



Pathbreaker or Partisan: How Do American Women See Kamala Harris?

September 2024



Confidential: Please do not share without permission
Contact info@2040strategygroup.com for more information

Analysis by



2040 Strategy Group
SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

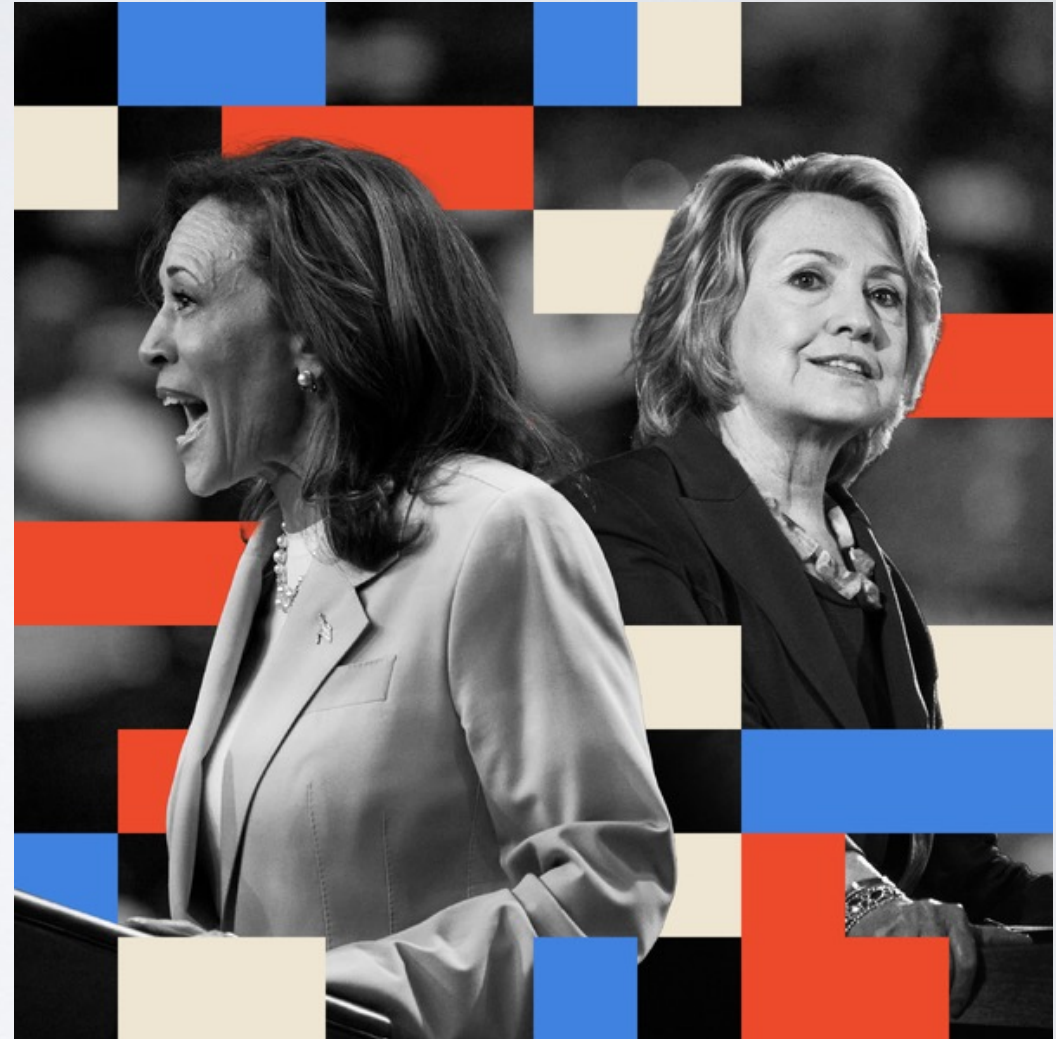
Ceiling Shattering: How Do American Women See Kamala Harris?

Kamala Harris is the second woman to be nominated by the Democrats in 8 years. Her candidacy embodies a potential historical first woman to be President, as well as other identities, including her biracial identity.

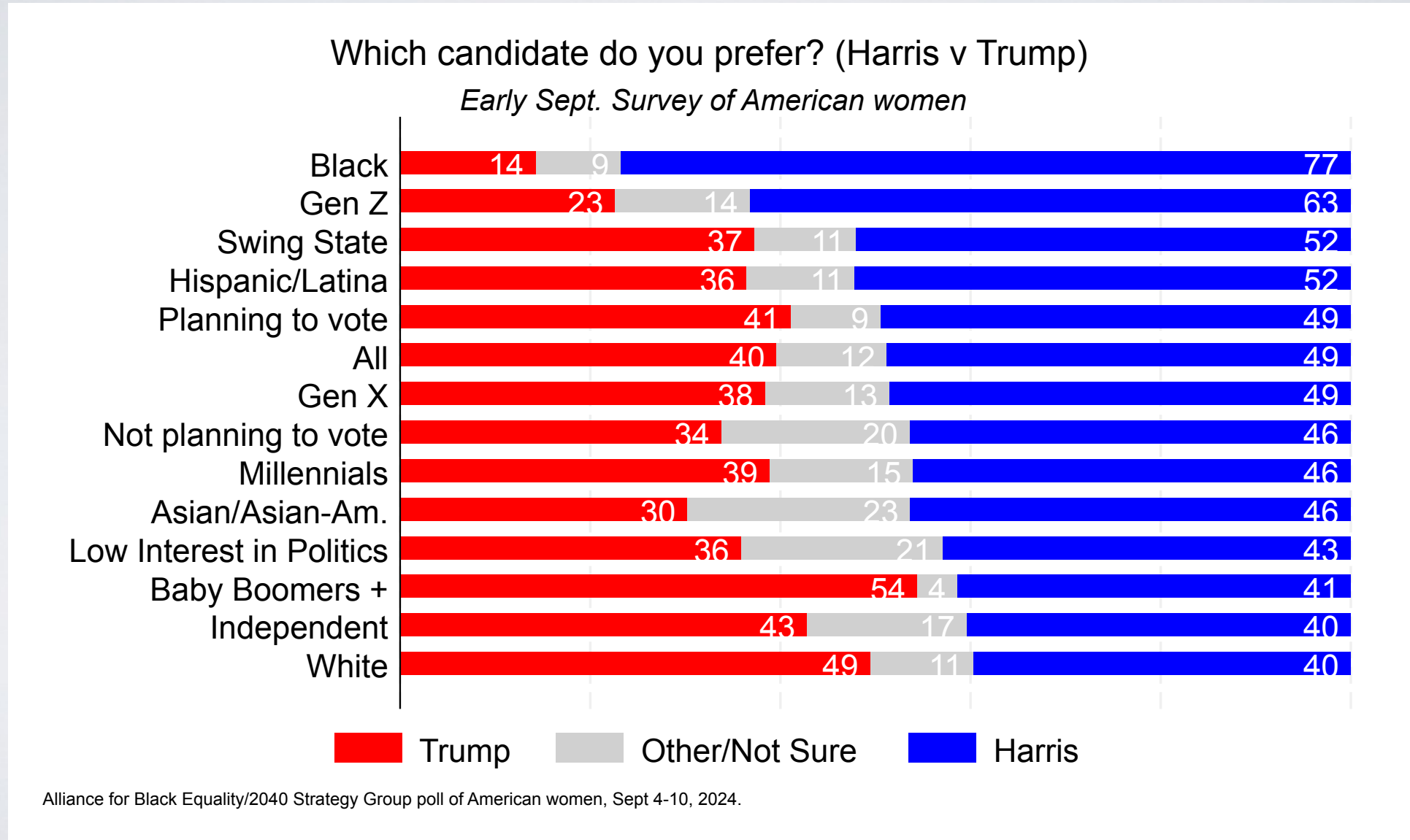
We asked 1487 women across the country how they viewed the political import of the Harris candidacy, with an emphasis on how they view key messages connected to the key role Women of Color play in defending and advancing American democracy from their position of intersectional insight (and historic exclusion).

We found that women's views on Harris are strongly colored by partisanship and ideology, and diverge across racial lines. But providing more information about her—even something as simple as reminding them she may soon be the first female President of the USA—increases support for her and may spur further action for women candidates and Democrats down the line.

We also dug into the idea of “Linked Fate” among women—the idea that women's fortunes in society are connected. This is a strong predictor of agreement with feminist politics, and an area for further messaging and study.



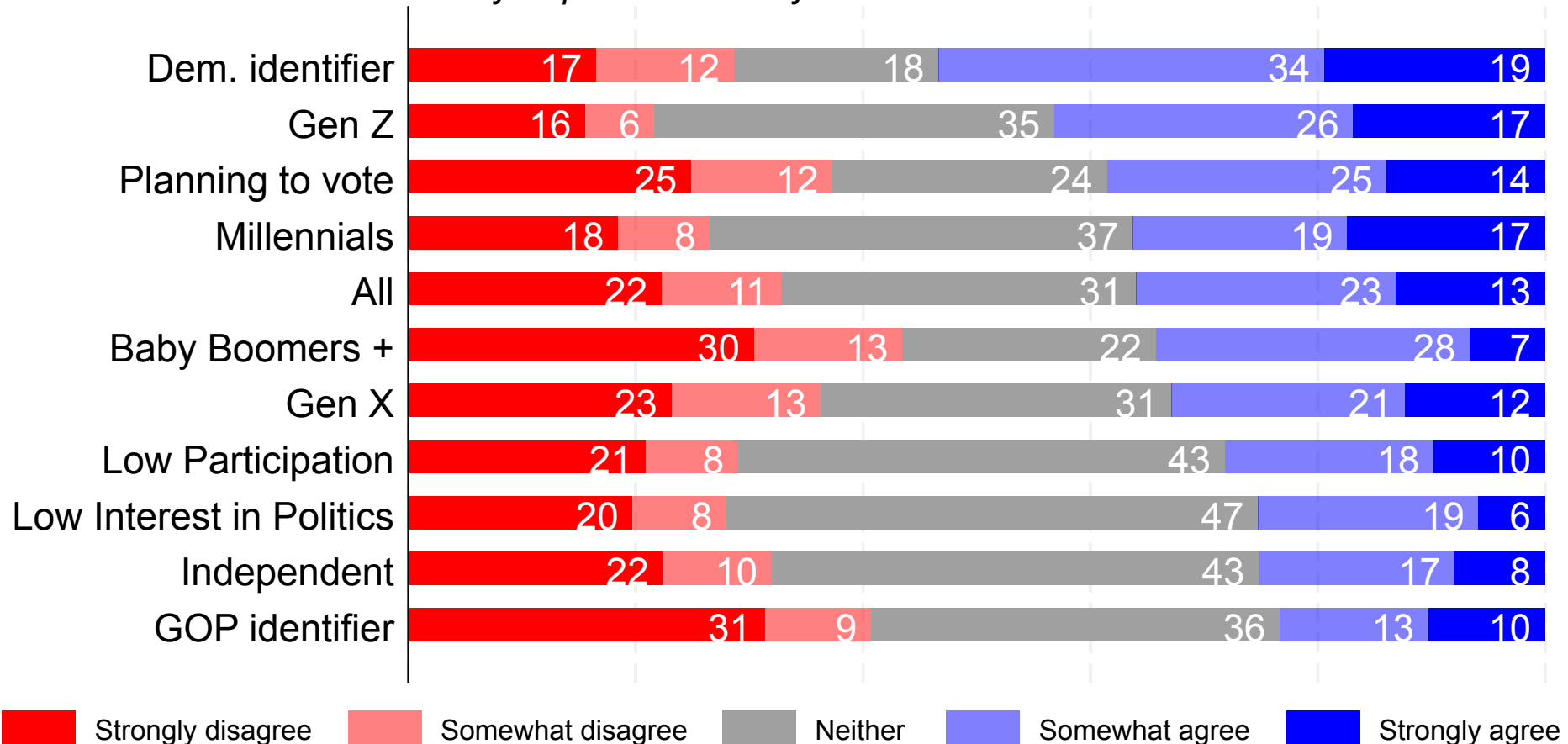
In the topline horserace, most segments of women lean toward Harris, but her lead is not huge and substantial numbers remain undecided



There's a lot of uncertainty about how much of a hurdle Harris's gender will be in winning the election

Kamala Harris's gender will make it harder for her to win the election over Donald Trump.

