

## The Nominations

### *The Road to a Much-Disliked General Election*

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At the end of a remarkably unpredictable election, I can, I believe, make one prediction with some assurance: Political scientists and historians will be studying and puzzling over the 2016 election for many years to come. Although many different questions will be asked about this election, some of the most intriguing concern the presidential nominations. How and why did the two major American parties choose Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump to be their presidential standard-bearers? Given the issues and powers at stake, given the significance that is invariably ascribed to the office of the presidency, how could the Democrats and Republicans have conferred their nominations upon perhaps the two most widely disliked figures in American politics?

As other chapters in this volume will amply demonstrate, a large number of Americans wanted nothing to do with either of these candidates. Though about 94 percent of the voters ultimately cast their ballots for one of the two major-party nominees, that should not be interpreted to mean that they were satisfied with the choices. In the exit polls taken in conjunction with the general election, only 43 percent of the voters had a favorable opinion of Clinton; 55 percent viewed her unfavorably. Trump's numbers were even worse: 38 percent favorable, 60 percent unfavorable. According to another question, only 41 percent of voters said they strongly favored the person they voted for. Thirty-two percent admitted to having "reservations" about their vote choice, and 25 percent could only say that they disliked his or her opponent even more.<sup>1</sup>

So how did we wind up with these two presidential nominees?

### **The Race Takes Shape: Democrats**

Well before Hillary Clinton formally resigned her position as secretary of state on February 1, 2013, it was widely anticipated that she would be a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016. The more open question concerned who—if anyone—would take the field against her. In the end, four other candidates entered the race: Vermont senator Bernie Sanders, former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley, former Rhode

Island senator and governor Lincoln Chafee, and former Virginia senator Jim Webb. (For their announcement dates, see Table 2.1.) Of these, it's fair to say, Chafee and Webb were regarded as extreme longshots; Sanders had some significant strengths but also some major weaknesses; and O'Malley might best be described as solid but not very exciting.

In light of Clinton's weakness as a general election candidate, it is impossible not to wonder why the 2016 Democratic race attracted so few strong entrants. One widely touted explanation for the small field of Democratic presidential candidates was the claim that the party had a "weak bench."<sup>2</sup> Prior to Trump's victory, it was widely assumed that the pool of plausible presidential candidates was limited to a party's senators, governors, and vice presidents. But the Republican tsunami in the 2010 and 2014 midterm elections had wiped out a substantial swath of these presidential possibilities, reducing the number of Democratic senators from fifty-nine to forty-six and the number of Democratic governors from twenty-nine to eighteen.

So the Democrats did have a comparatively small pool of presidential prospects to draw upon in 2016. But it would be a gross exaggeration to suggest that the five people who finally entered the race were the only ones available. Writing in 2014 and early 2015, political columnists and pundits who looked over the Democratic field were able to compile a long list of potential presidential candidates who were said to be considering a race or were being urged to consider one or who might have jumped in under the right circumstances. Among the names that appeared on most such lists were senators Elizabeth Warren (Massachusetts), Mark Warner (Virginia), Cory Booker (New Jersey), and Amy Klobuchar (Minnesota); governors Andrew Cuomo (New York), John Hickenlooper (Colorado), and Steve Bullock (Montana); and former governor Deval Patrick (Massachusetts).<sup>3</sup>

The most conspicuous non-entrant into the 2016 Democratic race was incumbent vice president Joe Biden. Since 1960, it has been an axiom of American politics that the vice presidency, whatever its other limitations, is an unrivaled launching pad for winning a presidential nomination, although the position also seems to be a net liability in the general election.<sup>4</sup> Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale, George H. W. Bush, and Al Gore all used the vice presidency as a stepping stone to a presidential nomination. By some measures, moreover, Biden was among the more popular figures in the Obama administration. In early October 2015, Biden's favorability numbers were 46 percent favorable, 39 percent unfavorable, as compared to 47–47 for Obama and 42–51 for Hillary Clinton.<sup>5</sup>

Yet there also seems to have been a widespread perception, even among Democrats, that Biden just wasn't presidential material: too old (he would have been seventy-four when sworn into office), too gaffe-prone. As one participant at a 2014 liberal gathering told a reporter, "I love Joe Biden, but I can't imagine him running for president."<sup>6</sup> History offered ample support for this person's skepticism: Biden had run for the Democratic presidential

**Table 2.1** Announcement and Withdrawal Dates for 2016 Presidential Candidates

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Formal Announcement</i>	<i>Statement of Candidacy</i>	<i>Statement of Organization</i>	<i>Withdrawal Date</i>
<b>Democrats</b>				
Hillary Clinton	April 12, 2015	April 13, 2015	April 13, 2015	none
Bernie Sanders	April 30, 2015	April 30, 2015	April 30, 2015	July 12, 2016
Martin O'Malley	May 30, 2015	May 29, 2015	May 29, 2015	February 1, 2016
Lincoln Chafee	June 3, 2015	June 16, 2015	June 19, 2015	October 23, 2015
Jim Webb	July 2, 2015	July 14, 2015	July 14, 2015	October 20, 2015
<b>Republicans</b>				
Ted Cruz	March 23, 2015	March 23, 2015	March 23, 2015	May 3, 2016
Rand Paul	April 7, 2015	April 8, 2015	April 7, 2015	February 3, 2016
Marco Rubio	April 13, 2015	April 13, 2015	April 13, 2015	March 15, 2016
Carly Fiorina	May 4, 2015	May 4, 2015	May 4, 2015	February 10, 2016
Ben Carson	May 4, 2015	May 4, 2015	March 2, 2015	March 2, 2016
Mike Huckabee	May 5, 2015	May 2, 2015	May 8, 2015	February 1, 2016
Rick Santorum	May 27, 2015	May 27, 2015	May 27, 2015	February 3, 2016
George Pataki	May 28, 2015	June 1, 2015	May 19, 2015	December 29, 2015
Lindsey Graham	June 1, 2015	June 1, 2015	June 1, 2015	December 21, 2015
Rick Perry	June 4, 2015	June 19, 2015	June 14, 2015	September 11, 2015
Jeb Bush	June 15, 2015	June 15, 2015	June 15, 2015	February 20, 2016
Donald Trump	June 16, 2015	June 22, 2015	June 29, 2015	none
Bobby Jindal	June 24, 2015	June 29, 2015	June 29, 2015	November 17, 2015
Chris Christie	June 30, 2015	July 1, 2015	July 1, 2015	February 10, 2016
Scott Walker	July 13, 2015	August 5, 2015	July 2, 2015	September 21, 2015
John Kasich	July 21, 2015	July 23, 2015	July 23, 2015	May 4, 2016
Jim Gilmore	July 30, 2015	July 29, 2015	August 4, 2015	February 12, 2016

*Source:* Formal announcement and withdrawal dates are based on contemporary news coverage. Statements of candidacy and organization are taken from the official candidate filings with the Federal Election Commission, available at fec.gov.

nomination on two previous occasions—in 1988 and 2008—and both times had fared very poorly. In presidential primaries, vice presidents typically benefit from their close association with the incumbent president, who is almost always very popular among his own party's adherents.<sup>7</sup> In 2016, however, Hillary Clinton had as good a claim to the pro-Obama vote as Biden. After sending conflicting signals through much of Obama's second term, Biden finally announced on October 21, 2015, that he would not be a candidate for president in 2016.<sup>8</sup>

Biden may have been unwilling to undertake the rigors and stresses of a presidential campaign in part because he and his family were still grieving over the death of his oldest son from cancer in May 2015. But why did all the other Democrats listed earlier finally decide not to throw their hats in the ring?

One factor that scared off many potential opponents was all the obvious assets that made Clinton not just a likely candidate, not just a strong early front-runner, but also (or so most pundits informed us) an almost prohibitive favorite. She had universal name recognition, a depth and variety of governmental experience that none of her opponents could match, extensive support among other Democratic officials and party leaders, an unrivaled fundraising machine, and an experienced, battle-tested team of advisers and consultants. In polls of the potential Democratic primary electorate conducted in 2013 and 2014, Clinton absolutely dominated the field. About 60 percent of the nation's Democrats regularly said they wanted Clinton to be their party's 2016 presidential nominee. In second place was either Joe Biden or Elizabeth Warren, with only about 10 percent support. These sorts of numbers led one pundit to call Clinton the strongest nonincumbent presidential candidate ever.<sup>9</sup>

Had they paid more attention to history, however, Democrats might have been less impressed by Clinton's apparent advantages. In the Republican Party, early front-runners generally tend to win the presidential nomination. Among the more fractious, disorderly Democrats, by contrast, early front-runners have a much rockier track record.<sup>10</sup> That was what Edward Kennedy learned in 1980, what Gary Hart learned in 1988, and what Howard Dean found out in 2004. Walter Mondale only narrowly escaped the same fate in 1984. An even more relevant precedent, of course, was Clinton's own experience in 2008. That year, too, she had been a strong early favorite with a sizable lead in the polls (though not as large as the lead she enjoyed in 2013 and 2014). Once the actual primary and caucus season began, however, Clinton was quickly overtaken by a charismatic but relatively inexperienced Illinois senator named Barack Obama. In retrospect, it is surprising that more Democrats were unwilling to put her to the test again in 2016.

