The Democratic Party's Liberal Bargain: De-Centering Race When Framing Progressive

Policies

by

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from feminist scholarship, this thesis re-articulates the concept of "liberal bargain" to makes sense of political parties, race and class in the United States. Specifically, the concept of "partisan liberal bargain" is developed in this thesis to capture how the Democratic party's behavior strategically de-centers race in favor of class discourse. These bargains, the thesis argues, reinforces how liberal orders and racial orders operate together to marginalize both racial and class-based minorities. Employing discourse analysis of over 1,000 news articles, the thesis reveals and unpacks bargains occurring during the 2016 and 2020 Democratic primaries, with a focus on three policy areas where racial justice is intimately and historically embedded: 1) criminal justice, 2) health care, and 3) environmental policy. Discourse analysis empirically captures the thesis' concept of partisan liberal bargains, showing a prominent lack of concrete or substantial centering of race and strong centering of class and neoliberal discourse. Thus, despite the Democratic party's strong African American voting bloc and association as the party of race and diversity, this thesis and the concept of partisan liberal bargains shows that racial justice is avoided and even delegitimized in party politics.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PARTISAN LIBERAL BARGAIN

Introduction

Former President Trump was heavily critiqued for his massive number of deportations and his widely infamous, inhumane kids-in-cages policy. Once everything was brought to the public eye, calls to abolish ICE, reunite families, and provide a safer pathway to citizenship became the norm. Scrutinization of the Trump administration had reached an all-time high. However, during a Presidential debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, Biden critiqued Trump for his heartless policy, to which Trump responded with, "who built the cages, Joe?" (Savage, 2020). Biden's response was messy. Not only had the Obama Administration overseen the opening of facilities that would be used to hold undocumented immigrants in inhumane conditions, but they had deported a larger number of undocumented immigrants than the Trump administration at the same point in their respective tenures (Savage, 2020). Obama, who had promised to be tough on immigration during his Presidential debate with John McCain, was even known as the "Deporter-in-Chief" to immigrant rights activists (Barrón-López & Thompson, 2019). Obama presided over one of the most stringent administrations when it came to immigration, despite having strong support from Latinx and the immigrant rights community during his run for presidency.

The Democratic Party today is framed as the party of racial minorities, where inclusivity and representation are highlighted as core features. This is especially apparent with the election of former President Barack Obama as the first Black president of the United States, marking a huge step forward in Black representation in the Democratic

Party. More recently, President Joe Biden is making history by having one of the most racially diverse cabinets ever seen, and the Democratic Party's association with progressive movements like Black Lives Matter. While this progress in diversifying who the Democratic Party includes and represents are important and real, the two-party system in the United States has a troubled history with regard to issue of race that warrant skepticism. Racial subgroups and racial justice have long been strategically pushed aside and de-centered in American politics and from the two political parties.

The two-party system in the United States has a rocky history with regards to marginalized groups, namely Black Americans and issues of race, and the parties' incentives to ignore marginalized group's interests. Paul Frymer's concept of electoral capture illustrates how the two parties have operated from a racist logic when competing electorally and how African Americans have served as important voting blocs with little to no actual representation. For example, the election of President Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign practically ignored Black Americans in order to capture the majority white population, demonstrating an example of the racial order and its suppression of Black people (Frymer, 1999). Electoral capture explained how issues of class were more broadly appealing to Black and white votes, while issues of race were only appealing to Black voters, making class the major priority for the Democrats to win elections. As a result, Black Americans were strategically left out of Clinton's campaign and excluded entirely because Republicans showed no signs of making racial appeals.

Rogers Smith's work similarly reveals how racism is a core American tradition, which becomes operationalized in different spaces and contexts, like political party behavior. The removal or marginalization of race itself is rooted to American racism and

its connections to liberalism. Smith explains this intimate relation between American liberalism and racism by analyzing how language used to deny rights to minorities were written using liberal language (1993). For example, science, an idea that typically aligns with liberal forms of beliefs, was coopted by racist ideals and differentiated people of color from white people (Smith, 1993). This notion was used to deny rights to minorities because they were separate beings and was perpetuated in universities, another institution associated with liberalism. Racism and sexism are rooted in liberalism, which manifested in a contradictory mindset that simultaneously called for individual autonomy and also denied rights to marginalized groups (Smith, 1993). With this in mind, it is not difficult to see why the Democratic Party felt wrongly justified leaving Black people out of the conversation almost entirely in 1992, as previously mentioned.

Going beyond the American context, liberalism has also been shown by scholars to be rooted in racism as well as colonialism. Amalia Sa'ar's concept of the liberal bargain describes Palestinian women living in Israel and connects Israel and its liberal elements to colonialism through Western influences (2005). Sa'ar posits that Israeli Palestinian women suffer marginalization due to ethno-national identity, gender identity and class, yet their citizenship grants opportunities through education, welfare, voting, and consumerism (2005). The liberal bargain, then, acts as a double-edged sword, granting benefits through different elements of liberalism, while continuing to suffer from systemic oppression. However, many marginalized communities partaking in the liberal bargain might sometimes achieve success under these conditions, resulting in a system that gives some advantages to marginalized people, but still leaves systemic discrimination untouched. Liberalism, and the bargains people take with it, are rooted in

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its spread via colonial influences, making the values of individuality, privatization, and freedom universal to places outside of the Western context.

Conceptualizing Liberal Orders and "Liberal Bargain" in the Partisan Context:

The liberal order is comprised of distinct features of liberalism that establish a way of living consistent with various sets of values. Roger M. Smith posits how the liberal order, or the liberal tradition, includes the push for individual rights, including the right to private property and autonomy for the self to achieve self-reliance (2016).

> The propagation of individual rights doctrines in the United States has fostered economic, psychological, and political contexts that have led many of those deeming themselves white to insist on racial limits on equal rights. And there is near unanimity that many if not virtually all the American political actors, parties, and movements that have won much support historically have done so in part by blending rights doctrines with racialized assumptions, often with explicitly inegalitarian racial doctrines. (Smith, 2016)

A liberal order (or tradition) can operate through individual rights and their connection to regressive policies and actions meant to maintain or construct racial hierarchies. While many processes are at play in maintaining a racialized liberal order, this thesis focuses on the concept of liberal bargains.

A liberal bargain frames the actions of a community, individual, or institution as performing a bargain with the liberal order. These bargains offer distinct sets of advantages or benefits for the actor involved, while also reaffirming the power dynamics established under the liberal order. Sa'ar's concept of the liberal bargain focuses on marginalized communities and their position in the liberal order, as well as their actions

to accept advantages of the liberal order, like education or job opportunities, while suffering from disadvantages.

Applied to political parties, the liberal bargain looks differently. It operates as a different sub-type. The partisan, or political party, liberal bargain positions different parties as addressing inequities within a society or nation, but only in the realm of the liberal order. This means embracing class, market-based practices and neoliberal means of solutions as they exist within the liberal order. These two liberal bargains stem from the same concept, but are distinct as they apply to specific contexts, and they continually influence one another at all times. It is also important to mention how the partisan liberal bargain can occur within both parties. The graph below shows the development of the partisan liberal bargain through the racial and liberal orders, and its relation, and key differences, to electoral capture, which the following section further unpacks.
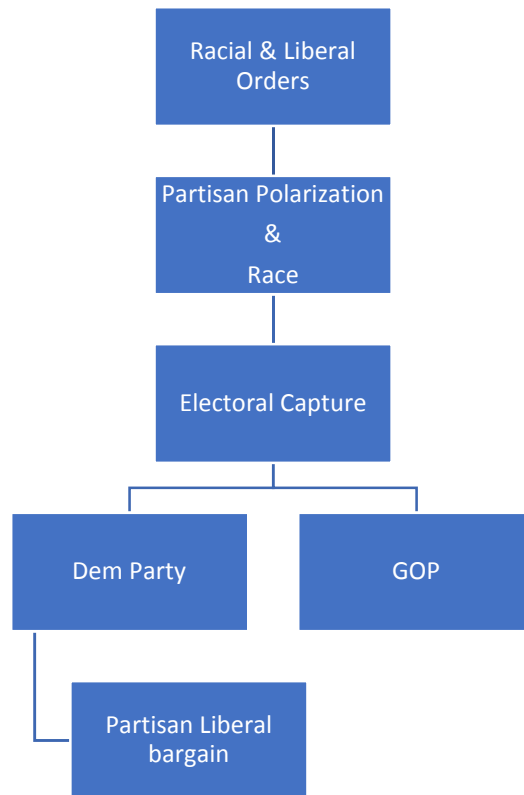
The original use of liberal bargains grew out of scholarship on patriarchal bargains in order to describe how and why oppressed groups create spaces of resistance and empowerment within a liberal order (Sa'ar, 2005). In this context, the individuals are the ones who perform the bargain. Their lived experiences and interactions with various institutions highlight how they experience advantages within the liberal order and disadvantages from systemic oppression. However, marginalized people are not the only ones who make decisions within a liberal order.

Building on the idea of bargaining with liberal orders, in the partisan and institutional context there is a shift in who performs the bargain. In this case, political parties are the ones who perform the bargain, as is the focus of this thesis. Political parties, in their journey to shape the landscape and how it operates through various legislation must pick and choose what to prioritize when working to make an equitable society. As previously established, the liberal order prioritizes things like individualism and privatization. These elements push the individual's ability to alter their own status through education, job opportunities, consumerism and ownership, and are associated with class. Systems of oppression, like racism and sexism, are also perceived as individual problems with individual solutions. With this in mind, partisan institutions must empower individuals broadly, often through class-based, mainly market-based, approaches. This gives individuals the opportunity to lift themselves up by the bootstraps, while giving little attention to the very real systems of oppression that are baked into every facet of every institution in the U.S.

It is important, however, to establish the difference between the partisan liberal bargain and Frymer's electoral capture and how those differences occur. Frymer's

electoral capture is built through the behavior and analysis of political parties, or institutions, and how they interact within the racial order, or the systems of oppression that work to subdue people of color (1999). Political scientists are more experienced in the analysis of political parties or institutions, so the electoral capture is framed through that lens. Conversely, Sa'ar's liberal bargain is heavily established in the lived experiences of marginalized people and how they work to secure themselves benefits despite systemic modes of oppression within the liberal order (2005). Anthropologists and sociologists are more experienced in their analysis of marginalized experiences, so the liberal bargain is framed through that lens.

Subsequently, electoral capture differs from the partisan liberal bargain through the space in which it occurs. Electoral capture, in its analysis of political party behavior, stems from the division between the two parties and the attempted capture of the white, median voter. Due to the fact that a third party cannot be competitively feasible within the American electoral system, the two parties must then fight directly with one another over the white, median vote, which always re-centered around class. These dynamics involve and have substantial consequences for race. Alan Abramowitz (2018) demonstrated this idea with the nomination of Trump during 2016, noting "that stoking racial fear and resentment was a central element of Trump's strategy", which energized white, Republican voters, and emphasized a growing, and heavily documented, polarization between the two parties (Doherty, 2014; Rauch, 2016; Jacobson, 2013; Lee, 2008). As such, the electoral capture is framed within the polarization and racial order of the Democratic and Republican parties.

While electoral capture occurs between the two parties, I argue that the partisan liberal bargain occurs mostly within the parties themselves, in this case the Democratic party. The Democratic party, as framed in the electoral capture, de-centers race in an attempt to capture the white, median vote, yet their voter base is incredibly diverse, putting them in a unique situation. The Democratic party itself must strategically choose to propose policies and promises that de-center race while simultaneously accepting the votes of people of color. When Sanders joined the Democrats in their primary run in 2016 and 2020, largely because of heavy polarization and a lack of third-party feasibility, he subjected himself to the partisan liberal bargain within the party. The Democrats can get away with de-centering voters of color, however, because the alternative shows even less promise. As a result, the Democratic party's partisan liberal bargain is one that occurs within.

While Frymer's electoral capture and Sa'ar's liberal bargain engage with the racial order and the liberal order, respectively, I argue that the partisan liberal bargain interacts with both to some degree. Roger Smith unpacked the various arguments about the relationship between liberalism and racism and concluded how the two are undoubtedly intertwined (2016). Similarly, scholars like Nancy Fraser (2008) posit that issues of recognition and redistribution must be fought in tandem with one another, highlighting the need to unpack the partisan liberal bargain and understand the connection between liberalism and racism. I take this same approach and argue that the partisan liberal bargain simultaneously engages with the existence and interaction between the racial order and the liberal order.

Uncovering a Liberal Bargain: Guiding Questions and Approach:

How is race strategically de-centered in the inter-party politics of the 2016 and 2020 Democratic primaries? How do discourse between the Presidential candidates and news unpack this de-centering? What policies or events contribute to a partisan liberal bargain, and how do they affect people of color? These questions will be incorporated into this thesis and will serve to unpack the critical understanding of race as it relates to political parties.

By analyzing news articles published during the 2016 and 2020 primaries, this project seeks to capture the full array of policies within the three areas and the ways in which these policies are framed in a progressive-leaning national news outlet. This analysis is complemented by quantitative graphs that show the presence of various debates in the primaries and how closely related they are to race, policy, etc. Discourse analysis is employed to uncover sources of policy debate within the Democratic Party, including:

1. Impacted minorities and constituencies that will benefit from policies in each area (e.g., Black, Latino, White, Working Class)

2. Policy rationales that are used to justify policies in each area (e.g., rights-based language; progressivism; neoliberalism)

3. Strategic approach to policy (e.g., incremental, comprehensive)

   a. Coding for mentions of legislative barriers

   b. Coding for language describing approach

Building on previous scholarship in political science, communication, journalism and feminist studies this thesis employs discourse analysis of news articles to capture

where divisions occur. A body of scholarship in political science emphasizes that ideas of neoliberalism in the Democratic Party are an important source of division. I am interested in capturing how neoliberalism[1] is framed around policies and whether there is specific anger geared towards issues of income/economic inequality. I am interested in capturing how progressivism[2], like neoliberalism, might be a key source of divide between race and class, and how these topics fit within the framework of systemic change that contributes to either a traditional incremental approach, or a push towards structural change. Additionally, I am interested in exploring the way these polices are framed, or not framed, around class, race, and how this relates to the liberal bargain. Discourse analysis of news articles provides one way to capture this, and quantitative text searches in the form of graphs will further unpack these ideas. It is important to note that this project is not interested in the media itself, but rather the data and avenue for analyzation that the media provide in the form of primary news reporting.

These ideologies are not the only possible source of conflict. Identity politics is a key source of conflict between and within the two parties today. I am interested in capturing how particular racial and ethnic constituencies or sub-groups are linked to key policies and the framing of these policies. The framing of these policies and the racial constituencies includes the types of language used and whether certain policies or generalized economic trends are prioritized over others. I am also interested more broadly in how these policies are linked to ideas about rights and how they are supported

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[1] While I unpack neoliberalism in the literature review, I define it as a promotion of the free market economy and an accepting of the assumption that an invisible hand will naturally regulate a fair economy.
[2] Like neoliberalism, I will unpack it later on, but I define it as pushing against incrementalism in favor of sweeping legislation that will structurally change and regulate institutions like healthcare.

or not supported via the language that is used in the articles. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the relationship between racial inequality and class-based inequality have historically been at odds with one another, despite being connected. Whether or not the policies enacted or proposed will largely benefit income inequality or racial inequality, or both, and how those policies are framed as feasible or not matters within this conversation. By focusing on news articles, they will map out how these sources might divide the Democratic Party today and how they intersect in discussions about certain policies. It will also capture how these ideas and groups are shaping party building and branding today, and whether said parties continue to partake in the partisan liberal bargain in the context of race and class.

Literature Review

This thesis directly engages with the relationship between identity politics and progressive politics through the scholarship in both areas, giving proper context to exposing the partisan liberal bargain. These two areas often do not overlap with one another in the Democratic party's proposed policies, leaving issues of race and class separated and inadequately addressed. By situating and engaging this thesis within identity politics and progressive politics, the alignment of the two, or the lack thereof, in the Democratic Party today becomes apparent. Whether or not the two align, and to what degree, reveals the presence, or lack thereof, of a partisan liberal bargain within key policy areas and events. Additionally, this thesis builds upon, but does not engage directly with, news framing and rights-based discourse. Since this involves the coding of news articles from different primaries, it is important to have a framework with which to study. News framing helps in identifying key issues within policies and the parties that

are associated with them. Discourse, mainly that of rights-based discourse, helps in finding the connection between key issues, policies and parties, and helps guide the process of engaging with identity politics and progressive politics. Again, as both are applied to the collected articles, the partisan liberal bargain becomes apparent through the framing of both the news and the way different types of rights are discussed, as well as the interactions between the racial and liberal order.

Part 1

Progressive Politics, (Neo)Liberalism, and the De-Centering of Race

The shape of progressivism today in electoral politics is heavily influenced by neoliberalism, and the interaction of the two is integral to understanding the Democratic party and the partisan liberal bargain.