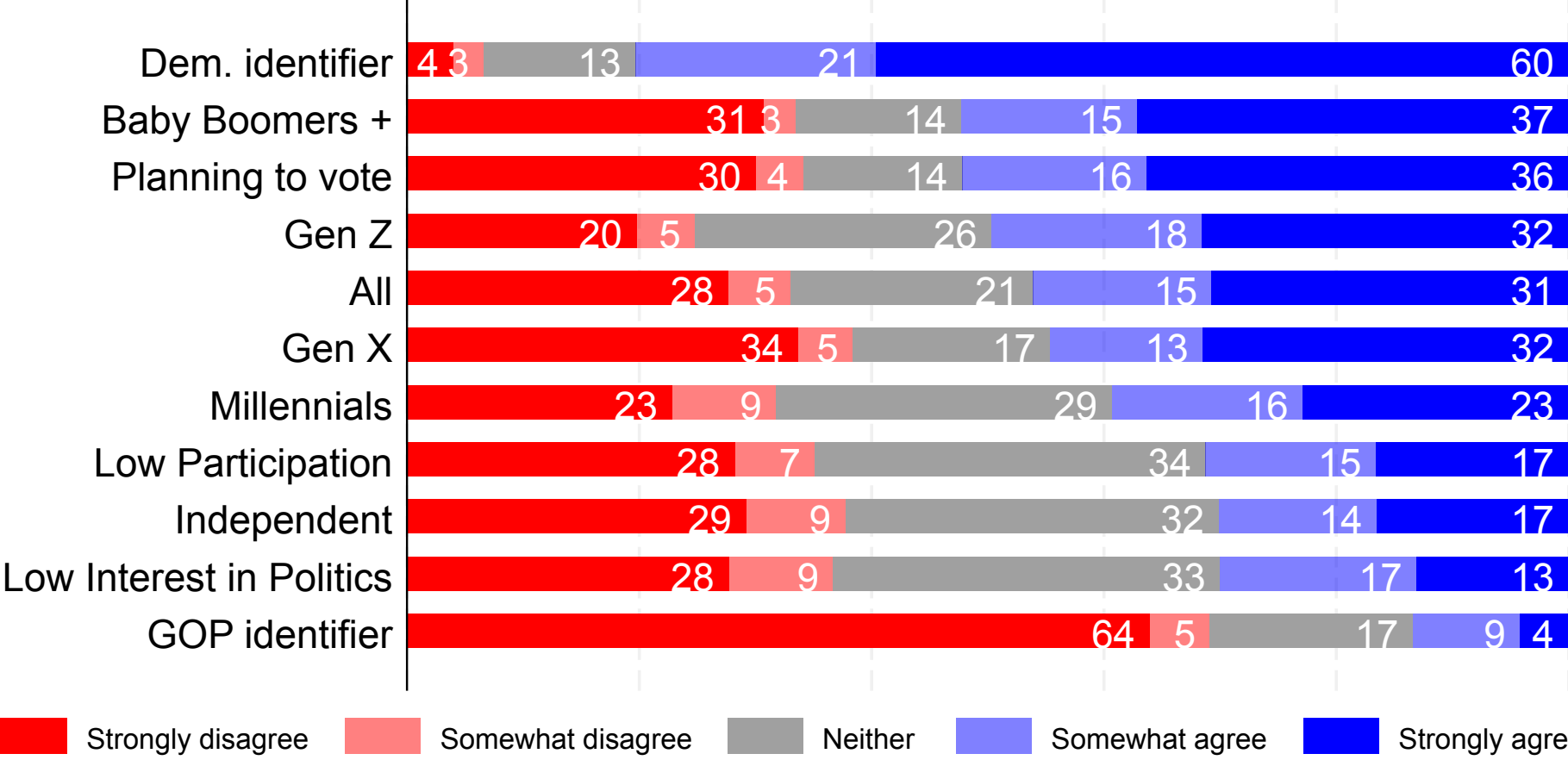
Early September Survey of American Women



Enthusiasm for Harris’s historic “first” potential is highly correlated with partisanship

It is important for me to see Kamala Harris become the first woman president of the United States.

Early September Survey of American Women



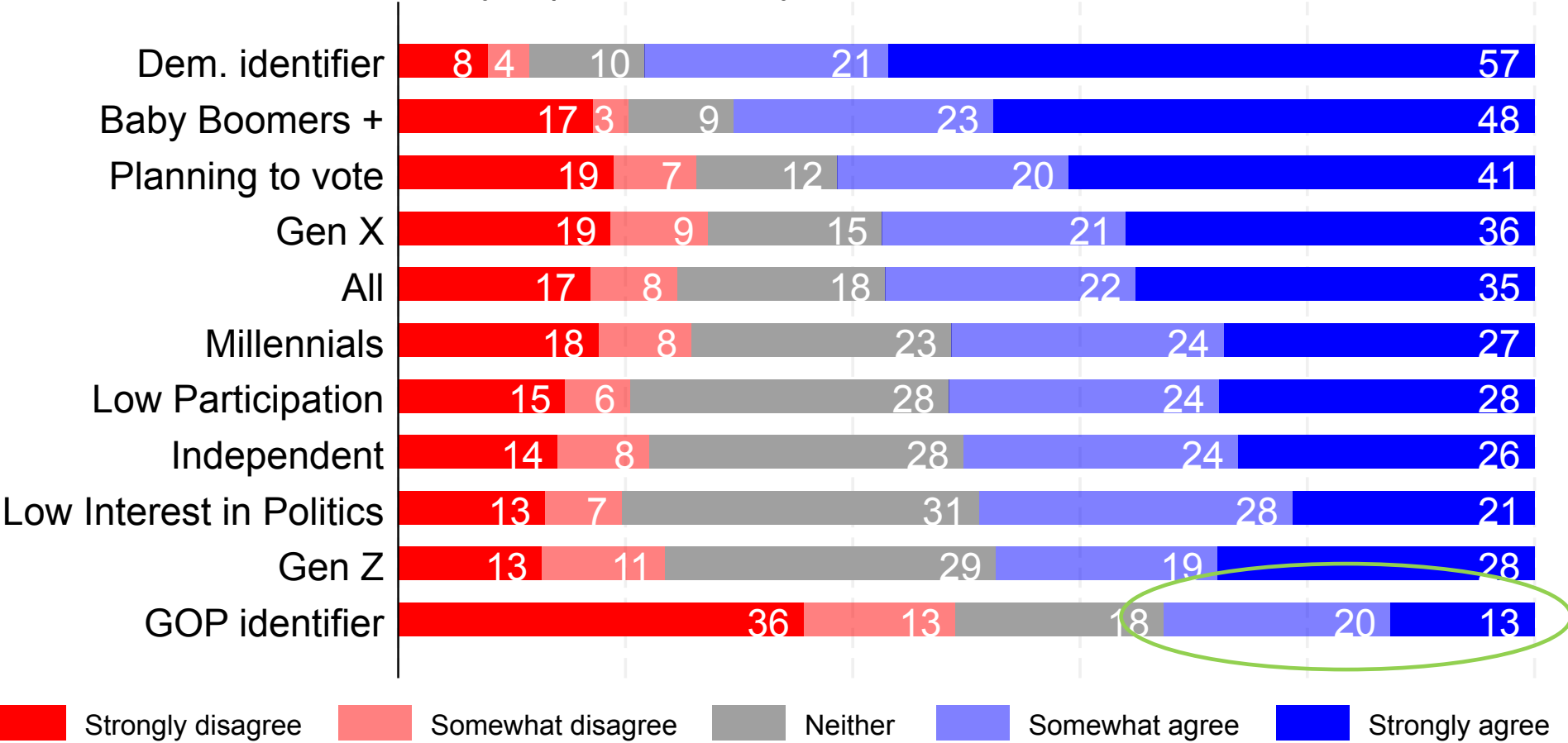
Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group Poll of Black Americans, September 6-10, 2024



Appreciation of her role model potential is more widespread

Harris's rise shows young girls that anything is attainable in America.

Early September Survey of American Women



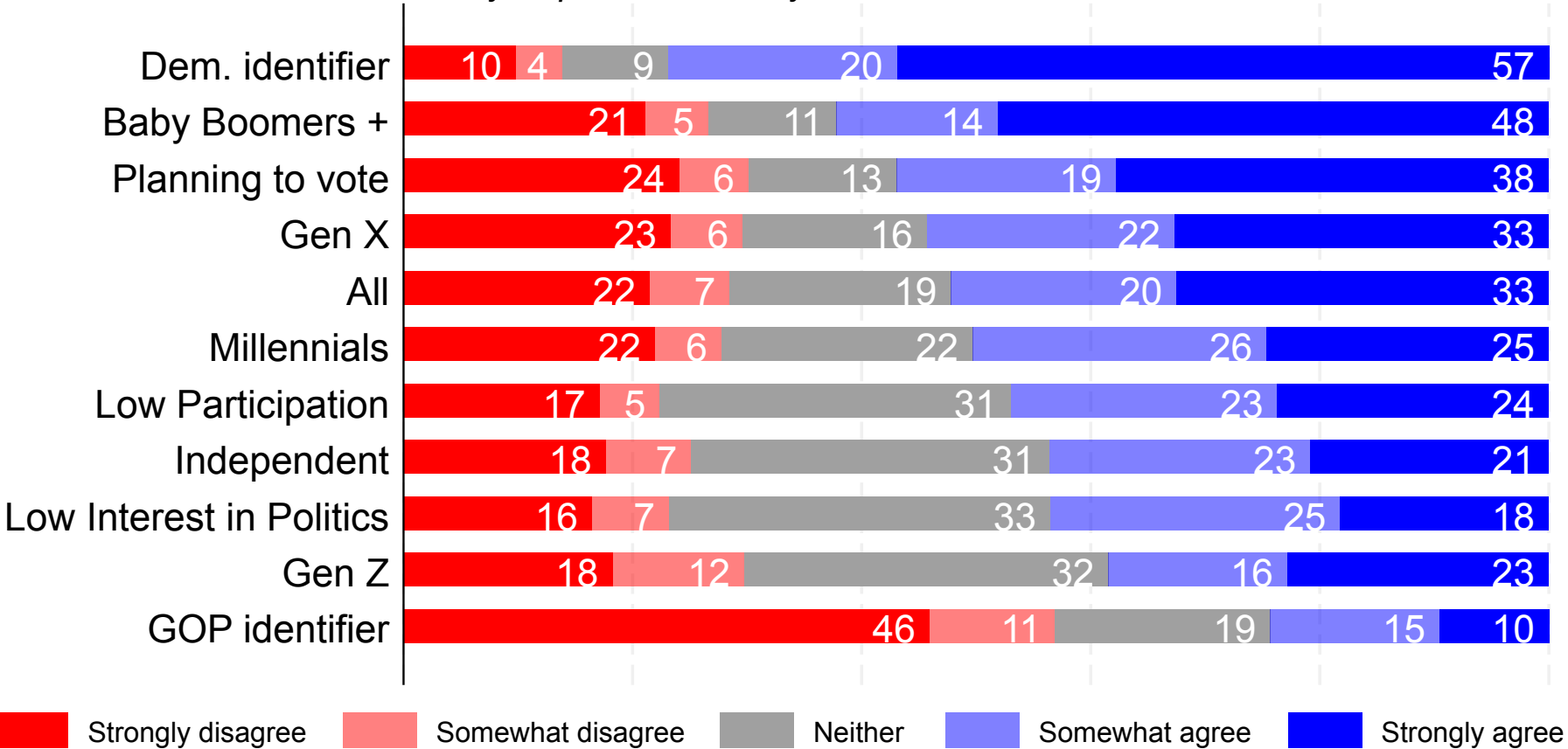
Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group Poll of Black Americans, September 6-10, 2024



Appreciation of her role model potential is more widespread

Harris is a good role model for young girls.

