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Harris vs. Trump Debate Insights

Who Won the Debate? 1,000
US Voters Weigh In!

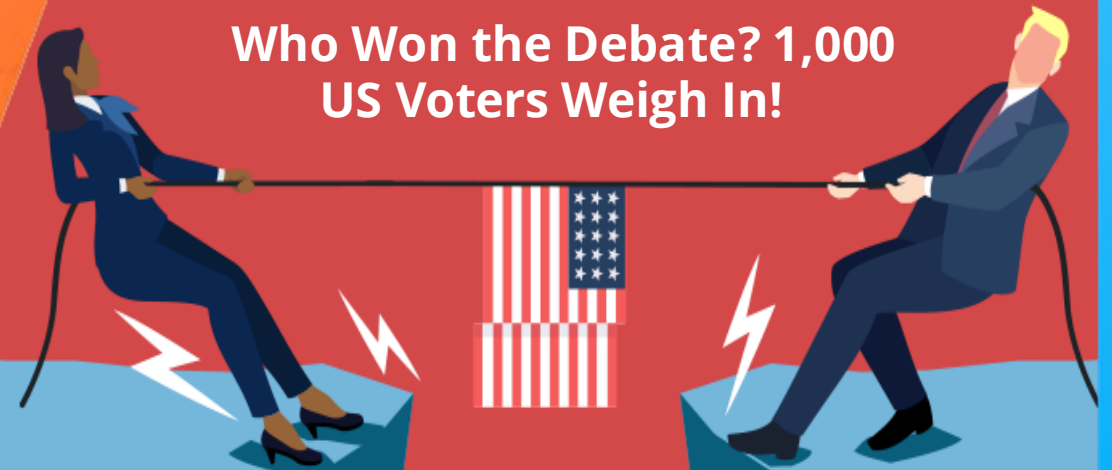
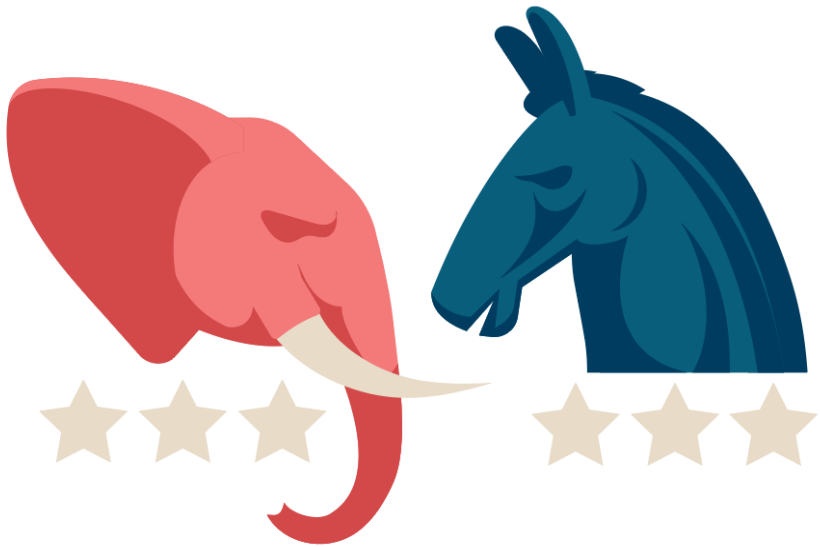


Table of Contents



- Background
- Method
- Results
 - Who won the debate?
 - Perceptions of Candidates and Their Debate Performance
 - Will this debate impact your vote in November?
 - Are there any positions or policies that either candidate described that were memorable or important for you?
- Discussion

Background: Who won the debate? And Why?



- Most reports about the Presidential debate include insights from a small sample of about 10-25 people
- CloudResearch decided to do something different– we reached out to nearly 1000 voters to get a representative view of what people thought
- Importantly we got their opinions both before *and* after the debate to see if anyone’s opinions about the candidates or voting intentions had changed
- With Engage’s AI system, we were able to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews to figure out why exactly voters had changed their minds about the candidates, or why they remained their opinions remained the same



