

# DIGITAL DEBATE: A PARTY DIVIDED

By Orenda Software Solutions

**W**hen it comes to picking a political leader, Orenda believes the opinions and views of millions outweigh the effect of a few. No matter how insightful, the deep analytical dives shared by a handful of Political Pundits pale in comparison to the knock down, drag out digital battles playing out publicly on social media.

Tuesday night's democratic presidential debate in Iowa triggered interested voters, and the outcome was a true demonstration of the divisiveness that exists within the party. There were many stories manifesting themselves in Orenda's data outputs, and of particular interest to our scientists was the close candidate scores. We believe the calculated reaction from the participating audience confirms that the party is definitely divided.

And after the showdown, candidate supporters dug in their heels, spinning out the same party lines until the thread came to a bitter end. The awkward feud between Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren leading up to the debate triggered multiple attacks from supporters of each candidate. In the end, Orenda's data showed that Warren took the brunt of the reputational blows. The data collection and analysis we conducted was for a 24-hour period.

Our technology:

- collected each emotional response leading up to and post-debate
- the millions of mentions were processed through Orenda's proprietary algorithms and relationship framework
- the outcomes were compared to the emotional content collected for the debate in Atlanta, Georgia on November 20th, 2019 – same period of time.

The summary that follows is a starting point for the work we will continue to conduct leading up to the presidential election. What we know from Orenda's past work is that when we quantify public opinion over time, our data quickly identifies when a candidate's values are aligned with voters' values, and when that human connection increases a candidate's favorability. And we know and have proven, that gains in favorability translates into a vote.

**ORENDA**

# 2020 Democratic Primary: Participating in Debate January 14, 2020

Categories:



## Joe Biden

Posts: 139,679

Avg tweets/hr: 5,372.27

Avg sentiment value: 2.96813

The third highest engagement went to Joe Biden, who also found himself to be a popular topic of discussion. Biden is already very well known in the political world for his long history with the Senate and the time he spent as Vice President from 2009-2017 during Barack Obama's presidency.

### Social Positioning Scores:

Category	Nov 20, 2019	Prior to Debate	Post-Debate
Trust	49	51	49
Satis.	52	48	48
Influe.	51	46	46
Soc.	50	48	46
Exch.	49	47	46
Com.	52	52	49
Char.	49	49	49
Gen.	52	47	47



## Pete Buttigieg

Posts : 97,924

Avg tweets/hr: 3,766.31

Avg sentiment value: 3.86767

Pete Buttigieg, former Mayor of South Bend Indiana, received just shy of 100,000 mentions during the measured 26-hour window. While this engagement is below the overall average, Pete's engagement was higher than two of the other candidates.

### Social Positioning Scores:

Category	Nov 20, 2019	Prior to Debate	Post-Debate
Trust	51	56	54
Satis.	52	56	54
Influe.	51	51	53
Soc.	53	55	56
Exch.	49	51	51
Com.	50	53	53
Char.	54	58	58
Gen.	52	54	53



## Amy Klobuchar

Posts : 68,060

Avg tweets/hr: 2,617.69

Avg sentiment value: 3.05424

Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar found herself on the lower end during the measured time period, receiving only 9.1% of the engagement seen by the leading Bernie Sanders.

### Social Positioning Scores:

Category	Nov 20, 2019	Prior to Debate	Post-Debate
Trust	54	52	51
Satis.	54	52	52
Influe.	52	51	52
Soc.	54	53	53
Exch.	51	51	51
Com.	52	51	50
Char.	56	53	55
Gen.	52	49	52



## Bernie Sanders

Posts: 747,231

Avg tweets/hr: 28,739.65

Avg sentiment value: 2.89206

Bernie Sanders lead Twitter in engagement during this 26-hour period, having more than twice as many mentions as the second highest candidate. This would indicate that Bernie is once again one of the most popular candidates for the 2020 election season.

### Social Positioning Scores:

Category	Nov 20, 2019	Prior to Debate	Post-Debate
Trust	52	46	46
Satis.	51	47	48
Influe.	49	49	48
Soc.	56	51	49
Exch.	51	50	49
Com.	50	46	46
Char.	52	52	50
Gen.	52	46	47



## Tom Steyer

Posts : 38,623

Avg tweets/hr: 1,485.50

Avg sentiment value: 2.9291

Of the six candidates that took part in the debate, Tom Steyer generated the least amount of engagement on Twitter. His 38,623 posts were approximately 5.2% of the engagement received by Bernie Sanders.