Progressivism

Progressivism, even in its origins, has many different connotative meanings, but has also become associated with the likes of Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and their representation of the left within the Democratic Party. The fight for a fairer economy was at the root of progressivism in the early 1900's and was more reformist in its nature rather than radical (Nugent, 2009). However, WWII and the subsequent rights movements brought about changes in the political sphere, including a more progressive stance for the Democratic Party, similar to the one seen today (Nichols, 2020). The fair redistribution of resources was a popular policy that was reflected in the progressive taxation of the wealthy elite to fund social programs for the poor and working class. Additionally, the rights movements were beginning to unpack the concepts of social identity and how they were linked to economic injustice. This

conception of progressivism is most like what Senator Sanders and Representative

Ocasio Cortez call for today, solidifying a connotative idea of what progressivism means

in the context of the United States today.

The underpinnings of progressivism within the U.S. are rooted in class-based

discourse, setting up a fight between more socialized approach to the economy against a

market-based or neoliberal approach. While it is clear that the liberal order of

individualism, consumerism, and privatization has a movement against it in terms of

socialized class, it still de-centers the racial order and how interacts with the liberal order.

The partisan liberal bargain does not imply that socialized, class-based discourse is the

problem, nor that they are winning the class-based discourse, but that neoliberalism

underpins the power relation between the liberal order and the racial order.

Neoliberalism

Following the progressive era of the mid 20th century, neoliberalism and

deregulation became the popular ideology and are inseparable from the political

landscape. Neoliberalism, an ideology that calls for a deregulation of the economy to

create a free market that naturally handles the redistributive process, was adopted by both

the right and the left to promote opportunity and the possibility of prosperity rather than

to guarantee it (Azmanova, 2019). This landscape is especially reflected in the fight for

full healthcare coverage as President-Elect Joe Biden plans to expand the Affordable

Care Act through the addition of a public option. While this addition would expand

coverage to nearly all US citizens, it would continue to operate within the confines of the

market-based economy and leaves the responsibility on the individual to find which

option suits their financial status best.

The neoliberal aspect of the U.S. economy and politics is undoubtedly connected to race and is even used as a tool to suppress advancements in racial justice. Wendy Brown theorizes how neoliberalism and its connection with individual behaviors, social relations, and market principles forces political discourse to think in terms of economics over anything else (2015). This, in turn, changes the political discourse to take on a cost/risk management, which off puts equitability of some governing practices (Lee, 2019). Marcus Lee unpacked the cost/risk management of governing practices, which has a direct effect on race, demonstrated by his example of the Stand Your Ground law in Florida, and its connection to the killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman. Lee notes how the law was originally intended to protect self-defense actors across the board, but the legislation process used racial codes like "drug dealers," "gangs," and "cop killers" to exclude people of color, specifically Black people, from receiving those self-defense benefits. Without the racial codes, Black people could have particularly benefitted from the law, especially in the instance of police brutality, or gang related violence, which disproportionately affects Black people and people of color. However, since these codes were integrated into the policy, Black people disproportionately did not benefit from it, demonstrating the neoliberal, cost/risk management of political discourse. A sweeping policy like the Stand Your Ground law was deemed too risky or too costly to implement without the racial codes, creating a racial, neoliberal framework of the political sphere. Chapter 2 unpacks how this racialized cost/risk management applies to the Democratic party in terms of police reform.

Lee's unpacking of neoliberalism and racial codes directly relates to the liberal and racial order and its connection to the partisan liberal bargain. The prioritization of

individual rights and their ability to stand their ground strategically displaced Black people from the conversation, revealing an interaction between the racial and liberal order and how it simultaneously upholds the values of liberalism, specifically neoliberalism in this case, and purposefully works to de-center race. This kind of interaction exemplifies the partisan liberal bargain.

Progressive Neoliberalism

The current state of the Democratic party leadership is an ideology known as progressive neoliberalism, which has brought about many consequences for the constituents and the party itself. Albena Azmanova notes how the systems of capitalism are left unchallenged by the Democratic Party due to moderate redistribution policies and a focus on representation in identity politics, creating a face of progressivism that barely challenges systemic inequality (2019). The rhetoric that justifies neoliberal progressivism prioritizes individualism and the empowerment of the individual to create their own success in spite of the challenges they face, which is an idea that became especially popular in the 90's with the election of President Bill Clinton (Bacqué, 2013; Perez, 2019; Schiller, 2019). The prioritization of such individualism and empowerment directly links to the liberal order, which Clinton adhered to. However, because of the deregulation of the economy, large corporations are free to prioritize company profits over the welfare of the entry level workers. The neoliberal influence over a party that claims to be progressive ensures that policies that would challenge the system of the free market and competition, like Medicare for All, are popular with constituencies, but not their representative politicians (Bacqué, 2013).

Progressive neoliberalism also stems from Nikol Alexander-Floyd's and Lester Spence's notions of Black neoliberalism and identity politics, respectively (2020; 2015). Individual problems require individual solutions, so to label Black inequality as an individual problem is to ensure that large systems of institutional racism are effectively untouched as people of color are expected to fend for themselves. Progressive neoliberalism serves to diversify the face of capitalism by addressing a stripped-down version of misrecognition politics (Fraser, 2008). This idea is also reminiscent of Fraser's notion of substantive dualism, which serves to treat problems of cultural and economics as separate issues (2008). Failure to address how racism and capitalism are linked together is to ensure that both systems continue, uninhibited and unchallenged.

Progressive neoliberalism, coupled with Black neoliberalism, encapsulates the interaction between the racial and liberal order to form the partisan liberal bargain. Labeling racism as an individual hurdle to overcome prioritizes individualism and empowerment of a single person, which has been the cornerstone of the Democratic party's approach to race. Such labeling makes race a less pressing issue to discuss when compared to neoliberal class, which has been a trend throughout American history.

Progressive Politics & Past Administrations

Additionally, failure to address issues of race and economic injustice in the political sphere have a long history in American politics. Desmond King and Roger Smith recount how the Civil Rights Movement, a movement that achieved historic racial justice not seen since the reconstruction era following the civil war, was followed by a significant lack of attention to racial justice (2013). The backlash that occurred from the Civil Rights Movement included the notion that future policies must be designed with

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zero attention to race, or a colorblind approach (King & Smith, 2013). This colorblind ideology clashed with the notion that race should be centered at the core of future policies in order to ensure that discrimination based on race does not persist. The colorblind approach demanded that policies treat everyone the same regardless of their social identities, which sounds fair, but allowed racial discrimination to continue and even worsened it in some respects (King & Smith, 2013). The colorblind ideology often prevailed as evidenced by the series of losses the Democrats suffered following the Civil Rights Movements, and the erasure of race from Bill Clinton's 1992 election campaign (Frymer, 1999). Even Barack Obama's election campaign was distanced from race. His "A More Perfect Union" speech had rejected Reverend Jerry Wright's critique of America's racial discrimination in relation to the 9/11 attacks, despite the Reverend being such an influence over Obama's racial political identity (King & Smith, 2013). Obama's speech included references to race that were so watered down they became palatable to white Americans, the biggest voting bloc in America, which was also reflected in his handling of immigration. Both Clinton and Obama separated and removed race from the political conversation in an attempt to win elections, effectively damaging the movement to combine misrecognition and redistribution, or racial justice and economic justice (King & Smith, 2013; Frymer, 1999; Fraser, 2008).

Another example of the failure to address racial justice along with economic justice is the famous New Deal under Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR). This piece of legislation, often acclaimed as a historic win for progressive politics, made substantial gains for working class people and strengthened faith in public service programs. However, while the legislation remained a huge victory throughout history, its racially

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discriminatory practices often go unnoticed. Marc Linder notes how the Fair Labor Standards Act, as part of the New Deal, included many racially discriminatory policies ranging from an exclusion from relief programs to purposefully constructed wage gaps (1987). Conservative politicians purposefully worked these exceptions and amendments into the New Deal and progressives compromised in order to get the legislation passed. Black people, in this case Black farmers, found their interests and rights compromised by both sides of the political spectrum for the sake of providing widespread relief to everyone else. So, when Biden claims he wants to create an FDR-like administration, there is reason to pause and consider what this means for people of color today when bills are inevitably subject to debates about bipartisanship.

Both in the fight against neoliberalism and within neoliberalism itself through past administrations, the liberal and racial orders are continually upheld. Both the Obama and Roosevelt administration removed discourse and legislative action regarding Black from the forefront of politics. The racial order was upheld in this de-centering, while issues of class and neoliberal class were prioritized, marking an inclusion and upholding of the liberal order, too. Again, socialized versions of class and the working class are not the cause, nor are they winning in their own fight. Neoliberalism and its preservation of the white elite are the main causes of the de-centering of race.

I aim to critically engage with the ideas of identity politics and progressive politics, in order to unpack whether the Democratic party still continues to leave race out of the conversation, whether race and class are still separated as two issues and whether the proposed policies within the Democrats reflect issues of race, neoliberal class, and the interconnection of both.

Liberalism's Strategic Use of Class against Race

Identity politics has contextual meaning within the US, but also has other meanings depending on the context of economy and culture. Mary Bernstein describes the different approaches to defining identity politics, including neo-Marxist ideologies that associate identity with one's economic class as the primary determining factor of exploitation, leaving one's culture to take a back seat (2005). From this stance, one's wealth and income along with their relationship with their employer are considered in their overall identity. However, this ideology is not as fitting for the political landscape in the US as much of the discourse revolves around one's cultural identity (Bernstein, 2005). This approach to identity politics utilizes cultural indicators that are separated from the notion of class and are more focused on the representation of one's race, gender, sexuality, ability, etc. (Crenshaw, 1991). Cultural identity politics is contextually the politics that people from the US are more familiar with and have the most experience with, in terms of how they fight for recognition and representation.

When cultural identity politics are applied to the fight for justice, whether that be racial, gender, sexual, etc., there are limitations in the focus on an individual social identity. Alexander-Floyd unpacks this idea by highlighting how Michelle Obama, an icon of personal achievement in spite of systemic racial and gender barriers, dedicates her success to working hard and overcoming those barriers by herself (2020). Similar to the individualist empowerment of neoliberalism, a stringent view of identity politics recognizes the systems that subjugate large groups of minorities but fails to recognize the systems themselves as needing the most change. As a result, Michelle Obama's message to simply "persevere" and "work hard" not only fails to recognize systemic change as a

need, but reinforces a capitalist, Western view of progress (Matua, 2020). These barriers

can be broken through only by being exceptional in a liberal order. This notion puts a

strain on people of varying minority identities because they are expected to and criticized

for working or not working multiple times harder than their privileged peers, creating an

unhealthy vision of success and stability (Spence, 2015). The individual view of identity

politics celebrates people like Michelle Obama and Barack Obama as examples that times

are changing but ignore the millions of other Black Americans that do not have the

support to do the same.

Identity politics, or the issue of recognition, has become central to political

discourse in the US, but issues of identity cannot be tackled without also tackling the

economic structures that plague marginalized minorities. If the policies that are passed do

not fundamentally challenge the current economic system that is capitalism, then the

outcome is likely not going to majorly impact the most vulnerable people the way

legislators might think. Athena Matua notes how policies like the ACA "[do] not deal

with the underlying structures that make health insurance unaffordable for many" (2020).

This is an example of how failing to address the redistributive or economic sides of

policies will result in only incremental change, and it is important to note that the ACA

was a policy that came from a historically diverse administration that prioritized

recognition of identity. However, this is not to say that economic justice is more

important than recognition of identity. Matua again notes how Senator Bernie Sanders'

failed bid for the President in 2016 was largely hindered because he focused so much on

economic justice, but "had no position on police violence, a historically used tool of

oppression and economic subordination" (2020). As a result, Senator Sanders failed to

capture the African American vote, which is a huge demographic bloc in the Democratic party, and one that should not be taken lightly. His focus on economic justice, but not racial justice is emblematic of the racial order and its subsequent de-centering of race.

The point Matua makes is further cemented by Nancy Fraser who argues for both redistributive justice, and recognition justice (2008). Both misrecognition and disproportionate redistribution coincide with one another and must be tackled simultaneously, if one is to achieve full equality or equity in a society. Fraser pinpoints substantive dualism as a pathway often taken to explain how differences of cultural and economic, or recognition and redistribution, are two different "spheres of justice" and should be treated separately (2008). However, as she explains, substantive dualism fails to unpack how both are intertwined. For example, in the economic sphere, there are many jobs that have been historically labeled as "women's jobs", such as secretary work, and "men's jobs", such as those requiring physical intensity (Fraser, 2008). On the other end of the spectrum, culture can influence the economic factors, which can be illustrated through the gender wage gap. These examples prove that cultural and economic issues are intertwined and cannot be completely separated without a detriment to the overall movement for gender equality. This is known as contra substantive dualism (Fraser, 2008). I aim to engage with this idea within the Democratic party as race is often left out of the conversation entirely in modern politics, while class, especially in its neoliberal form, takes the forefront. Contra substantive dualism engages with and posits that both the racial order and the liberal order must be challenged as they are closely linked to one another and how race is de-centered in a neoliberal society.

Part 2

It is important that I reemphasize that I do not engage with specifically the ideas of news framing and right-based discourse. However, I do build on these ideas, analyzing what tools they offer to better situate the and engage with the notions of identity politics, progressive politics, and the partisan liberal bargain. These elements are instrumental to understanding partisan framing in the Democratic party and unpacking how it affects the partisan liberal bargain.

Capturing the Partisan Liberal Bargain in News Framing and Right-Based Discourse

The way politics and policies are framed in major news outlets has an impact on how and why certain policies might be perceived by the general public, so it is important to consider the reason why certain polices are framed differently (Papacharissi, 2008). When a progressive policy is generally criticized, it is worth considering where the criticism stems from. In the same vein, the communication of said policies from major news outlets plays an important role in how the general public might react (Haynes et al., 2016). The general public's perception of a policy is affected by the way it is communicated in the media. If a policy is described or presented through a specific example – accompanied by a general abstraction and its potential impact – or by specific facts, then there is a lot of room for these strategies to frame the policy (Haynes et al., 2016). The communication and framing of different policies in the news can give insight to the political affiliations of the publishers and what ideals they may be beholden to.

Levendusky & Malhotra take a deeper look into political opinion and how media coverage of politics can affect one's political opinion (2016). By conducting a content analysis of articles during midterm and presidential election years, they were able to find,

and code articles based on the polarization of political opinions and whether said articles contributed to a person or many persons' political beliefs (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016). The results concluded that news articles indeed contributed to and polarized the political opinions of their consumers, showcasing the large influence the mainstream media has in shaping different narratives. If an article portrays a certain policy as bad for the economy, then the public will directly with it as a major part of the narrative, which would be inherit in a liberal order. This thesis builds upon this kind of work, going further to show that news articles in the mainstream media can not only be representative of popular beliefs in the general public, but can further solidify those beliefs, as they relate to the Democratic party.

Rights-based discourse has become a central part of the Democratic Party's rhetoric, especially in the most recent general election. Sociological thought surrounding human rights proclaims that discourse studies how people are, or are not, treated with dignity (O'Byrne, 2012). Subsequently, the language of human rights is a completely separate discourse from how it is represented in policy (O'Byrne, 2012). If human rights are embedded into the language of policy or law, then that conception of human rights is narrowed from its original state because the law creates specific rules about how the right is distributed. As a result, people can agree on the basic language of human rights, but their application of it might look vastly different from one another. However, only focusing on law within human rights discourse, not only narrows the scope of what the discourse includes, but also serves to erase the large movements, like Black Lives Matter, that influenced how said discourse was brought into law in the first place. This erasure and centering of law as absolute not only serves to displace Black voices but serves to

prioritize the economy in laws or legislation as part of the racial and liberal orders. The center of human rights discourse comes from being critical of state practices, and so the discourse cannot be singularly based on the laws that are enforced; it must include the social movements that influence and critique public policy (Freeman, 2017).

The use of general expression of human rights through language, as seen above, speaks to the changing landscape of human rights in terms of its dialect. David S. Law further frames the language of human rights into two general dialects: the generalized dialect, which – as the name suggests – speaks generally on human rights through the use of generic terms such as discrimination, liberty, or dignity, and the positive dialect, which characterizes human rights through the social, economic, and cultural aspects of a society (2018). Put simply, the positive dialect includes institutions, like healthcare, that are a product of the contemporary society. However, the generic wording of such declarations come with both benefits and shortcomings. Such vague wording could make it difficult to achieve meaningful progress for human rights (Coomans, 2012). On the other hand, such general statements bring awareness to the issue and open the door for unapologetic interpretations that could ultimately lead to truly progressive language (Coomans, 2012).

I build upon the history and intricacies of rights-based discourse and news framing discourse to better understanding why identity politics and progressive politics are so important to engage with through a human rights lens and social justice lens, and how the partisan polarization politics and the liberal and racial orders interact to create a partisan liberal bargain. This offers a pathway to analyze and organize the coding of news articles from the Democratic primaries in 2016 and 2020.

Project Scope, Design and Methods

Analytical Focus is on Race (not Class)

Liberal bargain is empirically examined with a focus on how race is de-centered, and how liberalism weaponizes class and economic frames to colorblind policy debates at the national level. In revealing this particular liberal bargain in Chapters 2 and 3, I am not arguing that the Democratic Party is the party of the working class. This would require a separate analysis grounded in a coding scheme of discourse analysis that operationalizes liberal bargains with "class" as the outcome, tracing whether the Democratic Party is de-centering, erasing, conflating, or altering class in strategic ways. This thesis does not address class in this way. Instead, class is operationalized as part of the Democratic Party's toolset for engaging in liberal bargains with a focus on how this impacts race.