Early September Survey of American Women



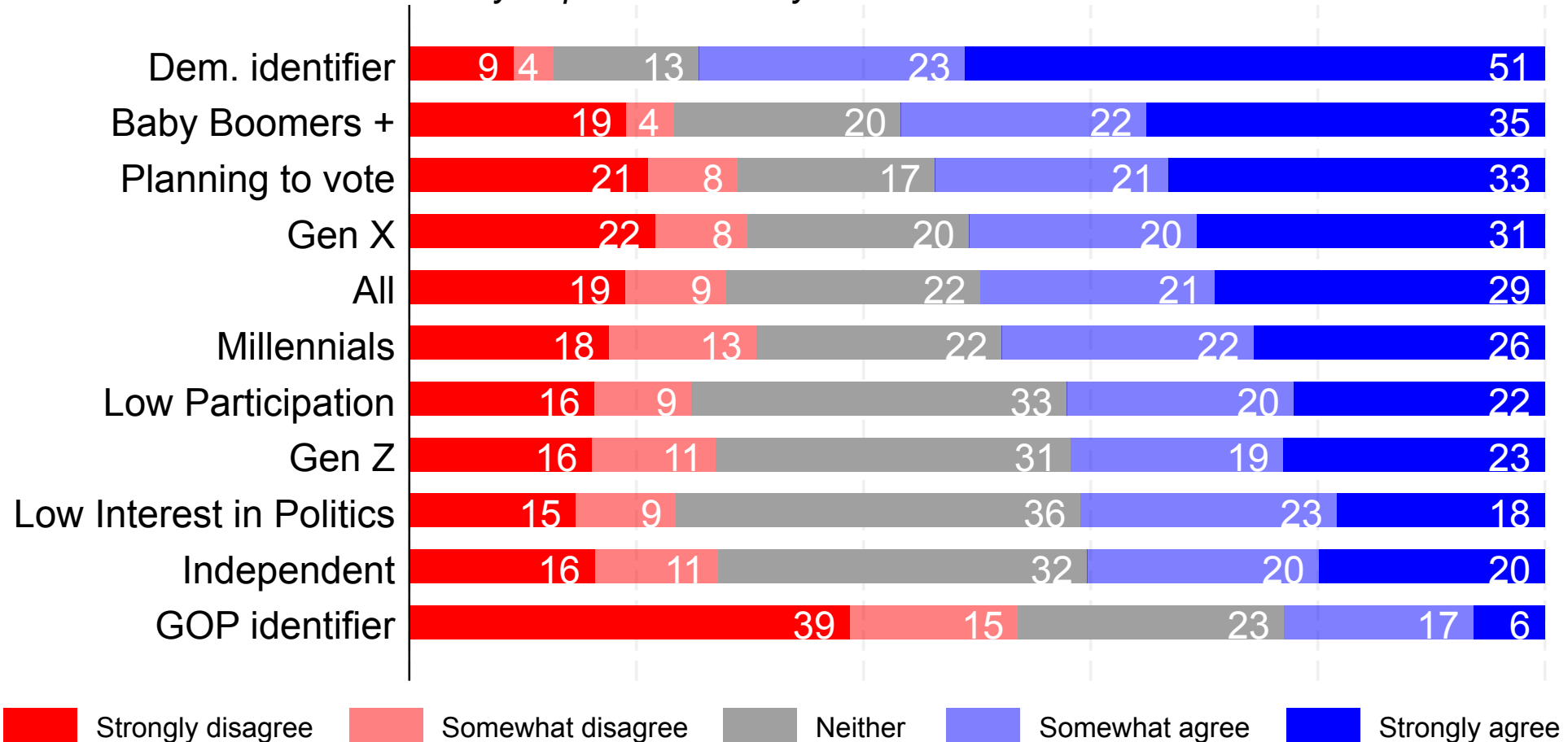
Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group Poll of Black Americans, September 6-10, 2024



There is a lot of uncertainty around how to place Harris in the lineage of WOC leading democracy

Harris's nomination is part of a decades-long tradition of WOC working to improve American democracy.

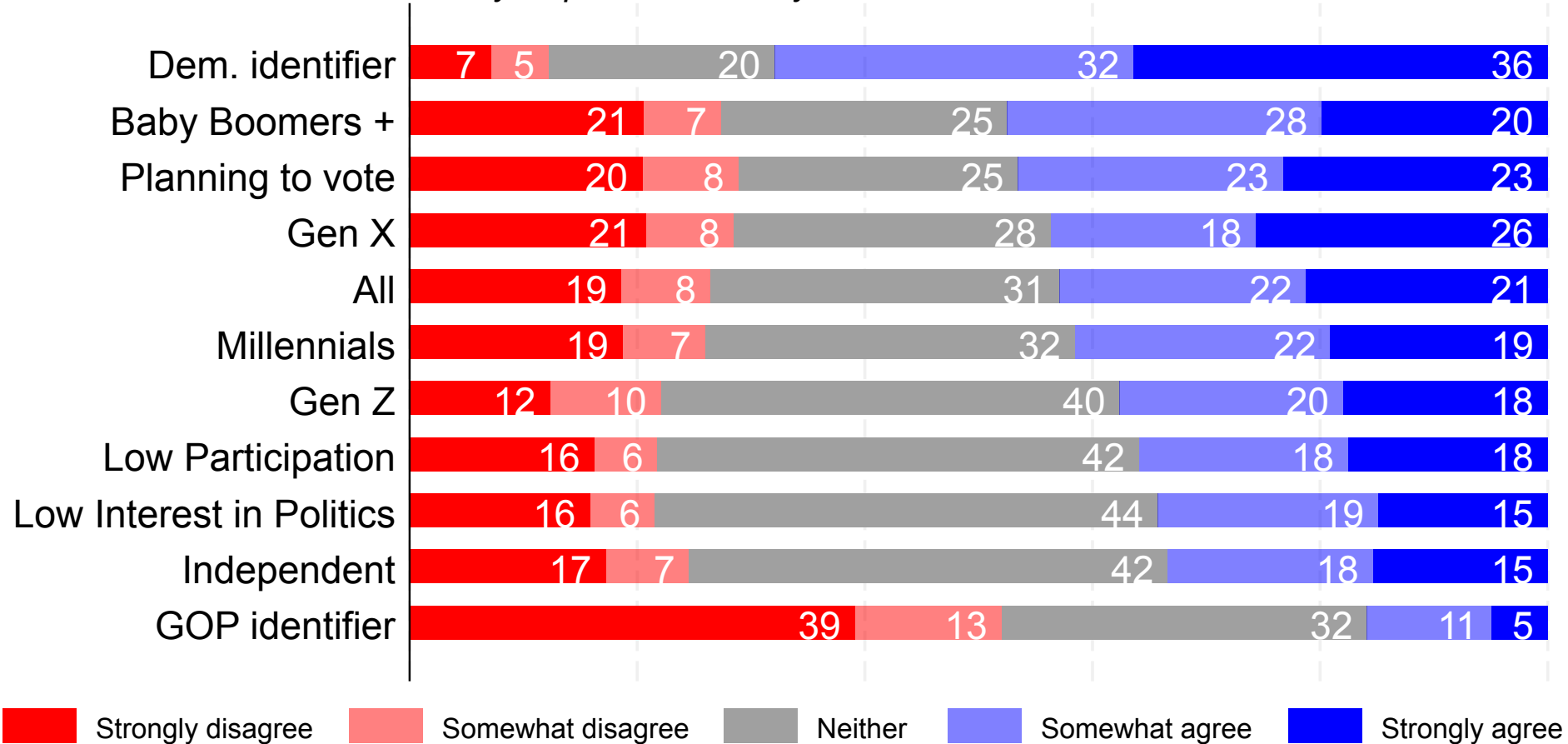
Early September Survey of American Women



And a lot of uncertainty around whether to center Women of Color in democratic efforts

Because of their experiences, it is crucial that women of color lead the movement for American democracy.

Early September Survey of American Women

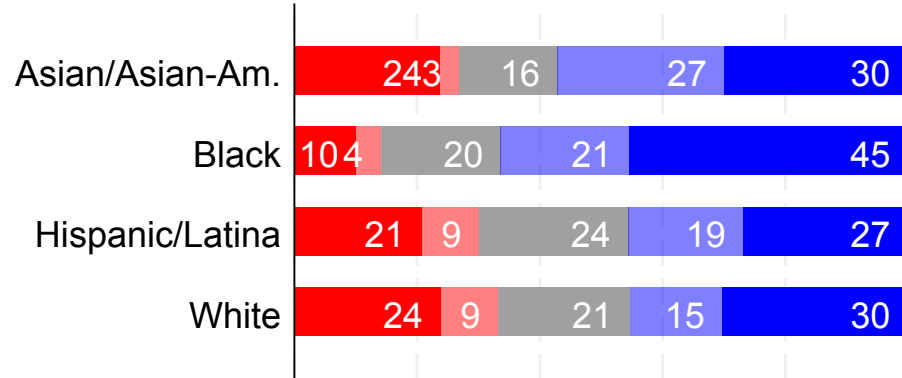


Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group Poll of Black Americans, September 6-10, 2024

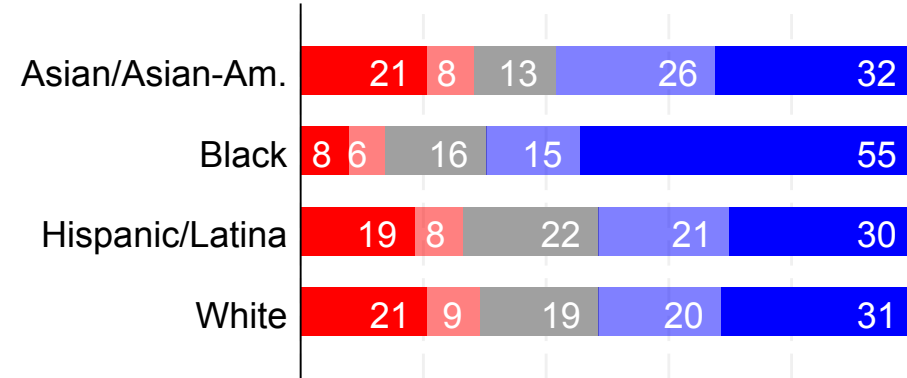


Black Women are Much More Likely to See Harris (and Women of Color) as Important Leaders for Democracy

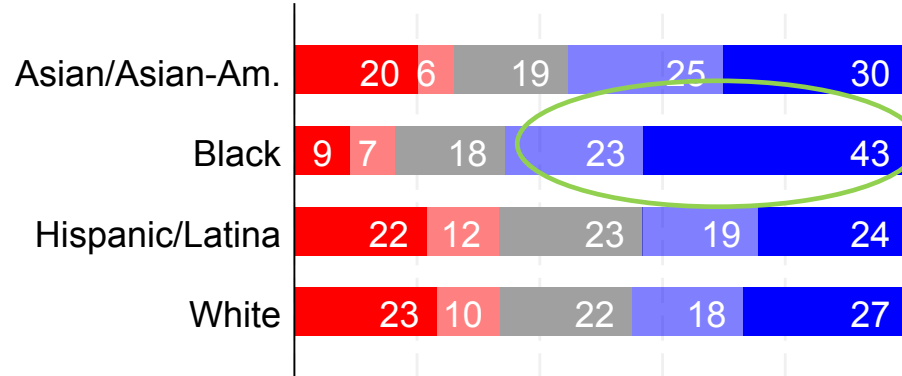
Harris is a good role model for young girls.



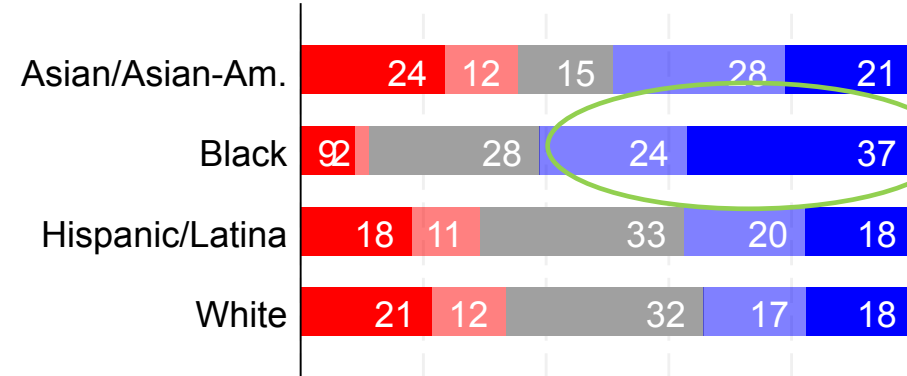
Harris shows young girls anything is attainable



Harris nomination is culmination of tradition of WOC improving democracy.



Because of their experiences, WOC should lead movement for American democracy.