Methodology

Chat-based conversations with Engage AI Before and after the Harris/Trump debate

Pre-debate = 15 min

Post-debate = 20 min



Sample

937 **US voters**

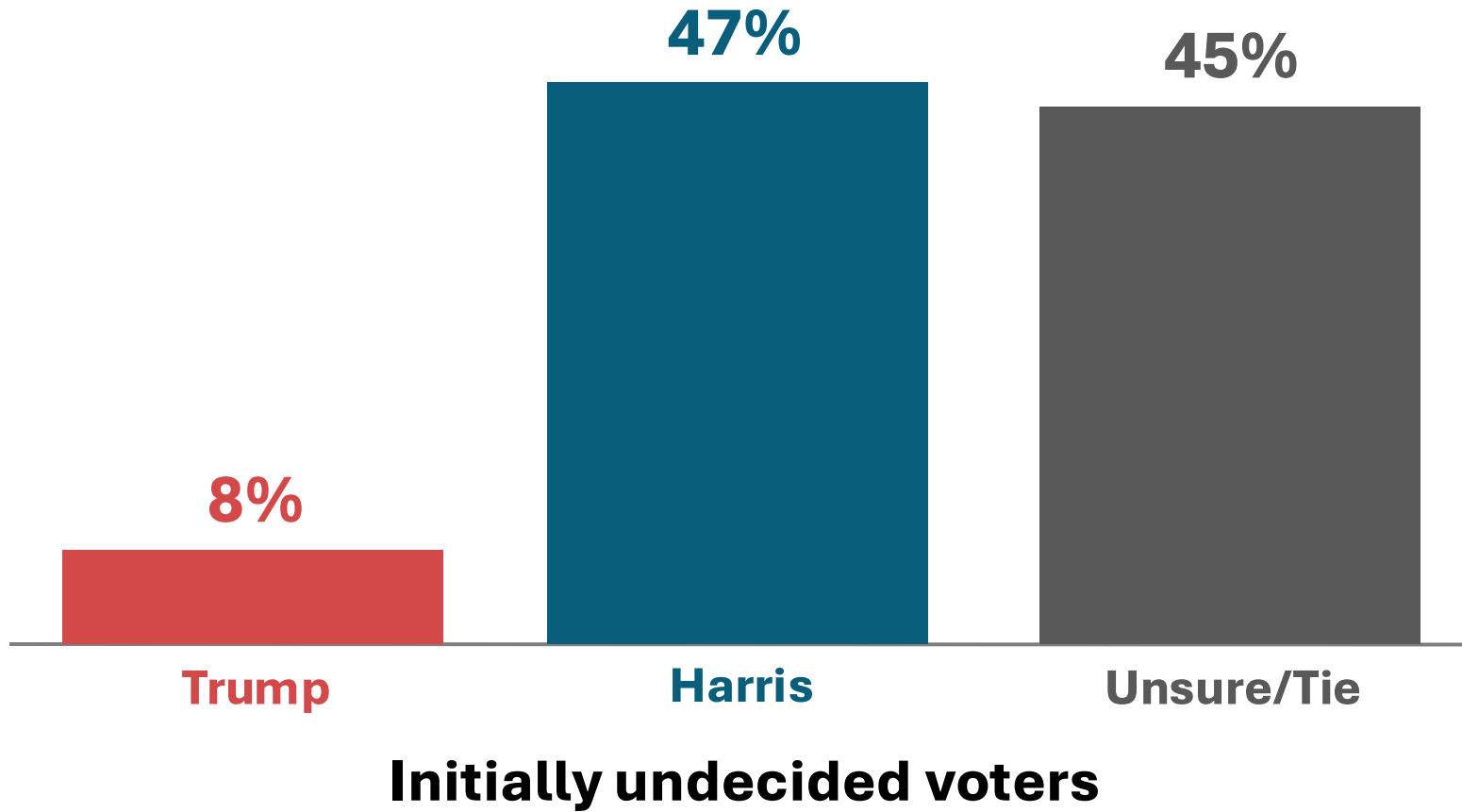
Prior to the debate:

- 370 Kamala Harris
- 338 Donald Trump
- 219 Undecided
- 10 Third party

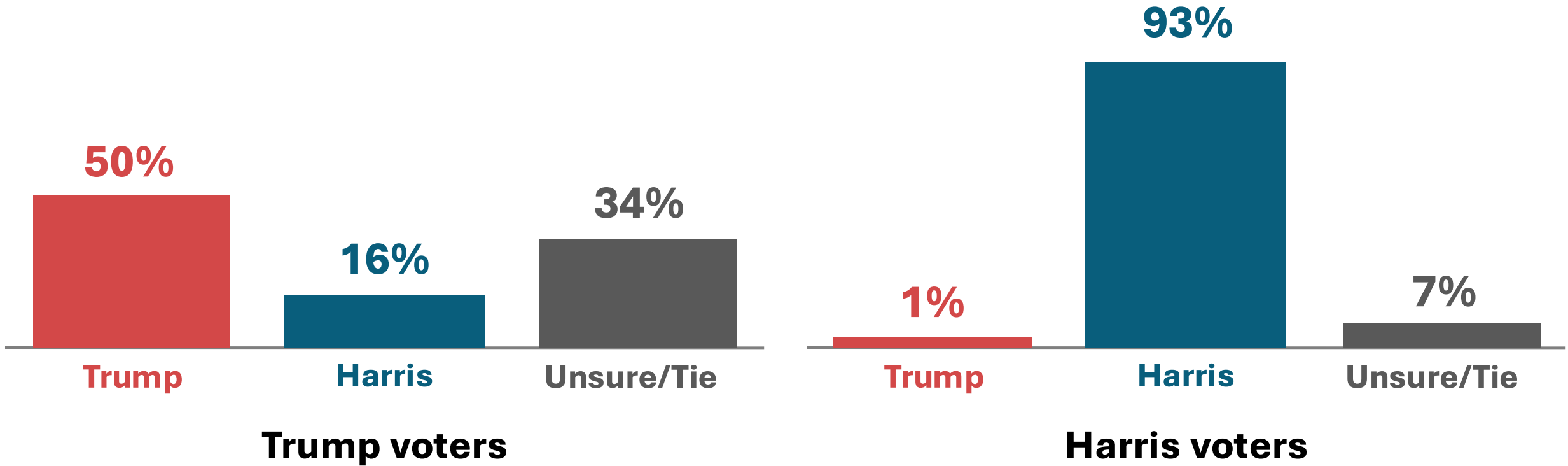


Who won the
debate?

Who won the debate?



Who won the debate?



Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Harris



- These participants overwhelmingly viewed Kamala Harris as the victor in the debate.
- Harris was commonly viewed as composed, eloquent, providing substantive discourse, and showing a presidential demeanor.
 - Calm and composed compared to Trump's agitated and repetitive speech
 - Substantive responses focused on real plans and issues
 - Presidential demeanor and professional conduct
 - Focus on the future and relatability to the American people



Could you elaborate on why you believe Kamala Harris won the debate? What aspects of her performance stood out to you as particularly compelling or effective?

*Kamala Harris presented herself as strong, well spoken, calm and resolute under pressure. She channeled her anger into verbal assaults that were made with a courtroom style. Trump gets mad and starts going off on the same grievances and stops answering questions posed to him. **He loses his opportunity to share his vision because he's enraged that it isn't stated that he has the best rally's ever. The most in history in fact.** No one leaves early on and on.. Who cares?! I don't care if someone left early or not!! Trump is easy to play and that is not a good quality for a leader to have.*



White woman, 67, Independent, FL



White woman, 58, Independent, MN

*It was like watching an adult debate a baby, She won, hands down. Only the rabid Trump crowd will say he won, He did a terrible job and allowed everything she said to bait him into a tantrum. She stayed on point talking about what she would do for the American people, but all Trump did was say unhinged things about rallies, stolen elections, eating pets and he has an idea for a plan. **He was president, and has had an additional 4 years to formulate a plan, but he still says he only has an idea for a plan.***

Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Trump



- These participants believe Trump won the debate due to a combination of his assertive and clear discussion of policies, his confident and calm demeanor, and his discipline and engagement with debate topics
 - Assertive and clear vision regarding economic policies pertaining to tax reduction, deregulation, and “America First”
 - Good engagement with debate topics and a disciplined approach
 - Showed more confidence than Harris



Could you please elaborate on why you think that Donald Trump won the debate? What specific elements or moments from his performance led you to this conclusion?



His assertive responses and clear focus on issues like tax reduction, deregulation and support for smaller business and his America First stance, was well accepted by the voters.

White woman, 67, Independent, FL



Were there any key points or examples he provided that particularly stood out?



Trump assertiveness was convincing because he presented **a clear, confident vision for economic growth, focusing on specific policies like reducing corporate tax rates**. His use of example such as job creation through deregulation, helped illustrate the tangible benefits of his proposals.