Another important factor working to Clinton's advantage was timing. The contemporary presidential nomination process generally requires prospective candidates to begin their planning years before the primary and

caucus season commences—but many of Clinton’s weaknesses were not so obvious until relatively late in the election. As Clinton occasionally lamented during the general election campaign, during her tenure as secretary of state she had been quite popular. According to one polling aggregation website, on February 4, 2013, three days after Clinton left that office, she was viewed favorably by 56 percent of the American public, while just 35 percent had an unfavorable opinion of her. Yet the Democrats cannot claim that they had no advance warning as to what lay ahead. Clinton’s popularity started to decline almost immediately after leaving office. By November 10, 2014, less than a week after the midterm elections, Clinton’s ratings were just barely positive: 48 percent favorable, 44 percent unfavorable. And by June 1, 2015, when there was still ample time for other candidates to enter the race, her numbers were “under water”: 44 percent favorable, 48 percent unfavorable.<sup>11</sup>

All of which suggests a final important reason for the small Democratic candidate field: The party had learned the wrong lesson from the last major Clinton scandal. In Bill Clinton’s second term as president, he had been hit with accusations that he had had an affair with a White House intern and then lied about it during a civil deposition. When those charges were first aired, lots of people—Republicans, Democrats, and members of the press alike—predicted that if the accusations were proven true, as they eventually were, there would be widespread public outrage and Clinton would be forced to resign. In fact, the American public was surprisingly unmoved by the whole controversy. Clinton’s approval ratings remained high, and when the House of Representatives nevertheless brought impeachment charges against him, polls regularly showed that a substantial majority of the public did not want the Senate to convict him.

When Republicans charged Hillary Clinton with maintaining a private email server in apparent violation of both State Department policy and federal law and thereby endangering classified information, lots of Democrats were inclined to dismiss the whole thing as a tempest in a teapot: as one more attempt by the Republicans to manufacture a scandal where none really existed. But this time, there was solid evidence that the public took the email scandal seriously. The general election exit polls, for example, included a question asking respondents how much Clinton’s use of a private email server bothered them. Fully 45 percent of the voters said it bothered them a lot; only 19 percent said it didn’t bother them at all.

In addition to the small number of declared candidates, one other prominent feature of the 2016 Democratic nomination race had become clearly visible by the summer of 2015: the emergence of Bernie Sanders as the main rival—indeed, the only real rival—to Hillary Clinton. In March 2015, as shown in Table 2.2, just 4 percent of the nation’s Democrats said they intended to vote for Sanders in the upcoming primaries and caucuses. But something in the Sanders candidacy caught on. His support jumped to 8 percent in April, to 15 percent in May, and to around 20 percent in August.

**Table 2.2** Presidential Nomination Preferences of National Democrats, January 1, 2015–February 1, 2016 (percent)

	Clinton	Sanders	Biden	O'Malley	Webb	Chafee	Warren
March 26–29, 2015	66	4	11	1	2		11
May 28–31, 2015	63	9	14	2	2	1	
July 16–19, 2015	62	14	14	1	2	1	
September 7–10, 2015	46	20	21	2	1	1	
October 15–18, 2015	54	23	16	1	1	*	
November 16–19, 2015	60	34		3			
December 10–13, 2015	59	28		5			
January 21–24, 2016	55	36		4			
<b>Quinnipiac</b>							
February 26–March 2, 2015	56	4	10	0	1		14
April 16–21, 2015	60	8	10	3	1	*	
May 19–26, 2015	57	15	9	1	1	1	
July 23–28, 2015	55	17	13	1	1	*	
August 20–25, 2015	45	22	18	1	1	*	
September 17–21, 2015	43	25	18	0	0	0	
October 29–November 2, 2015	53	35		0			
November 23–30, 2015	60	30		2			
December 16–20, 2015	61	30		2			

Source: All polls were conducted by ABC News and the Washington Post.

Note: Blank spaces indicate that that person's name was not included in the list of candidates read to survey respondents; asterisks indicate values less than 1 percent.

Meanwhile, the only other candidate besides Clinton who scored above the low single digits was Joe Biden, and even he lagged behind Sanders in most polls. In October, both Jim Webb and Lincoln Chafee acknowledged the obvious and withdrew from the race; on October 21, Biden ended any speculation that he would be a candidate. Polls conducted after these events showed quite starkly that the Democratic contest had become a two-person race, and that although Clinton was still the clear front-runner, her lead was considerably smaller than one might have anticipated from the polls conducted just a year or two earlier. In late November, for example, a Quinnipiac University Poll gave Clinton 60 percent of the vote, 30 percent to Sanders, and just 2 percent to Martin O'Malley.

Polls in the crucial early states of Iowa and New Hampshire showed an even closer race. In Iowa, two early September 2015 polls found Sanders leading Clinton, though she would regain the lead later that month. In the Granite State, where Sanders had the substantial benefit of living in neighboring Vermont, Sanders led the polls almost continuously from August 2015 to the primary in early February 2016.<sup>12</sup>

The rise of Bernie Sanders was a mixed blessing for the Clinton campaign. Obviously, she and her supporters hoped that none of her opponents would catch on and that she would thus have an essentially uncontested path to the nomination. Yet, if she was going to have a single major opponent, she could have done worse than Sanders. Sanders's message of economic inequality and how the system was rigged against ordinary Americans undoubtedly resonated with many voters, especially younger voters. But as we will see later, Sanders's appeal also had some decided limitations. In particular, lots of Democrats proved unwilling to give their presidential nomination to a man who had spent his entire political career running as an independent.

Her poll numbers aside, Clinton had one other advantage that became increasingly controversial as the 2016 primary season approached: her huge lead among the so-called superdelegates. Superdelegates—in party rules they are formally known as unpledged party leaders and elected officials—are a special class of delegates to the Democratic National Convention. When the Democrats redesigned their delegate selection rules in the early 1970s, one conspicuous consequence was a sharp decline in the number of major Democratic elected officials, including senators and governors, who served as convention delegates. So in 1982, the party decided to give automatic delegate status to certain types of elected officials and party leaders. Superdelegates, that is to say, are not chosen in the primaries and caucuses, nor are they bound by the results in their home state or district. They become national convention delegates because of the party or governmental positions they hold and can vote for whichever candidate they want. Though the rules have been tweaked a bit over time, since 1996 all members of the Democratic National Committee, all Democratic members of the U.S. House and Senate, all Democratic governors, and a few other “distinguished

party leaders” have been awarded automatic delegate seats at the national convention.<sup>13</sup> In 2016, that meant there were 712 superdelegates, or about 15 percent of the convention total.

Not surprisingly, given Clinton’s and Sanders’s very different past relationships with the Democratic Party, it soon became clear that the superdelegates had given Clinton a large lead in the delegate count before a single caucus or primary had taken place. As of November 2015, according to a count by the Associated Press, 359 superdelegates were publicly committed to Clinton; just 8 said they would vote for Sanders.<sup>14</sup>

### The Race Takes Shape: Republicans

Until June 2015, the 2016 Republican nomination race looked to be a fairly conventional affair. There was by then a sizable contingent of declared candidates, with a number of others clearly planning to join the race. But large candidate fields are actually the norm in nomination races for the party that does not control the White House. By some counts, the Democrats had fourteen announced candidates in 1972, seventeen in 1976. The full roster of 2016 Republican candidates, along with their announcement dates, is in Table 2.1.

What was unusual, at least for Republicans, was the absence of an early front-runner. In polls of the nation’s Republicans conducted throughout 2014 and the first few months of 2015 (see Table 2.3), no candidate was ever supported by more than about 20 percent of the potential party electorate. Putting aside Paul Ryan and Mitt Romney, both of whom ultimately decided not to enter the race, most early polls showed Jeb Bush, Mike Huckabee, and Rand Paul competing for the top slot, but none of them established anything like the clear lead that Ronald Reagan had over every other Republican in 1978 and 1979, that George H. W. Bush enjoyed in 1986 and 1987, or that Bob Dole had in 1994 and 1995.<sup>15</sup>

One other lesson from the data in Table 2.3 is the severe beating the Bush name had sustained from the presidency of George W. When Republicans wanted a candidate to regain the White House in 2000, they had, to a remarkable extent, rallied around the candidacy of the then-governor of Texas. By March 1999, more than 50 percent of the nation’s Republicans said they wanted Bush to be their next nominee. By the time George W. Bush left office, however, most Republicans apparently wanted nothing more to do with the Bushes. Even with his substantial advantage in early name recognition, Jeb Bush never exceeded 20 percent support in the polls shown in Table 2.3.

And then, on June 16, in the atrium of his own skyscraper, Donald Trump announced that he too would be a candidate for the 2016 Republican nomination. The race—and, it may turn out, the country—were never the same after that.



**Table 2.3** Presidential Nomination Preferences of National Republicans, January 1, 2014–February 1, 2016 (percent)

	<i>January 2014</i>	<i>April 2014</i>	<i>October 2014</i>	<i>December 2014</i>	<i>March 2015</i>	<i>May 2015</i>
Jeb Bush	18	12	10	10	20	13
Ben Carson			6	7	7	7
Chris Christie	13	9	8	6	6	5
Ted Cruz	12	7	3	6	13	7
Carly Fiorina					1	2
Lindsey Graham					1	1
Mike Huckabee		14	10	6	8	9
Bobby Jindal		2	1	2	1	1
John Kasich		1	1	2	1	3
George Pataki						1
Rand Paul	11	15	9	9	9	11
Rick Perry		5	5	4	2	2
Mitt Romney			21	21		
Paul Ryan	20	12	5	8		
Marco Rubio	10	6	6	4	7	9
Rick Santorum			4	3	2	3
Donald Trump						5
Scott Walker		5	1	5	12	11
	<i>July 2015</i>	<i>September 2015</i>	<i>October 2015</i>	<i>November 2015</i>	<i>December 2015</i>	<i>January 2016</i>
Jeb Bush	13	10	7	6	5	5
Ben Carson	6	18	22	22	12	7
Chris Christie	4	1	3	2	4	4
Ted Cruz	4	7	6	8	15	21
Carly Fiorina	*	2	5	4	1	3
Lindsey Graham	*	*	1	1	1	
Mike Huckabee	7	3	3	3	1	2

(Continued)

**Table 2.3** (Continued)

	July 2015	September 2015	October 2015	November 2015	December 2015	January 2016
Bobby Jindal	2	1				
John Kasich	2	3	2	3	2	2
George Pataki	2	*	1	*	0	
Rand Paul	6	4	2	3	2	1
Rick Perry	3	1				
Marco Rubio	9	6	10	11	12	11
Rick Santorum	1	1	*	1	*	*
Donald Trump	23	34	32	32	38	37
Scott Walker	11	2				

Source: All polls were conducted by ABC News and the *Washington Post*.