Empirical Design

Using ProQuest and NVivo, the thesis analyzes articles with curated coding schemes. ProQuest has access to the most relevant news sources that provide sufficient data to use, and NVivo provides a sufficient avenue to organize and code the language as it is relevant to this thesis. By continually developing each coding scheme through many different strategies, this thesis unpacks the empirical evidence of party division by focusing on the way language is used to describe minority groups and policies through the lens of progressivism, neoliberalism, right-based language, and identity politics, ultimately unpacking the Democratic party's engagement with the partisan liberal bargain.

Case Selection

The case selection consisted of one publisher that was used to gather articles from: the Washington Post. In preliminary searches for articles within the mentioned policy areas and times frames, the Washington Post consistently yielded the highest number of articles, providing a substantial base of articles to choose from that are robust enough for effective discourse analysis. The Washington Post is also a national outlet that captured the broad interests of constituencies all over the world, rather than state specific data. Additionally, the Washington Post provided a wide range of ideas, from more moderate takes on the political debates that favor incrementalism, to more progressive takes that would favor systemic change.

This case selection includes three different key policy areas which are healthcare, climate change, and criminal justice. These three policy areas are not the only ones that have a significant impact on the divisions in the Democratic Party, but they, over the course of the last two primaries, have proven to be at the forefront of national news outlets, and at the forefront of the general public's concern. These three policy areas have also seen key legislation in both the moderate and progressive sides of the Democratic Party that will further highlight the divisions between the two in the media.

The time selection for these searches range from 01-01-2016 to 06-30-2016 and 01-01-2020 to 06-30-2020. This time range provides the ideal window for capturing much of the discourse seen in policy as it relates to the Democratic Primaries as the main candidates had been solidified by January, and the presumed nominee had been all but decided by June. A full six months provides an even amount of time for such articles to be collected. Additionally, two primaries have been chosen to highlight any changes that

might have occurred over time within the discourse. Each policy has its own curated search term[3] for each time frame. Overall, a total of 2,432 articles were collected and read through, line by line, with 1,489 articles from 2016 and 943 articles from 2020 across all three policy areas.

Crucial case study

A crucial case study was conducted in the 2016 primary time frame and with the healthcare policy. This particular group was chosen because the publisher yielded the smallest number of articles for the associated search term. This case study helped to develop the coding scheme, which provided a starting point for the rest of the data collection, and established best practices and methods moving forward, while continuing to develop it across each case (Gerring, 2007). The coding scheme started with the 2016 healthcare articles from the Washington Post, but the cases themselves include the year of the primary and policy; the year of the primary, the publisher, and the policy; and the year of the primary, the policy, the publisher, and the identity of the author. These cases analyze the differences in discourse across the policy as they relate to the news source and the author as they are being coded (Gerring, 2007).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis involves a thorough review of the content of the collected articles through the NVivo program. This review examines patterns of language as they

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[3] (environment: "("primar*") AND ("gas emissions" Or "climate change" OR "paris agreement" OR "paris accord" OR "paris climate" OR "climate change" OR "environment*" OR "CO2" OR "carbon" OR "fossil fuel*" OR "fracking")", healthcare: "("primar*") AND ("ACA" OR "affordable care act" OR "healthcare" OR "Obamacare" OR "health insurance")", and criminal justice: "("primar*") AND ("criminal" OR "racial" OR "Act of 1994" OR "crime bill" OR "prison" OR "incarcerat*" OR "policing" OR "police" OR "sentencing" OR "super predator*")")

relate to neoliberalism, progressivism, identity politics, and rights-based language and as they contribute to divisions in the Democratic Party. A collection and organization of the instances where this language is employed allows for different codes to be created across publishers, authors, and policies. Discourse analysis utilizes language and places it in conversation with the statement's social and cultural contexts to create an understanding of the different viewpoints that might be expressed (Paltridge, 2012). What is significant in discourse analysis is the relationship between the language used and the context of the situation. For example, this thesis' data involves the context of news reporting, electoral politics, policy, identity politics, and so on.

Qualitative coding

Qualitative coding of these news articles is an involved process that includes reading through each of the articles and creating schemes based on what is found by hand. Building the code based on individual reading is a more interpretivist method, rather than searching based on preconceived ideas. This process not only identifies key patterns within the writing but serves as a starting point for other forms of coding that might require at least some knowledge of the content before they can begin (Rivas, 2012).

Text-based coding

Text based coding involves the searching of key words throughout the data that has been collected. Rather than reading through each of the articles individually, this method only finds the words I am searching for and the sentences that surround those words for context. In each of the areas of healthcare, the environment, and criminal justice there are key policies that have been discussed during the 2016 and 2020

primaries. The ACA is one such policy that could be used as a keyword to code. By searching through each mention of the Affordable Care Act, I see how each publisher frames the policy. The search terms for this kind of coding was influenced by the qualitative coding.

Word frequency coding

Word frequency coding involves looking at how many times a key word or phrase is mentioned in the articles gathered. This method determines which of the publishers/articles have mentioned key words the most. This method is significant because not only can it give insight as to what it means for each of the publishers/articles to mention key policies or phrases a certain amount of times, but it can also inform the other approaches to coding. By identifying what words or phrases are used the most and where, the other approaches can determine whether the phrases are mentioned enough to warrant investigation, and where said investigation might begin.

Liberal Bargain Table

In tandem with the discourse analysis, a table containing all examples of the liberal bargain within each policy area is on display to provide a roadmap for the chapter. Such a table allows for a summary of key liberal bargains as a way to introduce the reader to the discourse analysis, the bulk of the content, and explain what liberal bargain might look like, and what it means to not have a liberal bargain.

Quantitative Analysis

Using text-based coding and word frequency coding, I compile and analyze key terms and cross them with one another to reveal the presence of certain discourse in the three policy areas and their relationship with the different primary candidates. Doing so

strengthens the discourse analysis and provides transparency for the reader to view how often each policy mention, race mention, candidate mention, or a combination of the three occur. Graphs visualize this information and analysis of the graphs unpack their meaning.

Positionality

My positionality undoubtedly has an effect on how I interpret and analyze the information I have gathered, so it is imperative that my biases are made clear in order to properly engage with feminist ideas of positionality (Nagar & Greiger, 2007). I am a young, mixed race, male who holds a critical view of the Democratic Party. I believe that identity politics have been used alone as a way to measure progressivism in the United States, with representation in the government being displayed as a sign of progress. While I believe that representation in the government is a significant step forward, I also believe that this does not make a party progressive. My idea of what progressivism is includes fighting for the best possible policies for the people, even if those policies push against the current economic system. My view of neoliberalism, that being the notion of the free, unregulated market acting as its own living thing that will correct itself to the benefit of all, is largely negative. I think of politicians, even those within the Democratic Party, who do not support more left leaning policies, like Medicare for All, are more neoliberal in their nature, because a lot of their reasoning for not supporting such policies has to do with their refusal to push against the current economic system. Additionally, I believe that moderate politicians have somewhat coopted direct, rights-based language as a means of campaigning, while their follow through, in my view, is lacking. Lastly, my view of partisanship centers around the people that are being affected and the

compromises that are made to help them. The people should be put first in these policies, and while compromise and incrementalism are the basis of how policies become law, I believe you cannot aim low with moderation for the sake of compromise. When you lower your standards for what can be achieved, your results are even lower in the policy. These positions are why I believe there is such division in the Democratic Party and they will affect my work because my goal is to find whether these divisions are reflected in the media, and whether the language of neoliberalism, progressivism, identity politics, and rights-based language.

Thesis Overview

Chapter One situates and explains the historical tendency of how the two-party system and the Democratic party specifically de-center race for "class" through the partisan liberal bargain. Chapter Two focuses on the policy area of criminal justice in order to delve into the 2016 and 2020 Democratic primaries to unpack whether these weaknesses still exist and to what extent, with regards to identity politics and progressive politics. Chapter Three adds on the policy areas of healthcare and climate change to further unpack these weaknesses, and also tackle ideas of incremental versus comprehensive change through policy making. Finally, I finish with concluding thoughts that serve to tie everything together.

Limitations

While this thesis provides coverage of the division during the Democratic Primaries in 2016 and 2020, it does not cover other significant electoral events, such as the midterms. It is very possible that the division could be vastly different during this time as the debate is spread out over the House of Representatives and certain

Senate/Governor races as opposed to the Presidency. To provide a fuller picture of the

division, future research should expand their reach to every part of the electoral process,

and not just during the primary of a general election.

CHAPTER 2

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Introduction

The 1992 Democratic Party erased people of color from their platform and focused on a neoliberal class, effectively alienating their most loyal constituents; the question remains as to whether the Democratic Party continued these centrist politics in 2016 and 2020. Both primaries offered huge platforms for race and class especially under President Trump, and the Ferguson and George Floyd protests shined a spotlight on police brutality against Black people in 2014 and 2020 respectively. These events and the policies that follow provoke thought into the liberal order, racial order and its effect on the partisan liberal bargain.

Race & Criminal Justice

Race is intimately linked to each previously mentioned policy area. This chapter covers criminal justice and dissects how race can be centered or de-centered in the Democratic primary discourse. However, it is important to establish how each policy area is directly and explicitly linked to race. Doing so helps to unpack why race should be centered, if it is not already.

The criminal justice system, on the surface, operates to be fair and distribute punishment equally and proportionate to the crime that occurs, yet, in practice, it disproportionately affects and criminalizes people of color, especially Black people. The representation of people of color, especially Black people, in the criminal justice system is staggeringly high when compared to white people. Alfred Blumstein argues that there are many different factors that contribute to the widespread racial disparities in the

criminal justice system including, but not limited to: individual acts of discrimination, policies that have disproportionate racial effects, and "racial differences in participation in the crimes that lead to involvement with the criminal justice system" (Blumstein, 2001). These examples encompass a large portion of how the criminal justice system operates and how racial profiling and the 1994 crime bill are a part of the system and disproportionately affect people of color negatively.

The disproportionate treatment of people of color by the criminal justice system is especially relevant considering not only the history of the Civil Rights Movement, but also the continually lowering crime rates in the United States. Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve and Lauren Mayers note how despite lowering crime rates, incarceration rates have continued to grow, incarcerating people of color at an 8:1, Black to white ratio (2015). This incarceration ratio reached its peak from a 2:1 ratio before the Civil Rights Movement (Van Cleve & Mayers, 2015). Additionally, Kirstine Taylor posits that mass incarceration and racial violence exploded with the addition of "new forms and uses of police power" and "the expansion of state-level criminal codes" in the postwar south (Taylor, 2015). Despite such a large, sweeping piece of legislation that was race-centered, the criminal justice system further cemented its intimate relationship with race, resulting in one of the most disproportionate examples of systemic racism out of any institution in the United States.

Additionally, the connection to criminal justice and race also connects to neoliberalism and its prioritization of expanding prisons, police, and the military. Neoliberalism is historically rooted in a set of ideological and political practices including the embrace of the free market, privatization, and the elimination of social

services (Lee, 2019; Harvey 2005; Prasad 2006; Wacquant 2009). All are present within the Democrats' history, especially with the election of 1992 and Bill Clinton's commitment to divesting in welfare and embracing market-based solutions to class-based problems (Frymer, 1999). However, neoliberalism is also rooted in the expansion of prisons, police, and the military (Harvey 2005; Prasad 2006; Wacquant 2009). Because neoliberalism was feverishly embraced during the 90's, prison population and police budgets exploded, resulting in the increase of mass incarceration especially among people of color, which was directly helped by the passing of the 1994 crime bill. Additionally, Michael Dawson and Megan Francis explain how neoliberalism has created a new racial order within it. Success stories of individual Black people are hailed as examples of how systemic racism is a thing of the past, especially with the election of Obama and ultra-rich artists like Jay-Z (2016). Neoliberalism, while often based in class-based rhetoric, has direct implications for race, especially in terms of how its treats racism as a thing of the past.

Despite the undeniable evidence of systemic racism, much of the criminal justice system hides its systemic racism through a colorblind lens. Van Cleve and Mayers argue that the colorblind mentality of the criminal justice system, and the defense of it, stem from the perception that the system itself must be fair and indiscriminate in order to deter crime, just as Blumstein also described (2015; 2001). Scholars agree that colorblindness in a perceived post-racial world have exacerbated the mass incarceration of Black people (Alexander, 2012). If there are racial disparities within the criminal justice system then it must be because people of color commit more crimes than white people and are to be blamed for the disproportionate incarceration rates, not the system itself. This logic fails

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to critically engage with the multiple aspects of the criminal justice system that have practices and policies that disproportionately affect people of color. People of color face more convictions and higher sentences for the same crimes, are stopped and profiled more by the police, and policies like the war on drugs exacerbated carceral punishments and made it easier to target people of color for those punishments (Provine, 2008; Alexander, 2012). Colorblind framing not only perpetuates the racial disparities among people of color but paves the way for harmful policies like the war on drugs and the 1994 crime bill to further exacerbate systemic racism in the criminal justice system (Alexander, 2012).

Race, by extension, is intimately linked to and is inseparable from the criminal justice system because the policies and practices inherently target and discriminate against people of color.

The Partisan Liberal Bargain & Criminal Justice

As previously mentioned, the partisan liberal bargain serves as the overarching thread of this thesis and is, therefore, connected to the treatment of race in the criminal justice system by the Democratic candidates. In her framing of the liberal bargain, Sa'ar argues that it allows marginalized groups the potential to achieve higher status outside of their identity, such as education or job positions, but many elements of systemic racism and sexism are ignored and seen as obstacles for individuals to simply overcome (2005). Subsequently, I frame the liberal bargain in terms of the Democratic party and the bargain it strikes with the policies they engage with. Criminal justice discourse among the Democrats might offer some benefits for those affected by the system, but much of systemic racism either goes unaddressed or lacks substantive action. I argue that there are

policies and events in the primaries that demonstrate whether or not the partisan liberal bargain exists within the racial and liberal orders and to what extent.

Due to the fact that race is so intimately connected, and even associated, with criminal justice, the Democratic primary candidates in 2016 and 2020 cannot avoid talking about both in junction with one another. However as with the partisan liberal bargain and the Democratic Party's intense focus on neoliberal, class-based solutions, much of the discourse and proposed policies from the candidates do not have substantive actions for race, specifically. For example, if there is a policy that highlights issues of systemic racism in the criminal system, but does very little to address those issues, then the candidates supporting that policy would be an example of the partisan liberal bargain in this context. Conversely, if there is a policy that centers race and includes substantial action towards dismantling systemic racism, then the support of that policy would indicate the absence of the partisan liberal bargain.

I visualize and unpack the partisan liberal bargains, or lack thereof, present in the 2016 and 2020 primaries in criminal justice through tables, discourse analysis, and quantitative figures.

Partisan Liberal Bargain Table – Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice		"Partisan Liberal Bargains" by the Democratic Party			
	No	Yes (on a scale; or types)			
Racial Justice Policy & Events	Race and POC are Centered; Anti-Black racism frameworks	Multicultural and Diversity Centered - no practice in centering race or POC	Liberal Working Class Centered	Liberal Individualism	Absent (did not even try)
2016 -					
1994 crime bill		**Sanders, Clinton**		**Sanders, Clinton**	
Reparations					**All candidates**
Super predator comments		**Clinton**			
Police reform		**Sanders, Clinton**			
Economic Reform		**Sanders, Clinton**	**Sanders, Clinton**	**Sanders, Clinton**	
2020 -					
Defunding the police					**All candidates**
Justice in Policing Act/Reform		**Biden**			
Black Lives Matter Protests		**All candidates**			
Decriminalize Marijuana	**Sanders, Warren**				
Economic Reform		**All candidates**	**All candidates**		

The table above highlights the partisan liberal bargains that this chapter aims to unpack with respect to criminal justice. Each policy or event can be categorized within this table as a type of partisan liberal bargain, or a policy or event that centered race with substantive action. For example, both in 2016 and 2020, all candidates framed economic

solutions as a large part of their racial justice platform. Candidates, like Sanders in 2016, were especially guilty of this, seeing no need to address police brutality at first because class-based solutions, especially as they relate to neoliberalism, are viewed as the penultimate, palatable solution to racism. Another key partisan liberal bargain includes police reform in both 2016 and 2020. Police reform in 2016 was incredibly vague from both Clinton and Sanders, with only various talking points about linking police brutality and racism together making their way to the primary. Race was centered and involved in the discourse, but no specific plans were laid out. 2020 saw the development of more specific plans for police reform, especially with the unveiling of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. However, local governments in Ferguson and Atlanta reveal that similar police reform bills did little to address the systematic targeting of Black people by the criminal justice system. A common thread in both examples establishes how race and diversity are regularly discussed in criminal justice but are not at the forefront of the policies.

