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Report Snapshot:

What Moves the Floating Voter?

A deep look at the three-headed monster informing decisions of undecided voters.

Prologue

In every tight election attention turns to the fence-sitters as each party bids for their vote. Poles make predictions based on the movement of the numbers, but what people say and what they then do diverge widely these days.

In the study, Sympler unpacks hidden reasons people voters remain undecided - even at this very late stage.

We spoke to 100 undecided voters across the 6 key swing states and encouraged them to expose their candid feelings about the race. The winning candidate will be he or she that truly empathises with the emotions driving the choices - not just the stated 'reasons.'

This study was conducted for Creatives fo Harris, a group of 700 creative industry professionals who have organized to create messaging for the campaign. Sympler is an independent research firm that uses ethnographic & projective tools to illuminate hidden motivations.

In this excerpt, we're providing a glimpse into the insights we've uncovered. If you would like the full report, [drop us a line](#) & we'll send it along.

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“I’m **scared of the future** because of policies that may go into effect if Trump is president but if Kamala is President our international issues may not get solved..”
-Emu. Currently Undecided

“**The politicians are like puppets.** I’m voting for the lesser of two evils. That’s all. Because it best represents my interests.”
-Monica. Previously Undecided

“Harris is incompetent. Trump is incompetent, criminal and insane.”
-Kathy. Currently Undecided

“The democrats are a false champion for black rights just for votes. But, **they are the lesser of two evils.**”
-Hank. Previously Undecided

“I just feel like **nobody in politics are for the people.** It’s really for business and how they can get more money. When someone questions what a politician will do for the people it’s the same scripted line. But anytime a politician has the opportunity to make the nation better, they decide to do something that will gain them money.”
-Kiki. Currently Undecided

At face value, there is dissatisfaction about both choices

On closer inspection, there's a deeper fight: with the **binary**

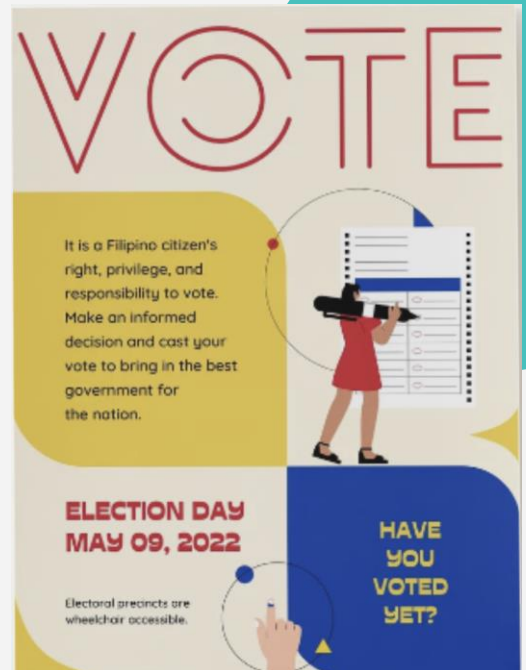
Undecideds feel let down by a system that treats them as an unthinking entity in order to 'win.' One that forces a binary choice upon them - between 'good and evil.'

Undecided voters aren't stupid. They aren't even entirely undecided, but they are pissed.

They're pissed at the oversimplification of their choices. By the lack of conversation: "Choose A or B, and we're done with you."

They're pissed because their agency was stripped away. They don't just feel unlistened to, they feel used. They want **to matter**.

So the very act of being undecided is a mini protest, a pause, a display of agency and **consciousness**.



7 WAYS TO EMPATHIZE

- 1 Strike a better balance between listening & **pandering**
- 2 Independent thinkers respond poorly to zealots & **ideologues**
- 3 Champion **civility** in our disagreement
- 4 Personality & **vibes** really are important for undecideds

- 5 **'Freedom'** is up for grabs and essential for independent thinkers
- 6 Personal trials don't undermine national **optimism** & pride
- 7 Project **strength** overseas without domestic overreach



01.

Strike a better balance between listening & pandering

Trump's success has been from standing outside of the system. For all his unlikeable traits, he is rarely faulted for his pandering. This quality might be an asset for the Harris campaign too.

One suggested solution is for Harris to forge a more authentic self that doesn't need to flip as much

You're not hearing me

"I think she struggles by pleasing her party too much instead of listening to voters. She should take a step back & listen to voters instead of funders"
-Bethany. Previously Undecided

Being yourself

You're pandering too much

"The candidates are not honest and present no clear plan for changes in the economy. Don't lie and pander to me."
-Bev. Previously Undecided

Listen to us down here!

"I think you should work on hearing people out. Just because someone has a different opinion, does not mean they are against you. Be open to changing your mind with the times, to listen to people who don't always have their voices heard."

-Josh. Previously Undecided

"They were trying too hard to fit in and weren't actually listening to our wants and needs. She did what she thought we needed, not what we actually needed."