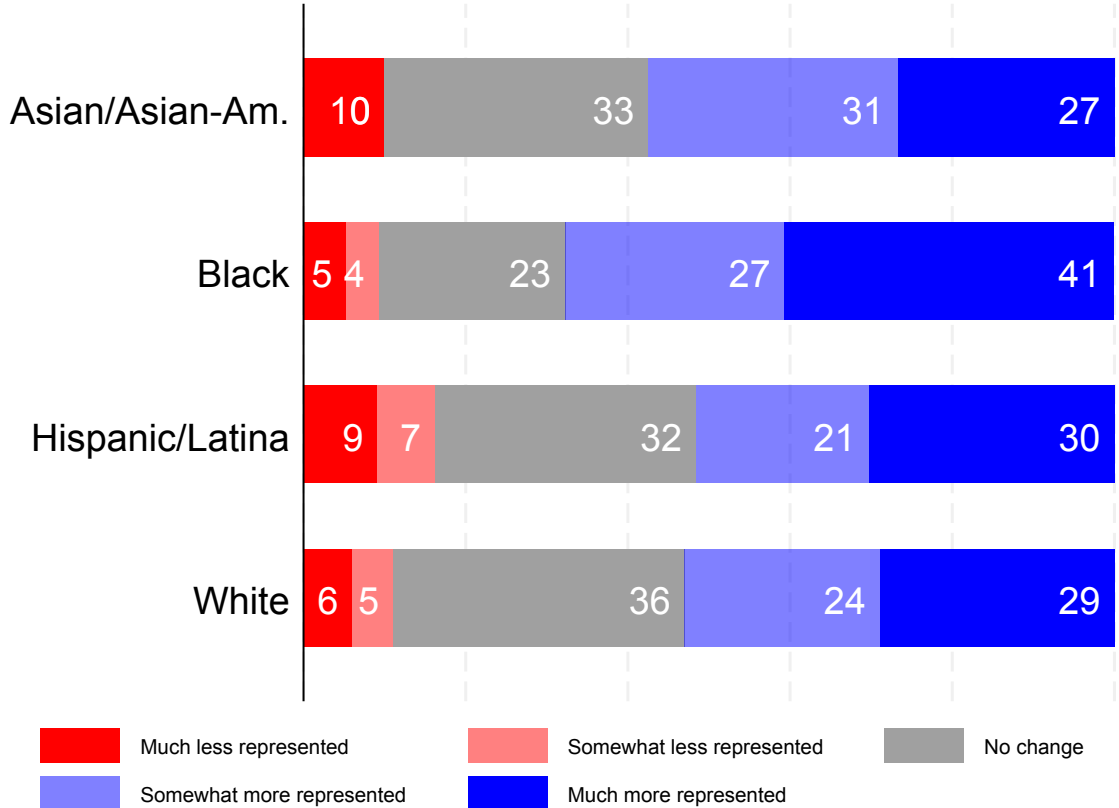


■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Neither disagree nor agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Strongly agree

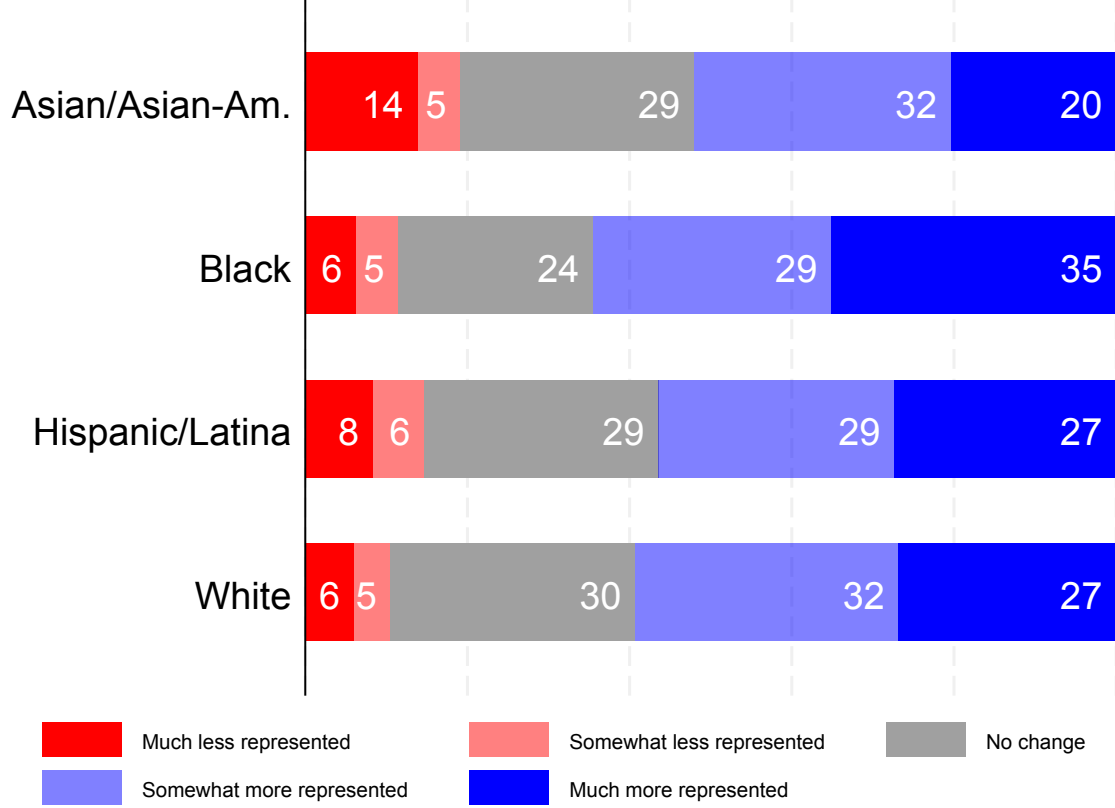


The Implications of Harris's Identities *Vary*: Women are likely to see her candidacy as making women overall, and Black women, more represented—but much less so Asian women

KH affect representation of: All women

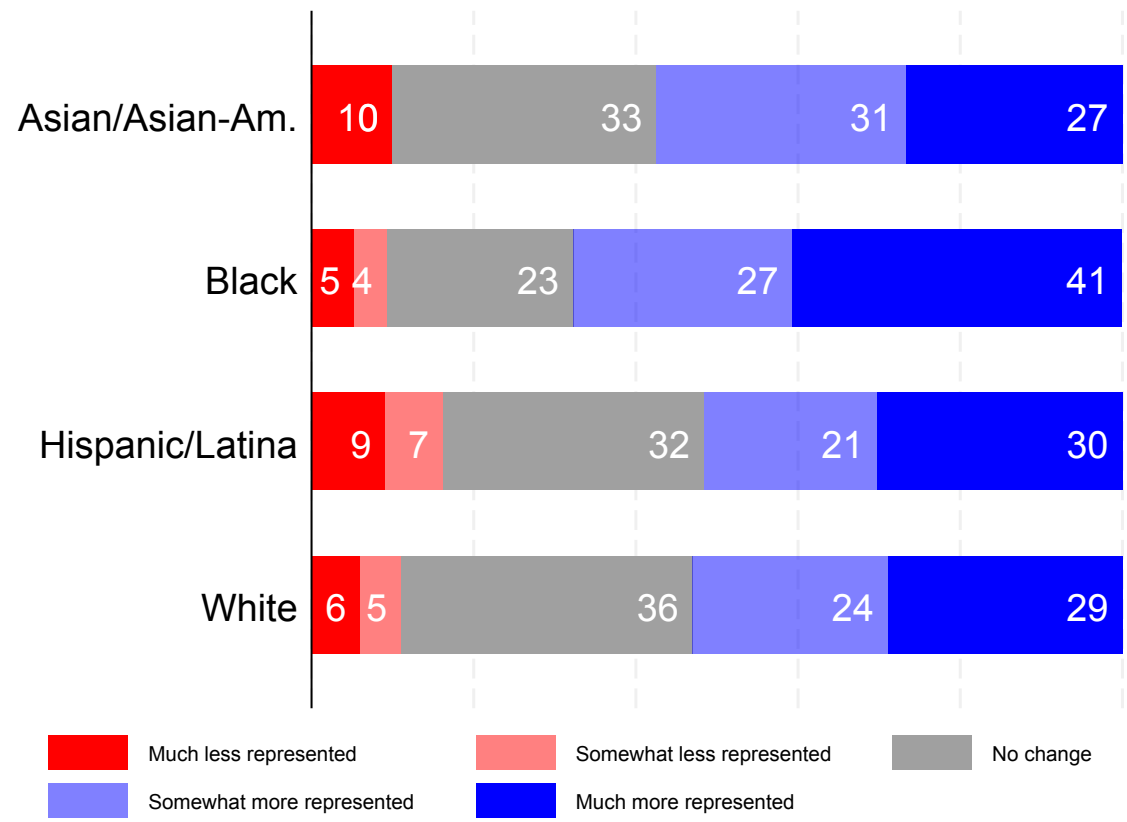


KH affect representation of: Black women

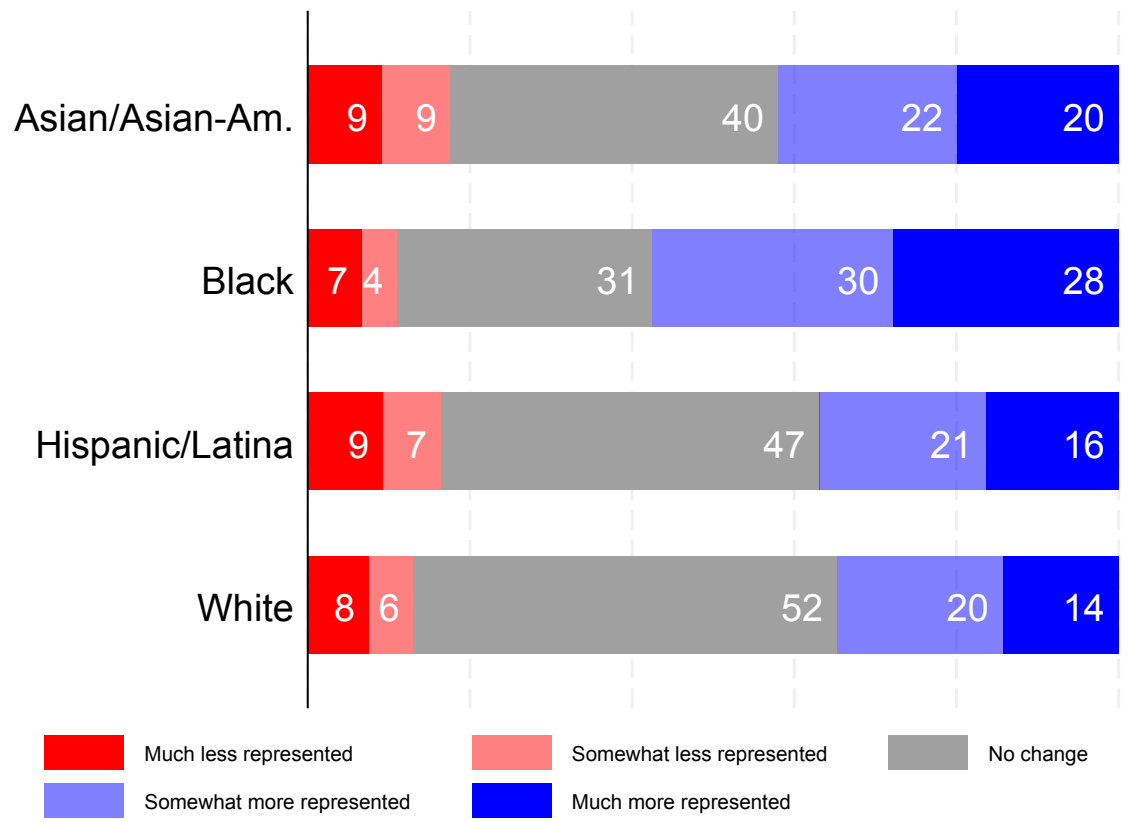


The Implications of Harris's Identities *Vary*: Women are likely to see her candidacy as making women overall, and Black women, more represented—but much less so Asian women

KH affect representation of: All women



KH affect representation of: Asian women





How should Kamala Harris
showcase her leadership?



(Re-)Introducing a National Figure

Harris's move to the top of the ticket was met by a burst of enthusiasm, but many voters are still unfamiliar with her despite her time as VP. Most are still learning about her personal and professional background

The campaign has leaned into some aspects of that background that connect to potential policy priorities. For example:

- A childhood steeped in civil rights activism that connects to current attacks on inclusive education, DEI efforts, and how we teach American history
- Support for women's rights, especially by fighting threats to abortion and other reproductive healthcare
- A "smart on crime" prosecutorial background that contrasts her concern for protecting the vulnerable with Trump's pattern of abusive behavior
- Experience as Biden's VP, inheriting some foreign policy commitments (especially in Ukraine and Gaza)



The many identities of the first woman vice-president

23 August 2024

Share

Rachel Looker and Holly Honderich
BBC News



Getty Images

[BBC](#)