Every candidate falls under the partisan liberal bargain with their various handling and support of key events and policies, but there are policies that, if they were to be supported, would exist outside of the partisan liberal bargain as substantial policies that center race and tackle racism. Reparations, for example, does both as it would provide substantial investment and direct payment to Black people specifically, which would tackle issues of systemic racism in countless ways. Policies like this exist and have broad support among independent groups and grassroots movements, but lack support from elected officials, often because of their polarizing effect on Black and white voters. Even if Democratically supported policies often do not center race through substantive action,

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it is possible for them to do so. Additionally, because every candidate falls under the partisan liberal bargain, the issue lies not with individual candidates, but with the entire Democratic party.

Methodology

Coding for criminal justice and racial constituencies provides an avenue to unpack both issues in both primaries because it deals with policies and institutions that directly affect people of color. In this case, Black people's experience with police brutality and defunding the police are centered within criminal justice discourse. The framing of these issues in the Washington Post articles help capture the state of the Democratic Party during the 2016 and 2020 primaries. Additionally, quantitative analysis of key words within the criminal justice section further unpacks the changes from previous Democratic primaries until now and sets the stage for discourse analysis.

Throughout each of the three policy areas: criminal justice, healthcare, and climate change; the most discussed constituency was always people of different income groups, rather than those of different racial constituencies. The cost of healthcare services to individuals and more broadly to taxpayers in terms of climate change seldom included the intersection of race and its disproportionate effect on people of color. Even when different racial constituencies were mentioned in terms of high costs, the solutions were mostly presented to appeal to everyone across the working class, rather than specific racial groups. In fact, people of color were often mentioned in terms of voting blocs that different candidates had various holds on, especially Latino/as. This discourse disproportionately portrays the needs of the working class over the needs of racial groups. Criminal justice, the focus of this chapter, was the only policy area that centered race.

The core argument this chapter presents is a critique of the Democratic party's commitment to Black and Brown people through their commitment, or lack thereof, to various policies, and by extension, how those policies are framed. This, I argue, effectively reveals how race and the concerns specific to people of color are placed at the margins of our national politics.

Importantly, my analysis reaffirms what scholars have explained as being a normal feature of the American political system. Frymer explains, for example, that issues of class are more broadly appealing to the general public than issues of race, which is why the Democratic Party is more inclined to brush racial specific issues to the side in its approach to centering market-based concerns in tandem with class-based concerns and the economy (1999). One article in the Washington Post wrote about the priorities of different racial groups and their politics saying, "the issues of racism and police treatment are significantly less important in the vote choice of white Americans . . . some 22 percent of white adults cite racism as one of the most important issues in their November vote" (Balz, Clement & Guskin, 2020). Even today issues of race are not on the minds of the largest voting bloc in the United States. As this chapter will show, in the 2016 and 2020 Democratic primaries, the party has a lukewarm approach to centering race in the primaries.
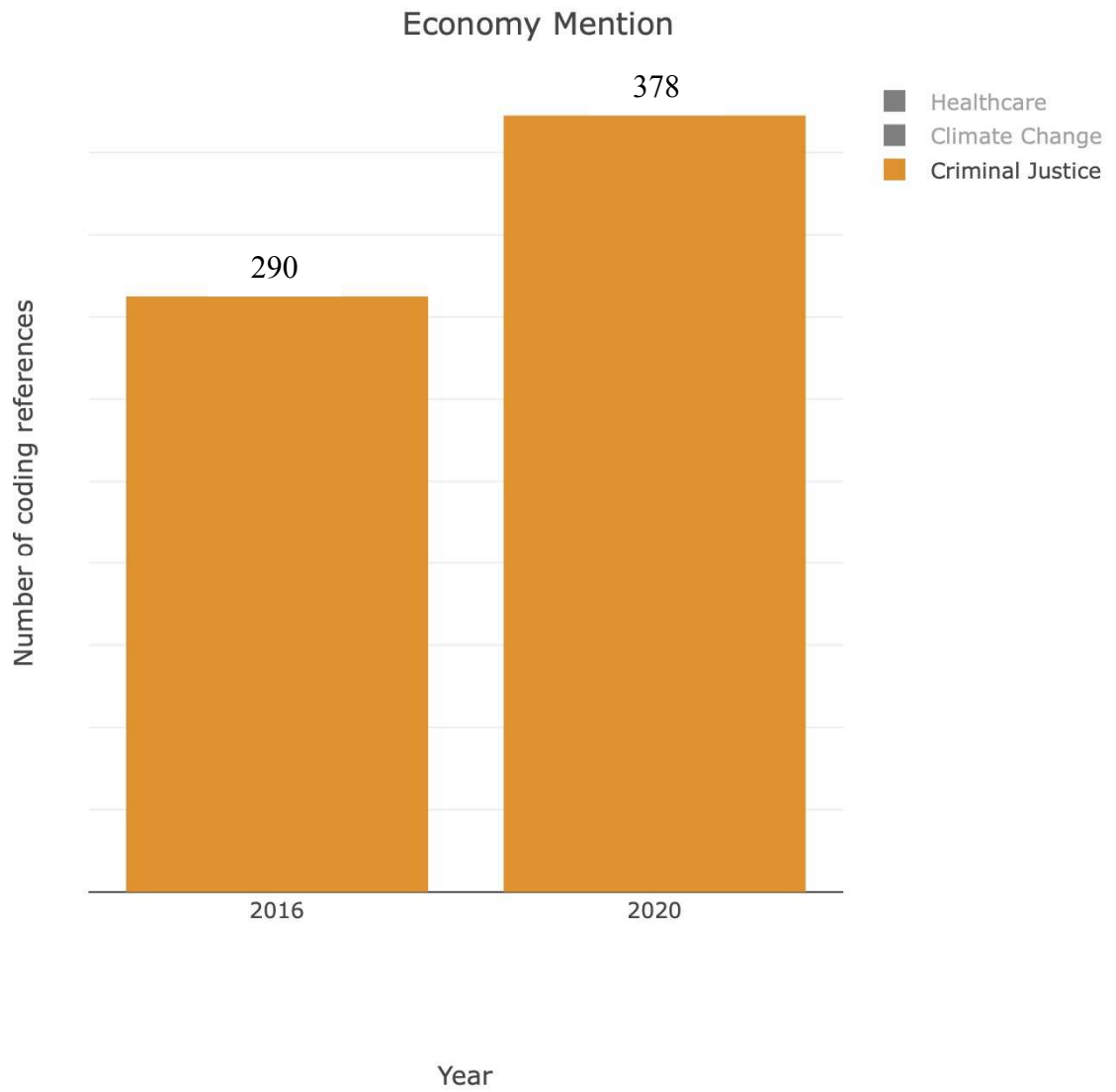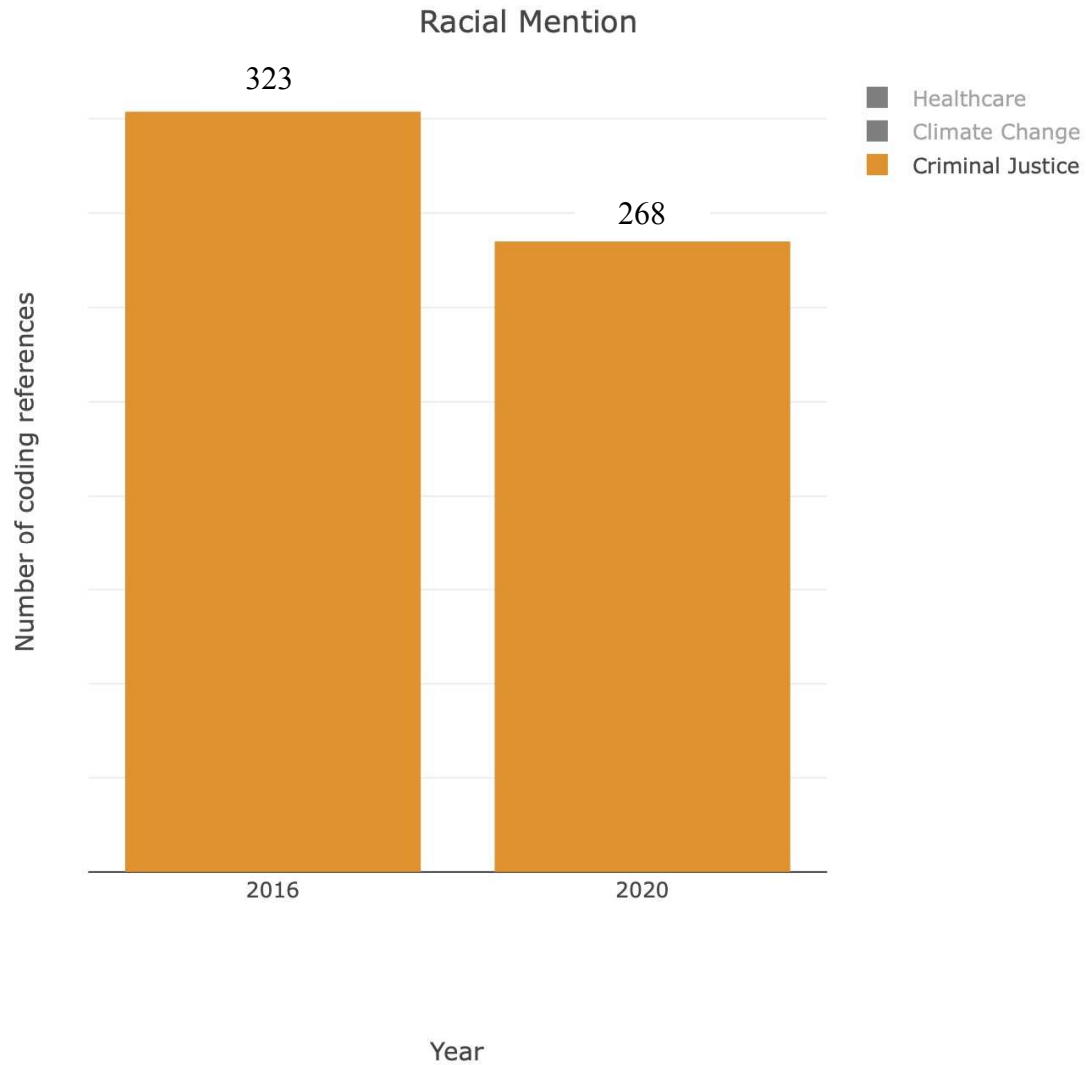
Quantitative Analysis

Text searches and cross references between key terms quantitatively unpack the difference in mention between the economy and race, and also how those terms are

framed. The mentions of "racial"[4] and "economy" are charted numerically in the criminal justice portion of the collected articles, as well as their approximate mention alongside key words like "policy" and "vote". It is important to mention that the number of articles collected for the criminal justice policy area is 622 for 2016 and 446 for 2020. As such, the number of mentions for 2020 are generally, but not always, lower than in 2016. I unpack the relationship between the mentioned terms and their overall mention, rather than the comparison from 2016 to 2020 in this quantitative section.

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[4] "Race" was not used because the article often mentioned race as it relates to the primary race, rather than race and ethnicity, skewing the number of times race was mentioned in the collected articles.

Economy Mention

378

290

Number of coding references

Healthcare
Climate Change
Criminal Justice

2016   2020

Year

Racial Mention

The two graphs above depict the number of times "racial" and "economy" were mentioned in the criminal justice section of the collected articles. Both text searches yielded results that fell in the 200-400 range, translating to a fairly even spread of mentions with 2016 mentioning race slightly more than economy, and 2020 mentioning economy slightly more than race. This finding is consistent with qualitative discourse analysis of the criminal justice policy area as much of the discourse found mentions and inclusions of race that would suggest race is more centered than it ever was during the

2008 and 1992 campaigns that famously excluded the discussion of racial discrimination (Frymer, 1999; King & Smith, 2013). Thus, as previously mentioned, 2016 and 2020 mark improvement in how race is handled within the Democratic Party, more specifically within the Democratic primary as racism is mentioned and talked about as a legitimate issue. Clinton, Sanders, and Biden make specific references to race in their campaign websites and there is extensive qualitative discourse in the collected articles with regards to race.

However, while quantitative analysis would suggest that there are mostly equal mentions of both economy and race within the criminal justice section, discourse analysis uncovers another layer of nuance. The mention of race and racial justice is not enough when it is not backed by specific, substantive action to tackle said racism.

2016

Economic Reform as Racial Justice

The 2016 Democratic primary, consisting of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, included much debate about how to tackle broad problem of class inequality and economic justice, often through neoliberal methods, but also debate around racial justice, revealing some semblance of self-awareness. Sanders most often laid out his platform in terms of economic justice, going as far to tie racial justice to it. A Washington Post article commented on this approach along with Hillary Clinton's perspective:

> Clinton doesn't shy away from race. Sanders talks about race, too, of course. But
> he seems to do so at a remove, and his attempts to make a convincing link
> between his economic message and race continue to fall short.

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"We have to begin by facing up to the reality of systemic racism, because these are not only problems of economic inequality," Clinton said at Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture last week. "These are problems of racial inequality. And we have got to say that loudly and clearly." (Capehart, 2016)

The relationship between racism and economics is clear, especially when discussing the racial wealth gap, which is disproportionately skewed in favor of white people. However, access to money and resources does not translate to transforming institutions historically rooted in systemic racism. Of course, this marks a step up from the days of the Bill Clinton Presidency where Black people were completely written out of the narrative and platform of the Democratic Party, but there continues to be a tradeoff for people of color who show commitment to the Democratic Party (Frymer, 1999).

Despite the acknowledgement that race must be tackled separately from economics, Clinton offered grants and tax credits, and Sanders offered much more left leaning, class-based policies, translating to very little concrete and substantial promises that would tackle systemic racism (Clinton, 2016). At first glance, there are fundamental differences between the ways Sanders and Clinton approach race, however, there is a significant focus on economics in both platforms. Clinton's grants and tax credits not only forgo the racial discrimination people of color face in America, but they also perpetuate the neoliberal, individualistic identity of the democratic party (Dawson & Francis, 2016; Alexander-Floyd, 2020). Black owned businesses are heavily discussed when racial justice is on the table, especially by Clinton, and include some of the only specific language when it comes to actionable policies. Additionally, Sanders' heavy

commitment to free college, single-payer healthcare, and a $15 minimum wage achieve the same individualistic identity as Clinton. Again, these policies would undoubtedly help people of color by giving them marginally more money and access to various institutions, but they do nothing to address racism specifically.

This situation of economics exemplifies the partisan liberal bargain for the 2016 Democrats. Republicans would not dare offer any policies such as this, nor would they dare to frame economics in terms of race, so the lack of commitment to specific, racial justice policies by the Democrats might be worth the neoliberal, class-based solutions. This commitment to neoliberal solutions exemplifies the liberal order, and by extension racial order, which the Democrats are beholden to. Additionally, by framing economic justice as the best racial justice policies, both Clinton and Sanders fail to understand how racism is inherently tied to various other institutions such as criminal justice. As previously established, race and criminal justice are inseparable, and so while economic solutions might contribute to lowering the negative interactions that police have with Black people, it will not suddenly cease. Redistribution and recognition of social problems must be combined to tackle issues of class and race both separately and in tandem with one another, not just with redistribution (Fraser, 2008).

<u>Police Reform</u>

Following the prominent 2014 Ferguson protests, both candidates offered their support for the Black Lives Matter movement, and suggested police reform in hopes of capturing the Black community's support. Yet these police reforms only amount to vague promises for addressing implicit bias and the use of excessive force, but again, nothing substantial or concrete. During one of the 2016 Presidential debates Sanders talked about

police reform saying, "we need fundamental police reform, clearly, clearly, when we talk about a criminal justice system . . . I would hope that we could all agree that we are sick and tired of seeing videos on television of unarmed people, often African Americans, shot by police officers" (Balz & Phillip, 2016). These words are worth pondering considering that when he first entered the race, Sanders had zero interest in talking about police brutality, or any issue for that matter, outside of economic justice (Matua, 2020). Sanders changing his stance on police brutality reflects a positive turn of events that pushes against colorblindness (Alexander, 2012; Van Cleve & Mayers, 2015), both for the Black Lives Matter's influence and for Sander's receptiveness to Black concerns; however, it also highlights a weakness within the candidate as his initial instinct was to not have a stance on one of the most prominent, contemporary civil rights movements.

Both Clinton and Sanders had the same stance on police reform, which was that something must be done to address "implicit bias", but neither put forth any substantive plans. Analyzing the rhetoric of police reform from the two candidates in the collected articles revealed zero specific plans about how to tackle police reform, but there was plenty of discussion linking police brutality to race, and vague mentions of action, as seen with Sanders' quote above. Racism was framed as a problem in the criminal justice system, specifically with regards to police brutality, but not as inherently ingrained into the institution. This individualistic framing of racism within criminal justice is dangerous because it places the blame on specific people or "bad apples", which serves to deflect and ignore how racism is built into the criminal justice system through various policies and structure, and is a direct consequence of the racial and liberal orders (Alexander, 2012; Van Cleve & Mayers, 2015).