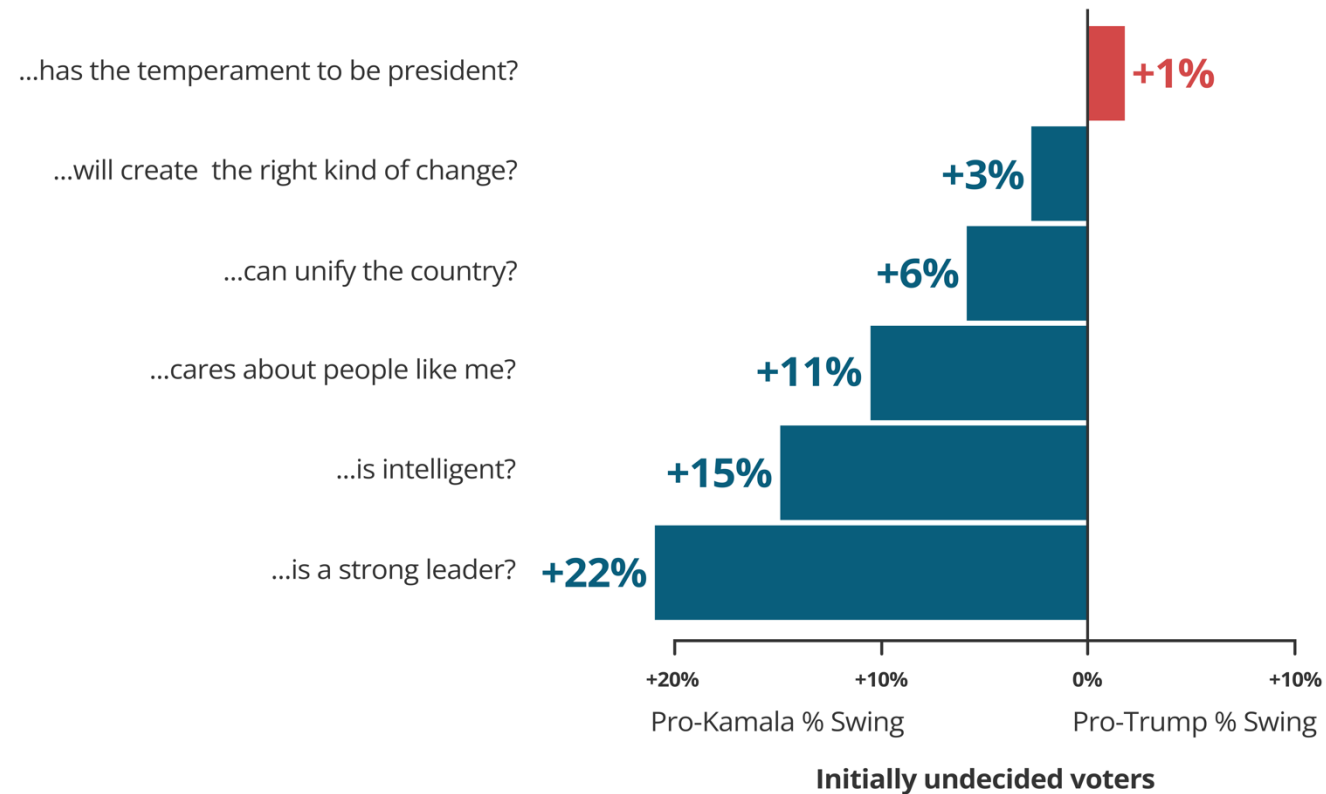
White woman, 67, Independent, FL



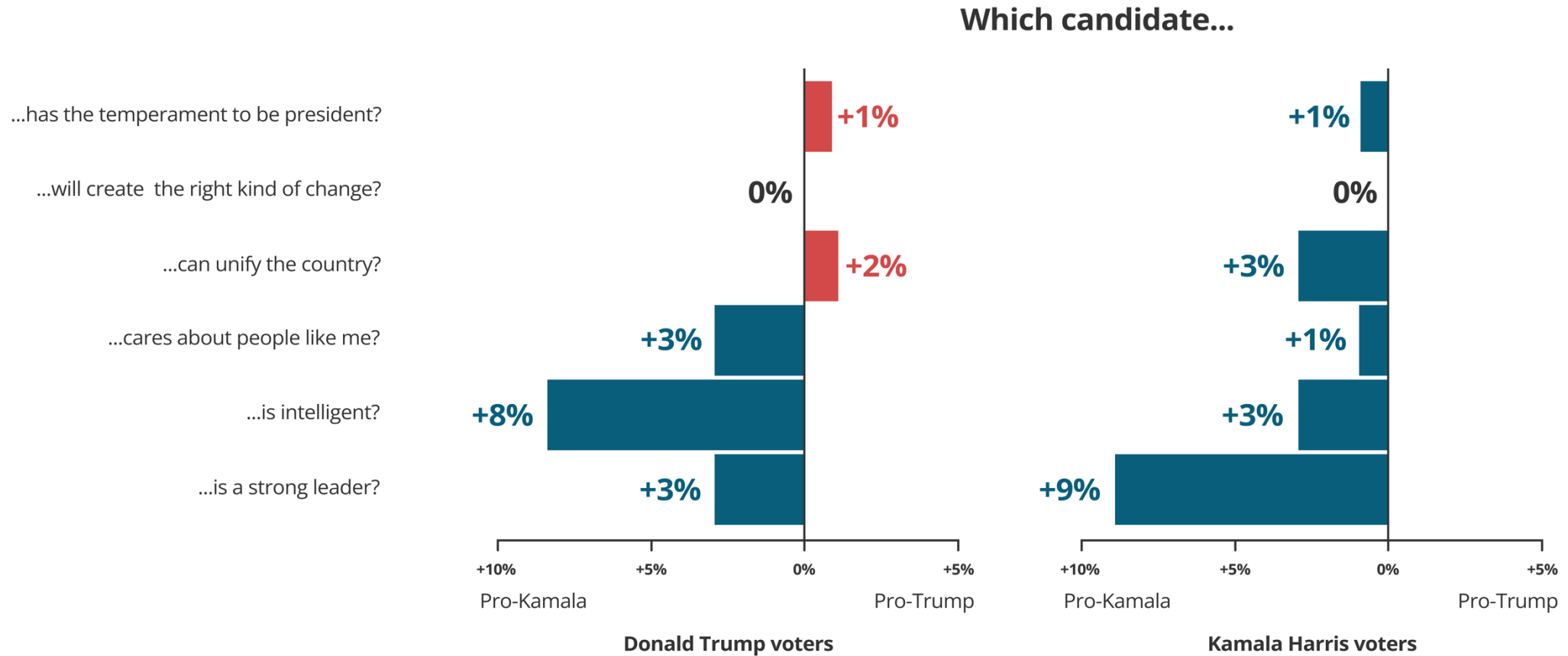
Perceptions of Candidates and their Debate Performance

Candidate perceptions

Which candidate...



Candidate perceptions



Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Harris



- These participants were mostly positively surprised by Harris's performance
- Trump's performance either met their low expectations or disappointed them



Did the candidates perform as you expected during the debate, based on what you previously stated you hoped to see? Did anyone or anything surprise you?



Yes, I did expect Trump to act the way he did, but *Harris really did surprise me as she was tough and didn't let him intimidate her.*

Indian woman, 49, Republican, CA



What actions or statements made her stand out in this regard?



When Trump said she was against fracking, Harris corrected him. She also said that he spread birther lies about Obama and is trying to use race to divide the country. She pointed out that he tried to get rid of Obamacare 60 times and during Biden's administration, that they actually negotiated drug prices to make them more affordable by capping some of them, such as \$35/month for insulin.

Indian woman, 49, Republican, CA



Did the candidates perform as you expected during the debate, based on what you previously stated you hoped to see? Did anyone or anything surprise you?



I did expect Trump to act as irrational as he did but his statements still took me by surprise. I was unsure how Harris would do but in comparison she did better than I expected.

Korean woman, 29, Democrat, CA



Could you elaborate more on the surprising statements made by Donald Trump and how that impacted your view of him?



Trump had to be fact checked multiple times throughout the debate. ***A few statements that was memorable was his statement about immigrants eating dogs and about post birth abortions. This made me view him very negatively.***

Korean woman, 29, Democrat, CA

Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Trump



- These participants noted that the debate seemed mostly theatrical rather than substantive
- They viewed Trump favorably for his results-oriented approach especially in relation to economic and foreign policy solutions



Did the candidates perform as you expected during the debate, based on what you previously stated you hoped to see? Did anyone or anything surprise you?