Note: Blank spaces indicate that that person's name was not included in the list of candidates read to survey respondents; asterisks indicate values less than 1 percent.

It was no great shock that Trump declared his candidacy. He had publicly toyed with the idea in several previous elections. He undoubtedly loved being in the public spotlight, and running for president offered him a new opportunity to speak in front of large crowds, give interviews, and appear on national television. What was surprising was what happened after his announcement: Trump's poll numbers immediately started on a long and sustained increase. By late July 2015, he was clearly the Republican front-runner—and save for a three-day period in early November, he never surrendered that position.<sup>16</sup> By early December, he had a 15-percentage-point lead over the rest of the GOP field. The final poll in Table 2.3, taken just a week before the Iowa caucuses, showed Trump with the support of 37 percent of the country's Republicans. The only two candidates within shouting distance were Ted Cruz, at 21 percent, and Marco Rubio, at 11 percent.

Why Trump, a political novice with a highly negative public image, was able to win the Republican nomination is a knotty question that will receive a more extended examination later in this chapter. But three points should be mentioned here, as they go far toward explaining his rise in the pre-primary polls. First, though he spent relatively little on paid advertising, Trump received an extraordinary amount of free publicity—what is sometimes called “earned media”—on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, and in online sources. Throughout his campaign, Trump complained about his treatment by most major media organizations. But no matter how much reporters and editors may have disliked Trump and impugned his policies and abilities, they couldn't resist covering him. As CBS president

Les Moonves said in a moment of candor, “It may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS. . . . The money’s rolling in and this is fun. I’ve never seen anything like this, and this [is] going to be a very good year for us. Sorry. It’s a terrible thing to say. But bring it on, Donald. Keep going.”<sup>17</sup> At the end of February 2016, a firm called mediaQuant estimated that Trump had received the equivalent of \$1.898 billion in free media coverage. The next-most-favored candidate, Hillary Clinton, had received just \$746 million. The second-most-covered Republican candidate, Ted Cruz, had received \$313 million worth of coverage, less than one-sixth of what Trump had been given.<sup>18</sup> In an election in which no other Republican candidate except perhaps Jeb Bush was well-known, the media probably helped Trump far more than they hurt him.

Second, though much of what Trump said was highly controversial and helped give him a decisively negative public image, he was clearly saying things that some people—especially Republican people—wanted to hear. A particularly good example is the immigration issue, the most publicized subject in Trump’s announcement speech, the issue that probably best explains his initial rise in the polls. As is true of many policy issues, public opinion about immigration is complicated. Depending on what is asked about and how the question is worded, support can be found for a variety of different postures and policy options. But there is a good deal of evidence to show that lots of Americans—in many cases, a clear majority—do not believe that our borders are secure and think that illegal immigration imposes a variety of significant costs on the country. Yet the two most recent presidents, Bush and Obama, were almost entirely unwilling to recognize the problem, much less work to solve it. So when Trump accused illegal immigrants of bringing crime and drugs to America, many of his listeners thought he was only telling a much-needed truth.

Finally, Trump became the Republican front-runner because most of his opponents refused to take him seriously. Until far too late in the campaign, his opponents assumed that Trump was a flash in the pan, a passing fad whose campaign would collapse once the voters got a good look at him. Most of Trump’s rivals accordingly designed their campaigns on the premise that their proximate task was to emerge as Trump’s principal rival. Then, facing Trump in a one-on-one contest, they thought they could easily put him to rout and wrap up the nomination. Well after Trump had assumed the lead in all the polls, the other Republican candidates spent far more time and money attacking each other than going after Trump.

Perhaps the best example of this tendency was Right to Rise, the well-funded Super PAC that was organized to boost the campaign of Jeb Bush. In August 2015, Mike Murphy, the chief strategist of Right to Rise, openly described his organization’s battle plan: “If other campaigns wish that we’re going to uncork money on Donald Trump, they’ll be disappointed. Trump is, frankly, other people’s problem. We’d be happy to have a two-way race with Trump in the end, and we have every confidence that Governor Bush

would beat him.”<sup>19</sup> Murphy was true to his word. As of mid-February 2016, according to a study by ProPublica, Right to Rise had spent just 4 percent of its funds attacking Trump, less than a quarter of the money they spent attacking John Kasich, one seventh of the money they used to attack Marco Rubio.<sup>20</sup> Said one conservative commentator, “Right to Rise, like an all-pro right guard, helped clear a path for Trump by blocking several of his would-be tacklers, in particular Marco Rubio.”<sup>21</sup>

### The Delegate Selection Season: Democrats

The Democratic primary and caucus season, which ran from February 1 through June 14, was not, on the whole, a particularly suspenseful affair. It began on an auspicious note for the Sanders campaign. The Vermont senator came within an eyelash of beating Clinton in the Iowa caucuses, clobbered her in the New Hampshire primary, and then finished a close second in the Nevada caucuses. Hovering over these results was Clinton’s experience in the 2008 Democratic nomination race, when she had entered the primary season with a large lead in the national polls, only to lose most of the primaries and caucuses—and thus the nomination—to Barack Obama. Would something similar, many observers wondered, happen in 2016?

Any such apprehensions were decisively put to rest by the results of the South Carolina primary on February 27. In 2008, it was South Carolina that had first shown just how formidable Obama’s candidacy would be. Largely because of his appeal to black voters, Obama trounced Clinton in the Palmetto State by a two-to-one margin. In 2016, South Carolina sent a very different message. This time it was Sanders who had trouble appealing to black voters. Sixty-one percent of the South Carolina Democratic primary electorate was black, and 86 percent of them voted for Clinton. Add in a small majority of the white vote, and Clinton won an overwhelming victory, 73 percent to 26 percent. Three days later, she won seven of the nine primaries held on March 1 (one of the exceptions was Sanders’s home state of Vermont), then won all but one of the nine remaining Democratic primaries held in March. (As we will see later, it was Sanders’s success in the caucuses that made his campaign appear more competitive than it really was.) According to most media delegate counts, Clinton clinched the Democratic nomination on June 6, with six primaries still to take place.

In light of the controversy over the role of the superdelegates, it is important to emphasize that Clinton did *not* win the 2016 Democratic nomination because of them. Had there been no superdelegate provision in the Democratic Party rules, Clinton would still have won a solid majority of the convention delegates, 2,205 (54 percent) to 1,846 for Sanders (46 percent).<sup>22</sup> Clinton’s advantage among superdelegates undoubtedly padded her lead: With the superdelegates added in, she received 60 percent of the votes in the actual convention balloting.<sup>23</sup> It may also have helped reassure some

of her more nervous supporters in the weeks before South Carolina. But the bottom line is that Clinton won in 2016 because most Democrats wanted her to be their party's nominee and expressed that preference in the primaries and caucuses.

Clinton's popularity among her party's ordinary, rank-and-file voters emerged with special clarity in the primaries, the complete results of which are shown in Table 2.4. Of the thirty-nine Democratic presidential primaries held in 2016, Clinton won twenty-nine, receiving 55 percent of the total vote to just 43 percent for Sanders. In most other subfields of American political science, an election in which the winner bests his or her closest competitor by 13 percentage points would not be considered close. As indicated in Table 2.5, Sanders fared far better in the caucuses, winning twelve of fourteen. Thus, one could say, Clinton won thirty-one of fifty-three contests. But this way of summarizing the results significantly understates the extent of Clinton's dominance. Caucuses tend to be held in small states; large states almost always select their delegates via primary. Of the twenty most populous states in America in 2016, only one (Washington) held a Democratic caucus. Clinton's thirty-one victories thus included wins in the nine most-populous states, whereas many of Sanders's victories came in states with comparatively small populations.

Caucuses, moreover, have often been criticized for doing a poor job of representing the concerns and preferences of ordinary voters. Caucuses are almost always characterized by very small turnout rates—usually no more than about 2 or 3 percent of the party electorate—and are thus susceptible to domination by a small number of zealous candidate and issue activists.<sup>24</sup> Nebraska's experience in 2016 provides an instructive example. On March 5, Nebraska held precinct caucuses, the results of which were used to select twenty-five delegates to the Democratic National Convention. On May 10, Nebraska also held a presidential primary, but the primary was purely advisory—it had no effect on the selection or binding of any convention delegates. Whereas just 33,460 participated in the delegate-selecting caucuses, 80,436 people voted in the nonbinding primary. And although Sanders won the Nebraska caucuses 57 percent to 43 percent, Clinton won the more participatory primary 53 percent to 47 percent.

In sum, whatever criticisms Sanders and his supporters may have about the 2016 presidential nomination process, they cannot reasonably complain that Hillary Clinton won even though the voters really preferred him. The primary results, in particular, speak loudly to the contrary. As for Sanders's disproportionate success in the caucuses, this may only reflect the fact that caucuses have such a small and unrepresentative voter turnout. A more broadly based delegate selection device, such as a primary, would probably have awarded even more delegates to Clinton.