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This acknowledgement of racism along with a lack of any substantial plan results in another partisan liberal bargain for the Democratic party. Both Clinton and Sanders want to have a diverse face on their platforms, talking broadly about race, but they refuse to put any bold action to that face, perhaps because they do not wish to rock the boat and alienate white voters, or perhaps they truly did not grasp how far the roots of racism are buried into the criminal justice system (Van Cleve & Mayers, 2015; Frymer, 1999). Discourse surrounding racism within the police institution combined with a vague plan results in an outcome that does not risk either of the candidates' political standings. Their decision to place racism and police brutality as a lower priority than healthcare, income inequality, tuition costs, or the minimum wage was intentional as those popular policy areas generate less risk than substantive action on police reform, resulting in an adherence to the racial and liberal order (Brown, 2015; Lee, 2019).

<u>1994 Crime Bill</u>

Importantly, Clinton also suffered from her husband's legacy. Bill Clinton's 1994 crime bill particularly affected Clinton, despite the fact that Sanders also voted for it, because of association. During a rally, activists pressed Clinton on this issue when they "held up signs as she spoke that read 'Hillary Is Killing.' That was a reference to the omnibus crime bill passed under her husband's presidency . . . [t]he activists claim that the bill has devastated African American communities" (Gearan & Sullivan, 2016). The activists' "claim" is entirely true. Bill Clinton's "tough on crime" motto and bill created harsher sentences for crimes that disproportionately affected people of color and Black Americans.

Despite the fact that both politicians voted for and pushed the 1994 crime bill, they both either defended their vote or criticized the other. One article noted how, "the Clinton campaign has criticized Sanders for his support of the 1994 crime bill when he was a congressman," and Sanders even defended his vote by noting how it, "preserved the assault-weapons ban and included domestic-violence protections for women" (Gearan & Wagner, 2016). Both politicians recognize the infamy and harm the bill had amongst the Black community, resulting in major PR control for them both[5].

This example of discourse is another example of the partisan liberal bargain in the context of the Democratic party. The entirety of the discourse surrounding the candidates and the 1994 crime bill seems to focus around taking shots at one another. While both candidates had made statements criticizing mass incarceration, which is linked to the crime bill, neither properly acknowledge their role in pushing mass incarceration and both of their plans for mass incarceration involve incremental sentence reform and more vague discourse. The partisan liberal bargain, then, stems from the party's reluctance to make racial specific policies, and instead lean more towards neoliberal class that is consistent in the racial and liberal orders.

<u>"Super-predator" Comments</u>

Clinton's own past came to haunt her, especially when, "Ashley Williams, a 23-year-old activist from Charlotte . . . stood and demanded an apology from Clinton for the high incarceration rate for Black Americans, and told the candidate: "I am not a super-

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[5] It is important to note that while both Clinton and Sanders pushed for this bill, Biden was another candidate that sponsored the bill. There is discourse regarding Biden's participation in the 1994 crime bill in 2020, but it is few and far between, especially compared to 2016's discourse. Therefore, Biden's relationship to this bill will not have its own section in 2020, but it is important to mention the role that all Democratic frontrunners had in a bill that disproportionately impacted people of color.

predator, Hillary Clinton" (Gearan & Wagner, 2016). Williams' words echoed Clinton's past words about Black people from 1996 when she said, "They are often the kinds of kids that are called 'super-predators' . . . [n]o conscience, no empathy. We can talk about why they ended up that way, but first we have to bring them to heel" (Gearan & Wagner, 2016). While she has apologized for those comments, it is chilling to analyze the lengths to which the Democrats were willing to not only leave people of color out of the voter appeal, but also the extent they were willing to demonize Black people for the sake of demonstrating their commitment to a carceral criminal justice system. The situation improved in 2016 with the previous comments and acknowledgements of police brutality on people of color; however, as previously discussed, the comments and subsequent policy proposals only ran skin deep with their minute changes to the police department. The Democrats' commitment to recognition was not reflected in their "progressive" policies, leaving room to wonder what their response would be to a proposal that incorporated recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 2008).

This event is especially telling of the partisan liberal bargain when placed in the context of the previously discussed police reform and 1994 crime bill. Again, Clinton apologized for the comments she made, but not only did she support the 1994 crime bill that her husband pushed, she perpetuated the rhetoric that Black people, Black kids even, are to be feared and are prone to being criminals or "super-predators". This targeting of Black people was not individualistic, but a reflection of the systemic racism that exists in the criminal justice system (Van Cleve & Mayers, 2015). The rhetoric has shifted to be more inclusive and sympathetic towards Black people, as seen in previous discourse, but fails to achieve concrete policy proposals that stem beyond economic justice or vague

police reform, something the Democratic Party has strategically done, especially so within the racial and liberal order.

<u>Reparations</u>

One of the most targeted and progressive policies for Black people, reparations, remained scorched earth for the Democrats in 2016. Both Democratic candidates focused very broadly on class, often framed in terms of the market, calling for better access to healthcare, redistribution of wealth, and affordable college for all Americans, and they even began to speak about the injustices that people of color face. However, when pressed about reparations, a policy that would not only target the redistribution of wealth and address class inequality like both candidates longed to do, but would also show an unequivocal dedication to Black people in America, neither candidate supported it (Phillip, 2016). This policy choice, which was denied in favor of higher tax credits given to Black-owned businesses, shows that the candidates are concerned with making comprehensive promises to a broad majority of Americans across class rather than across race. Both candidates spoke at large about how their policies for affordable healthcare and education, along with a higher minimum wage, would also help people of color, which is very much so true. However, these policies do not address the disproportionate lack of access that people of color face, nor do they fundamentally change the systems that disproportionately and negatively affect people of color. These policy proposals are directly inherited in a racial and liberal order because they prioritize individual success through monetary means and maintain systemic racism. Reparations was merely one avenue to combine the issues of recognition and redistribution and neither candidate deemed it worth risking white votes for (Fraser, 2008).

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Reparations is a significant piece of the partisan liberal bargain and a perfect illustration of how the Democrats approach race in the 2016 primary race. As previously mentioned, reparations is a comprehensive policy that would target and benefit Black people specifically, yet neither candidate wanted to support it. Other policies like police reform and economic reform, either fail to center race as an issue or fail to deliver specific, substantial policies that help people of color. Reparations does both. For whatever reason the candidates cited for their lack of support, the fact remains that Black people will have their trials and tribulations broadly spoken about during the primary, but a comprehensive, race-centered policy is simply not acceptable for the candidates.

In 2016 the Democrats showed a growing sense of empathy towards people of color and Black people, specifically, by including race and racism in their daily vocabulary, however their commitment often did not extend beyond these words and incremental policies that would only serve to slightly change racial minorities' livelihoods.

2020

The 2020 Democratic primary, with a historic number of candidates and a continuation to one of the biggest protests for Black lives in modern history, saw marginal improvements surrounding race and class, but with mostly the same rhetoric and same partisan liberal bargain. While there were increased conversations about how an improved healthcare and climate change plan would benefit Black and Brown people, race was still not at the forefront of any conversation. Joe Biden, the front runner for nearly the entire race, framed almost his entire racial justice plan in terms of economics by securing higher Pell grants for Black owned businesses, paying Black and Brown

workers a higher wage (achieved by raising the minimum wage for all), various refinancing options, and undoing the tax changes made under the Trump administration (Biden, 2020). Again, just as in 2016, the focus on businesses suggests a higher priority towards the state of the economy, rather than the specific well-being of Black and Brown people, as is common within a racial and liberal order. Class-based inequality does disproportionately affect people of color, but the solutions are marginal in their approach, especially when compared to long-discussed policies such as reparations, and little attention is given beyond class.

<u>Decriminalizing & Legalizing Marijuana</u>

The support to legalize marijuana has gained traction in the past two election cycles, which is a policy that would directly help people of color who are disproportionately arrested and convicted for marijuana possession. In 2016 Sanders favored only legalizing marijuana and framed it in terms of economic justice when discussing the criminal justice system, saying, "young people get criminal records for using marijuana, while Wall Street executives escape prosecutions for actions that plunged the United States into recession" (Fahrenthold, 2016). While there are class-based links to marijuana convictions, there is a direct link to the war on drugs and its detrimental effect on different racial constituencies when compared to white people (Blumstein, 2001; Van Cleve & Mayers, 2015; Provine, 2008).

In 2020, both Sanders and Warren made commitments to not only legalize marijuana, but to also expunge past marijuana convictions, resulting in direct help to people of color who were disproportionately affected. However, this policy was only supported by Sanders and Warren. Biden, the Democratic nominee and current President,

supports decriminalizing marijuana, but not legalizing it. Decriminalization would maintain possession of marijuana as a crime, but would not make it subject to prosecution, whereas legalization would remove all legal prohibitions. Decriminalization leaves the door open for significant penalties for those with large possession of marijuana or those who sell marijuana. Black voices such as Lenard Larry Mckelvey, co-host of "The Breakfast Club", which is a radio show popular with Black communities, criticized Biden's racial justice plan and, "called on Biden to legalize rather than decriminalize marijuana" (Sullivan, 2020). Decriminalization still allows for the criminal justice system to abuse and disproportionately target marginalized groups for nonviolent acts.

While progressive candidates embrace policies that would center and provide substantial results for people of color, Biden reiterates the continued standing of the partisan liberal bargain in terms of marijuana. Support for decriminalizing marijuana involves a give and take where many people of color would benefit, but many would still be disproportionately affected by the policy. In this case, the more moderate portion of the Democratic party mainly partakes in the partisan liberal bargain, which does show progress for the progressive side, yet the moderates control the Presidency at this point. This split between the moderate and progressive side demonstrates an overall maintenance of the racial and liberal order because the moderate side of the Democrats have all the power and refuse to take action on race directly and effectively.

Police Reform (2020) & The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act

Police Reform (2020)

If 2016 marked a turning point in the specific inclusion of race and diversity in a candidates' platform, then 2020 continued this movement, resulting in more concrete

police reform policies, but failing to make an impact on the local level. Clinton and Sanders' response to police brutality amounted to vague promises at the hope of securing Black and Brown people's votes, resulting in an incomplete application of identity politics. A similar situation can be observed in the city of Ferguson, which had seen a sharp increase in racial diversity in elected government officials since the 2013 and 2014 protests:

> Over the intervening years, Ferguson has seen some change. Four of the six City Council members are Black, compared to just one six years ago. A Black police chief now leads a more racially diverse department, whose rank-and-file officers wear body cameras. The city - once accused of harassing its Black residents with tickets and fines to fill its coffers - now collects far less in revenue this way than it once did. And this month, voters made history by electing the city's first Black mayor. Yet residents say that a deeply ingrained racism still exists in Ferguson, that Black neighborhoods are still overpoliced, and that even with the more diverse leadership, remnants of the old guard remain. (Gowen, 2020)

The achievements that Ferguson has made in terms of racial representation are nothing short of amazing. The grassroots movement of Black Lives Matter made a historic impact on the centering and success of electing officials that represent the needs of the people. However, nothing fundamentally changed. Even with the inclusion of body cameras and the reduction of tickets and fines, which have been popular policy proposals among the Democrats, Black and Brown communities, as this article states, remained primarily targeted by the police.

Further insight into this narrative can be seen with the Mayor of Atlanta, Keisha Bottoms. Two weeks after the murder of George Floyd, videos surfaced of a white Atlanta police officer murdering Rayshard Brooks, a 27-year-old Black man, resulting in large protests across Atlanta. Bottoms, a Black woman, was under fire as she said, "we value our officers in Atlanta . . . I also recognize that our communities are hurting and our officers are hurting. And so, in the same way our demonstrators need an opportunity to vent and to express their frustration and their concern, understand that our officers need the opportunity to do that as well" (Williams & Willis, 2020). Bottoms played a centrist role in the protests, expressing condolences for Rayshard Brooks while also expressing concern for the officers that were responsible for the unjust death of a Black man. This example, along with the diversity in Ferguson, perfectly encapsulates the extent to which the Democratic party will fight for racial equality. Even during times of civil unrest, Democratic leaders refrain from rocking the boat or suggesting policies that enact more comprehensive change in an attempt to appeal more broadly to their constituents, regardless of race, and to the established institutions they are in charge of. These actions effectively represent the liberal and racial orders and their inner workings. The elected officials in Ferguson, like Bottoms, claim to represent the Black community, and even promise to make changes that will help them. Yet the Black community remained overly policed and expressed frustration with the Black officials' lack of action. Atlanta city council members went as far as pushing to withhold $73 million in funding from the police until Bottoms came up with a plan to remake the department (Williams & Willis, 2020). The push was unsuccessful and unsupported by Bottoms, and the article ended with praise for Bottoms by Biden, painting her centrist position in a positive light. If even

local leaders are incentivized to play a centrist role in their local politics despite the diversity, recognition, and representation, the odds of potential federal democratic leaders supporting comprehensive, race-oriented policies are slim.

The partisan liberal bargain exists even at the local level. Atlanta and Ferguson see historic levels of racial diversity in public office and concrete action on police reform, yet nothing fundamentally changed. These situations should have been examples of unbridled, unapologetic centering and substantial action on racism in police institutions, yet nothing fundamentally changed. The partisan liberal bargain exists for the Democratic party if the Democrats are Black, revealing how deep Democratic treatment of Black people and support for neoliberal, class-based policies run (Sa'ar, 2008; Dawson & Francis, 2016; Alexander-Floyd, 2020). However, this type of partisan liberal bargain and incremental police reform would find its way to the federal level, as well.

George Floyd Justice in Policing Act

Before the George Floyd protests in 2020, the candidates had their own plans to address police brutality in America. Virtually every candidate included plans to enforce body cameras on police officers, establish independent/community oversight committees, create federal standards for use of excessive force, etc. Subsequently after the George Floyd protests began, house democrats unveiled the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which would, "ban chokeholds and some no-knock warrants and establish a national database to track police misconduct" (Bade, Demirjian & Kane, 2020). These policies sound like welcome changes to the policing system, however, many of those incremental changes, like police body cameras, were made in the previously mentioned Ferguson city, which did not fundamentally change Black and Brown people's treatment by the police.

Democrats have shown little support for criminal justice policies beyond the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, leaving room to wonder if they view this policy as the best solution to police brutality.

This federal version of the local policies in Atlanta and Ferguson extend this type of partisan liberal bargain to mainstream Democrats. This policy centers race and provides concrete action that would make specific changes to the police department. However, this policy is too ineffective in its action and results in nothing fundamentally changing. This calculated move in the face of historic social movement and unrest is a risk management strategy and encapsulates the Democrats' commitment to the racial and liberal orders (Brown, 2015). House Democrats want everyone to know that they, "are going to do something about [police brutality]," yet they will not push the policies further, even if they do not result in substantial change (Bade, Demirjian & Kane, 2020). This is especially relevant as Biden, the current Democratic President, has pledged not only to further increase police budgets, continuing with neoliberalism's trend of police expansion, but will also give them more equipment than before (Slisco, 2020). The racialized aspects of the criminal justice system are all too apparent, yet even the Democrats will use risk management strategies that maintain the status quo while offering incremental change as part of the partisan liberal bargain (Brown, 2015; Lee, 2019; Sa'ars, 2005).

Defunding the Police

While Democratic leaders propose and discuss the intricacies of their own proposals, it is important to understand and analyze not only their response to more transformative, activist driven proposals, but also the proposals themselves, such as

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defunding the police. Defunding the police involves the withholding and transferring of funds from the police department to other social services, such as mental health crisis interventionists, better welfare programs, a more robust education system, etc. One Washington Post op ed described the ever-expanding role of the police saying:

> We also ask too much of police. They should not be expected to fill the gaping holes in America's mental-health-care system. They should not be our primary response to problems of dysfunctional families and disordered communities. They should not be delivering discipline at school buildings or mediating disputes among neighbors. They should not be our solution to homelessness. Shrinking the outsized role of police in U.S. society will require the rest of us to expand our own zones of responsibility and accountability. (Von Drehle, 2020)

Many of the activists that call for defunding the police argue that carceral responses to people that are literally having their own crises do not address the root of their problems. Criminalizing the symptoms of homelessness does nothing to address why people are homeless in the first place. Some presidential candidates, like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, specifically addressed the criminalization of poverty in their platforms (Sanders, 2020; Warren, 2020), but they do not address the disproportionate budgets that the police have compared to other social services, nor do they address the immediate reliance on militarized police for situations that might require more specialized and demilitarized approaches, such as mental health crises. Additionally, following the nationwide protests and rallying calls to defund the police, none of the major presidential candidates or high ranked democratic leaders supported defunding. In fact, Joe Biden, the assumed nominee at that point in time, not only did not support

defunding the police, but argued in favor of further increasing the police budget to incorporate diversity training, and racial sensitivity training (Slisco, 2020). Again, these are the same kinds of changes that were implemented in places like Ferguson, which amounted to very little change for the different racial constituents and left those same people who called for more radical, comprehensive change left out of the conversation.