Message Test: Experimental Framework

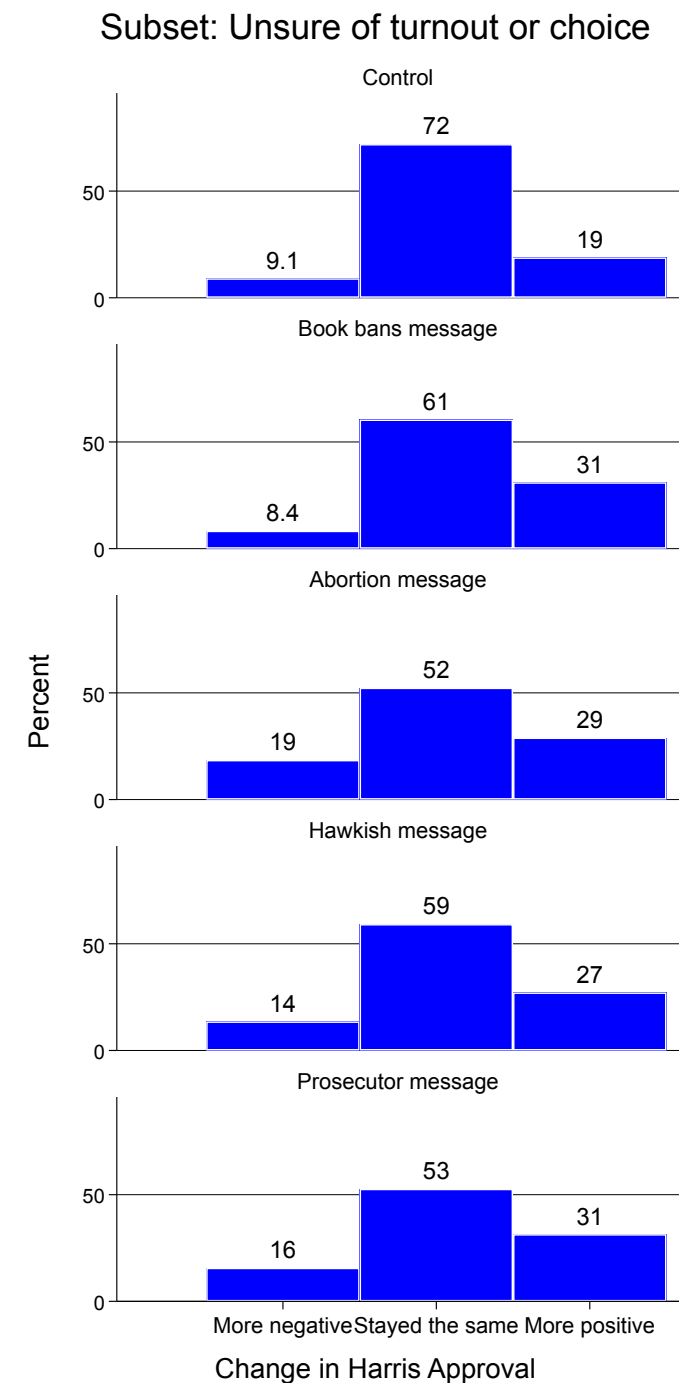
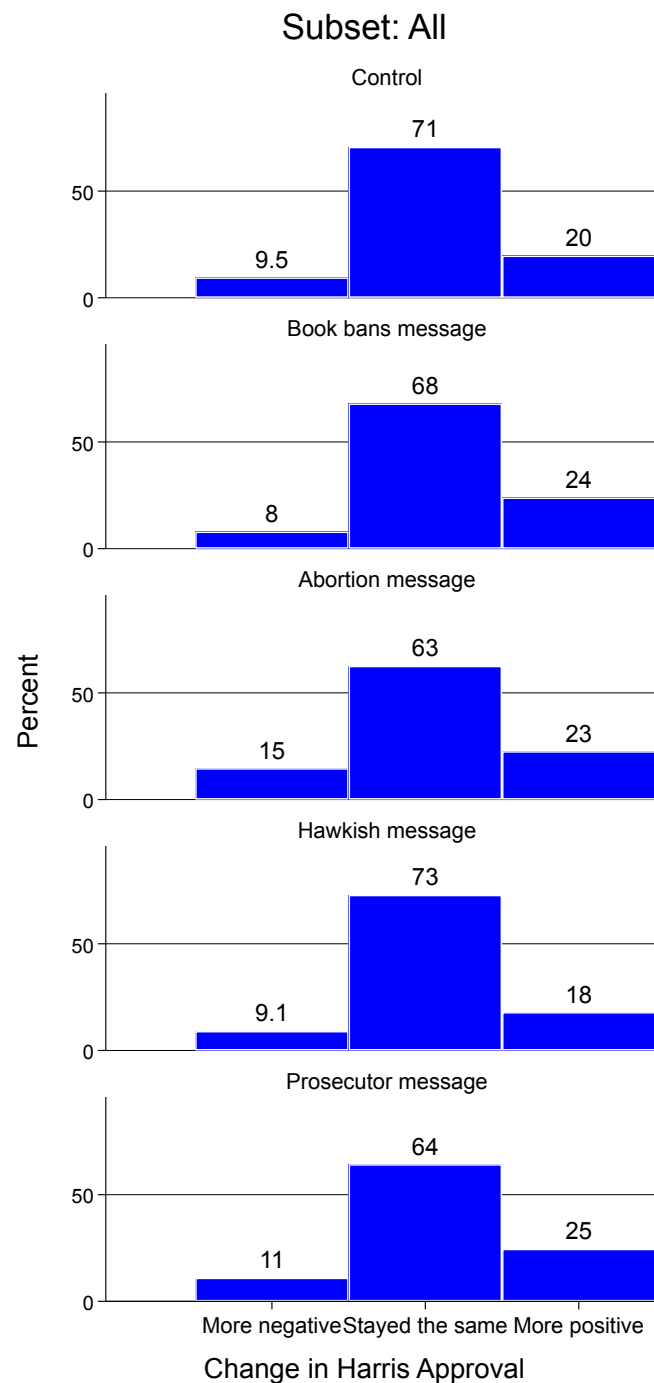
To evaluate what kinds of appeals are likely to re-engage women voters to motivate support for Harris this cycle, we tested several messages:

- (1) A **control message** that Harris is an historic candidate because of her identities as a Black woman;
- (2) A message using the **Alliance for Black Equality's ad frame** that describes Harris's roots in the Black community and her plans protect **the accurate teaching of Black history in schools** from attacks by Republicans (***Book bans message***);
- (3) A message describing Harris's commitment to equal rights for women and to **protect abortion rights from bans** allowed by Trump and the Supreme Court (***Abortion message***);
- (4) A message describing how Harris is committed to Israel's right to self-defense and though she supports a cease-fire in Gaza will not push for an end to weapons sales to the Israeli government (***Hawk message***).
- (5) A message describing Trump's criminal background and Harris's experience as a **"smart on crime" prosecutor who used the law to protect vulnerable people** (***Prosecutor message***);

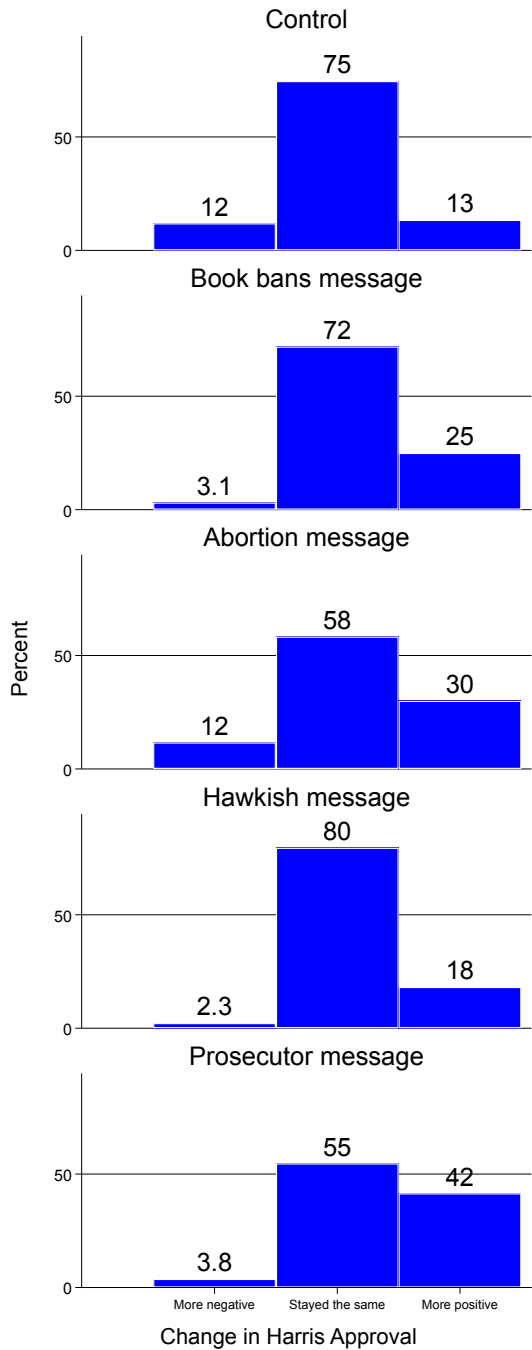


Outcome: Change in Support for Harris

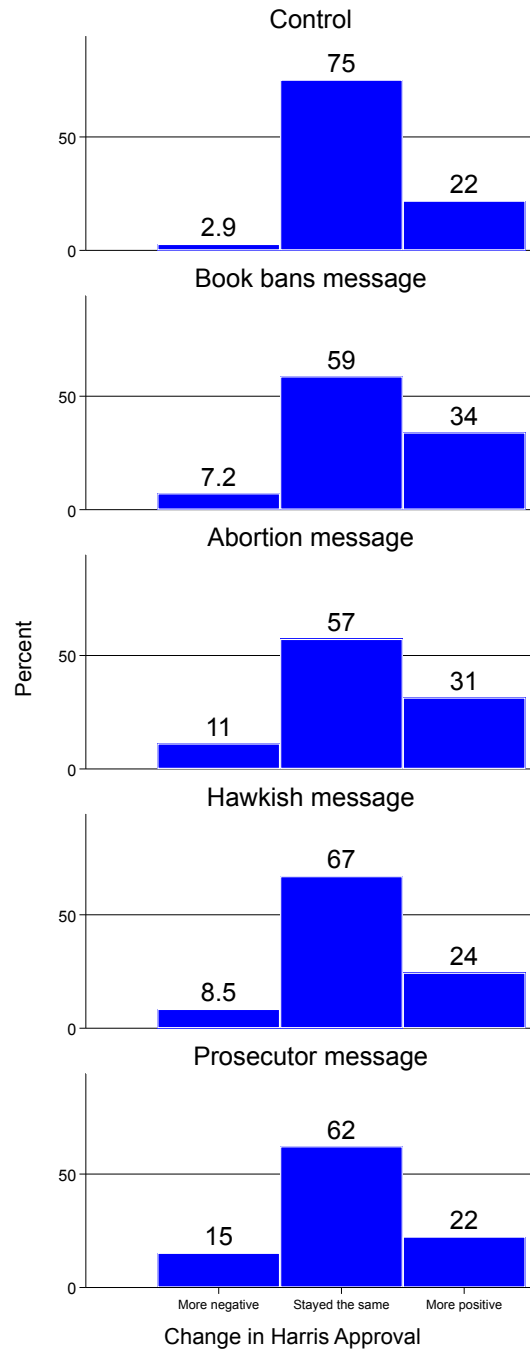
- Providing more information can move many voters, especially those not familiar with Harris
- Even the control condition—**simply telling respondents she was Black and a woman**—increased her approval among a (net) 10.5% of respondents.
- The other messages moved similar numbers of respondents.
 - The **Abortion** message, which is the message most clearly connected to gender, had a low net effect, likely driven largely by the parties' well-known positions on the issue. Among non-Republicans, it is a net +17, similar to the other messages.
 - The **Book Bans** message draws very little backlash among women, making it a strong net positive, especially among Black and white women. It is much less popular among Asian women.
 - The **Hawkish** message was as influential as the control, but also had **high negatives** among younger and more liberal voters; in a separate poll, it was actually **net-negative** among Gen Z men.
 - Perhaps surprisingly, the **Prosecutor message** is the strongest net overall, driven by positive responses among more conservative white and Asian respondents
- In the electorate overall, it is not clear that substantive framing does much to reliably find more support for Harris, especially among lower-engagement women. Simply providing the anodyne historic “first” information does about as well, and produces no negative reaction. Targeted framing may be more effective within particular groups:
 - The Book Bans and Abortion message worked particularly well for Black Women and White Liberal women
 - The Abortion message worked particularly well for Asian and Latina women
 - White Liberal