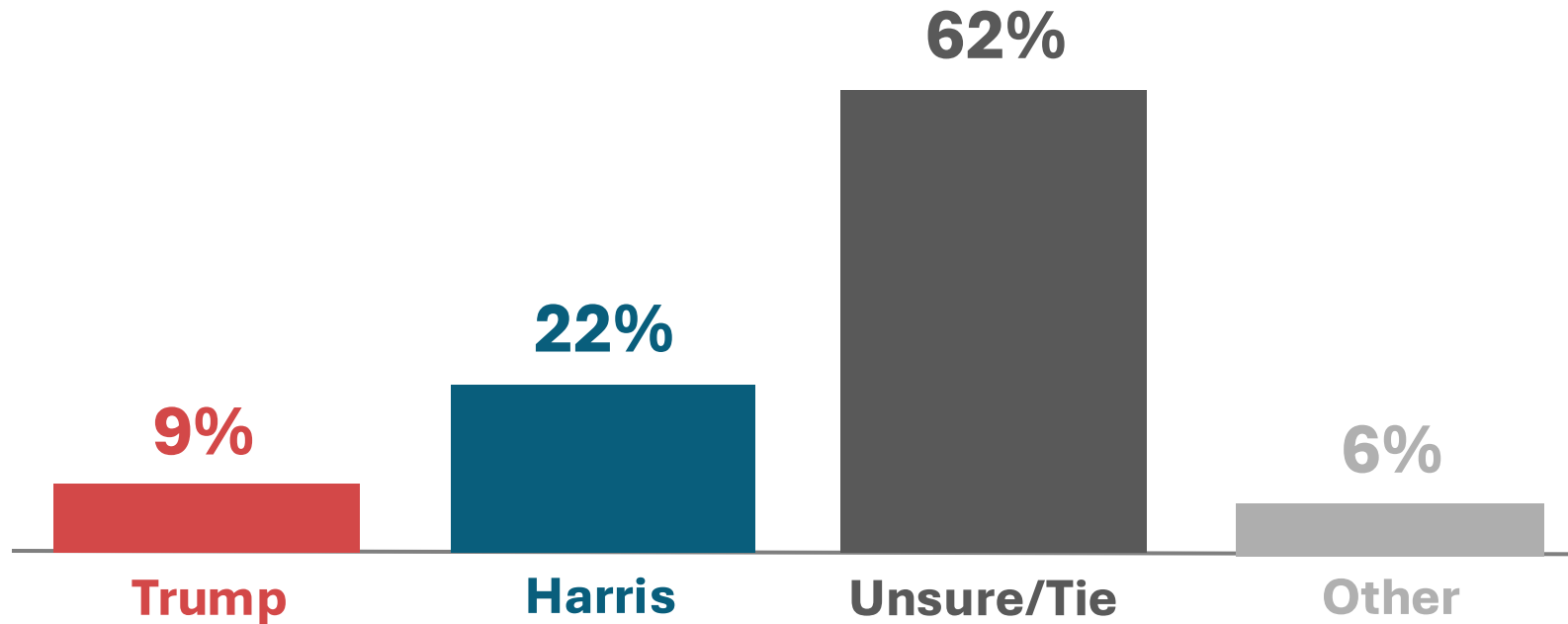


I was surprised Harris didn't say anything new to show she will take a different direction on international events so it may end up with a lot of Biden hold overs in her government. **Trump is a blowhard as expected but he is more likely to be results oriented I feel like and take actions to get plans through congress to make things happen.**

White man, 47, Democrat, TX

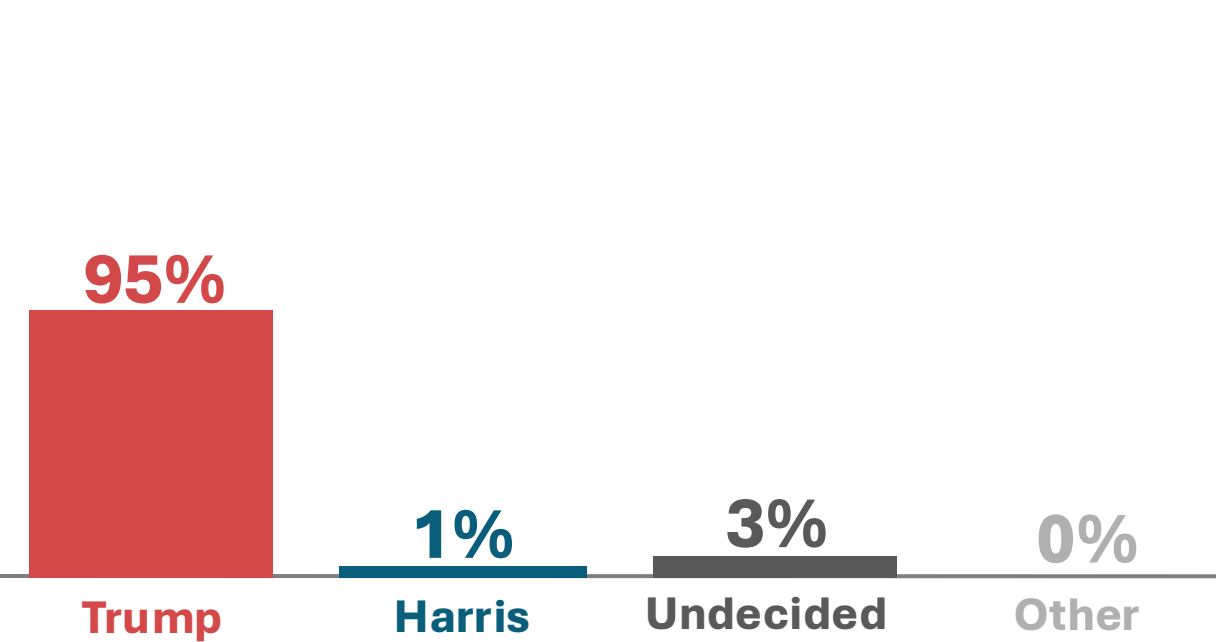
Will this debate
impact your vote
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Will this debate impact your vote in November?