The mainstream Democratic leaders' decision to not support defunding the police has an effect on the general public's opinion of the policy, which is further cemented by the mainstream media. While the search in the Washington Post captured much sympathy and support for defunding the police, it also captured much opposition, revealing another divide within the democratic party. An example of opposition argues that, "[the] approach is too extreme . . . County Executive Marc Elrich (D) dismissed large cuts to the police budget as a 'utopian vision'," (Tan, 2020). This pragmatic viewpoint dismisses fighting for such transformative change because it would never come to fruition, an argument that becomes central in other policy areas like healthcare and climate change, and one that is very common in Democratic leadership and mainstream media. Another argument against defunding the police labels it, "a sort of trap . . . efforts to weaken [the police] through budget cuts . . . are likely to have unanticipated consequences . . . and research shows that, when violence increases, Americans of all races . . . [support] harsher policing" (Sharkey, 2020). This framing aims to cut across, and even ignore, the disproportionate treatment of Black and Brown people by the police by suggesting that everyone will unequivocally support the police when things get bad enough. This not subverts racism to individual and isolated instances to be overcome by people of color, but minimizes the extent of systemic racism within the institution of criminal justice,

pushing the narrative that the criminal justice system is naturally fair and equal, which is

not the case (Dawson & Francis, 2016; Alexander-Floyd, 2020; Van Cleve & Mayers,

2015). By extension, policing, like class, is framed as a unifying issue, but only when the

various experiences of people of color are ignored (Frymer, 1999).

Even local leaders have been forced to put an official stance on the defunding the

police movement. When local activists in Minneapolis, the city where George Floyd was

murdered, pressed Mayor Jacob Frey on whether he would commit to defunding the

police or not, he responded with, "I do not support the full abolition of the police"

(Hawkins, Mettler & Stein, 2020). Frey purposefully avoided a direct question, instead

responding to a nonexistent question that was way more extreme. He does not support

defunding the police, but did not want to say that directly so as to not upset the activists,

but also did not want to commit to a policy proposed by Black and Brown activists. The

same article framed defunding as a negative, stating that officials must "[weigh] whether

to stand with protestors who are demanding an extreme overhaul at the risk of

jeopardizing public safety and taking authority away from police officers in communities

that have sought more protection against violent crime" (Hawkins, Mettler & Stein,

2020). Defunding the police is negatively framed by claiming how it threatens public

safety. Additionally, police officers are framed as protectors of communities against

violent crimes, illustrating the need to keep them robustly funded. These narratives

provide emotional and pragmatic reasons to not support defunding. However, as

previously established, only 22 percent of white people, the largest voting bloc, rank

racial justice as their highest concern, so defunding the police is also not an elector-

friendly phrase for elected officials.

Defunding the police, like reparations in 2016, represents a type of partisan liberal bargain in which no major Democratic politician takes any action at all. Both reparations and defunding the police are comprehensive and center race at their core, yet no mainstream Democrat supports either. The partisan liberal bargain, in terms of criminal justice and police brutality, only offers vague promises or minute changes and pushes more left-leaning, race-centered policies to the side. Between the Republicans and the Democrats, only the latter actually talk about racism and its broad effect on the world. However, the Democrats refuse to support comprehensive policies that center race, demonstrating a continued and unequivocal commitment to the racial and liberal orders that prioritize empowering individuals and ignoring systemic issues. Race cannot be separated from criminal justice, and so, the lack of support for reparations in 2016 and 2020, and the lack of support for defunding the police in 2020 shows the Democrats' lack of commitment to race.

Conclusion

Both the 2020 and 2016 democratic primaries showed improvements in race inclusion, especially in terms of criminal justice, but leave much more room for improvement. Sanders, Clinton, and Biden - the Democratic frontrunners – all called attention to race and highlighted the need to dismantle racism. However, their specific policy mention for how to tackle racism, especially within the criminal justice system, proved lackluster. Clinton and Sanders broadly spoke about police brutality and the need for reform, yet practically none of the discourse discussed how to go about making reforms, or how those reforms would affect people of color. When a specific policy finally emerged surrounding police reform, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act,

which Biden supports, it proved much too small in its impact, as seen in cities like Ferguson. Additionally, when specific policies that both centered race and made substantial changes came to the forefront, like reparations and defunding the police, no major Democratic candidates supported any of them.

Huge political movements like Black Lives Matter made it so that race was impossible to ignore during both primaries, forcing the major candidates to take some sort of stance on race and systemic racism. The Democratic Party's inclusion of race, and its mild commitment to it, was a direct response to ever-changing landscape of politics and movements. These movements, and the Democratic party's nuanced response, reveal an important, yet heavily documented, portion of racial justice history: The Democratic party is content with ignoring race and prioritizing neoliberal class if there are no major social movements that seek to prioritize race through immense political pressure. The Democrat's partisan liberal bargain will accommodate the inclusion of race, but only minimally so as to broadly appeal to every possible voting constituency.

CHAPTER 3

HEALTHCARE, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Introduction

While the criminal justice section of policy offered more of a focused lens on race through the different candidates and their appeals combined with lackluster commitment, healthcare and climate change further unpack this lack of commitment. Many of the proposed policies within the healthcare and climate change sector are almost largely discussed in terms of economic effects rather than racial effects. The policy proposals from the Presidential candidates regarding healthcare and climate change rarely include specific language to tackle racial discrimination that is robust enough to be placed side by side with neoliberal class in terms of importance. If racial discrimination language is included, it is often to highlight the issue, but not enough to sufficiently tackle it. Subsequently, both the liberal order and the racial order are maintained in this section because individualized, market-based solutions that empower the wealthy elite are prioritized over the collective well-being of marginalized people. As such, the inclusion of racial language and policy proposals is so lacking, that I shorten the partisan liberal bargain table for this section. The partisan liberal bargain table in this section shows key policies and how they prioritize neoliberalism and class over the effects of systemic racism. Then, in the next section, I identify key policy proposals that center race and demonstrate a commitment to dismantling racism.

<u>Healthcare</u>

The relationship between race and racism within the institution of healthcare is apparent and inseparable. Kevin Fiscella, Peter Franks, and Marthe R. Gold conducted research to find that people of color, especially Black people, experience health disparities in the healthcare industry both in terms of socio-economic status or lack of health insurance, and discrimination based on their race (2000). Black people have reported receiving, "less appropriate preventative care . . . lower-quality hospital care . . . less intensive hospital care . . . and lower-quality prenatal care" (Fiscella, Franks & Gold, 2000). This finding suggests that not only do people of color suffer from health issues more so than white people because of a lack of health insurance compared to white people, but they also experience personal, racial discrimination. This racial discrimination has many effects on people of color including less trust in the medical system and a preference for same-race doctors. Jennifer Malat and Michelle van Ryn found that, "one in five African Americans reports a preference for a same-race healthcare provider" (2005). The study also found that those who experienced personal discrimination within the medical system were more likely to have a preference for a same-race provider, as well (Malat & van Ryn, 2005). Additionally, people of color are more likely to have distrust in the medical system than white people (Fiscella, Franks & Gold, 2000; Malat & van Ryn, 2005).

Additionally, the very fabrics of the American healthcare system are rooted in neoliberal, market-based practices, which includes the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Marcus Lee unpacked the dangers of neoliberal ideology and its connection to racism

within the criminal justice system (2019). The ACA contains similar elements of neoliberalism that perpetuate insurance access inequality, especially with people of color. Adam Gaffney unpacks the history of neoliberalism in healthcare, noting how it dates back to the 1960's and begins with fundamental ideas of "moral hazard" that claim how full coverage of healthcare would result in the misuse of it and lower the value of healthcare as a whole (2015). These ideals set the stage for the "insurance marketplace" which would tailor healthcare plans to different individuals based on their cost and usage, continue to "impose sizable out-of-pocket expenses for the sick" and ultimately lead to the ACA's conception. It is important to understand the neoliberal history of the American healthcare system because its neoliberal roots are used as a means to push market-based reform that de-centers race.

Along the same vein, Jamila Michener notes how the Medicaid portion of the American healthcare system primarily covers people of color yet is strategically limited in its access across different states (2018). The varied structure of Medicaid and its roots in geographical racism suppress those who seek self-improvement in their health through barriers of movement, from existing Medicaid states that already fulfill their needs, to barriers of Medicaid access that prevent financial stability or the potentiality of movement. The federalist portion of the American political system can create potential openings for equities to be pursued, but also leaves room for abuse that disproportionately affects people of color (Michener, 2018). Health insurance access is a political issue that is rooted in racism.

The ACA in its implementation contained language aimed at filling uninsured gaps pertaining to race, specifically. Studies have shown that while racial disparities have

been reduced in terms of health insurance coverage, significant racial disparities remain, especially among young adults (Lipton, Decker & Sommers, 2019). Additionally, even when controlling for socio-economic factors, and health insurance, Black women are twice as likely to experience infant mortality than white women (Alio, et. al., 2010). These findings are significant to the connection between healthcare and race because while there is a significant racial disparity in terms of health insurance, coverage does not necessarily translate to equitable outcomes for people of color.

Climate Change

Like healthcare, climate change is not only vehemently connected to race and racism but is rooted in the centuries old power dynamics that continue to subjugate marginalized communities on a global scale. Phoebe Godfrey argues that climate change is often thought about in terms of a natural disaster phenomenon that will affect humans indiscriminately, but in reality, the slow and ever-increasing effects of climate change will reflect the social inequities on a global scale including the "white elite of the Global North . . . [and] (their) historically proficient abilities to invent and enact social, economic and political divisions" (2012). These social inequalities include race, gender, and class, and they are not mere side effects but are inherently tied to the fabric of climate change and the inequities it will perpetuate. Further inspection into racialized climate change reveal many barriers and many layers in the fight to include racial justice into environmental justice.

Race and its connection to climate change includes not only how climate change affects people of color disproportionately, but how the fight to combat climate change affects people of color disproportionately. Jonathan London and others analyze how

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California's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 and its goals of reducing California's greenhouse gas emissions was more ambitious than any other state at the time (2013). However, this historic policy included contentious debate in the environmental justice community as strategies to achieve reduced greenhouse emissions were often framed in neoliberal, market-based practices such as cap and trade, a policy that caps pollution emissions and promotes the buying and selling of allowances that allows said emissions (London, et. al., 2013). While cap and trade policies incentivize corporations to lower gas emissions, the process by which they reduce emissions, i.e. planning and zoning decisions, often creates co-pollutant hotspots that disproportionately affect marginalized communities, including people of color (London, et. al., 2013; Johnson-Meszaros & Williams, 2008). When market-based solutions take the forefront in environmental justice, they prioritize profits rather than the communities they are meant to protect.

Additionally, neoliberal, market-based solutions to climate change often involve unequal distributions of environmental hazards, leading to the racialization of different forms of labor, which produces "disproportionately high exposure to environmental hazards," for marginalized groups (London, et. al., 2013; Harrison, 2011; Morello-Frosch et al., 2001). These ideas are consistent with Lee's conception of neoliberalism and how it negatively effects people of color through market-based solutions (2019). Cost/risk management of the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 assessed that reducing greenhouse emissions was a priority, but that the protection of vulnerable communities was a worthy tradeoff in achieving the priority. So much of the United States' effort to combat climate change is based in neoliberal practices that the connection between racism and climate change is not only apparent, but often exacerbated.

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The Partisan Liberal Bargain, Healthcare, and Climate Change

Just as with criminal justice, the partisan liberal bargain serves as an overarching thread for climate change and healthcare. While the partisan liberal bargain showed a commitment to race diversity and inclusion in criminal justice, it also showed a lack of commitment in policy agendas. The same goes for healthcare and climate change, but to an even lesser extent. While the discourse surrounding healthcare and climate change might mention and include some proposals to combat racism within these policy areas, the solutions are mostly based around market-based class and the general population's access to healthcare or environmental justice. This represents a commitment to the racial and liberal orders, and by extension, the intertwining of individual autonomy through neoliberal practices and the subversion of racialized discourse (Sa'ars, 2005; Smith, 1993; 2016). Discourse analysis in the collected articles and their respective policy areas reveal partisan liberal bargains that demonstrate the Democratic party's varying commitment to racial justice.

As previously established, race is intimately connected with healthcare and climate change. However, quantitative analysis and discourse analysis reveal little discussion between race and its connection to healthcare and climate change. Additionally, their policy proposals offer little in terms of specific action to tackle systemic racism, especially compared to the robustness of their neoliberal solutions.

Again, I visualize and unpack a shortened version of the partisan liberal bargains, or lack thereof, present in the 2016 and 2020 primaries in healthcare and climate change through tables, discourse analysis, and quantitative figures, and I analyze key moments or provisions that do center race.

Partisan Liberal Bargain Table – Healthcare & Climate Change

Healthcare & Climate		"Partisan Liberal Bargains" by the Democratic Party			
	No	Yes (on a scale; or types)			
Racial Justice Policy & Events	**Race and POC are Centered; Anti-Black racism frameworks**	**Multicultural and Diversity Centered - no practice in centering race or POC**	**Liberal Working Class Centered**	**Liberal Individualism**	**Absent (did not even try)**
Healthcare – 2016 & 2020					
Medicare 4 All		**Sanders, Warren**			
ACA & Public Option		**Biden**	**Clinton**	**Clinton**	
Covid-19			**Biden, Sanders**		
Climate Change – 2016 & 2020					
Paris Agreement			**Biden, Clinton**		
Green New Deal		**Sanders, Warren, Steyer**			

       The table above represents key policies and their relation to the partisan liberal bargain. Medicare-for-all and the public option portion of the ACA cover a substantive portion of the healthcare discourse, and as both the quantitative and discourse analysis uncover, they mostly focus on class, both in a neoliberal and more left-leaning, socialist perspective. Race, however, is almost exclusively left out of the picture. The Democratic party's partisan liberal bargain with policy remains mostly a fight between these two types of class and de-centers race.
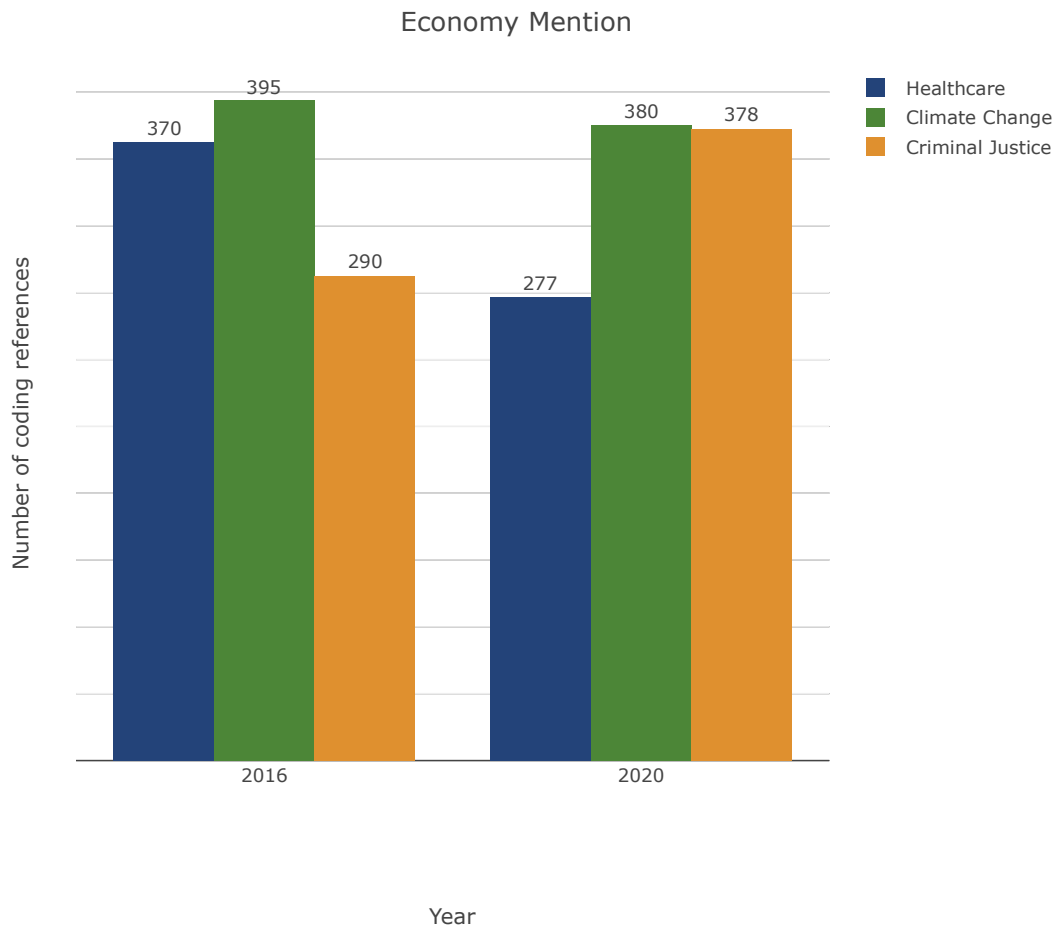
       With regards to climate change, the conversation mostly remains the same. Race is mentioned minimally, and the proposed solutions hardly include mentions of specific
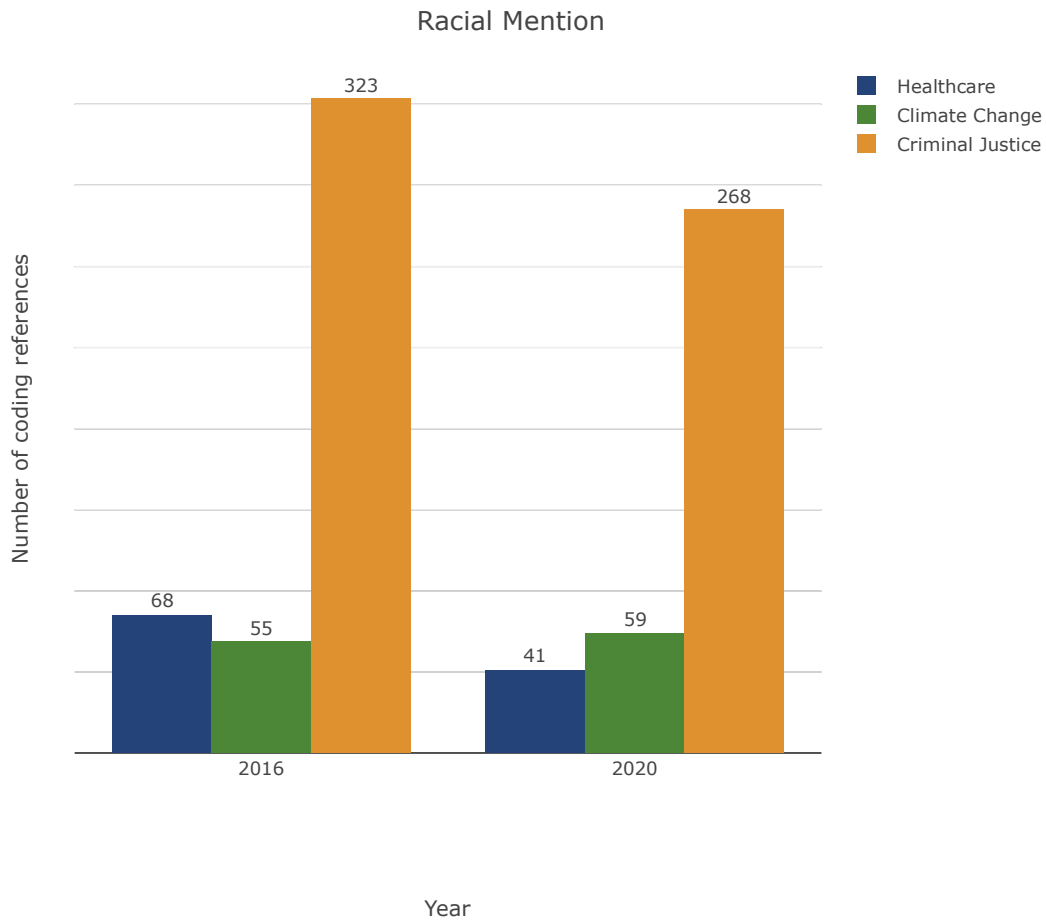
racial policies. The Paris Agreement is often framed in the journey to reduce the overall temperature of the planet by two degrees, often through cap and trade policies that not only fail to center race but have historically been used to subjugate racial communities.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative text searches through the collected articles revealed substantive difference between the mention of "economy" and "race" in healthcare (564 articles), climate change (800 articles), and the comparison to criminal justice (1068 articles). As previously established in Chapter 2, the mention of race and economy was fairly evenly distributed, which was to be expected because of the close relationship between criminal justice and race. Discourse analysis then revealed the nuanced difference in discussion race received in terms of actual policy, compared to the economy, or neoliberal, class-based solutions. There are differences in the number of articles collected, especially between that of healthcare and criminal justice, yet the difference in racial mention versus economic mention far exceed the proportions of each section of articles collected.