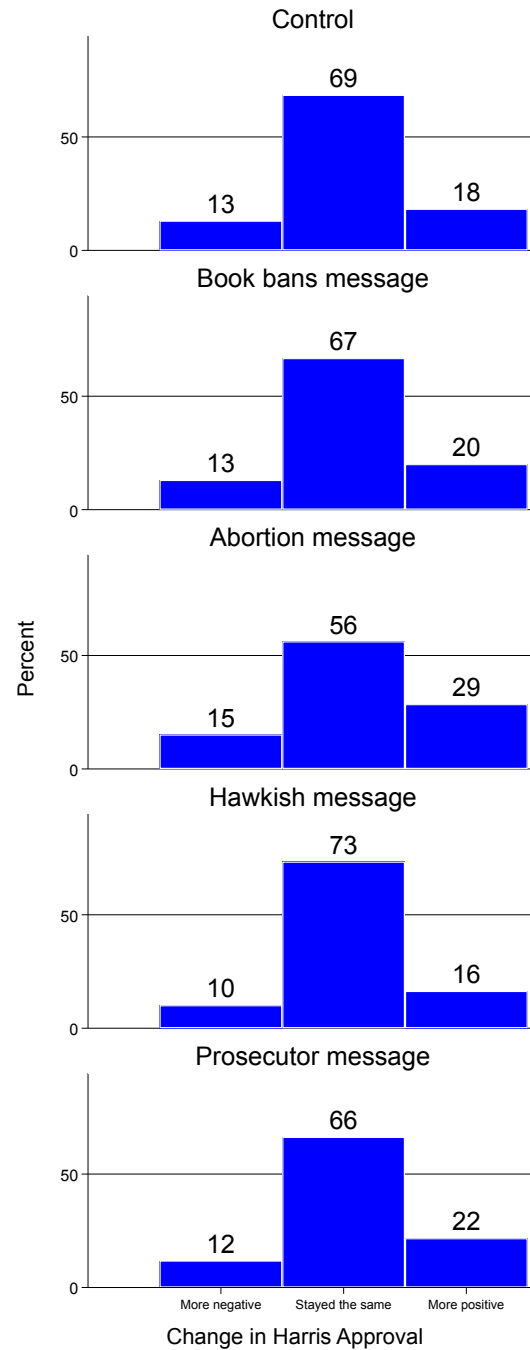
Subset: White liberal



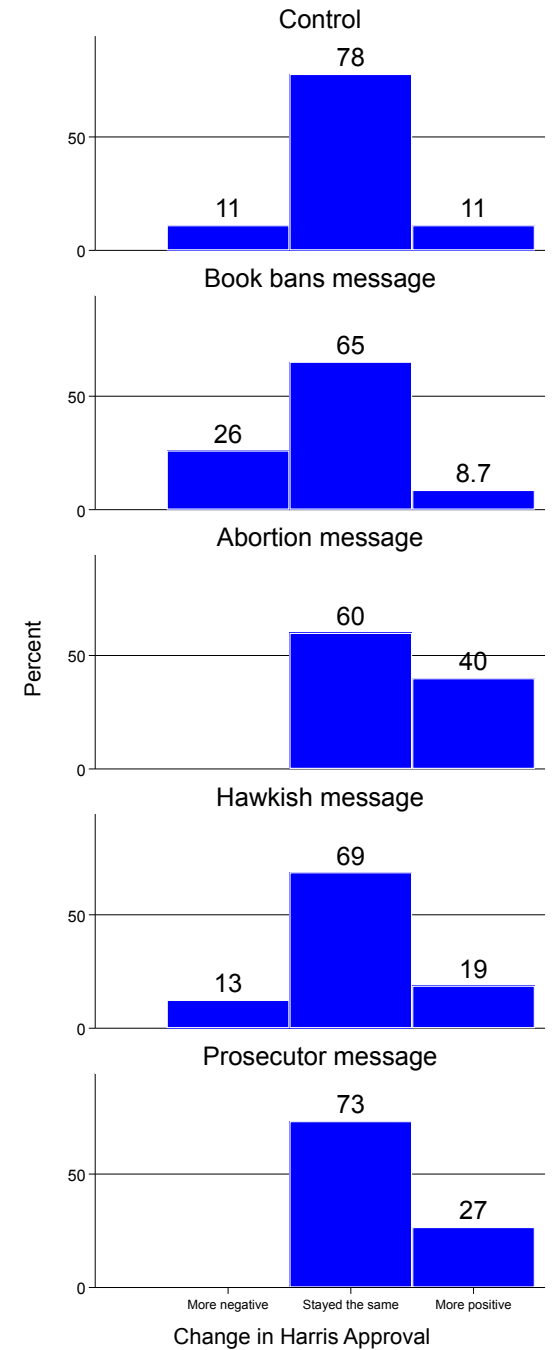
Subset: Black



Subset: Hispanic/Latina



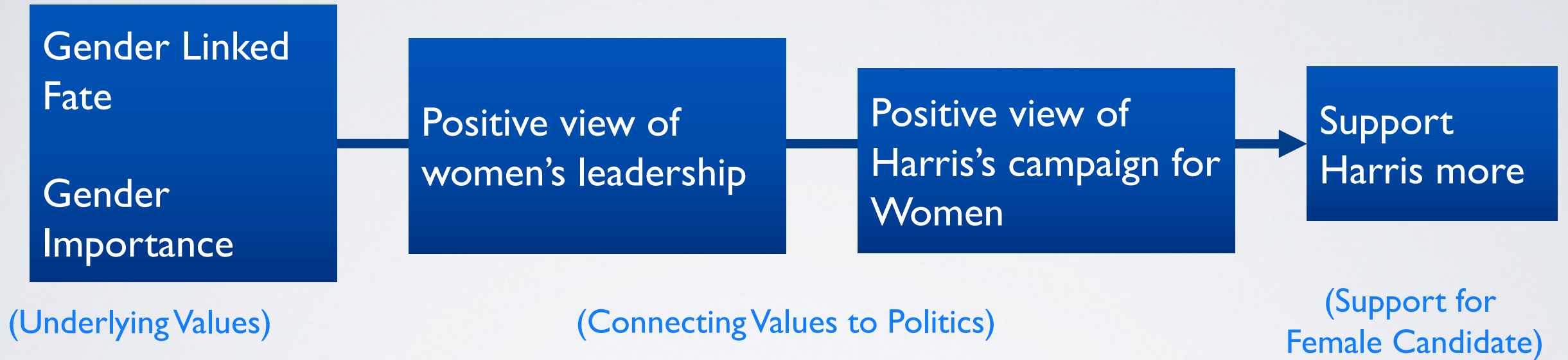
Subset: Asian/Asian-Am.



Connecting the dots:

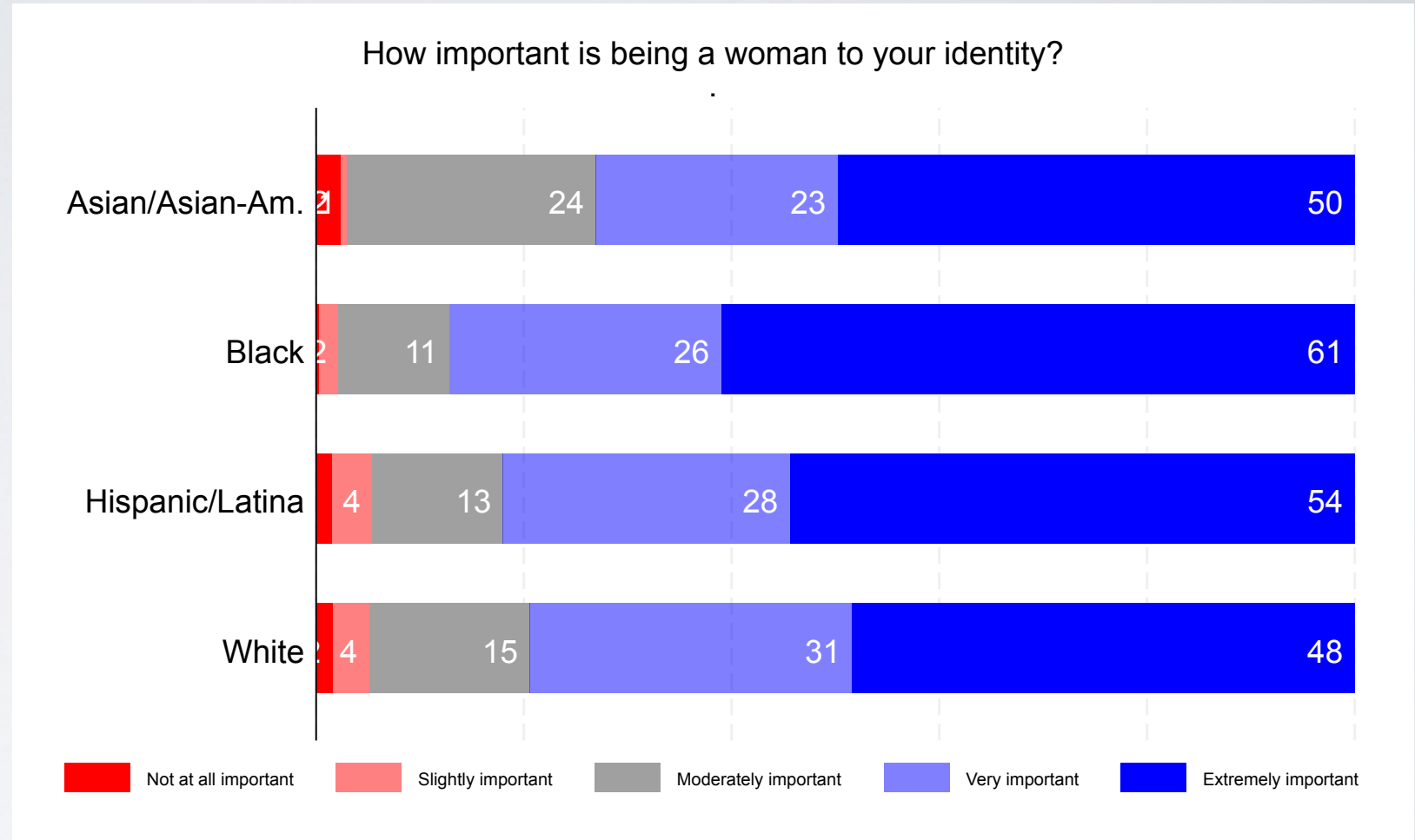
Priming connection to other women to motivate support and action

“Funnel of causation”



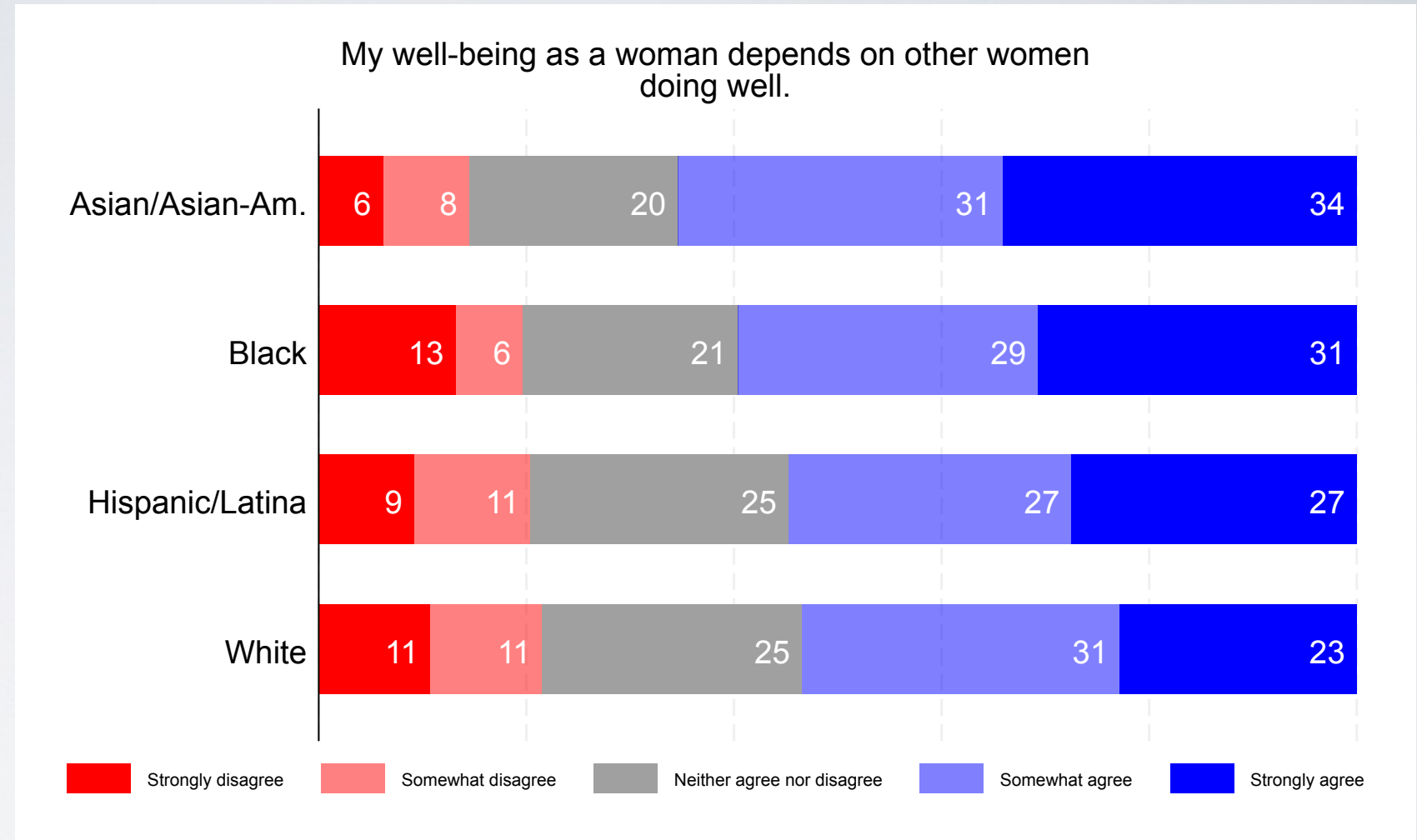
What structures gender-based political consciousness?