To get a better sense of why Clinton prevailed, Table 2.6 combines the results of twenty-five separate exit polls, which were conducted after almost every Democratic primary held between February 9 and May 10. Sanders had

**Table 2.4** Democratic Presidential Primary Results

<i>Date</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Clinton</i>	<i>Sanders</i>
February 9	New Hampshire	37.7%	60.1%
February 27	South Carolina	73.4	26.0
March 1	Alabama	77.8	19.2
March 1	Arkansas	66.1	30.0
March 1	Georgia	71.3	28.2
March 1	Massachusetts	49.7	48.3
March 1	Oklahoma	41.5	51.9
March 1	Tennessee	66.1	32.5
March 1	Texas	65.2	33.2
March 1	Vermont	13.6	85.7
March 1	Virginia	64.3	35.2
March 5	Louisiana	71.1	23.2
March 8	Michigan	48.3	49.7
March 8	Mississippi	82.5	16.6
March 15	Florida	64.4	33.3
March 15	Illinois	50.6	48.6
March 15	Missouri	49.6	49.4
March 15	North Carolina	54.5	40.9
March 15	Ohio	56.1	43.1
March 22	Arizona	56.3	41.4
April 5	Wisconsin	43.0	56.6
April 19	New York	57.5	41.6
April 26	Connecticut	51.8	46.4
April 26	Delaware	59.8	39.2
April 26	Maryland	62.5	33.8
April 26	Pennsylvania	55.6	43.5
April 26	Rhode Island	42.2	53.6
May 3	Indiana	47.5	52.5
May 10	Nebraska	53.1	46.9
May 10	West Virginia	35.8	51.4
May 17	Kentucky	46.8	46.3
May 17	Oregon	42.1	56.2
May 24	Washington	52.4	47.6

<i>Date</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Clinton</i>	<i>Sanders</i>
June 7	California	53.1	46.0
June 7	Montana	44.2	51.6
June 7	New Jersey	63.3	36.7
June 7	New Mexico	51.5	48.5
June 7	South Dakota	51.0	49.0
June 14	District of Columbia	78.0	20.7
Summary Statistics	Total vote	17,121,442	13,210,249
	Percent	55.5	42.8
	Number of primaries won	29	10

*Source:* In most cases, primary results are based on the actual data reported by the state boards of elections, with occasional supplementary information from *The Green Papers* (thegreenpapers.com).

**Table 2.5** Democratic Caucus Results

<i>Date</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Clinton</i>	<i>Sanders</i>
February 1	Iowa <sup>a</sup>	49.8%	49.6%
February 20	Nevada <sup>a</sup>	52.6	47.3
March 1	Colorado	40.3	59.0
March 1	Minnesota	38.1	61.2
March 5	Kansas	32.3	67.7
March 5	Nebraska	42.9	57.1
March 6	Maine <sup>a</sup>	35.5	64.3
March 22	Idaho	21.2	78.0
March 22	Utah	19.8	77.2
March 26	Alaska	20.2	79.6
March 26	Hawaii	30.0	69.7
March 26	Washington <sup>a</sup>	27.1	72.7
April 9	Wyoming <sup>a</sup>	44.3	55.7
June 7	North Dakota <sup>a</sup>	25.6	64.2
Summary Statistics	Average percentage	34.3	64.5
	Number of caucuses won	2	12

<sup>a</sup>Entries are the percentage of delegates each candidate won to the next round of delegate selection meetings (usually a state convention). In all other states, entries are the percentage of actual votes cast at the caucuses.

**Table 2.6** Who Voted for Whom in the 2016 Democratic Primaries: Cumulative Results from New Hampshire through West Virginia

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Percent of the Primary Electorate</i>	<i>Percent Voting for Clinton</i>	<i>Percent Voting for Sanders</i>
All 25 Primaries		56	42
<b>Gender</b>			
Men	42	52	47
Women	58	64	35
<b>Age</b>			
18–29	16	30	69
30–44	23	52	47
45–64	40	67	32
65 or older	20	72	25
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
White	60	49	49
Black	27	79	20
Latino	9	NA	NA
Asian	2	NA	NA
Other	3	NA	NA
<b>Education</b>			
High school or less	16	66	32
Some college	31	55	44
College graduate	30	55	43
Postgraduate	23	61	38
<b>Income</b>			
Less than \$30,000	20	62	37
\$30,000–\$50,000	22	56	43
\$50,000–\$100,000	31	55	43
\$100,000 or more	27	60	38
<b>Party Identification</b>			
Democrat	75	66	33
Independent	22	36	62
Republican	3	NA	NA
<b>Ideology</b>			
Very liberal	25	51	48
Somewhat liberal	36	58	42



Variable	Percent of the Primary Electorate	Percent Voting for Clinton	Percent Voting for Sanders
Moderate	32	65	34
Conservative	7	NA	NA
<b>Most Important Issue</b>			
Health care	21	63	36
Economy/jobs	40	61	37
Terrorism	11	69	28
Income inequality	25	45	54
<b>Top Candidate Quality</b>			
Electability	13	82	17
Cares	28	45	54
Honest	26	28	71
Experience	31	88	11
<b>Next President Should</b>			
Continue Obama policies	54	74	26
Be more liberal	29	33	67
Be less liberal	12	41	49

Source: Results for individual state exit polls were taken from CNN.com. State turnout figures were taken from *The Green Papers* (thegreenpapers.com).

Note: Entries represent the percentage of the primary vote received in twenty-five Democratic primaries (New Hampshire through West Virginia), weighted by state turnout. "NA" indicates that there were so few respondents in the given category that the results were not reported in most exit polls.

great appeal for younger primary voters: He won 69 percent of the votes cast by those aged eighteen to twenty-nine. He also won a majority of the votes cast by independents, those whose most important issue was income inequality, and the 29 percent of Democratic primary voters who thought that the next president should be more liberal than Obama.

As suggested earlier, however, the exit polls also show some major limitations on the Sanders vote. The first such limitation involved *partisanship*. Not everyone who votes in a Democratic primary thinks of themselves as Democrats: 22 percent of Democratic primary voters identified as independents; 3 percent said they were Republicans. But 75 percent *were* Democrats, and most Democrats were understandably reluctant to vote for a man who had joined the party only when he decided to seek its presidential nomination. Among Democrats, 66 percent voted for Clinton, just 33 percent for Sanders.

A second important limitation on the Sanders vote was *race*. As was often noted during the campaign, Sanders had trouble talking about the special concerns of minority voters. Part of the problem may have been that

all of his previous elections had taken place in Vermont, a state that has only the smallest trace of black or Hispanic residents. As a self-declared socialist, moreover, Sanders tended to see most problems as economic in nature. One political scientist commented, “That’s kind of the fundamental problem between some blacks and white progressives, this notion that white progressives talk about class so much, that they forget that there’s class diversity within African-American communities. And that there are ways that racism affects blacks regardless of their class status.”<sup>25</sup> The result was that whereas white voters split their ballots evenly between Clinton and Sanders, Clinton won 79 percent of the black vote to just 20 percent for Sanders. The candidate preferences of Hispanic voters were reported for only four states—Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New York—but in these states, Clinton out-pollled Sanders 67 percent to 33 percent among Hispanics.

There are also indications in Table 2.6 that at least some Democrats thought Sanders’s views were too extreme. Although voters who said they were “very liberal” divided about equally between Clinton and Sanders, Clinton won 65 percent of the votes cast by self-described moderates. Only 13 percent of Democrats said that electability was the “top candidate quality” they were looking for—but 82 percent of them voted for Clinton.

Lest it seem that Clinton won only because of Sanders’s weaknesses, there is also evidence in Table 2.6 of the many positive reasons that Democrats were attracted to her candidacy. She won 64 percent of the votes cast by women, while also winning a small majority of the men’s vote. Almost a third of Democratic primary voters said that “experience” was the quality they valued most in a presidential candidate—and 88 percent of them voted for Clinton. Those who were most concerned with the terrorism issue also saw Clinton as a better choice than Sanders.

Finally, a word should be said about the charge that the Democratic National Committee had rigged the nomination process in Clinton’s favor. Though the Sanders campaign had been complaining about the DNC’s role throughout the nomination campaign, these protests received special attention in the days immediately before the Democratic convention, when Wikileaks released the text of some 20,000 emails that had been sent by a small number of top DNC officials. Over the next few days, the Internet was filled with stories headlined “Leaked DNC Emails Confirm Democrats Rigged Primary” and “DNC Undermined Democracy.”<sup>26</sup> The most notable result of the furor was to compel the resignation of DNC chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

The Wikileaks emails do show that many top DNC officials disliked Sanders and wished his campaign would end. Some of what the party did probably violated the Democratic Party charter, which requires that “national officers and staff of the Democratic National Committee maintain impartiality and evenhandedness during the Democratic Party Presidential nominating process.”<sup>27</sup> In general, however, what the emails really show is how little the national party organization can do to aid a candidate it favors.

In one of the offending emails, a DNC officer raised the possibility of accusing Sanders of being an atheist, in order to reduce his vote in the upcoming Kentucky and West Virginia primaries. The suggestion was never acted upon, however—and, if it had been a good idea, could easily have been implemented by the Clinton campaign itself or by one of its surrogates. The DNC’s press secretary also suggested trying to “push a narrative” that the Sanders campaign “was a mess.” Again, not a particularly devastating accusation—and there does not seem to have been any follow-up. Several DNC officials, including Wasserman Schultz, said a variety of uncomplimentary or dismissive things about Sanders, but none of these statements was ever made public until the Wikileaks release. Many of the alleged “smoking gun” emails were purely defensive in character. The DNC consulted with a Clinton campaign lawyer—but only because the Sanders campaign had attacked the two organizations for improperly conducting a joint fundraising operation. When the Rhode Island state government decided to open up a relatively limited number of polling places for its April 26 primary, the DNC worried that if Clinton fared better than she was doing in the polls, the “Bernie camp will go nuts and allege misconduct.” Although the decision of the Rhode Island government may have been wrong, the DNC’s reaction was neither improper nor surprising. And since Sanders won the primary anyway, the DNC’s fears never materialized.