-Lee. Currently Undecided

"I feel you do not have a good grasp on the situation of the average American, you focus too much on one group where you feel your strength is, you need to expand."

-Ronald. Currently Undecided

Ultimately, strike the balance & **be yourself**

*“Sometimes I feel that **she’s trying too hard to be hip and cool**, and to be like a “normal” everyday person. I understand why she does it and it helped in the beginning, but I feel like a lot of people want to see her professional side and know how she will act as Madam President. Maybe **just a little more balance between those two sides.**”*

-Lee. Currently Undecided

*“There are people in the world called ‘yes men’. They say “yes” to everything no matter the consequences or the cost. You, unfortunately, have been labeled as one of those. **Take time to assert your beliefs and stances** even if they are against the norm.*

-Janet. Previously Undecided

*“I believe you still have a chance to redeem yourself you could really could blossom if do **a little more inner work on yourself** and outer work to gain more perspective from more groups in society to do so.”*

-Kristina, Currently Undecided

There's immense value in

This group of voters put a great deal of stock in the idea of independent thinking. Not only do **they want to be valued for this**, but they value it in others. A candidate that projects this will earn points.

Independent Thinking

*"There used to be strong Democrats and strong Republicans, and then there were some politicians in the middle who might side with the other part on things that matter like abortion, but now so many of the Republicans are just Trumpists, and it's sad and a little scary that people aren't able to think for themselves and stand up to that miserable clog of a human being."
-Corinna: Previously Undecided*

Speak to their emotions, while trusting them to do their research



EMOTIONAL

FUNCTIONAL

Apply classic advertising channel strategy

Maintain the emotional ‘vibes’ messaging in the large channels. And keep the policies & the functional messaging for the interactive spaces where voters can navigate themselves.

Independent thinkers will dig in their heels if they sniff any hint of Utopia-washing. By splitting the messaging, you won’t accidentally patronize people with policies shouting in the big emotional spaces (like speeches).

Finally, let them know we trust them, that we know it’s complicated, there isn’t a perfect solution & that we’re learning too.

02.

Independent thinkers respond poorly to zealots & ideologues

Increasingly entrenched views from ideologically motivated, verbal democrats have had the unintended consequence of pushing their friends to the center or right in search of a place to debate.



The zealotry can overflow into bullying at times.

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*“It makes me very sad and frustrated to see so many people follow, without question either candidate, only to ensure they’re not ousted by their social group. It hurts so many people like me. I actually feel pretty obsessed with it and take a lot of time and energy to deflect the feelings. People think it’s a moot issue that the one candidate that touched on topics most related to me was bullied from running and **I’m being bullied by one side to vote their way** and i must choose whether I’ll lower myself to vote the other way or throw my hands up to vote the way so many people in my social group want me to vote is a lot of pressure, even if I know they aren’t going to be in that voting booth with me. I try to open people’s eyes to what the impoverished are going through, or the misinformation people are fed and I’m either ignored or torn down. They have no clue what it’s like to live in my shoes and both sides have also taken it upon themselves to use mental health as a weapon to throw at each other making the work organizations and individuals like myself have fought to destigmatize null. I see the changes in my daily life. “The middle class! The middle class! The middle class” people scream. How can anyone hope to improve the middle class without finding a way to resolve the issues **the forgotten class** are dealing with?”*

-Kristina. Currently Undecided

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Life became an argument with loved ones

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“I feel like people have their beliefs upside down. We're in this constant battle against each other if someone's beliefs are different than ours and can't come to an understanding that we have different views. **Life is an argument rather than a conversation.** The political divide over the past decade is mind boggling. I think the next few months will become more dangerous. People are too stuck on their own beliefs that they'll make rash and harmful decisions.”
-Katee. Previously Undecided.

“(This fighting) hurts my personal life and relationship with family. I feel like **I've lost family connections over this.** America is good at having a lot of options available goods wise.”
-Melissa. Previously Undecided.

“They just talk like they are without a doubt right about everything and **treat you like you're stupid** for not believing their lives.”
-Melissa. Previously Undecided

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Don't forget your loved ones & acknowledge their freedom to choose

If one of the key sources of emotional malaise is right in your home, how can the Harris campaign provide tools & content to repair these bonds?

Removing the judgement will begin to unstick the independently minded





Dear Kamala, We need a 3rd way

Don't cut the crusts off their sandwiches. Acknowledge the large & sometimes ugly challenges ahead



"Dear Kamala, I am sorry I couldn't vote for you this round, I really did want to though. But there were too many short falls and you also angered me terribly. I like you and respect you and your background but you didn't consider touching base on the chronic disease epidemic affecting society or the part major food and pharmaceutical companies play in it. It's slowly killing me and hurting and killing others. I only have one life.

