPolitics, 2020)

Voter loyalty: One theory regarding the massive flip to Biden was the potential of voters flirting with new and unfamiliar candidates. Due to the field being so large at the beginning of the invisible primary, there was a plethora of options to choose from besides Sanders and Biden. It even became a possibility that Biden was going to be out-voted and out-fundraised by Buttigieg until he suddenly dropped. As we saw in the Super Tuesdays, voters resonated with Biden, which was what the model predicted would happen from the very beginning. Regardless of the Super Tuesdays narrowing down to three candidates for March 3rd, voters ultimately

supported Biden over Warren, who entered the race with such an enthusiastic and supportive base, but she quickly fell off. We can see from Warren's poor performance in Nevada, South Carolina and the first Super Tuesday that her base was no longer loyal to her, but had returned to Biden once again.

Bernie's downfall: Heading into January 2020, there were concerns of a pattern following Sanders and the party distinctly deciding against him in 2016. Sanders came in with more momentum than any other candidate, having raised more money than any other and having climbed in the polls while other candidates' were dropping was a sure sign of him doing well. It was a matter of whether the party would be able to stop Sanders the way they did in 2016, or would he be too powerful like Trump and ultimately attain the nominee.

Bernie Sanders has always been known for his Progressive/Socialistic ideas, and it resonated well with the youth vote. However, the youth vote is still not in a place of strength that the Boomer or Gen X vote is, those aged 55 and up that is. The youth vote has made great strides since the midterm elections back in 2018, but there is still too big of a gap to make a significant difference with just one specific generation. Sanders for a while appeared to appeal to other generations, especially when looking at Iowa and New Hampshire, however it seemed to stop there. Sanders was also known for his alliance with the Hispanic/Latino community, so it was a surprise to see that these young and Hispanic voters in both Florida and Arizona had ended up voting for Biden.

It seems that Sanders has a consistent pattern of doing well in caucuses, but not in primaries, with the exception to Nevada. Sanders swept Nevada and North Dakota, two states that hold caucuses rather than primaries, and again with Iowa. New Hampshire is the exception

to the rule as he remains consistent in doing well there, but he falters with other primary states such as South Carolina.

The reality is, in order for Sanders to ever attain the nomination, it would require that the party itself shifted further left. The Party was looking for a candidate that could beat Trump, someone with Progressive and bold policies, but not someone looking to start a revolution within the party. The reality is, in contrast to Sanders, Trump's message of xenophobia, racism, and hatred already existed in the party. He did not bring anything new, rather he reminded voters of those sentiments and appealed to the Party's sweet spot. The Democratic Party is different. Where the party currently resides is where Sanders met his greatest downfall. The two-party system shows that even though ideology is broad in its scope, the majority of the party will always supersede that of the lesser.

Limitations: Given how large the field was this year, at just over 20 candidates, the thesis could not elaborate on other candidates besides those who were polling the highest at a national level. Granted, if there were more time, the potential to do so would be there.

The COVID-19 outbreak also put the nomination process at a disadvantage. We did not foresee this being a factor in the primaries, and it ultimately forced Sanders hand. Had the pandemic not occurred, it is almost certain that Sanders would have stayed in the race, and potentially lead to a contested convention. Instead, the primaries were put on hold and Sanders chose not to play the waiting game with where he stood at the delegate and endorsement count.

Joe Biden became the nominee for the Democratic Party in early April. The model certainly explains that there is a path to victory, however it does not consider there are multiple ways to achieving the nomination. We expected the playing field to narrow between Biden and

Sanders long before the South Carolina primary. Instead, South Carolina acted as the compressor we needed back in January. Until then, the party was in a holding pattern with no clear candidate in sight.

Ultimately, this thesis intended to utilize Cohen et al.'s *The Party Decides* model to test whether the model would be true for the 2020 Democratic Presidential Primary, or if it would become a mere exception to the rule. This thesis proved that the model held true, with some modifications to consider specifically for the Democratic Party. The model was also correct in that the primary would eventually boil down to Biden, Sanders and Warren, however Warren did not hold as much potential as we had first thought. In conclusion, the party did decide. This research is valuable to help reform the model and test its reliability for further Presidential primaries to come.

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