The one thing the DNC did that may have had a significant effect on the outcome of the Democratic race was the way it chose to organize and structure the candidate debates. Unlike past nomination contests, when the national party organizations had generally left the debates to whichever groups and news outlets cared to organize them, in the 2016 election both the Democratic and Republican National Committees attempted to impose their own debate calendar on the candidates, apparently on the assumption that there had been too many debates in past years, to the detriment of the party in the general election. As a result, on May 5, 2015, the DNC announced that this time there would be only six debates among the Democratic presidential candidates, as compared to more than twenty in 2008.<sup>28</sup> When the schedule was announced, it was widely interpreted as an attempt by the DNC to shield Clinton, the clear early front-runner, from the exposure and attacks she was likely to receive during an extended series of debates. As if to confirm this criticism, the number of debates was later increased to nine—but only because the Clinton campaign requested the addition. Widespread criticisms of the truncated debate calendar from other Democrats, including former DNC chair Howard Dean and House minority leader Nancy Pelosi, were simply ignored.

Several other features of the debates were also said to work in Clinton’s favor. An unusual number of them were scheduled for the weekend or other times when the viewing audience was likely to be comparatively small. The rules were also set so that Clinton received a disproportionate amount of the speaking time.

It is difficult to say what would have happened if the DNC had not set up the debates this way. No doubt a larger number of debates and a more even division of speaking time would have given the second-tier candidates a chance to make their case to a wider audience. But would any of them actually have taken advantage of the opportunity? It is always difficult to predict just which candidates will “catch on” with the voters. Based on their performances in the debates in which they did participate, however, O’Malley, Webb, and Chafee seem unlikely to have lit up the nation’s television screens. Moreover, the DNC’s worries notwithstanding, Hillary Clinton was herself a formidable debater.

### The Delegate Selection Season: Republicans

The Republicans’ invisible primary ended, as we have seen, with Donald Trump holding a significant lead in the polls over a large field of declared candidates. The emergence of a clear front-runner is a fairly common occurrence in contemporary presidential nomination races. Much the same thing had occurred in the Democratic nomination race of 1984 and the Republican contests of 1980, 1988, 1996, and 2000. Typically, this sets up a competition among the non-front-runners to see who will emerge as the principal rival to the early leader, with the first two events on the delegate selection calendar—the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary—generally playing a major role in thinning out the field and establishing at least some sort of “pecking order” among those who make it through the first hurdles.

If Ted Cruz was to score an early win in 2016, few venues could have provided a better opportunity than the Iowa caucuses. As in past years, attendance at the Iowa caucuses was top heavy with two groups that the Cruz campaign had long targeted: 40 percent of the 2016 Iowa Republican caucus attendees described their ideology as “very conservative,” and 64 percent said they were born-again or evangelical Christians. Cruz won 44 percent of the votes cast by the former group, 34 percent from the latter, and thus eked out a narrow win over Trump, 28 percent to 24 percent.<sup>29</sup> Marco Rubio came in a respectable third, with 23 percent.

Cruz would soon learn a lesson, however, that had also been taught to past Iowa winners such as Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum: The profile of the New Hampshire primary electorate is very different from that of the Iowa caucusers, which means that success in the first event frequently doesn’t transfer to success in the second. Though 71 percent of New Hampshire Republicans said they were conservative, only 26 percent were “very conservative.” More important, Granite State conservatives are of the traditional limited-government variety, not the social and cultural conservatives who dominate Republican politics in the Iowa caucuses and many Sunbelt states. Just 25 percent of New Hampshire Republican voters said they were born-again Christians, the second smallest percentage of the twenty-four Republican primary electorates for which 2016 exit poll data exist.

On January 31, the day before Iowa, Cruz stood at 11 percent in the New Hampshire polls—almost exactly where he finished eight days later. The Iowa win, in other words, brought him not a bit of additional support in New Hampshire.

The candidate who did seem to be riding a wave of momentum in the first few days after Iowa was third-place finisher Marco Rubio. His numbers in the *Real Clear Politics* polling average in New Hampshire jumped from 10 percent on January 31 to 16 percent on February 6. And then came one of the critical moments in the 2016 campaign.

On the Saturday before the primary, the major candidates took part in a debate. In a by-now familiar pattern, New Jersey governor Chris Christie, who was lagging badly in the polls, trained his fire not on front-runner Trump, but on Rubio. The key exchange began when Rubio was asked about Christie's warning against "voting for another first-term senator as America did with Barack Obama in 2008." Rubio responded by offering a quick, nonspecific list of his accomplishments, then said, "And let's dispel once and for all with this fiction that Barack Obama doesn't know what he's doing. He knows exactly what he's doing. Barack Obama is undertaking a systematic effort to change this country, to make America more like the rest of the world."

The debate moderator then turned to Governor Christie, who said of Rubio, "You have not been involved in a consequential decision where you had to be held accountable. You just simply haven't. . . . The fact is it does matter when you have to make decisions and be held accountable for them." Rubio offered a brief criticism of Christie's gubernatorial record, then repeated the claim he had made a minute earlier: "Let's dispel with this fiction that Barack Obama doesn't know what he's doing. He knows exactly what he's doing. He is trying to change this country." And now Christie pounced: "You see, everybody, I want the people at home to think about this. That's what Washington, D.C. does. The drive-by shot at the beginning with incorrect and incomplete information and then the memorized 25-second speech that is exactly what his advisors gave him." In response, Rubio offered another criticism of Christie's record and then, as if to confirm everything Christie said, repeated his main rebuttal line a third time: "This notion that Barack Obama doesn't know what he's doing is just not true. He knows exactly what he's doing." "There it is," Christie said exultantly. "There it is. The memorized 25-second speech. There it is, everybody."<sup>30</sup>

Rubio's inability to offer a more plausible defense of his capacity to be president, endlessly replayed on television, was immediately recognized as one of "the gravest debate lapses of modern presidential campaign history."<sup>31</sup> Never again would Rubio be a serious threat to win the Republican nomination.

Three days later, when New Hampshire voters went to the polls, the results could not have been better for Donald Trump. On the one hand, the New York businessman won a thumping victory, beating his

nearest competitor by almost 20 percentage points. At the same time, New Hampshire put a significant damper on whatever momentum both Cruz and Rubio had acquired in Iowa. Cruz finished third, with just under 12 percent of the vote. Rubio fell to fifth place, with 11 percent. In one final bit of good fortune for Trump, a fourth candidate, John Kasich, did just well enough to keep him in the race. Having spent an enormous amount of time campaigning personally in New Hampshire, Kasich finished second—a distant second—to Trump. Kasich, who had a solid conservative record both in Congress and as governor of Ohio, had decided to present himself to the Republican electorate in 2016 as a moderate and unifier. As subsequent primaries would prove, such a stance would bring Kasich some support in a handful of northeastern states, but gave him little chance of winning the nomination. His continued presence in the Republican race, however, meant that the anti-Trump vote remained even more finely divided. Kasich would also prove to be a disruptive presence in future debates. Whenever Cruz and Rubio would attack Trump, Kasich, who refused to criticize any of his opponents, could usually be counted on to change the subject when it was his turn to speak.

With three significant opponents still in the race, none of whom had yet clearly emerged as the main rival to Trump, and with Trump himself still dominating the media, the real estate mogul won sixteen of the next nineteen primaries. Particularly noteworthy was his March 15 victory in the Florida primary, Rubio's home state, which finally convinced the Florida senator to drop out of the race. As can be seen in Table 2.7, not once during this time period did Trump win a majority of the primary vote. In more than half of his early victories, he was held under 40 percent.

Trump did stumble in Wisconsin, where the combination of a united party establishment, heavy Super PAC spending, and strong opposition from some local talk radio hosts gave Cruz a significant victory. Unfortunately for Cruz, the next primary on the Republican calendar was in New York, Trump's home state. Never a great venue for the Texas senator, Cruz had further diminished his chances in the Empire State by saying back in January that Trump embodied "New York values," with the clear implication that such values were viewed unfavorably by the rest of the country. The result, on April 19, was a blowout win for Trump, in which he garnered 60 percent of the vote to 25 percent for Kasich and just 15 percent for Cruz. Trump followed that up with five more impressive victories in northeastern states, in each case winning a solid majority of the vote.

That set up the Indiana primary on May 3 as the final showdown between Trump and his two last rivals. Cruz threw all of his remaining resources into Indiana, a conservative state that might in other circumstances have been a favorable locale for the Texas senator. But the Trump juggernaut proved impossible to stop. Trump won 53 percent of the vote in the Hoosier State, and by the next day both Cruz and Kasich had withdrawn.