- We asked two key preliminary questions
- How important is being a woman to your identity? (Gender importance)
- “Agree/Disagree: My well-being as a woman depends on other women doing well.” (Gender Linked Fate)
- These may seem like similar questions, but they are fundamentally differ on their inward- or solidaristic focus.
- Empirically, in our sample they were not highly correlated.



What structures gender-based political consciousness?

- We asked two key preliminary questions
- How important is being a woman to your identity? (Gender importance)
- “Agree/Disagree: My well-being as a woman depends on other women doing well.” (Gender Linked Fate)
- These may seem like similar questions, but they are fundamentally differ on their inward- or solidaristic focus.
- Empirically, in our sample they were not highly correlated.



Gender Linked Fate
Gender Importance

Positive view of women's
leadership

Positive view of Harris's
campaign for Women

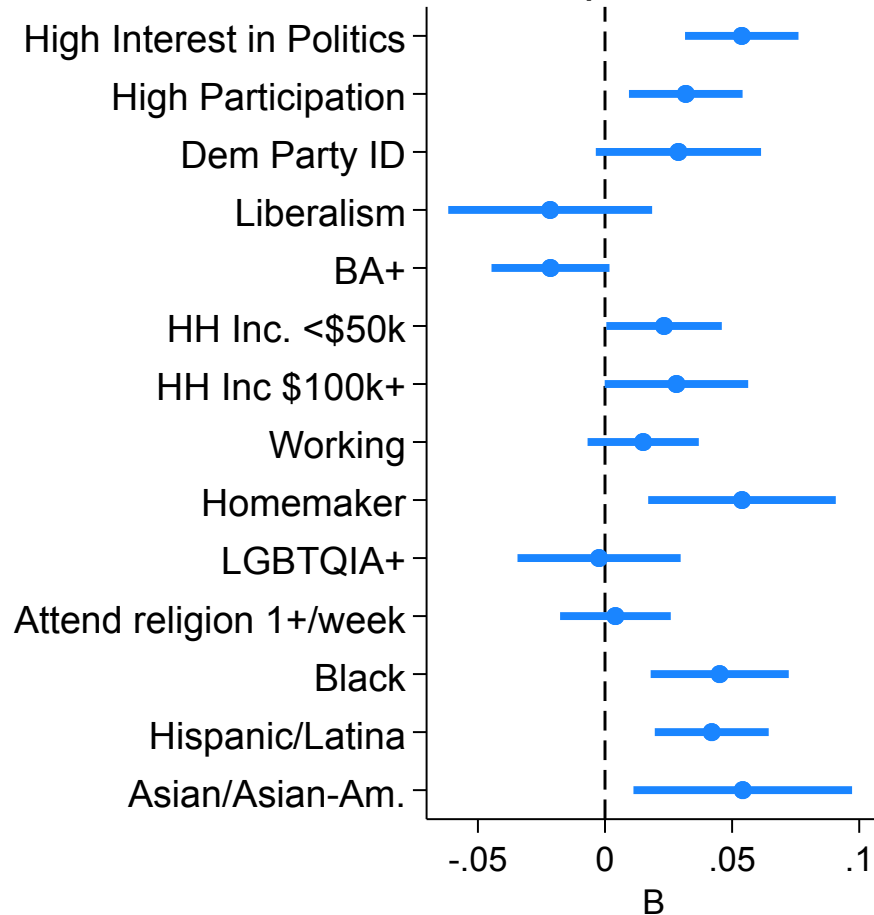
Support Harris
more

(Underlying Values)

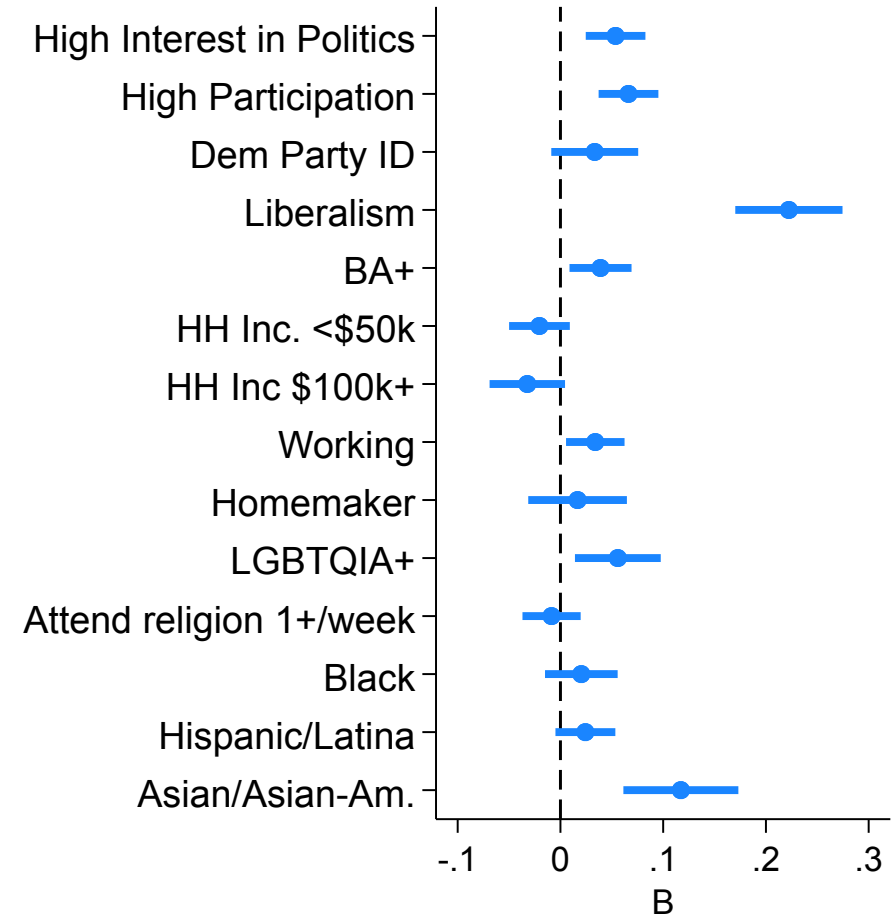
(Connecting Values to Politics)

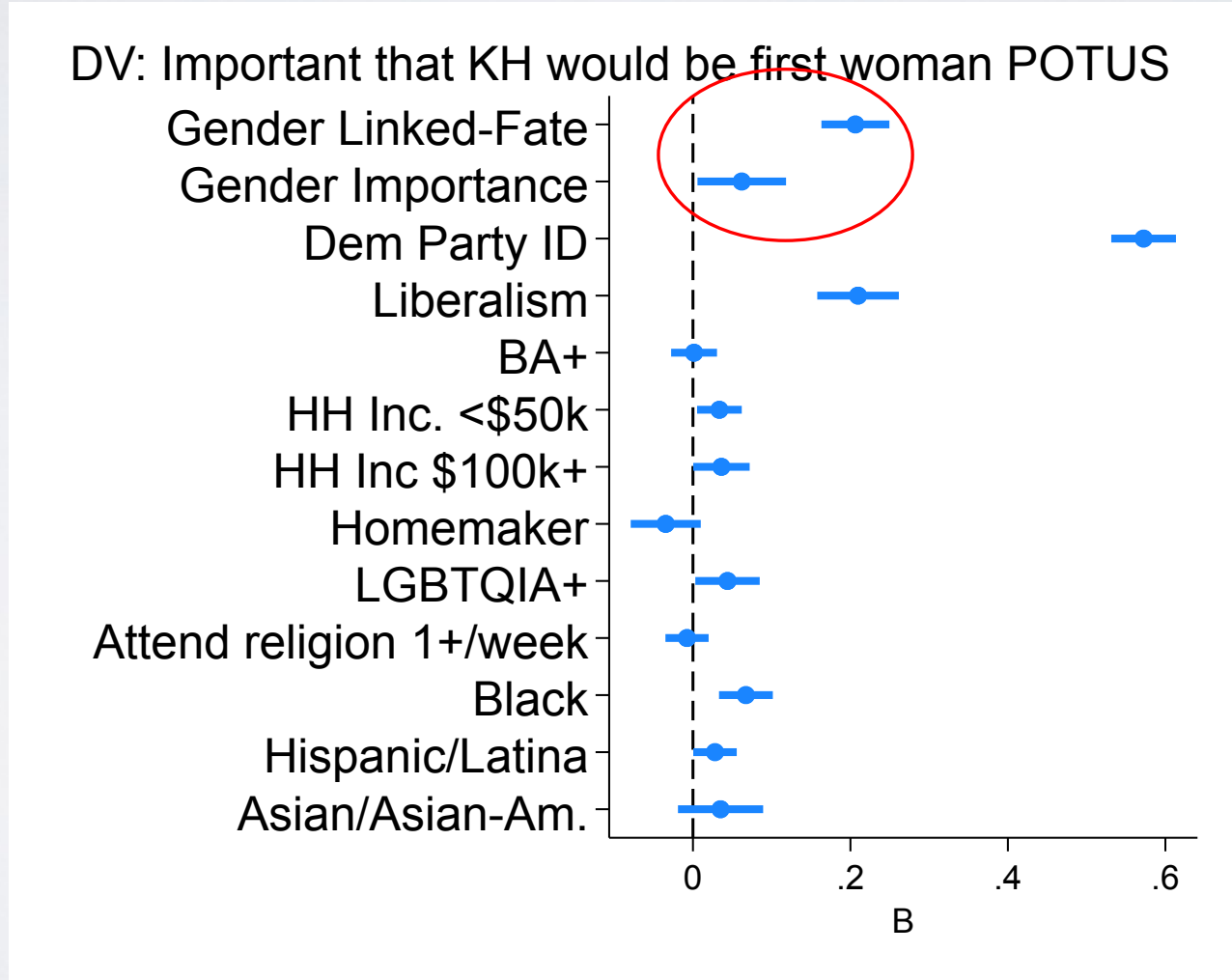
(Support for Candidate)

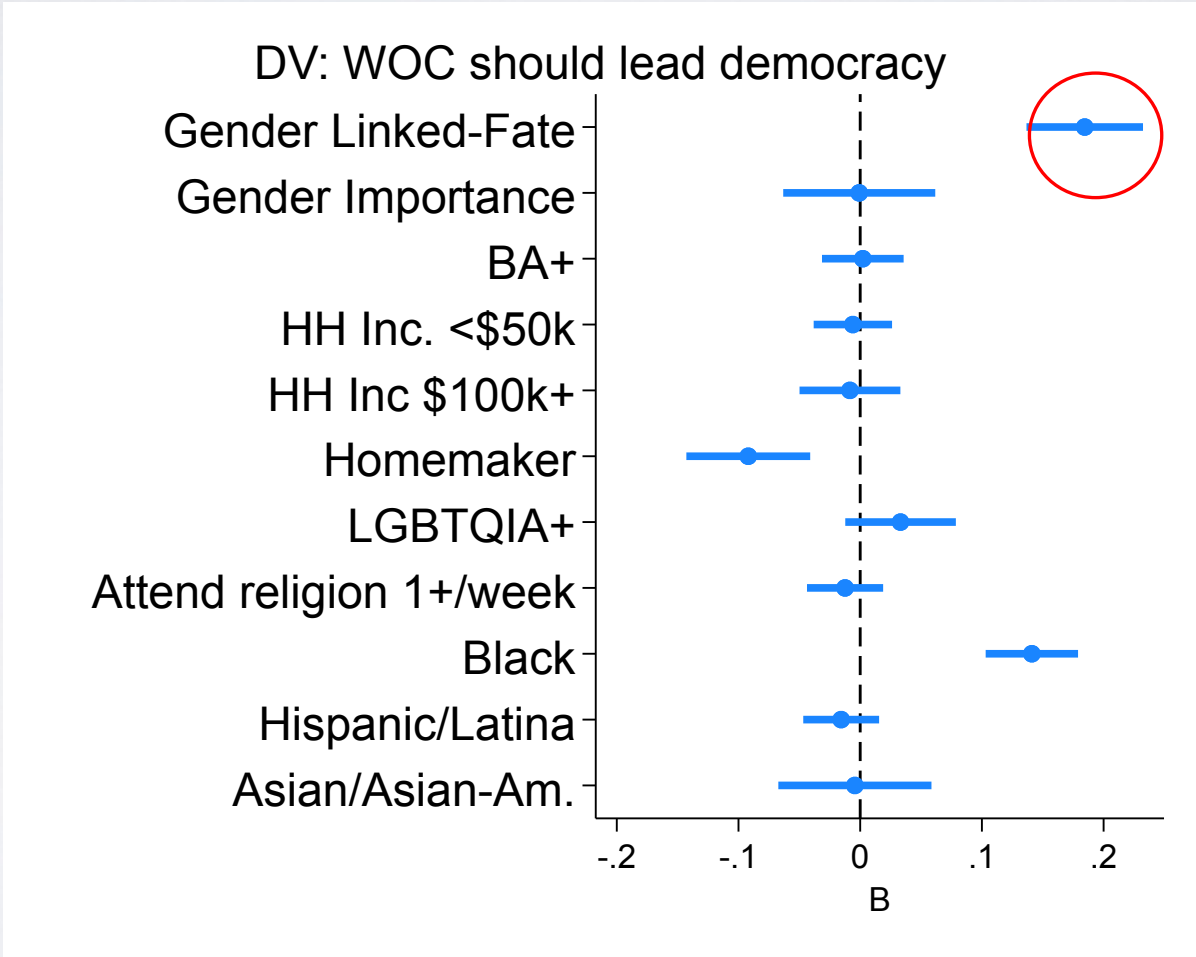
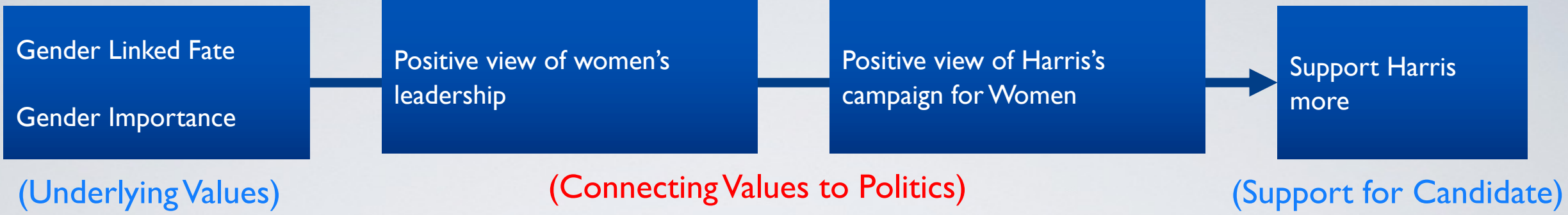
Predictors of Gender Importance