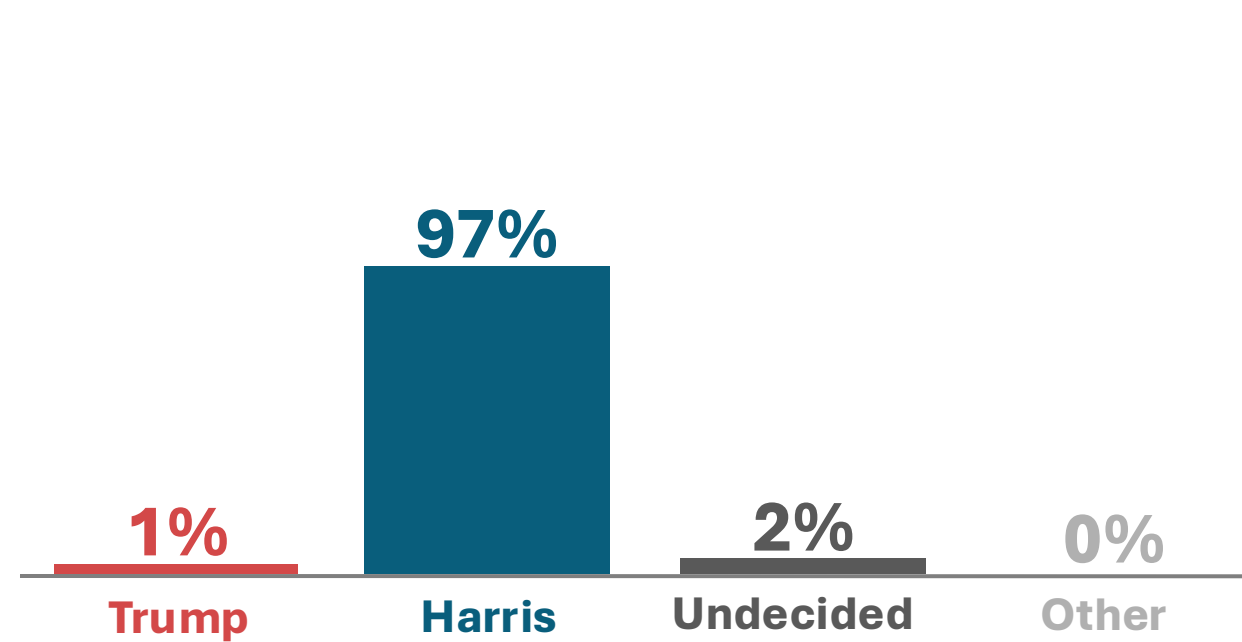


**Initially undecided voters:
Who will you vote for?**

Will this debate impact your vote in November?



**Initially Trump voters:
Who will you vote for?**



**Initially Harris voters:
Who will you vote for?**

Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Harris



- The factors that swayed these participants' opinions were less about policy specifics and more about the behavior, preparedness, and perceived willingness to address key issues directly.
- Harris benefitted from being viewed as a more mature, comprehensive candidate, while Trump's perceived temperament and approach hurt his appeal among the undecided voters sampled.
- Participants were also dissatisfied with Trump's failure to offer detailed plans for his policies

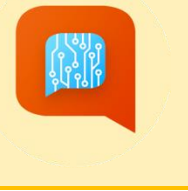


Can you share more about how this debate will influence your vote in November? Specifically, what did you learn or observe during the debate that changed your voting intention?



I learned that Donald Trump is incredibly unfit to run this country for a second time. I also learned that he has a court hearing or something coming soon in November.

Man, 33, Democrat, NY



Could you elaborate more on the surprising statements made by Donald Trump and how that impacted your view of him?



Kamala's response and significant understanding of what is going on in this country was shown in this debate. Whereas Donald Trump seems to be stuck in a loop of fanatical support from his supporters thinking that that will be enough to improve our country. If i had to pinpoint a moment in where the debate went in favor of Kamala for me, it would be when Donald Trump could not speak cohesively about the January 6th riots that he incited.

Man, 33, Democrat, NY

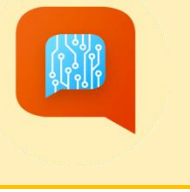


Can you share more about how this debate will influence your vote in November? Specifically, what did you learn or observe during the debate that changed your voting intention?



I was more undecided before, but I figured I would not vote for Trump. I think I view Harris more favorable after the debate.

Chinese man, 27, independent, OK



I'm glad to hear that the debate helped clarify your decision. Can you share what positioned Kamala Harris favorably in your view? Was it her arguments, demeanor in handling the debate, or any stand out moments that particularly swayed you?