There is no do over. I was very upset about what your party did to Kennedy. You put me in a horrible position where I had to choose a party of a double standard or a party I dislike just because you didn't allow Kennedy to join yours. If Kennedy had walked away of his own accord without what the left did to him, there would have been a huge chance I would have voted for you. I also feel that as much as I supported the woke movement in the beginning, it has gone too far and is pushing both sides further from each other and closer to civil unrest. Of course, everyone should be supported but not to the point of obsession. It would have made more sense to spread that support to all people needing it, no matter what race, what religion, what anything. You could have added the impoverished and homeless easily into that movement and I'm not talking by ways of jealousy like you are, pushing people to think we should bluntly take from the rich but in ways that reduce the stigma and increase options for us. I also couldn't vote for someone who claims they are saving democracy but trampled on our rights. Free speech doesn't only include my right to speak and be heard, it also includes my right to hear others. Any ban on supposed misinformation gives people like you the right to control information which is dangerous. I also wish you had spoken more about options to reduce abortion without reducing the right to choose. I commend you for standing up for my right as a woman to choose but shouldn't there be restrictions on the line between a woman's choice and a child's right to live. Where is the cut off? You never said. I wish you took the time to stand up more for the forgotten class as much as you have for the middle class. If you had gone out and asked people like me what our lives are like and what could improve, that could have made the difference. Throwing money at it won't fix it. Anyways, I hope you run again with new considerations. I would love to see a woman of color representing the US for a change. In the meantime, I hope you consider what a terrible spot you put me in by ultimately taking away my choice to vote for Kennedy because before you had done that, it was a choice between you and him."

-Kristina. Currently Undecided

05.

'Freedom' is up for grabs & essential for independent thinkers

At first glance it looks like the off-putting factors from both candidates are poles apart, but on closer inspection they are united by a sense of suffocation. The ownership of the 'Freedom' narrative is more available given Project 2025 fears, so more important for both sides than ever. Freedom takes on an even greater value as undecideds hate nothing more than having their power taken from them - especially intellectually.

THEY'LL TELL
ME HOW TO
THINK



'FREEDOM'

THEY'LL TAKE
AWAY MY
FREEDOMS

'Freedom of thought' is visible in the reasons voters are put off Harris

OVERLY PREACHING & 'PIOUS'

*"Right now, I am furious with the Democrats. I used to be one, the turned independent years ago but it's like they feel like they are a cult. You can't show them truths without them disagreeing because they have been manipulated to believe what the "so called" experts are telling them to believe. **Both sides are guilty for it but it is especially worse at this point, on the left.** I can't stand the double standards. You can't fight for democracy and bully a third party out of the race. You can't fight for our rights and force censorship. You can't preach bodily autonomy and still punish those unwilling to inject their bodies with vaccines. I could go on."*

-Kristina. Currently Undecided

THEIR VALUES

"I don't like pretty much everything that one party seems to support. It goes against my views as a Christian and it seems the media is flooded with their propaganda."

-Daren. Previously Undecided

"Being so sure that the other party's ideas are so wrong and they are fooling Americans or rather have a personal vendetta to sort out."

-Jones. Currently Undecided

FEAR OF THE CONTROL AGENDA

"The Republican Party stands in my opinion no longer is for certain ideas but for power & control. They've taken advantage of their opinions and increased their views to strike fear & control others..."

-Emu. Currently Undecided

OVERT PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

"I am disgusted by the way women are treated by the Republican party. The patriarchal misogyny is too much and no respect for women's autonomy."

I hear him make slurs about black people & foreigners and I'm not okay with that. Everybody is a person & should be treated as such."

-Lisha: Currently Undecided

TRUMP'S 'INSANITY'

"I don't particularly like Kamala Harris but Trump seems to be off his meds these days. I realize that i am 51 and a bit old fashioned but he is trying to turn back progress for decades and endangering lives in the process. I worry for my granddaughter if he gets elected."

-Tracy. Previously Undecided

And 'freedom'
more generally is
visible in the
reasons voters are
put off by Trump

Speak directly to the independent thinker

Some of the best messages speak directly to *independents*



want to dive deeper?

[get in touch](#) &
we'll share the full report.



Sympler is a global insights firm that enlightens creatives and communicators with powerful human understanding. By combining instinct and creativity with empathy technology, Sympler scales rich and profound insight.

Harnessing the intimate spaces of private chat, where respondents are more relaxed and emotionally honest, Sympler taps into fears and desires through play, projection, and reflection, revealing complex human motivations. Sympler doesn't treat people as "data points" but uses tools to trigger human skills like curiosity, empathy, and imagination.

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Dear Kamala,

“I believe you tried your best but I also think you didn't hit all the strong points you could have it will be okay but we can only learn from mistakes there can always be another try but next time focus on gearing people with the right information and debate stronger”

-Carolina. Currently Undecided