### Social Positioning Scores:

Category	Nov 20, 2019	Prior to Debate	Post-Debate
Trust	49	45	49
Satis.	50	45	49
Influe.	48	45	46
Soc.	53	48	54
Exch.	49	42	46
Com.	50	42	47
Char.	52	50	53
Gen.	51	45	50



## Elizabeth Warren

Posts : 326,394

Avg tweets/hr: 12,553.62

Avg sentiment value: 2.89229

Warren's engagement was the second highest during the measured time period. While more than two times lower than the engagement received by Sanders, 326,000+ mentions is no small feat, and should continue to be one of the most engaging candidates.

### Social Positioning Scores:

Category	Nov 20, 2019	Prior to Debate	Post-Debate
Trust	52	42	47
Satis.	53	46	48
Influe.	50	46	48
Soc.	54	43	49
Exch.	48	45	47
Com.	49	45	47
Char.	53	47	51
Gen.	51	47	49



## Mike Bloomberg\*

Posts: 12,010

Avg tweets/hr: 461.92

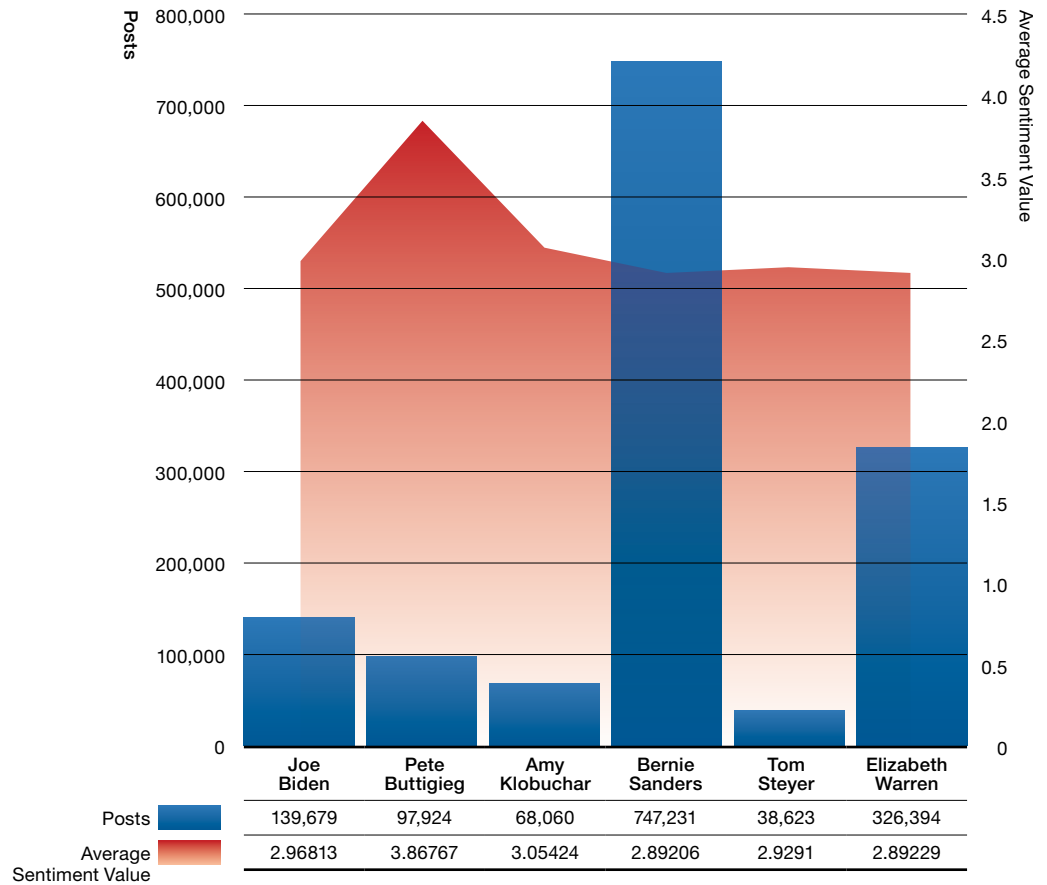
Avg sentiment value: 2.95878

\*Did not qualify for debate

### Social Positioning Scores:

Category	Nov 20, 2019	Prior to Debate	Post-Debate
Trust	50	48	48
Satis.	52	49	50
Influe.	50	48	48
Soc.	52	49	53
Exch.	49	47	48
Com.	50	46	48
Char.	57	51	51
Gen.	51	48	48