Demeanor definitely had the greatest impact for me, but I feel she had a better message for unity for Americans

Chinese man, 27, independent, OK

Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Trump



- Perceptions of strong leadership, dissatisfaction with Harris's policy clarity, and agreement with economic principles emerged as important factors for these participants leaning towards Trump after the debate.



**Can you share more about how this debate will influence your vote in November?
Specifically, what did you learn or observe during the debate that changed your voting intention?**

The debate solidified my decision by clearly outlining Trump economic strategies, which aligned with my priorities for tax reform and deregulation.



White woman, 32, Independent, NC



White man, 47, Democrat, TX

I might change to Harris and then back to Trump again between now and the election, but at this moment I am leaning towards Trump because I feel like he will be a stronger leader that will try to get things done.

Are there any positions or policies that either candidate described that were memorable or important to you?

Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Harris

- These participants now intend to support Harris because...



- She demonstrated a dedication to “the people” not self-serving
- Proposals to lower taxes for small businesses and support the middle class through tax credits
- Acknowledging she owned a gun while advocating for gun control
- Abortion stance in favor of reproductive rights were clear
- Plans to increase border agents in response to immigration concerns



Are there any positions or policies that either candidate described during the debate that were memorable or important for you?

She was very strongly for women's rights and abortion rights, invoking emotional appeal and sympathy for victims of crimes who had no choice or control over the circumstances. On the other hand, Donald Trump refused to commit to action on abortion, which made the impression that it was not an important issue to him when it is to me. In addition, his remarks that abortions will be performed "after the baby is born" demonstrates clear misinformation and lack of knowledge about the process of abortion as well as what it really is, making him seem foolish and uninformed.



Chinese woman, 20, CA

I did agree with Kamala Harris's policies because most of the policies are what seemingly benefits me personally. Her statements regarding being for the middle class because they are the backbone of the country in all aspects of her policies made the most impact on me.

It resonates with me and probably a lot of people because that is similar background to what I was raised in. She stated policies that would help with tax relief for small business owners and families that I feel would benefit the middle class.



Korean woman, 29, Democrat, CA

Undecided voters who now intend to vote for Trump



- These participants now intend to support Harris because...
 - His stance on immigration and proposal for largest deportation program
 - His economic policies such as tax rates and deregulation
 - Pro-life stance
 - Dissatisfaction with Harris and the unknown



Are there any positions or policies that either candidate described during the debate that were memorable or important for you?



Kamala listed all the money she was going to hand out, which to me sounds like bribing voters and then she will blame congress for why we can't get the promises delivered. Trump using the military to deport people and his economic policies are memorable for me.

White man, 28, Independent, TX



You mentioned that Trump's approach towards using the military for deportation and his economic policies were memorable for you. Could you detail what aspects or specifics of these policies stood out for you? How do these align with your personal beliefs or impact your life directly?



The fact that it will be the largest deportation program in the US is what stood out. I think we should focus on securing the country and stopping illegal border crossings. There is too much risk to communities and people. I live in Texas and have lived in areas affected by illegal immigrants who are in gangs. I don't want to feel I need to carry a gun anytime I travel in Texas in case one of them tries to attack me or my family.

White man, 28, Independent, TX

But still...many undecided voters remain undecided



- These participants remain undecided because they were not convinced by the positions or policies of either candidate.
- They desire more detailed and sincere policy discussions
- Both candidates seemed to lack genuine commitment and failed to provide substantial implementable solutions
- Too much focus on personal attacks toward each other

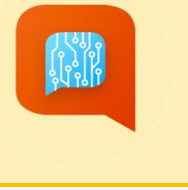


Are there any positions or policies that either candidate described during the debate that were memorable or important for you?



It was memorable to me that Trump did not answer why he killed an immigration bill and that Harris didn't answer whether she would sign an abortion bill

