

Challenge

Several sources had predicted Bernie Sanders to be pulling in 7 to 9 states on Super Tuesday while Biden was expected to poll in 5 to 6 states (Russonello). However, when final results from Super Tuesday were released, Sanders had only won in Vermont, Utah, Colorado, and California while Biden had polled in all other states (Jason Bernet). Bernie's problem stems not from a lack of familiarity effect or the use of strong primers, such as celebrity endorsements, but rather from the small turnout of young voters; due to the lack of perceptual vigilance.

Key Contextual Factors

Although Sanders has more than a dozen celebrity endorsements, including artists that appeal to the younger generations such as Halsey, the band Vampire Weekend, and Bon Iver, he still won half as many states as Joe Biden (Dzhanova). Celebrity endorsements are a method of a priming associative piece and in a study conducted in 2008, it was found that those politicians who had endorsements result in a much higher percentage of individuals who will vote for that politician (Pease & Brewer 395). Despite Sanders creating a strong familiarity effect, especially through the use of social media, causing 30% of minorities in a majority of states and over 82% of minorities nationwide to vote for him, he still polled significantly lower than Biden on Super Tuesday (Russonello Jan 31).

Bernie has yet to reach the younger generation as a result of his lack of perceptual vigilance towards younger people. Bernie does stand for ideas that are popular to young people, such as erasing student debt or universal healthcare, but he also has policies such as breaking up bigger companies and pulling troops out of Iraq, which do not spark as much of an interest with younger generations (King). When Bernie was running against Hilary in 2016, the voter turnout in Vermont, Bernie's own state, was 15% compared to 11% on Super Tuesday (King). Similarly, in 2016 in Texas, 20% of voters were between 17 and 29, while on Super Tuesday it was only 15% (King). In 2016 in Virginia, young voters comprised 16% of total voters as compared to Super Tuesday at only 13%; Sanders winning 55% of these votes as compared to 69% in 2016 (King). Due to the fact that Bernie supports anti-war and anti-corporation, those are policies that the younger generations do not feel it is needed; they are more focused on having a president who wants to give free college. As much as Bernie discusses free college, it tends to be drowned out by his overarching stance; to take away power from such big corporations; that is not a problem that most young people experience directly.

Solution

Bernie could possibly show his interest with young people by making a presence on larger university campuses; maybe to host a rally or to walk around and show the students he wants to fully understand their needs and wants. Along with directly aligning himself with these positions, he will be making his face known amongst younger generations; therefore causing the familiarity effect. Sanders could also spend some more time on stage discussing student loans and student debt issues instead of focusing more on limiting corporations' power. With strategies such as this, he has a higher chance of showing he stands with the younger people as well; once the

younger generation sees this, they may be more inspired to vote; knowing it will directly impact them in some way.

Works Cited

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