Economy Mention

Number of coding references

- Healthcare
- Climate Change
- Criminal Justice

2016: 370 — 395 — 290

2020: 277 — 380 — 378

Year

Racial Mention

The two graphs above reveal a significant difference in the number of times "racial" was mentioned in healthcare and climate change when compared to criminal justice and when compared to the economic mention. Diversity and inclusion were hallmarks of the criminal justice section, as racism was often mentioned in tandem with proposed policies. These visuals reveal that healthcare and climate change do not receive the same treatment and the economy takes a massive priority over race in terms of discourse inclusion.

Additionally, by combining the numbers of economic and racial mention between each respective policy area and year, the percentage of racial mention versus economic

mention becomes apparent. For example, when adding together the number of racial and economic mentions for criminal justice – separately for 2016 and 2020 – the results find that racial mention makes up for approximately 52% of the total race and economic mention in 2016 and 41% in 2020. While the two years differ, they still retain a relatively proportionate number of mentions when compared to the economy. However, racial mention in healthcare only made up approximately 16% of the total mentions between the two graphs in 2016 and 13% in 2020. Similarly, racial mention in climate change only made up approximately 12% of the total mentions between the two graphs in 2016 and 13% in 2020. Visualizing and finding the proportion to which race and economy are mentioned in the same policy areas reveals a staggering difference in treatment between economy and race, even when the policy areas are isolated to themselves.

Discourse analysis qualitatively shows the same difference in treatment between the economy and race while also showing the nuanced treatment of race when it is mentioned, just as with criminal justice.

Healthcare

Individual Responsibility, Race, and Healthcare

Clinton, in her campaign for healthcare reform, suffered from individualistic approaches to healthcare that stemmed from 1996 and continued with the ACA. An analysis of her book "It Takes A Village" finds that, "Clinton also stresses the role of personal agency in staying healthy. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, she says. Teach kids to feel responsible for their own weight. Shut the refrigerator door and open the front door instead," resulting in the kind of dialogue that, "is consistent with one of the more unexpected aspects of "It Takes a Village" - its socially conservative views of

family, sex and popular culture" (Lozada, 2016). Clinton's book, largely used as a tool for her husband's 1996 reelection, ignored the racial disparities in the healthcare system and even went as far to suggest that "staying healthy" is a matter of being more active, which does not address the multitude of different reasons why someone would use the healthcare system, and is commonly used as a tool against pushing for race specific issues. While this book was written long before her bid for election, a lack of discussion around healthcare and race would suggest that perhaps Clinton did not evolve much beyond her husband and Obama's strategies. The ACA is a policy that utilizes market-based approaches, a hallmark of neoliberal practices, and puts responsibility on the individual to find a plan that fits them and their financial status (Gaffney, 2015). This policy and its underpinnings display continued commitment to the liberal order, and by extension, the racial order (Sa'ars, 2005; Smith, 1993; 2016). Clinton's individualistic approach to health in 1996 fits well within the ACA's framework and demonstrates the Democratic commitment to neoliberalism and the lack of commitment to how healthcare affects people of color.

Clinton's intense focus on individualism with regards to staying healthy coupled with rhetoric to prioritize economic factors, materializes in her commitment to the neoliberal aspects of the ACA. This results in another individualized partisan liberal bargain of the Democratic party that places the responsibility of self-care on individuals, and de-centers systemic racism as an obstacle to be overcome (Alexander-Floyd, 2020; Sa'ar, 2005).

Covid-19

Much of the healthcare discourse involved also included much discussion surrounding the corona virus and its impact on the different communities across the United States. This discourse shined a spotlight on the disproportionate effect the corona virus can have on Black people with one article saying:

But long before covid-19 invaded Dougherty County, where African Americans make up more than 70 percent of the population, residents were already battle-worn from decades of struggle against social and economic inequities, including high unemployment, poverty and chronic disease, the lingering effects of slavery and racial discrimination that continue besieging communities of color across the country. Black people account for "90 percent or better" of the Dougherty County deaths . . . Data shows that people with [diabetes, COPD, cancer, AIDS], many of which affect African Americans at a disproportionate rate, are at increased risk for hospitalization and death from covid-19. (Williams & Willis, 2020)

The global pandemic, even in its early stages, revealed the racial disparities within many U.S. institutions, including healthcare. This would have been a significant time to push for reforms that put race at the forefront of the healthcare system, however, the only significant proposal made at the time was class based. At this point in time the only two candidates in the race were Biden and Sanders. Sanders put out a specific corona virus response plan "that offered a long list of responses to the viral outbreak that would cost about $2 trillion . . . including a monthly $2,000 check for every American household for the duration of the crisis" (Linskey, Scherer & Sullivan, 2020). Biden also made reference to the corona virus, with an article saying, "he has argued that a public option is

now vital as unemployment increases and people lose their employer-based health-care coverage" (Goldstein & Viser, 2020). Both used the pandemic as a means of highlighting the need for their different healthcare plans. While more universal coverage would help people across the board, neither of their plans included specific proposals or provisions that would address racial disparities in the corona virus. The virus has exacerbated racial disparities within healthcare, yet both candidates treated it as a broad, one-size-fits-all, issue of healthcare access, adhering to the racial order.

Again, the Democratic party fails to center race, even in times where racial disparities are exacerbated, highlighting the party's partisan liberal bargain during the corona virus outbreak. Both candidates used the pandemic as a means of pushing their healthcare plans, which while they would help people across the board, they fail to address the inequities that disproportionately affect Black people. The candidates' approach positions a singular solution to the pandemic through their already-existing healthcare plans, pushing race aside and indirectly centering class, and neoliberal class in their bargain to their policies (Sa'ae, 2005).

ACA & Public Option

Both in 2016 and 2020, healthcare policy debate included the expansion of the ACA through a public option, revealing a preference for neoliberal, market-based solutions, and an important lack of racialized debate. In 2016, Chelsea Clinton, Hillary Clinton's daughter, criticized Sanders' healthcare plan, saying, "Senator Sanders wants to dismantle Obamacare, dismantle the [Children's Health Insurance Program], dismantle Medicare and dismantle private insurance" (Tumulty, 2016). Private insurance is directly mentioned, indicating a desire to maintain the healthcare marketplace and maintain the

current, neoliberal approach to health insurance. This approach is rooted in the "moral hazard" ideal that purposefully underinsures different constituencies in order to maintain the value of healthcare and prevent people from "misusing" it through overuse (Gaffney, 2015). The market-based approach, then, leads to out of pocket expenses that can put Americans in financial debt, which directly helps the wealthy elite.

When Clinton was pressed about the "high deductibles, rising premiums and out-of-pocket costs," by the moderator at a Democratic primary debate, she dismissed them as "glitches" (Phillip & Wagner, 2016). These glitches are the cornerstone of market-based, neoliberal approaches to healthcare, and while the ACA did marginally lessen the racial gap in insured people, the gap remains significantly large (Lipton, Decker & Sommers, 2019). Additionally, even with the ACA, federalist approaches to healthcare continue to suppress and restrict people of color from movement that white people have access to (Michener, 2018). Yet, these racial gaps were hardly discussed during the primary. A majority of the discussion revolved around what has already been presented: costs to middle- and lower-class people and how they can be solved using neoliberal practices. This particular approach to class not only de-centers race but ensures the high profits and "value" of the healthcare industry through out-of-pocket expenses, demonstrating, again, a continued commitment to the liberal and racial orders.

Both Clinton and Biden's proposals for healthcare include adding a public option to the ACA as a means of continuing to insure as many people as possible and achieve 100% coverage. When pressed about Sanders' plan, Biden indicated that "he is open to building on the Affordable Care Act in a way that would expand coverage. He has started emphasizing the need for universal health-care coverage" (Viser, 2020). The priority of

both candidates during the primary was to achieve full coverage and limit the expenses that people pay out-of-pocket. While this approach might take important steps to achieving full coverage, which would include people of color, it is still mostly a neoliberal, market-based approach. The original ACA tried and failed to not only fill racial gaps of uninsured population but failed to mitigate individual experiences of discrimination based on race (Lipton, Decker & Sommers, 2019). People of color, Black people especially, experience bouts of racism and discrimination, beyond the discourse of insurance and expenses, that prevent them from receiving extensive care in many different areas (Fiscella, Franks & Gold, 2000). Clinton and Biden included zero discourse on how to address this kind of racism and their plans hardly included mentions of racial discrimination. The ACA and its potential public option are not only framed in terms of the economy, but they are framed in terms of a market-based, neoliberal piece of the economy that disproportionately affects people of color.

The ACA and its public option companion represent another partisan liberal bargain for the Democratic party, demonstrating a further commitment to neoliberal practices by the more moderate or centrist politicians. The commitment to neoliberalism and the continued de-centering of race maintain the system of individualism and apply individualism to systemic racism. As previously mentioned, this process directly results from the racial and liberal orders, which the Democratic party operates under and refuses to tackle (Sa'ars, 2005; Smith, 1993; 2016). The partisan liberal bargain for the Democratic party continues to de-center race, leaving people of color with only one choice because the Republican party offers a more extreme version of neoliberalism that is even more costly (Sa'ar, 2005).

<u>Medicare-for-all</u>

Similar to the discourse of the ACA and its public option, Sanders' single payer healthcare system (2016), or Medicare-for-all (2020), largely focuses on the economy, especially in its critiques. Kenneth Thorpe, a health economist at Emory University, discussed the topic of Sanders' single-payer system, finding that it would, "require another trillion dollars a year in new taxes on top of the $1.3 trillion that Sanders had proposed" in 2016 (Pearlstein, 2016). A majority of the discourse surrounding Sanders' healthcare plan revolves around the notion of cost. There is no concern for how it will help guarantee coverage for people across the country, and importantly, no concern for how it would shrink discrimination that people of color face within the healthcare world. In fact, the same article pushed critique of the plan further by indicating that "the Sanders plan would reduce income for doctors, hospital administrators and drug company shareholders" (Pearlstein, 2016). Not only do critiques of Sanders' plan fail to include a lack of racial components to the plan, but they also center the profits of high executives that soar in a neoliberal, market-based healthcare system. The discourse of different kinds of class also serves as a means of de-centering race.

In 2020 the same critiques of Sanders' healthcare plan, now Medicare-for-all, existed and were further pushed by other candidates. Michael Bloomberg, a latecomer into the 2020 democratic primary race, stated that a Medicare-for-all proposal would guarantee Trump's reelection, "because his [healthcare] plan would remove private health insurance for 160-million Americans" (Janes, Linskey, Scherer & Viser, 2020). Just as in 2016, the emphasis for privatized health insurance remained a priority, which in this case was employee-based healthcare. Again, critiques of Medicare-for-all were

rooted in ties to the economy. The ACA cannot be dismantled and replaced because so many people rely on health insurance from their jobs and revoking that would hurt the economy. The ACA cannot be dismantled and replaced because high healthcare executives would have their incomes slashed. The liberal order is maintained because of the commitment to market-based solutions that focus on the individual, rather than the collective, and the racial order is maintained because race is successfully de-centered throughout the entirety of the Medicare-for-all discourse (Sa'ars, 2005; Smith, 1993; 2016).

Sanders' single payer plan and its critiques represent another partisan liberal bargain for the Democratic party. While a single-payer plan pushes against the neoliberal approach, it continues to ignore race as a significant factor to health, as references to race are far and few between. A majority of the discourse revolved around how much the plan would cost rather than how much the plan would help people, broadly and in terms of race. The partisan liberal bargain for the Democrats and Medicare-for-all continues to center the economy as opposed to race, especially in the face of critique.

A Difference of Class

The debate between Medicare-for-all and a public addition to the ACA represents a class-based debate that may have benefits for people of color but continues to ignore race in a huge way. When discussing the differences between Sanders' and Clinton's healthcare proposals, one argument stated how, "until Ms. Clinton refuses money from big donors and Wall Street and Forgoes PACs, she is part of the problem, not the solution. Universal access to health insurance is not the same as single-payer health care and making higher education more affordable isn't the same as college education being

tuition-free. These differences are huge" (Bohn, 2016). Indeed, the differences are substantial. Market-based solutions to healthcare, incorporated into the ACA, prioritize the value of the healthcare itself and create different purchasable plans for different income levels that have more or less benefits than other plans (Gaffney, 2015). These neoliberal approaches have exacerbated racial disparities in terms of healthcare insurance (Lipton, Decker & Sommers, 2019). Sanders' plan actually pushes against the neoliberal approach to healthcare and challenges the insurance industry as a whole, giving everyone the same, free, quality insurance that includes a multitude of different coverages including, dental, vision, hearing, and mental health (Sanders, 2020). This sweeping plan would not only eliminate the racial insurance gap but might significantly reduce racial health gaps as well and would even challenge aspects of the liberal order. The difference highlights an important gap in class-based discourse and neoliberal-based discourse. While race is continually de-centered from the mainstream discourse, it is neoliberalism that underpins the power relation and not the working class themselves.

However, while plan to equally cover all residents with the same quality plan might reduce racial disparities, it also ignores a crucial component of racial health. A Washington Post article about racial inequity and class inequity within the healthcare system also had this discussion:

Infant mortality is generally associated with poverty, low maternal education, poor health-care access and lack of adequate prenatal care. However, studies have shown that affluence, high maternal education and health insurance do not necessarily protect African Americans from poor pregnancy outcomes or infant mortality. An Institute of Medicine report found that the risk of preterm birth in

college-educated African American women was greater than that for white women with fewer than eight years of education. (Jenkins, 2016)

This article refers to a multitude of studies that control for socio-economic status and health insurance and still concludes that Black women experience higher rates of infant mortality during childbirth than white women (Alio, et. al., 2010). This study is significant because it means that racial health disparities cannot necessarily be solved through equal and full coverage alone. The healthcare institution, as a whole, needs complete reform that includes centering racial health disparities, and eliminating instances of racial discrimination and restoring people of color's faith in healthcare providers (Fiscella, Franks & Gold, 2000; Malat & van Ryn, 2005). Candidates like Sanders make reference to this specific statistic about Black women, but the reference is alone in its fight for racial justice or racial centering in healthcare (Hohmann, 2020). The reference does not go beyond itself to conclude that the entire healthcare system needs reform to include and center race and racial discrimination, but instead isolates itself as one of the few mentions of race, putting a diverse face to his healthcare plan. This same phenomenon occurred in criminal justice, but with a much more diverse face.