White man, 28, Independent, TX



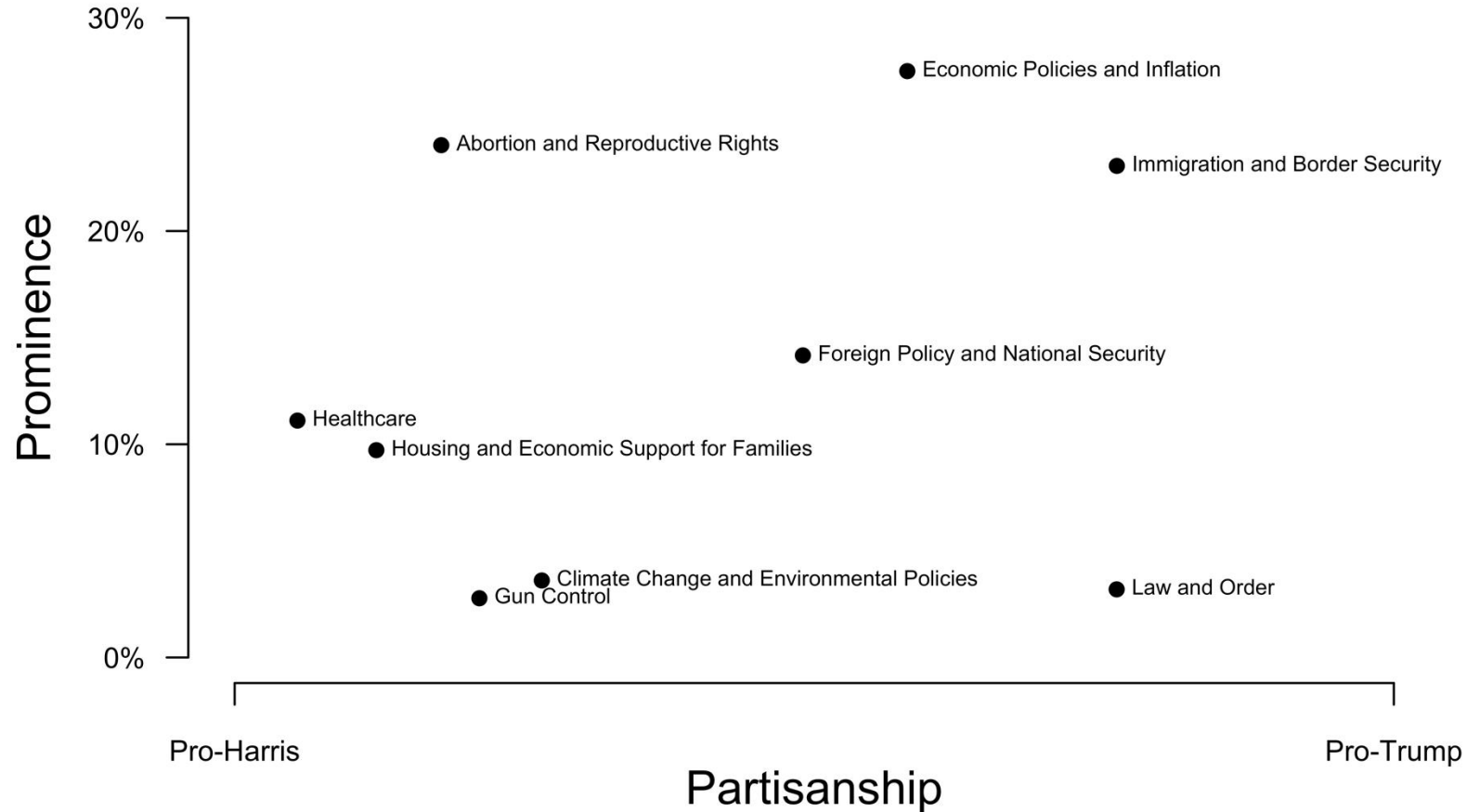
When you mention that Trump did not answer why he killed an immigration bill, do you recall which bill this was and why its discussion was significant for you? Also, why was Harris's non-response on the topic of signing an abortion bill memorable for you?



I believe it was a bill to enforce stricter border security by moving more patrol officers to the border. For Harris, I thought she would have a clear answer to this question but it seemed like she didn't want to take a side.

White man, 28, Independent, TX

Top Debate Themes by Party Affiliation



*Prominence = % of participants tagged as mentioning each theme

*Partisanship = Average support for Trump minus average support for Kamala for participants tagged with each theme

In Sum



- Most Harris supporters believe she won the debate, while only about half of Trump supporters think he won
- More undecided supporters believe Harris won than think that Trump won
- The debate gave people a chance to get to know Harris and they now see her more positively on a number of traits important to leadership ability
- Many undecided remain undecided– will they make up their minds before the election? Abstain from voting?

Contact us for more information



In the News

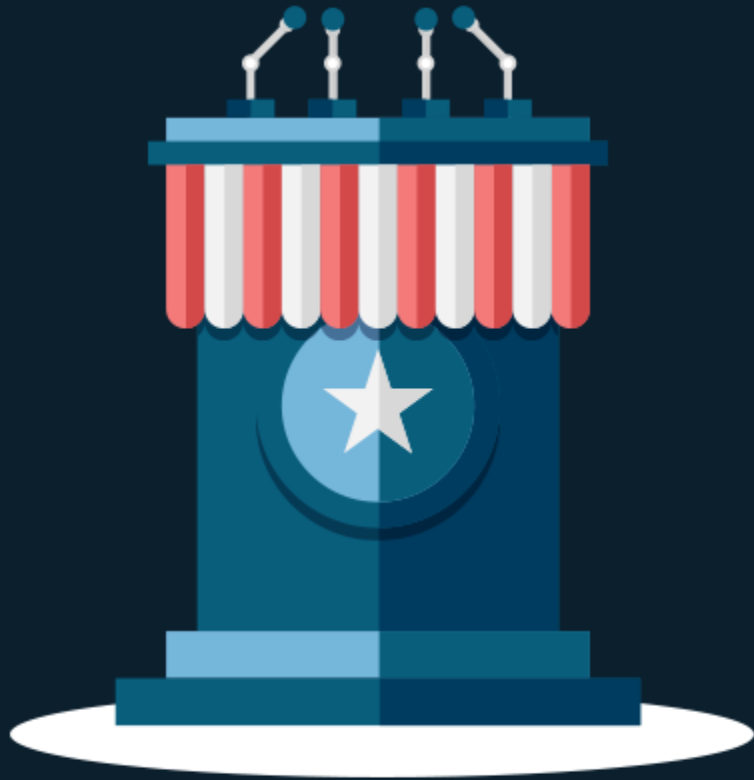
- [A.I. poll reveals why most voters think Harris won the debate \(CBS\)](#)

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Thank You

Do you have questions or have interest to learn more about how **AI conversational polling** can do for your research, please reach out.

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