

Women and minorities in politics

Aufgaben

Der vorliegende Vorschlag enthält in Aufgabe 3 alternative Arbeitsanweisungen.

- 1 Outline the Democrats' campaign strategy and how Kamala Harris's nomination is a turning point for the Democratic Party in the USA. (Material 1)
- (30 BE)**

- 2 Examine how this campaign strategy including Biden's nomination of Kamala Harris as his running mate reflects America's democratic principles and ideals.
- (40 BE)**

- 3 Choose one of the following tasks:

- 3.1 Taking the cartoon (Material 2) as a starting point, comment on the idea of race and gender being a condition for nominating or appointing people to high positions.

or

- 3.2 You are a student intern working on the campaign committee of the governing Conservative Party in the UK. Your supervisor has asked for your opinion on the importance of diversity in the UK parliament.

Taking the statistics on Members of Parliament (MPs) in the UK parliament (Material 3) into account, write an email to your supervisor discussing whether it is necessary to have more diversity among the party's MPs in order to make effective policy for Britain.

(30 BE)

Material 1

Ronald Brownstein: Kamala Harris's Nomination Is a Turning Point for Democrats (2020)

In the final rally Joe Biden held before COVID-19 shut down the country in March, he clasped hands on a stage in Detroit with a group of emerging Democratic stars. "I view myself as a bridge, not as anything else," he declared a few minutes later. "There is an entire generation of leaders that you saw standing behind me. They are the future of this country." Yesterday, Biden took a major step toward redeeming those words when he chose Senator Kamala Harris of California, one of the Democrats on that stage, as his vice-presidential nominee.

By selecting Harris, Biden has positioned the Democratic Party for a profound generational and demographic transition, and he's addressed the fundamental incongruity of his candidacy: the inherent strain of a nearly 78-year-old white man leading a political coalition that relies on big margins among young voters, people of color, and women.

Biden represents the Democratic Party of his post-World War II coming-of-age: a coalition centered on blue-collar white people who worked with their hands, mostly in smaller industrial cities such as Scranton, Pennsylvania, where he was born. From almost every angle, Harris embodies the Democratic Party of the 21st century: a biracial child of immigrants (who is herself in an interracial marriage) who rose to political prominence from a base in San Francisco, a diverse, globalized hub of the emerging information economy.

Many obstacles still prevent women and people of color from achieving power in the Democratic Party's leadership commensurate with their influence in its voting base. But Harris makes the concept of Biden as a bridge more concrete – and potentially more attractive to younger nonwhite voters displaying lagging enthusiasm for him – by embodying the other side of that span: a party that potentially makes more room at the table for people who look like her. "I think Kamala Harris has the potential to activate a voter that otherwise has not seen themselves reflected in the Democratic Party," says Terrance Woodbury, an African American Democratic consultant who studies younger voters.

Many members of the Democrats' "coalition of transformation," including professional women, immigrants, and African Americans, can see aspects of their experience reflected in Harris's life. That could make her a resonant symbol of the Democrats' embrace of a changing America. [...]

When Biden made his announcement yesterday afternoon, I was on the phone with Aimee Allison, the founder of She the People, which advocates for advancing more women of color in the Democratic Party. We were discussing her ambivalent feelings about how Biden's vice-presidential selection process had unfolded over the past few weeks. [...]

[S]he was frustrated and angered that several of the Black women candidates, particularly Harris, had faced what Allison saw as a hazing in the press from some older white male Democrats, including former Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut, who was part of the small committee Biden had assigned to assess his choices. "What's very clear is we have political institutions and a political culture that has a very unique way of tearing down women who are standing for leadership, who have impressive experience [and] come with impressive résumés, with a capacity to inspire voters in a way white guys can't," Allison told me. "The conversation was very racist and very sexist. It's a problem. It's a problem we have with Republicans. It's a problem with Democrats. It's bigger than a political party."

Those words had barely left Allison's mouth when the news broke that Biden had selected Harris. For a moment, she was overcome with emotion. "It's pretty remarkable. I get emotional – she's just made history," she said, her voice cracking. Harris "stands on the shoulders of remarkable generations of

Black women who have fought and bled for this moment.” The selection, she thought, showed that Biden meant what he’d said onstage in Detroit. “She represents a new America,” Allison told me. “She already knows how to speak to that language of solidarity, to that multiracial coalition. She is showing up in the moment we need. This is what the country needs.” [...]

In 2016, just 60 percent of eligible African American voters turned out¹, down from 67 percent in 2012, according to the Census Bureau. Kasim Reed, the African American former mayor of Atlanta, told me last night he is confident that Harris’s position – combined with antipathy toward Trump and Biden’s own connections with older Black voters – will ensure a dramatic rebound in Black participation. “I am going on the record that Black turnout is going to exceed President [Barack] Obama’s Black turnout,” Reed said. Harris’s selection “sends a very important message that high achievement and dedication matter.” [...]