**Table 2.7** Republican Presidential Primary Results

<i>Date</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Trump</i>	<i>Cruz</i>	<i>Kasich</i>	<i>Rubio</i>
February 9	New Hampshire	35.2%	11.6%	15.7%	10.5%
February 20	South Carolina	32.5	22.3	7.6	22.5
March 1	Alabama	43.4	21.1	4.4	18.7
March 1	Arkansas	32.8	30.5	3.7	24.8
March 1	Georgia	38.8	23.6	5.6	24.4
March 1	Massachusetts	49.0	9.5	17.9	17.7
March 1	Oklahoma	28.3	34.4	3.6	26.0
March 1	Tennessee	38.9	24.7	5.3	21.2
March 1	Texas	26.8	43.8	4.2	17.7
March 1	Vermont	32.3	9.6	30.0	19.1
March 1	Virginia	34.8	16.7	9.5	32.0
March 5	Louisiana	41.4	37.8	6.4	11.2
March 8	Idaho	28.1	45.4	7.4	15.9
March 8	Michigan	36.5	24.7	24.3	9.3
March 8	Mississippi	47.2	36.1	8.8	5.3
March 15	Florida	45.7	17.1	6.8	27.0
March 15	Illinois	38.8	30.2	19.7	8.7
March 15	Missouri	40.8	40.6	10.1	6.1
March 15	North Carolina	40.2	36.8	12.7	7.7
March 15	Ohio	35.9	13.3	47.0	2.3
March 22	Arizona	45.8	27.5	10.5	11.6
April 5	Wisconsin	35.0	48.2	14.1	1.0
April 19	New York	60.2	14.8	25.1	0.0
April 26	Connecticut	57.9	11.7	28.3	0.0
April 26	Delaware	60.8	15.9	20.4	0.9
April 26	Maryland	54.1	19.0	23.2	0.7
April 26	Pennsylvania	56.6	21.7	19.4	0.7
April 26	Rhode Island	62.9	10.3	24.0	0.6
May 3	Indiana	53.3	36.6	7.6	0.5
May 10	Nebraska	61.5	18.4	11.4	3.6
May 10	West Virginia	77.1	9.0	6.7	1.4
May 17	Oregon	64.2	16.6	15.8	0.0
May 24	Washington	75.5	10.8	9.8	0.0

*(Continued)*

**Table 2.7** (Continued)

<i>Date</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Trump</i>	<i>Cruz</i>	<i>Kasich</i>	<i>Rubio</i>
June 7	California	74.8	9.5	11.3	0.0
June 7	Montana	73.7	9.4	6.9	3.3
June 7	New Jersey	80.4	6.2	13.4	0.0
June 7	New Mexico	70.6	13.3	7.6	0.0
June 7	South Dakota	67.1	17.0	15.9	0.0
Summary Statistics	Total vote	13,757,244	7,452,060	4,197,460	3,324,927
	Percent	45.6	24.7	13.9	11.0
	Number of primaries won	33	4	1	0

*Source:* In most cases, primary results are based on the actual data reported by the state boards of elections, with occasional supplementary information from *The Green Papers* (thegreenpapers.com).

In all, as can be seen in Table 2.7, Trump won thirty-three of the thirty-eight Republican presidential primaries held in 2016, to just four for Cruz. John Kasich's lone victory came in his home state of Ohio. On the other hand, Trump finished with just 45 percent of the total primary vote, the lowest percentage for a Republican presidential nominee since the delegate selection rules were rewritten in the early 1970s. Like Bernie Sanders, Trump's opponents fared far better in the caucuses (see Table 2.8). Trump won just three of the eleven 2016 Republican caucuses.

Table 2.9 combines the results of twenty-four exit polls conducted after all of the major Republican primaries that took place before Cruz and Kasich withdrew. In strictly demographic terms, there is nothing terribly striking about the Trump vote: He succeeded in assembling a diverse cross-section of the Republican primary electorate. Many of the variables that might have been expected to matter had little effect on the vote. Gender offers a good example. His many crude comments about women notwithstanding, Trump ran only slightly worse among women than among men, and he won a clear plurality of the vote from both groups. As the least obviously religious Republican candidate in memory, Trump nevertheless won 39 percent of the votes cast by born-again and evangelical Christians, compared with 44 percent of non-evangelicals. The only demographic trait that significantly distinguished Trump voters from those who supported one of the other Republican candidates was education. Trump won 50 percent of the votes cast by those with a high school education but only 30 percent from voters with a postgraduate degree. Yet even in the latter category, Trump won a larger percentage of the vote than any of his competitors.

Ideology and partisanship also seem to have had little effect on the Trump vote. Unlike Democrats, most of whom were unwilling to vote for an



**Table 2.8** Republican Caucus Results

<i>Date</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Trump</i>	<i>Cruz</i>	<i>Kasich</i>	<i>Rubio</i>
February 1	Iowa	24.3	27.6	1.9	23.1
February 23	Nevada	45.9	21.4	3.6	23.8
March 1	Alaska	33.6	36.4	4.0	15.2
March 1	Minnesota	21.4	29.0	5.8	36.2
March 5	Kansas	23.4	47.5	11.1	16.8
March 5	Kentucky	35.9	31.6	14.4	16.4
March 5	Maine	32.6	45.9	12.2	8.0
March 8	Hawaii	43.4	32.3	10.0	13.2
March 12	District of Columbia	13.8	12.4	35.5	37.3
March 12	Wyoming	7.4	65.4	0.0	20.0
March 22	Utah	13.8	69.5	16.7	0.0
Summary Statistics	Average percentage	26.9	38.1	10.5	19.1
	Number of caucuses won	3	6	0	2

Note: Entries are the percentage of preference votes cast for each candidate in the caucuses. Results for the North Dakota and Colorado caucuses are unavailable.

election-year convert like Bernie Sanders, Republicans showed little reluctance to embrace a candidate who had joined their party in 2012. Indeed, Trump actually fared somewhat better among Republican identifiers than among independents. Similarly with ideology: Though Trump had once espoused the liberal position on many issues, including abortion, gun control, and single-payer health care, he ran about equally well among very conservative, conservative, and moderate voters. A question that asked primary voters to name their “most important issue” indicates, not surprisingly, that Trump ran best among those who were concerned about immigration. But only 10 percent of the Republican primary electorate named immigration as their top issue; terrorism, government spending, and the economy all ranked far higher in the voters’ scale of priorities.

### Why Trump?

Why did Trump, widely dismissed as a nonserious candidate when he entered the race, win the Republican nomination? One factor was his complete domination of the news coverage. This also helps explain why none of the demographic variables in Table 2.9 seemed to matter very much. As Larry Bartels showed almost thirty years ago, political substance matters only when the voters have learned enough about the candidates to draw meaningful distinctions.<sup>32</sup> Given the media’s obsession with Trump and the outcomes in Iowa

**Table 2.9** Who Voted for Whom in the 2016 Republican Primaries: Cumulative Results from New Hampshire through Indiana

Variable	Percent of the Primary Electorate	Percent Voting for . . .			
		Cruz	Kasich	Rubio	Trump
All 24 Primaries		27	15	13	41
<b>Gender</b>					
Men	51	26	14	11	45
Women	49	27	15	15	37
<b>Age</b>					
18–29	11	29	15	17	33
30–44	19	29	13	14	38
45–64	44	27	14	12	43
65 or older	25	24	16	12	43
<b>Born-Again or Evangelical Christian</b>					
Yes	55	34	10	12	39
No	45	19	20	13	44
<b>Education</b>					
High school or less	17	27	9	9	50
Some college	32	28	11	11	46
College graduate	32	27	17	14	38
Postgraduate	19	26	22	17	30
<b>Income</b>					
Under \$50,000	29	25	12	11	46
\$50,000–\$100,000	35	32	13	12	40
\$100,000 or more	37	23	19	16	39
<b>Party Identification</b>					
Republican	69	29	12	13	42
Independent	26	24	18	13	38
Democrat	5	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Ideology</b>					
Very conservative	33	42	7	10	37
Somewhat conservative	42	23	14	15	44
Moderate	22	14	25	14	41
Liberal	3	NA	NA	NA	NA

Variable	Percent of the Primary Electorate	Percent Voting for . . .			
		Cruz	Kasich	Rubio	Trump
<b>Most Important Issue</b>					
Immigration	10	25	6	7	59
Economy/jobs	36	22	18	14	40
Terrorism	23	27	13	15	41
Government spending	28	33	15	13	35
<b>Top Candidate Quality</b>					
Electability	12	24	12	24	33
Shares my values	35	42	22	16	14
Tells it like it is	20	8	6	4	80
Can bring change	32	22	13	10	50
<b>When Did You Decide?</b>					
Within last week	33	29	21	16	29
Last month	24	30	16	15	33
Before that	43	24	8	8	55

*Source:* Results for individual state exit polls were taken from CNN.com. Actual results and state turnout data are, in most cases, taken from the official election returns, with occasional assistance from *The Green Papers* (thegreenpapers.com).

*Note:* Entries represent the percentage of the primary vote received in the twenty-four Republican primaries held between February 9 and May 3 (New Hampshire through Indiana) for which an exit poll was conducted, weighted by state turnout. “NA” indicates that there were so few respondents in the given category that the results were not reported in most exit polls.

and New Hampshire, most voters probably never did learn enough about many of Trump’s rivals to consider them as real alternatives.

Second, many Republicans liked what Trump was selling. This is shown most clearly by the penultimate item in Table 2.9, which asked voters about the top quality they were looking for in a candidate. Relatively few Republican voters felt that Trump “share[d] their values.” Those who were most concerned with values—about a third of the Republican primary electorate—voted disproportionately for Ted Cruz. Nor did Trump fare especially well among those concerned about electability. Trump scored big, however, among two groups. The first was those who wanted a candidate who could “bring change.” After eight years of George W. Bush’s big government, pro-immigration conservatism, followed by eight years of Barack Obama’s unabashed liberalism, many Republicans wanted someone who would approach the federal government not with a surgical scalpel but with a sledgehammer. Trump convinced such voters that he was the person most likely to do this. Trump ran even better among voters

who sought a candidate who would “tell it like it is.” At a time when many voters think that far too much has been surrendered to the forces of political correctness, Trump’s unguarded, often abrasive rhetoric, for all the criticism it received, clearly impressed many voters as just what the country needed.