## Audience Engagement



### Joe Biden

Social positioning scores indicate that Vice President Joe Biden **did not gain favorability** based on his debate performance on January 14. While most metrics remained the same, the observable changes were a 3 point drop in Trust, a 2 point drop in Social Responsibility, a point drop in Exchange of Benefits, and a 3 point drop in Commitment.

Decreases in scores represent less positive language related to Trust and Commitment. This may indicate a decline in public support for Biden's campaign. The debate highlighted Biden's historical support of the war in Iraq, posts following the debate highlighted public doubt about his honesty and current stance on military action.

Biden supporters tend to focus on achievements from the Obama administration, including the Nuclear Deal with Iran and the Affordable Care Act. There is support for keeping the current health care plan and not raising taxes.

Trump supporters tend to focus on Biden's hypocrisy, noting that the Obama administration bombed civilians. They use these facts to present Biden as a liar. There is a noticeable number of posts questioning Biden's intellect and there are accusations of delusional behavior, or signs of dementia.

### Pete Buttigieg

Mayor Pete Buttigieg is **gaining support** when compared to baseline metrics from the November debate. Though there were some decreases in social positioning scores before and after the most recent debate, they remain higher in every category when compared to November.

Gains in Influence indicate that more people are open to considering what Buttigieg has to offer, and that mentions of him are more favorable following the debate than before. There is also an increase in Social Responsibility, indicating that Buttigieg and his platform is appealing to values and issues important to the public.

Decreases in Trust and Satisfaction may not be based on his debate performance but his avoiding tough questions from media post-debate and his upcoming town hall. There is a lack of trust on racial issues, whether black voters support him and why.

Supporters tend to focus on his closing statements on addressing poverty and support for childcare workers. Favorable mentions highlight his personal characteristics, how well he debates, his military service, and faith. Supporters post that they believe Buttigieg will be able to beat Trump in a debate.

Trump supporters are not actively criticizing Buttigieg as an individual, but lumping him in with other candidates and claiming that Trump will win against any of them. Doubts tend to highlight a lack of support from the black community, and that Buttigieg is overrated.

### Amy Klobuchar

Senator Klobuchar is **losing support** according to our social positioning in Trust, Satisfaction, and Commitment. The trend in data shows that she may be holding onto the support she had won early in the primary, but has not been winning new supporters since November. The immediate losses in scores following the debate indicate lower confidence in her campaign.

Posts related to Trust and Satisfaction following the debate were reactions to the question raised in the debate - whether a woman can win the presidency. There are a number of overt statements of yes, a woman can win, just not Klobuchar. Others are framing the response as desperate, embarrassing, and constructed to attack Bernie Sanders.

Klobuchar's supporters quoted her statements from the debate and stated that they thought her performance was good and that she was either their first or second choice. However, there were roughly the same amount of posts stating that they had ranked Klobuchar higher before this debate and that they think she will soon suspend her campaign.

There were few people openly attacking Klobuchar, but mentions of both her and Senator Warren were focused on the topic of being undefeated in elections. The reaction to this was mixed, and a lot of posts were suggesting that Klobuchar's past electability is no indicator of future electability.

## Bernie Sanders

Social positioning scores have dropped for Senator Sanders since the November debate and have only improved in two categories following the debate, those being Satisfaction and General. While the remaining categories have either held their position or decreased, the categories that observed some improvement indicate that **over all sentiment is still favorable** for the Sanders campaign.

The key driver behind the drop in scores during and following the debate were in reaction to the allegation from Senator Warren that Bernie told her that he didn't believe that a woman could win the presidency back in 2018. There was a lot of reaction to the statement, question in the debate, and answers from candidates. Posts were mixed, some thought the statement was part of an attack ad, others went further to accuse CNN of bias against Sanders. Supporters perceived the whole topic as going in Sanders's favor, that his track record demonstrates that Warren lied.