Biden’s inner circle has tilted heavily toward older white men, but by choosing Harris, he’s taken one significant step toward acknowledging his need to open more doors to younger and more racially diverse leaders. Many activists of color were deeply frustrated this year that, even with the party’s most diverse presidential field ever, all of the race’s² finalists were white candidates in their 70s: Biden, Sanders, and Warren. Harris’s selection won’t eliminate all the structural inequities that produced that incongruous result. But whether Biden wins or loses in November, her nomination may be remembered as a moment when the pinnacle of Democratic Party leadership came to more closely resemble the base of voters that elects it to power. Even as the GOP³ at every level remains dominated by white men – starting with Trump and Pence – the Democrats haven’t nominated a presidential ticket of two white men since 2004. It’s difficult to imagine when they ever will again.

(927 Wörter)

Ronald Brownstein: Kamala Harris’s Nomination Is a Turning Point for Democrats, in: The Atlantic, 12.08.2020, URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/08/kamala-harris-and-new-democratic-party-coalition/615187/> (abgerufen am 16.12.2021).

Material 2



Tom Stiglich: Bonus Editorial Cartoon, in: West Central Tribune, 07.08.2020, URL: <https://www.wctrib.com/opinion/cartoons/6604183-Bonus-editorial-cartoon-for-Aug.-7-2020> (abgerufen am 16.12.2021).

¹ to turn out – to show up and cast a ballot in an election

² race – here: referring to the political competition of the Biden campaign

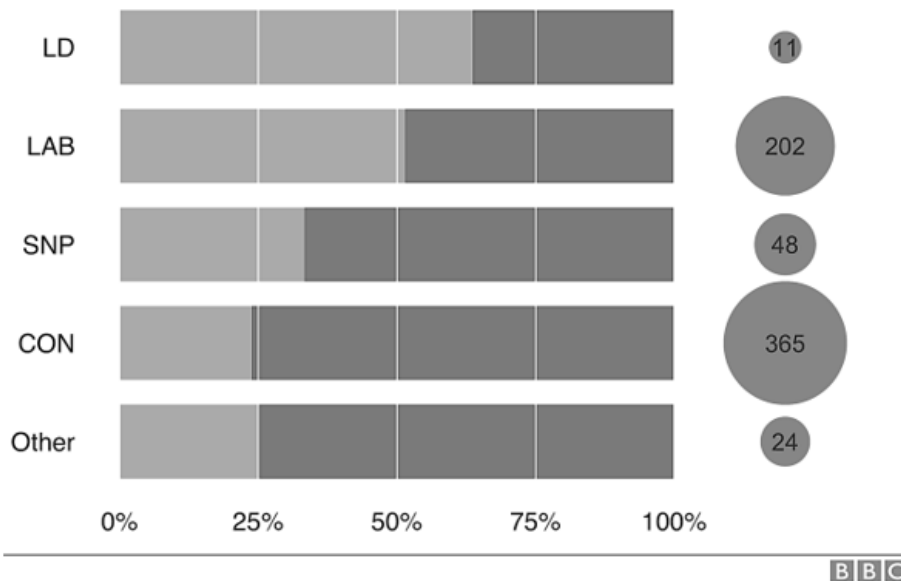
³ GOP – Grand Old Party, nickname for the Republican party

Material 3a

Majority of Labour and Lib Dem MPs are female, for first time in history

Proportion of female (light grey) and male MPs (dark grey)

Total number of MPs

**Hinweise**

LD – Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)

LAB – Labour

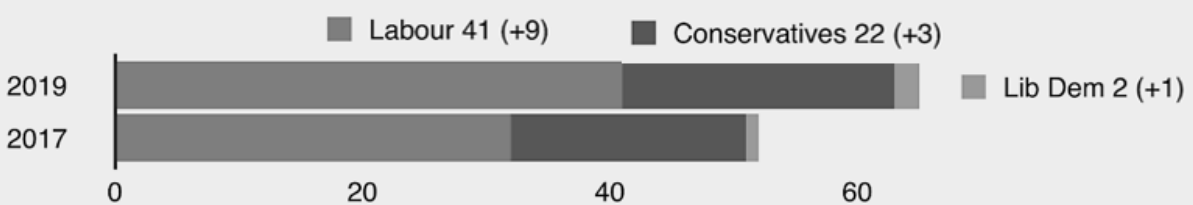
SNP – Scottish National Party

CON – Conservatives

Material 3b

Record number of MPs from ethnic minorities

Change in brackets from 2017 election result



Source: British Future

BBC

Adapted from: The Data Journalism Team: Election 2019: Britain's most diverse Parliament, in: BBC News, 17.12.2019,
URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-2019-50808536> (abgerufen am 16.12.2021).