Third, Trump won because, for a substantial part of the American electorate, none of his critics had the legitimacy necessary to make their criticisms stick. It is a well-established principle of public opinion research that the persuasive effect of a given communication depends to a great extent on the credibility of the source. If I think a particular person is unreliable or biased or has bad judgment, I am unlikely to be persuaded by anything that person says. In an extreme case, where the communicator is actively disliked by the audience, a criticism may actually work to the advantage of the person being criticized. Marco Rubio, for example, often boasted about the fact that he was the Republican candidate singled out for special attack by the Clinton campaign.

Though there is little indication that they have recognized the full dimensions of the problem, most so-called mainstream media organizations face a real crisis of credibility with Republicans and conservatives. Far from being seen as neutral arbiters and purveyors of fact, most media are viewed as (to quote one blogger) Democratic partisans with a by-line. A good illustration comes from a question that the Gallup Poll asked in 2010: “In general, do you think the news media are too liberal, just about right, or too conservative?” Republicans had no doubts about the answer: 76 percent said the media were too liberal, just 6 percent said the media were too conservative. Lest one dismiss these results on the grounds that the media are required by their job to be skeptical and critical and that everybody therefore views the media as an antagonist, Democrats had a quite different view. Just 26 percent of Democrats said the media were too conservative, whereas an almost equal number, 22 percent, actually thought the media were too liberal. The most popular answer among Democrats, chosen by 48 percent, was that the news media got things “just about right.” Small wonder, against this background, that Trump paid so little apparent price for all the editorials and commentary that denounced him. Many Republicans probably reacted by deciding that, if so many in the media disliked Trump, he must be doing something right.

Finally, Trump won because none of his major opponents ran a very good campaign. For all the early talk that 2016 featured one of the strongest Republican candidate fields ever assembled, all of Trump’s major opponents except Jeb Bush were relatively new to the national stage and, either for that reason or because they hired bad consultants, made lots of glaring mistakes. A number of these errors have already been mentioned: Kasich’s strange decision to present himself as a moderate; Rubio’s fumbling performance in the pre-New Hampshire debate; and the all-but-universal failure to take Trump seriously as a candidate until it was too late.

Perhaps the worst single mistake by a Republican candidate occurred before the campaign began. As of late 2012, no candidate seemed better positioned to win the 2016 Republican presidential nomination than Marco Rubio. A senator from one of the two most important swing states in the nation, of Cuban ethnicity, and with a compelling personal story, Rubio had also been a Tea Party favorite when first elected to the Senate in 2010. And then, in one move, he went a long way toward neutralizing all of these advantages. Though Rubio had opposed amnesty when running for the Senate in 2010, in early 2013 he became one of the “Gang of Eight” that coauthored a “comprehensive immigration reform” bill that was spectacularly unpopular among conservative Republicans. Though a few Republicans supported the bill, most viewed it as a horrendous piece of legislation that granted the Democrats everything they wanted—increased levels of immigration, amnesty for illegals that were already here—and got almost nothing in return by way of stricter enforcement or increased border security. Well before Rubio’s stumble in New Hampshire, this was the principal issue that his opponents used against him.

### Denouement and Conclusion

The rest is anticlimax. On July 15, Trump picked Indiana governor Mike Pence to be his running mate. Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the Republican National Convention, which was held in Cleveland July 18–21, was the substantial number of Republican Party leaders who declined to attend, including home-state governor Kasich and all of the party’s living presidential nominees except Bob Dole. The most memorable moment was Ted Cruz’s speech to the delegates, in which he had been expected to endorse Trump but instead only recommended that voters “stand, and speak, and vote your conscience, vote for candidates up and down the ticket who you trust to defend our freedom and be faithful to the Constitution.”

The day after the GOP convention ended, Hillary Clinton announced that her vice presidential candidate would be Virginia senator Tim Kaine. The Democratic National Convention took place in Philadelphia July 25–28 and showed a party that seemed to be a good deal more united than the Republicans.

I began this chapter by asking how the two major parties could have nominated two such generally unpopular presidential candidates as Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Having reviewed both parties’ nomination races in some detail, I wish at the end to pose a slightly different question: Was there an alternative set of rules that might have produced a different outcome?

The analysis presented in this chapter provides little reason to think that any plausible change in the rules would have yielded a different nominee, in either party. The Democratic superdelegate rule may or may not be a good idea, but in 2016 it had no effect on the final result. Hillary Clinton won her

party's nomination because she won a clear majority of the votes cast in the Democratic primaries and thus won a majority of the ordinary, non-super-delegates who were selected in the primaries and caucuses. A strong case can be made that the Democrats significantly overestimated Clinton's appeal to the general electorate and underestimated the importance of all her many negatives, but there is nothing the rules could have done to alter such beliefs. The only rules change that might have given Bernie Sanders a reasonable chance of winning the nomination would have been a switch by a very large number of states from primaries to caucuses—but such a change would have helped Sanders only because caucuses are generally characterized by a low and unrepresentative turnout and therefore might have allowed a less popular candidate to win a majority of the delegates. Precisely for that reason, it is difficult to imagine a large-scale national movement to increase the use of caucuses.

A good case can be made that the Democratic National Committee, and especially DNC chairperson Debbie Wasserman Schultz, violated the party rule requiring that organization to be impartial and evenhanded during the presidential nomination process. But ever since the delegate selection rules were rewritten in the early 1970s, there has been little that the formal party organization can do to help a favored candidate. For all the controversy the Wikileaks emails generated, when evaluated dispassionately they actually show how few real powers and resources the DNC has. The one exception—the one intervention by the DNC that might have made a difference—was its decision to hold a very limited number of debates and to schedule them at times when the viewing audience was likely to be relatively small. But it is far from clear that a larger number of debates would have transformed one of the second-tier candidates into a serious contender or significantly increased the electoral appeal of Bernie Sanders.

But suppose that Sanders had been nominated. Would he really have fared better in the general election than Clinton did? Sanders's partisans are fond of citing their candidate's favorability ratings, which were consistently higher than Clinton's throughout the election year—higher, indeed, than those of any other major presidential aspirant in either party. On January 30, 2016, on the eve of the Iowa caucuses, Sanders's average rating was 47 percent favorable, 38 percent unfavorable; Clinton's numbers were 39 percent favorable, 55 percent unfavorable. Similarly, on November 5, 2016, three days before the general election, Sanders was viewed favorably by 54 percent of the American public, unfavorably by 35 percent. Clinton's average ratings on the same day were 42 percent favorable, 56 percent unfavorable. Trial-heat polls also showed Sanders running far better against Trump than Clinton did.

As a guide to what would have happened if Sanders had actually been the Democratic nominee, however, these numbers are highly misleading. Sanders was popular throughout the 2016 election campaign because no one made any serious, prolonged effort to attack him. No one had any

reason to. Clinton offered a few mild criticisms of his record and policy proposals but was reluctant to go full bore after a candidate who was unlikely to win the nomination and whose supporters she would need in the general election. Nor did the Republicans make any effort to reduce Sanders's popularity. From their perspective, the longer his nomination campaign lasted and the more blood he drew from Clinton, the better for the Republican nominee in November. Had Sanders actually won the nomination, however, the Republicans would have delightedly launched an all-out assault on the Vermont senator. And they would have had a lot to work with: his socialism, his alleged atheism, his promise to increase taxes on the middle class, his perceived weakness on terrorism, his fondness for Castro and many other Third World radicals. Though we cannot, of course, say how many of these attacks would have struck a responsive chord with the voters—2016 was a notoriously bad year for predictions—we can at least say that Sanders's high favorability numbers are an inadequate guide to his likely fortunes as the Democratic presidential nominee.

The general verdict I have just pronounced with respect to the Democrats also applies to the Republicans: There is little reason to think that a different set of rules would have produced a different nominee. Trump's nomination was the product of a variety of special circumstances: the unusually large number of declared candidates in the race, the media's decision to cover Trump's doings so intensively, the failure of the other candidates to take him seriously, the unwillingness of so many prominent Republican leaders to recognize just how unpopular their stance on immigration was. But it is hard to imagine how any of these factors would have been altered by a different rules regime.

Like his Democratic counterpart, Republican National Committee chair Reince Priebus made a concerted effort to reduce the number of Republican presidential debates, in the belief that the large number of debates in 2012 had hurt Mitt Romney's chances in the general election. But the premise underlying this effort is mistaken. Romney lost the presidential election because he ran a very poor campaign, not because he was severely damaged by the Republican debates.<sup>33</sup> An expanded number of debates, where the other candidates had something like equal airtime with Trump, would undoubtedly have given them a better chance to slow the Trump steamroller. But would they have used the opportunity to cut Trump down to size, or would they simply have continued to attack each other in a mad scramble for second place? Based on their behavior in the debates that were held, the latter seems more likely.

Ever since the late 1960s, parties that have just lost a presidential election have often reacted by blaming the process. If only we had had a different set of rules and procedures, the losers lament, we would have selected a better candidate—or at least put the candidate we did nominate in a better position to win the general election. But no process is foolproof. Even the best-designed process must be operated by humans, who are inevitably

subject to error, bias, and misjudgment. For the last several decades, the Clintons have occupied a unique position in the Democratic Party, which goes a long way toward explaining why they so greatly overestimated Hillary's appeal as a general election candidate. In the aftermath of the 2016 election, most Republicans were convinced that their process worked just fine—that the mistakes were all on the other side. But whether they will still think this in 2020 or 2024 is an open question.