One of the more popular criticisms against Sanders following the debate was that he would raise taxes on those earning \$29,000 or less, and that contradicts what he had previously promised.

A popular post summarized that if it is true that Bernie said that, then that is disturbing, and that if it is not true and Warren is lying, then that is disturbing. There appears to be some divisiveness on the issue, but many people are calling for unity and that they will support either candidate should they win the nomination.

There is a growing trend of posts 'exposing' Sander's staffers or volunteers quoted as making statements related to anarchy, socialism, and that some issues are more important than law in America. It appears to be part of a campaign against Sanders, but the source is unclear, potentially fake news posts intended to arouse fear about Sanders. There is another claim that his staff are locking their personal social media accounts, and that people are calling for transparency during the campaign. It is unclear if this is true.

## Tom Steyer

Social positioning **scores decreased significantly** from the November debate until the day of the January debate, indicating that Tom Steyer was not able to capitalize on his support from early in his campaign. However, the scores increased significantly post-debate in every category. We can infer then, that support for Steyer and his platform increases during times of high visibility or publicity.

Support for Tom Steyer was framed as him being a better alternative to the other candidates, not necessarily for anything he is promising. Though some have expressed their support for Steyer, they are not defending or explaining their decision.

Criticism against Steyer's debate performance has largely been calling out his hypocrisy for claiming that climate change is a priority to

him, but that his hedge fund had invested in oil and coal. The public also stated that his ads are unclear, not effective, a waste of money, and that he is attempting to buy the presidency.

There were many mentions surrounding the final encounter on stage between Senator Warren and Senator Sanders, they did not shake hands and appeared to have an argument. Steyer was standing between them and many posts point out how awkward it was, and asking Tom to 'spill the tea' on what he overheard because it was not audible.

## Elizabeth Warren

Social positioning **scores for Senator Warren dropped** since November leading up to the debate in January. The trend was driven by her claim that Senator Bernie Sanders told her in 2018 that a woman could not win the presidency. Leading up to the debate there was a lot of speculation whether it was true, planted, skewed, or fabricated entirely. The discussion online was divisive and caused in-fighting between Warren and Sanders supporters.

Supporters of Warren focused on her performance, planning, and readiness to take on President Trump. Many people quoted her, saying that she is undefeated and mentions about her over all good performance. There are many supporters stating that she is their first pick.

Supporters of Sanders focus on Warren's 'betrayal' of Bernie, that the story was fabricated or exaggerated, and that they don't believe Warren. They are calling her a snake, and questioning her integrity. There are many posts stating that Warren is playing the 'woman' card, faking sexism, and using feminism to win as a token candidate. There are more divisive mentions of Warren than other candidates, with many using the hashtag #BernieOrBust and tagging Elizabeth Warren's account.

Little attention was focused on Warren's plans, especially health and how it would be funded, despite that being a highlight during the debate. More people posted about her statement that the men on stage lost a lot of elections but the women were undefeated.

Each category observed **an increase in scores following the debate**. This indicates that following the reactions to what was said during the debate, mentions of Warren are more favorable, with **many media sources naming her a winner** in the debate.

## Mike Bloomberg

Though not qualifying for the debate, Mike Bloomberg's campaign tweeted during the event as a way of participating and weighing in on key issues. Orenda's social positioning scores indicate that his gains in Social Responsibility and Commitment are reflective of resonating with audiences. His tweets on taking the fight to President Trump in battleground states was favorably received, though it is unclear at this time if that will convert into votes.

Supporters focused on issues of gun safety, and some posts attributed Bloomberg's stance on guns as the deciding factor in their decisions. People also supported tweets naming the list of school shootings since Trump took office, and that the topic of gun safety should be raised in importance.

Criticisms of Bloomberg include indifference to his campaign, stating that he won't win public support despite the amount of money he is spending on advertising. One post in particular presented the ads in Atlanta as hilarious because they attempt to spin the billionaire as relatable, or like a neighbor.

There are those clearly stating that they will not vote for Bloomberg, although no explanation was presented. There was a post calling for an investigation into his business in China, but there is no other information or explanation as to why they would call for the investigation.

To learn more, please contact us at [info@orendasolutions.com](mailto:info@orendasolutions.com) or call **1-416-777-1313**.