The approach to racial justice within the healthcare system cannot be an individualized method that treats race as an obstacle, rather than an entire systemic structure that is built into every institution (Alexander-Floyd, 2020). The approach must include a centering of race alongside class, as a separate issue, but one that must be fought in tandem with class (Fraser, 2008; Azmanova, 2019; Spence, 2015). Additionally, it must be an equitable version of class and not through the underpinnings of capitalism and neoliberalism. Race and class lend themselves well to criminal justice,

but they also lend themselves well to every institution in existence. Race cannot be separated from healthcare simply because the discourse centers class. While Sanders' healthcare plan challenged aspects of the liberal order, it did not seek to further address elements of systemic racism, resulting in a maintenance of the racial order.

The partisan liberal bargain for the Democrats, and their policies, Medicare-for-all and the public option, continue to develop with each other, simulating an exclusive fight between left-leaning, class-based approaches to healthcare, and neoliberal, market-based approaches to healthcare. The Democratic party has posited itself in a false choice that includes many more options, and inclusions than the discourse might let on.

Climate Change

The policy area of climate change remained the least robust in terms of actual political discourse within the primary but continued the trend of neoliberal class and economy dominating existing discourse. As previously established, the major candidates Clinton, Biden, and Sanders each mentioned race significantly less in healthcare and climate change, but each mentioned race the least in climate change. Much of the language surrounding climate change includes policy proposals that "[don't] increase the deficit by so much as a dime; leaves most Americans financially better off; encourages innovation; and provides an incentive for other emitters, including China and India, to act" ("Common-sense, planet-saving reform", 2020). The mentioned plan here incorporates a tax on carbon emissions and is hailed for adhering to the market-based capitalistic economy that exists in the U.S. and prioritizes the deficit and innovation. Discussions around climate change continue to weaponize the economy as a means of de-

centering race from the conversation in another partisan liberal bargain that maintains the racial and liberal orders.

<u>Paris Agreement</u>

Both in 2016 and 2020 the Paris Agreement was centered as an important step in tackling climate change, but it is one that not only centers a neoliberal type of class over race, but some of the policies actively harm people of color. During a Democratic debate in 2016, Clinton "said that Sanders had been unnecessarily critical of Obama for the landmark deal signed in Paris a few months ago, in which more than 190 countries agreed to tackle the problem" (Fahrenthold, Wagner, 2016). Additionally, in 2020, Biden would "rejoin the Paris accord and commit the nation to achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions . . . he would insist on . . . an "enforcement mechanism," which could be a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade program" ("A welcome shift in tone", 2020). The Democratic party favors neoliberal-based approaches and not only are both a carbon tax and a cap and trade program both neoliberal-based approaches, but cap and trade programs are rooted in systemic racism. Corporations buy and sell the caps on emissions in order to incentivize the lowering of said emissions, but they can often result in pollutant hot spots that are located in low-income, racially diverse communities (London, et. al., 2013; Johnson-Meszaros & Williams, 2008). As previously discussed, the concentration of pollution in these areas are directly harmful to the residents and are supported by systemic racism within planning and zoning practices that are fundamental to these kinds of climate change program (London, et. al., 2013; Johnson-Meszaros & Williams, 2008). Race is not only actively de-centered by placing the profits and

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incentives of corporations over the needs of people of color, but people of color are actively harmed in the process.

These approaches to tackling climate change center on the corporations and work to maintain their market-based practices, which are supported by the Democrats, resulting in another aspect of the partisan liberal bargain. The racial and liberal orders in which corporations and Democrats operate prioritize the profits over people of color, and so the Democrats partake in their own partisan liberal bargain that centers neoliberal-based approaches that push race to the side, reaffirming the racial order as well.

<u>Green New Deal</u>

The Green New Deal, often hailed as a true progressive plan on climate change, was unsurprisingly discussed in terms of its cost, rather than how it would affect marginalized communities. One article referred to the sweeping legislation as "a costly Green New Deal" (Balz, 2020), while another characterized the bill as an "overweening, inefficient and ultimately unrealistic overreach" ("A welcome shift in tone", 2020). Both critiques are rooted in the bill's cost, rather than its potential effect, prompting support from other kinds of bills. The latter of the two previous quotes continues with "reason to celebrate the release Thursday of a climate plan by an alliance of corporations, environmental advocacy groups, economists and prominent citizens that bills itself as 'the broadest climate coalition in U.S. history'" ("A welcome shift in tone", 2020). The response, like healthcare, is a preference for corporate plans that center neoliberal-based solutions, treating climate change as solely a market issue. In response to the Green New Deal, the GOP even planned to introduce "several free-market-based bills in response to the Green New Deal, a sweeping set of policy proposals backed by some Democrats"

(Mufson, 2020). The presence and popularity of market-based solutions across the political board is alarming considering the damaging effects a neoliberal institution can have on marginalized people (London, et. al., 2013; Johnson-Meszaros & Williams, 2008). Liberalism, and by extension neoliberalism, have roots of historic racism and de-centering of race, especially in climate change that is riddled with colorblind rhetoric, directly maintaining the racial and liberal orders (Smith, 1993; Lee 2019).

The Green New Deal is, like Medicare-for-all, a partisan liberal bargain in how members of the Democratic party are able to use cost, and neoliberal practices as the main source of discourse, rather than race and the policy's effect on it. This is a common theme in healthcare and climate change, and, unfortunately, it leaves little room for discussion when it comes to small moments where race is actually centered.

What Does Racial Inclusion Look Like?

A majority of the discourse surrounding healthcare and climate change weaponizes class, both left-leaning and neoliberal, as a means of excluding race. This marks a stark contrast to criminal justice, which would often center race but only on the surface with policies that rarely reflected the rhetoric used. However, there were instances where certain proposals and bills included language and provisions that did center race, albeit small instances. These inclusions, like reparations and defunding the police, represent a lack of a partisan liberal bargain, indicating a small, yet real, change of pace.

Climate Change

One 2020 candidate, Tom Steyer, made his entire campaign about climate change and aimed to make the connection between racism and climate change. One Washington

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Post article described how Steyer backs the connection between the two by saying, "that global warming will be felt most bluntly by Black and Brown communities" (Grandoni, 2020). This connection is important to make because climate change is often framed as a looming existential threat that will hit the world, eventually, and indiscriminately, rather than a problem that can also affect individuals and communities differently. Both Sanders and Warren have also acknowledged this connection, marking a welcome change within both climate change and the extension of racism within institutions other than police violence (Sanders, 2020; Warren, 2020). All three candidates have embraced the Green New Deal and, which specifically included eliminating racist permitting rules, ending the Sandoval Supreme Court decision "that set an unreasonable burden of proof of racism for claims of environmental racism", and providing more funding for disproportionately impacted communities like communities of color and Indigenous communities (Sanders, 2020). These proposals within the Green New Deal are substantial examples of centering race within climate change. However, these sections make up only a tiny part of the entire proposal, and there is practically zero discourse within the Democratic debates that highlight these specific sections. The full inclusion of these sections alongside issues of class would radically transform the political discourse stage, bringing different intersecting sources of division together and tackling them both separately, but in tandem with one another (Fraser, 2008). If this were to happen, the notion of the partisan liberal bargain might be disrupted for the better.

Healthcare

One of the few instances that racial inequity was specifically crossed with healthcare came from Sanders. A Washington Post article described how the candidate

spoke to a crowd declaring "we're tired of Black mothers dying at three times the rate of white mothers" (Hohmann, 2020). This declaration is not only a significant mention of racism within the healthcare sector but was also backed up with a plan to increase reproductive services in communities of color, a specific response to the plight that Black women face. Additionally, candidates like Warren and Biden included the same statistic of Black mothers dying three times more than white mothers during childbirth, and both candidates included the same plan to reduce the racial disparity that Black mothers face in their respective proposals (Main, 2018; Sanders 2020). Like in the Green New Deal, this section actually centers race and provides a specific policy that would help a racial community, which again, disrupts the partisan liberal bargain. Of course, this proposal, like in the Green New Deal, is the only specific inclusion with regards to race and it covers practically none of the discourse aside from Sanders' one quote. A marginal shift is occurring within the Democratic party's partisan liberal bargain, but the constrains of the racial and liberal orders on the party remains firm.

Conclusion

Both the 2016 and 2020 Democratic primaries show a distinct lack of racial discourse, and specific racial policy. Criminal justice included discourse surrounding the issues but lacked any policies. Differentially, healthcare and climate change suffer from huge racial exclusion. The debates over climate change and healthcare focused around differing ideas of class, both in the more left-leaning version of class that aimed to tackle the insurance and corporate industries, and in the more market-based, neoliberal approaches to class through the ACA and cap and trade policies. While there were specific inclusions that managed to center race in various healthcare proposals and in the

Green New Deal, the inclusions were minimal and isolated, making up a tiny portion of the overall policy.

Despite large movements and events like Black Lives Matter and the corona virus pandemic, race failed to be centered in either of the policy areas, and neoliberal class was actively weaponized as a means of de-centering race. Even though the pandemic exacerbated and make crystal clear the racial inequities of the current healthcare system, neither Sanders nor Biden, the only candidates remaining at the time, proposed solutions that centered those glaring racial disparities. Instead they used it to push their own approaches to healthcare. The Democratic party's partisan liberal bargain within healthcare and climate change centered the broadly appealing class and all of its intricacies, leaving race to be excluded.

Final Conclusion

This thesis applies the "liberal bargain" to political institutions, through what I label as the partisan liberal bargain. I apply this concept to the Democratic party and capture its strategic de-centering of race in favor of neoliberal class discourse. As the policy areas of criminal justice, healthcare, and climate change show, the liberal and racial orders operate together to marginalize both class-based minorities and racial minorities through neoliberalism. Discourse analysis empirically shows how the Democratic party partakes in the partisan liberal bargain to de-center race in policy making despite inclusive racial dialogue like in criminal justice. Subsequently, it not only shows how racial policy making and dialogue are de-centered in healthcare and environmental policy, but it also demonstrates a clash between equitable class-based discourse and neoliberal class-based discourse. The power dynamics of neoliberalism serve to de-center race in favor of class and neoliberal discourse.

What do we Learn About Progress?

While this thesis addresses said power dynamics, it does not address progress, policy and reform, and the makeup of the democratic party.

This thesis engages primarily with how race is de-centered by neoliberalism, but it is important to acknowledge the role that different modes of change play in the political sphere. The example I gave with the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act would likely not provoke radical change for Black people's experience with the police, but it is still a concrete piece of legislation that centers the experience of Black people in it. Additionally, it is one that has more popular support from moderate politicians than

something like defunding the police. With this in mind, the policy might be the correct step in order to bring about systemic change through incrementalism over time.

However, the problem is that the Democrats have not put forth any future plans for incrementalism after this one policy. The other option, defunding the police, is not popular and not worth engaging with for even the most progressive Democratic Presidential candidates. So, it is only natural to wonder whether there would be a next step after implementing the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. Such a policy by itself would not do away with the inner workings of the racial and liberal order, which work with one another to suppress marginalized communities, especially people of color. In that case, pushing for more radical change through defunding the police and not accepting the incremental policies would be the better pathway for systemic change. If Black people are going to be continually harassed by the police even with the incremental policy, then it is better to fight for something more radical.

However, if the Democrats actually engaged with, and approached more radical policies, like defunding the police, as end goals to be eventually reached, then incremental polices might be worth pursuing. Employing incrementalism while also acknowledging that there is a more radical end goal can successfully engage with the demands of Black people and work within the confines of the political sphere and its apprehension to radical change. Tackling the racial and liberal order, piece by piece, can eventually result in addressing individualism, which has been weaponized against people of color to treat systemic racism as a singular hurdle to overcome. Acknowledging these systems and their effect on people of color must be backed with an actual plan but must also have a concrete objective. There is no question that pushing for more radical change

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immediately can have its detriments, just like incrementalism without an end goal. While there is a pathway with a more visionary incrementalism, it is only one way forward in terms of systemic change and is not the definitive way forward. It is most important to address the liberal and racial orders that work to suppress marginalized communities.

To the point of racial and liberal orders, however, it is also important to unpack the prominence of liberal orders and elements of liberalism, like individualism, over that of the racial order. Due to the fact that the liberal order is so prominent, it can serve to actually mask the racial order and promote color blindness, which is reflected in many policies outside of criminal justice. By being invisible, the inner workings of the racial order, and by extension, white supremacy are enabled and empowered. Subsequently, it is important to understand and contextualize progress in terms of the racial order. The orientation of progress could make a difference in how progress is made within the racial order. Constant self-reflexivity and being active in both combatting and calling out racism in everyday life and political actions could be one step in terms of making progress towards combatting the racial order (DiAngelo, 2018). This process also involves learning the extensive history of white supremacy and anti-Blackness, including abolition efforts, colonization, and the process of repairing through the commitment to ongoing action that centers Black communities' demands (Schillinger, 2020). While there are many possible pathways to combatting and centering the racial order, it is important to note that these systems of power are a tradition for American politics, and they cannot be undone with a singular policy (Smith, 2016).

While this thesis reveals the liberal and racial ordering as a process occurring in the Democratic party, it does not claim that progress has never been made. Allan Colbern

and S. Karthick Ramakrishnan examine state rights in terms of immigration, particularly in California, and found that there has been substantial progress for undocumented people, who are primarily people of color, in the fight for immigration justice (2020). So, even though my thesis shows that race is de-centered in American electoral politics, progress has been made in terms of racial justice. Progress is not always linear in its path, and I am not making any claims about whether or not substantial progress has been made for people of color. My work unpacks the power dynamics of the racial and liberal order within the Democratic Party. With that being said, however, it is important to further analyze how progress can be made for people of color and the different pathways that can be taken. Are more progressive policies like the Green New Deal more efficient in incorporating racial justice discourse into areas besides criminal justice? Or would this be better suited for social movements? Perhaps a combination of both? There are a multitude of different pathways for change: incrementalism, radicalism, federalism, etc., and these ideas must be put in conversation with one another to assess progress for people of color.

Next Steps in Researching the Partisan Liberal Bargain

I developed this concept to explain the behavior of the Democratic party, but it can also be used to explain the behavior of other institutions. The liberal and racial orders are phenomenon that are not just active in the electoral sphere, but every facet of the American political realm. As previously mentioned, this bargain can apply to the GOP and its own commitment to the liberal and racial order. It can even apply to NGO's and their interaction with political parties. Even outside of the electoral sphere, the racial and liberal orders work to maintain the de-centering of race.

Additionally, this research raises new questions about the future of the Democratic party and its leadership. More progressive members like Sanders and AOC, and newcomers like Jamaal Bowman and Cori Bush have been more successful in centering race with socialized class. How does their presence and leadership affect the direction of the Democrats? Do they have the influence to push the Democrats more to the left and successfully center race? The ever-changing landscape of the federal government makes these questions worth exploring.

Other modes of research can significantly improve findings beyond that of discourse analysis through the news. Working with NGO's that deal with racial justice and interviewing their experiences with the Democrats would further unpack their partisan liberal bargain. Attending Democratic conventions and the like would also provide more direct communication and a more up-close interaction with elected officials would also unpack the partisan liberal bargain. Future modes of research must be pursued to fully understand and contextualize the de-centering of race, and then pathways forward must also be explored.

The racial and liberal orders are also global phenomenon that affect even the highest reaching institutions. Perhaps such globalized institutions like the United Nations partake in their own partisan liberal bargain that de-centers race in favor of neoliberal class. Perhaps the same applies to the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. These institutions exist in order to help other countries, but like with the Democratic party, their actions might uphold a neoliberal order more than they lift marginalized groups. The partisan liberal bargain can be broadly used and expanded to explain the behaviors of other institutions besides the Democratic party and should be contextualized

in order to understand the behavior of various institutions and work to create a pathway

forward.

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APPENDIX A

CODEBOOK

Name of Code
Qualitative
Identity Politics
Against Identity
Constituencies Mentioned
African American
Asian American
Latine
General
Identity & Economy
Merge
Separate
Policy Framing for POC
Help
Hurt
Legislation & Policy
Mentioned Barriers
Policy Areas
Climate Change
Criminal Justice
Healthcare
Policy Rationale
Rights-based Language
Policy as Human Right
Systemic Change
Against
Incrementalism
Neoliberalism
Employee-based Healthcare
Free market & Choice
Individual Responsibility
Prioritizing Economy
Privatization
Pragmatism
Socialism bad
Unity
For
Anger @ System
Enacting Larger Change
Progressivism
Mentions
Progressivism conception
Pushing to Left

Socialism good