## Notes

1. All exit poll results cited in this paragraph are taken from [www.cnn.com/election/result/exit-polls](http://www.cnn.com/election/result/exit-polls). These results are slightly different from those that CNN reported earlier, apparently because an updated weight variable has been applied to the data.
2. See, for example, Nicholas Confessore, Jonathan Martin, and Maggie Haberman, "Democrats See a Field of One Heading to '16," *New York Times*, March 12, 2015, A1.
3. The names given in the text are a "consensus list" drawn from the following sources: Jason Linkins, "The Brutalist Guide to 2016's Democratic-Contenders (Not Named Hillary Clinton)," *Huffington Post*, July 13, 2014, [www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/13/2016-democratic-contenders\\_n\\_5579531.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/13/2016-democratic-contenders_n_5579531.html); Bob Cusack, "The 65 People Who Might Run for President in 2016," *The Hill*, August 20, 2014, [thehill.com/homenews/campaign/215523-the-65-people-who-may-run-for-president-in-2016](http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/215523-the-65-people-who-may-run-for-president-in-2016); Ginger Gibson, "Election 2016: Hillary Clinton Isn't the Democrats' Only Candidate," *International Business Times*, January 21, 2015, [www.ibtimes.com/election-2016-hillary-clinton-isnt-democrats-only-candidate-1786932](http://www.ibtimes.com/election-2016-hillary-clinton-isnt-democrats-only-candidate-1786932); Jonathan Bernstein, "Democrats Have No Bench? Be Serious," *Bloomberg*, March 12, 2015, [www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2015-03-12/democrats-have-no-bench-be-serious-](http://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2015-03-12/democrats-have-no-bench-be-serious-); and Tim Cavanaugh, "21 Democrats Who Could (Maybe) Take Hillary Clinton's Place in 2016," *Washington Examiner*, March 14, 2015, [www.washingtonexaminer.com/21-democrats-who-could-maybe-take-hillary-clintons-place-in-2016/article/2561521](http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/21-democrats-who-could-maybe-take-hillary-clintons-place-in-2016/article/2561521).
4. On the emergence of the vice presidency as a stepping stone to higher office, see William G. Mayer, "A Brief History of Vice Presidential Selection," in *In Pursuit of the White House 2000: How We Choose Our Presidential Nominees*, ed. William G. Mayer (New York: Chatham House, 2000), 341–345.
5. All numbers cited here are based on the October 4, 2015, averages reported at [elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster#favorability-ratings](http://elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster#favorability-ratings).
6. As quoted in David Catanese, "What If Hillary Clinton Doesn't Run?" *U.S. News & World Report*, July 22, 2014, [www.usnews.com/news/blogs/run-2016/2014/07/22/if-not-hillary-clinton-then-who-will-the-democrats-pick](http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/run-2016/2014/07/22/if-not-hillary-clinton-then-who-will-the-democrats-pick).
7. This is perhaps the major reason why vice presidents do so well in presidential nomination races. See William G. Mayer, "Retrospective Voting in Presidential Primaries," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40 (December 2010): 660–685.
8. Peter Baker and Maggie Haberman, "Biden Concludes There's No Time for a 2016 Run," *New York Times*, October 22, 2015, A1.
9. Nate Silver, as quoted in Garance Franke-Ruta, "Nate Silver: Hillary Is the Strongest Non-incumbent Ever," *The Atlantic*, June 28, 2013, [www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/06/nate-silver-hillary-is-the-strongest-non-incumbent-ever/277337/](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/06/nate-silver-hillary-is-the-strongest-non-incumbent-ever/277337/).
10. See, in particular, the discussion of how candidates emerge as front-runners in contemporary nomination races in William G. Mayer, "The Basic Dynamics



- of the Contemporary Nomination Process: An Expanded View,” in *The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2004*, ed. William G. Mayer (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 82–132.
11. All Clinton favorability numbers reported here are taken from elections [huffingtonpost.com/pollster/hillary-clinton-favorable-rating](http://huffingtonpost.com/pollster/hillary-clinton-favorable-rating).
  12. Based on the compilation of polling data at [www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2016/president/Iowa\\_New\\_Hampshire\\_Nevada\\_South\\_Carolina\\_Dem\\_Contests.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2016/president/Iowa_New_Hampshire_Nevada_South_Carolina_Dem_Contests.html).
  13. For further details about the hows and whys of superdelegates, see William G. Mayer, “Superdelegates: Reforming the Reforms Revisited,” in *Reforming the Presidential Nomination Process*, ed. Steven S. Smith and Melanie J. Springer (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), 85–108.
  14. The AP survey is discussed in Domenico Montanaro, “Clinton Has a 45-to-1 ‘Superdelegate’ Advantage over Sanders,” *NPR*, November 13, 2015, [www.npr.org/2015/11/13/455812702/clinton-had-45-to-1-superdelegate-advantage-over-sanders](http://www.npr.org/2015/11/13/455812702/clinton-had-45-to-1-superdelegate-advantage-over-sanders).
  15. The tendency of past Republican nomination races to produce a clear early front-runner is discussed in Mayer, “Basic Dynamics.” The appendix to that chapter contains survey data on the 1980, 1988, and 1996 GOP contests.
  16. This conclusion is based on data at [www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2016/president/us/2016\\_republican\\_presidential\\_nomination-3823.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2016/president/us/2016_republican_presidential_nomination-3823.html).
  17. As quoted in Paul Bond, “Leslie Moonves on Donald Trump: ‘It May Not Be Good for America, but It’s Damn Good for CBS,’” *Hollywood Reporter*, February 29, 2016, [www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/leslie-moonves-donald-trump-may-871464](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/leslie-moonves-donald-trump-may-871464).
  18. The mediaQuant results are discussed in Nicholas Confessore and Karen Yourish, “Measuring Trump’s Big Advantage in Free Media,” *New York Times*, March 17, 2016, A3.
  19. As quoted in Robert Costa and Philip Rucker, “GOP Field Wrestles a Trump Tornado,” *Washington Post*, August 21, 2015, A2.
  20. See Philip Bump, “The Giant Super PAC Backing Jeb Bush Has Spent Very Little Fighting Donald Trump,” *Washington Post*, February 20, 2016, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/20/the-giant-super-pac-backing-jeb-bush-has-spent-very-little-fighting-donald-trump/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/20/the-giant-super-pac-backing-jeb-bush-has-spent-very-little-fighting-donald-trump/).
  21. Stephen F. Hayes, “How Jeb Cleared the Way for Trump,” *Weekly Standard*, January 23, 2016, [www.weeklystandard.com/how-jeb-cleared-the-way-for-trump/article/2000726](http://www.weeklystandard.com/how-jeb-cleared-the-way-for-trump/article/2000726).
  22. This is the count for non-superdelegates provided at both [www.thegreenpapers.com/P16/](http://www.thegreenpapers.com/P16/) and [www.bloomberg.com/politics/graphics/2016-delegate-tracker](http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/graphics/2016-delegate-tracker).
  23. The final roll call totals at the Democratic convention were 2,842 for Clinton and 1,865 for Sanders, with 56 abstentions.
  24. For a detailed discussion of all these points, see William G. Mayer, “Caucuses: How They Work, What Difference They Make,” in *In Pursuit of the White House: How We Choose Our Presidential Nominees*, ed. William G. Mayer (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1996), 105–157.
  25. Andra Gillespie, as quoted in Sam Sanders, “On Race, Sanders and Clinton Stumble but Engage,” *NPR*, March 3, 2016, [www.npr.org/2016/03/07/469554117/on-race-sanders-and-clinton-stumble-but-dont-shy-away](http://www.npr.org/2016/03/07/469554117/on-race-sanders-and-clinton-stumble-but-dont-shy-away).
  26. See Tyler Durden, “Leaked DNC Emails Confirm Democrats Rigged Primary, Reveal Extensive Media Collusion,” *ZeroHedge*, July 23, 2016, [www.zerohedge.com/news/2016-07-23/leaked-dnc-emails-confirm-democrats-rigged-primary-reveal-extensive-media-collusion](http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2016-07-23/leaked-dnc-emails-confirm-democrats-rigged-primary-reveal-extensive-media-collusion); and Michael Sainato, “Wikileaks Proves Primary Was Rigged: DNC Undermined Democracy,” *Observer*, July 22, 2016, [observer.com/2016/07/wikileaks-proves-primary-was-rigged-dnc-undermined-democracy](http://observer.com/2016/07/wikileaks-proves-primary-was-rigged-dnc-undermined-democracy).

27. See “The Charter of the Democratic Party of the United States,” Article V, sec. 4, at [www.demrulz.org/wp-content/files/DNC\\_Charter\\_Bylaws\\_9.11.2009.pdf](http://www.demrulz.org/wp-content/files/DNC_Charter_Bylaws_9.11.2009.pdf).
28. An exact count on the number of debates in 2008 is difficult to find, in part because it is not always clear what constitutes a “debate.”
29. All poll numbers cited here are taken from [www.cnn.com/election/primaries/polls/IA/Rep](http://www.cnn.com/election/primaries/polls/IA/Rep).
30. All quotations from the debate are based on “Transcript of the New Hampshire GOP Debate, Annotated,” *Washington Post*, February 6, 2016, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/06/transcript-of-the-feb-6-gop-debate-annotated/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/02/06/transcript-of-the-feb-6-gop-debate-annotated/).
31. The quoted assessment is from Jeremy W. Peters and Jonathan Martin, “Rubio Is Tested as Rivals Sense Vulnerabilities,” *New York Times*, February 8, 2016, A1.
32. See Larry M. Bartels, *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).
33. See William G. Mayer, “How the Romney Campaign Blew It,” *The Forum* 13 (December 2015).