Predictors of Gender Linked Fate

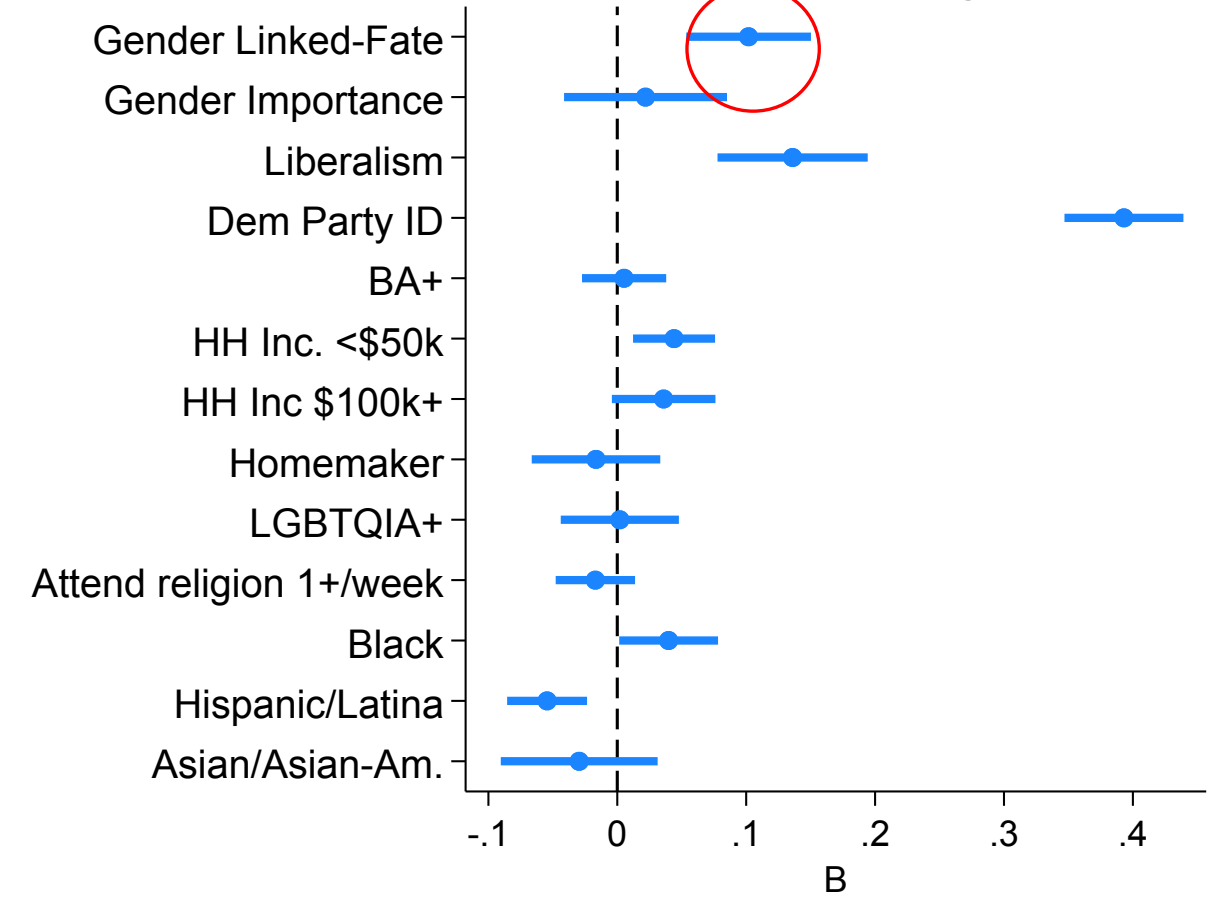






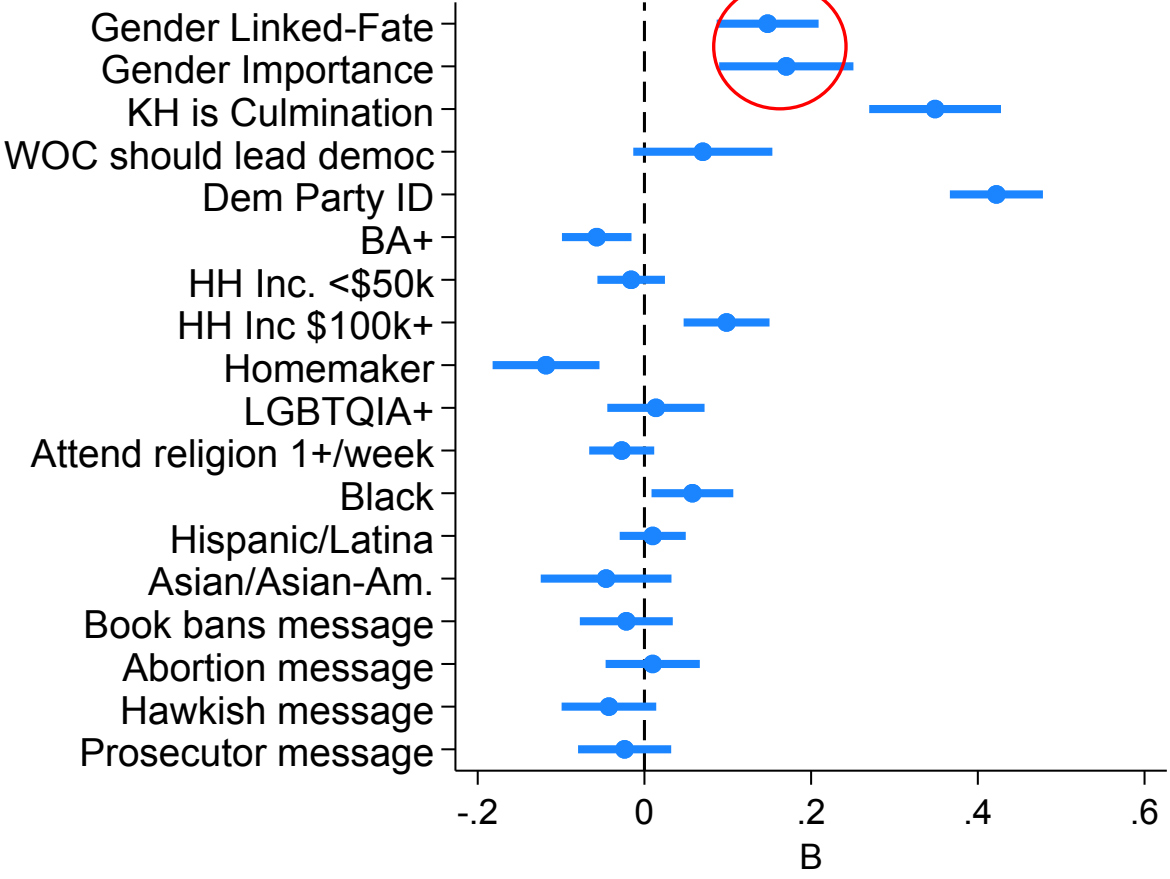


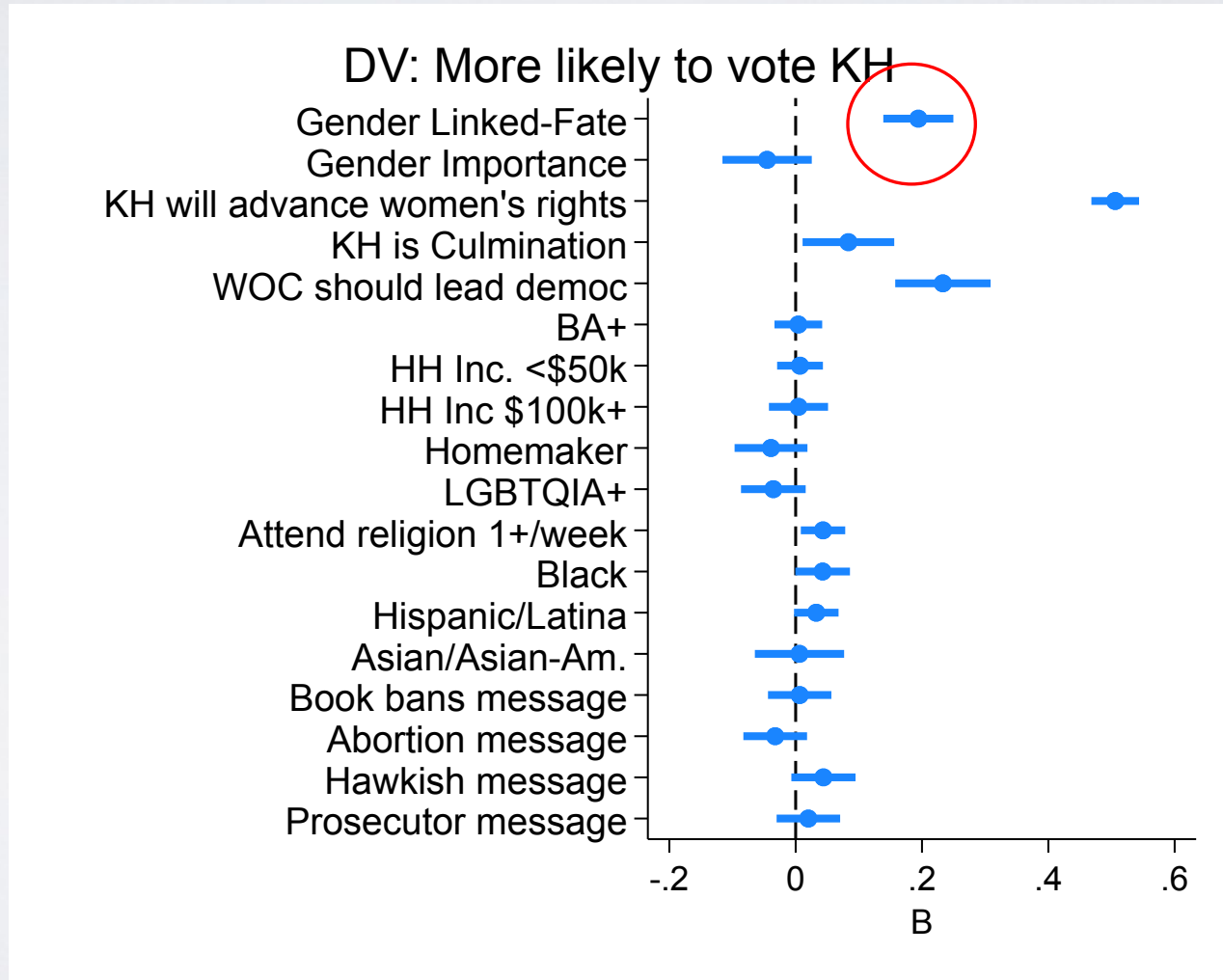
DV: KH nom is culmination of decades-long tradition

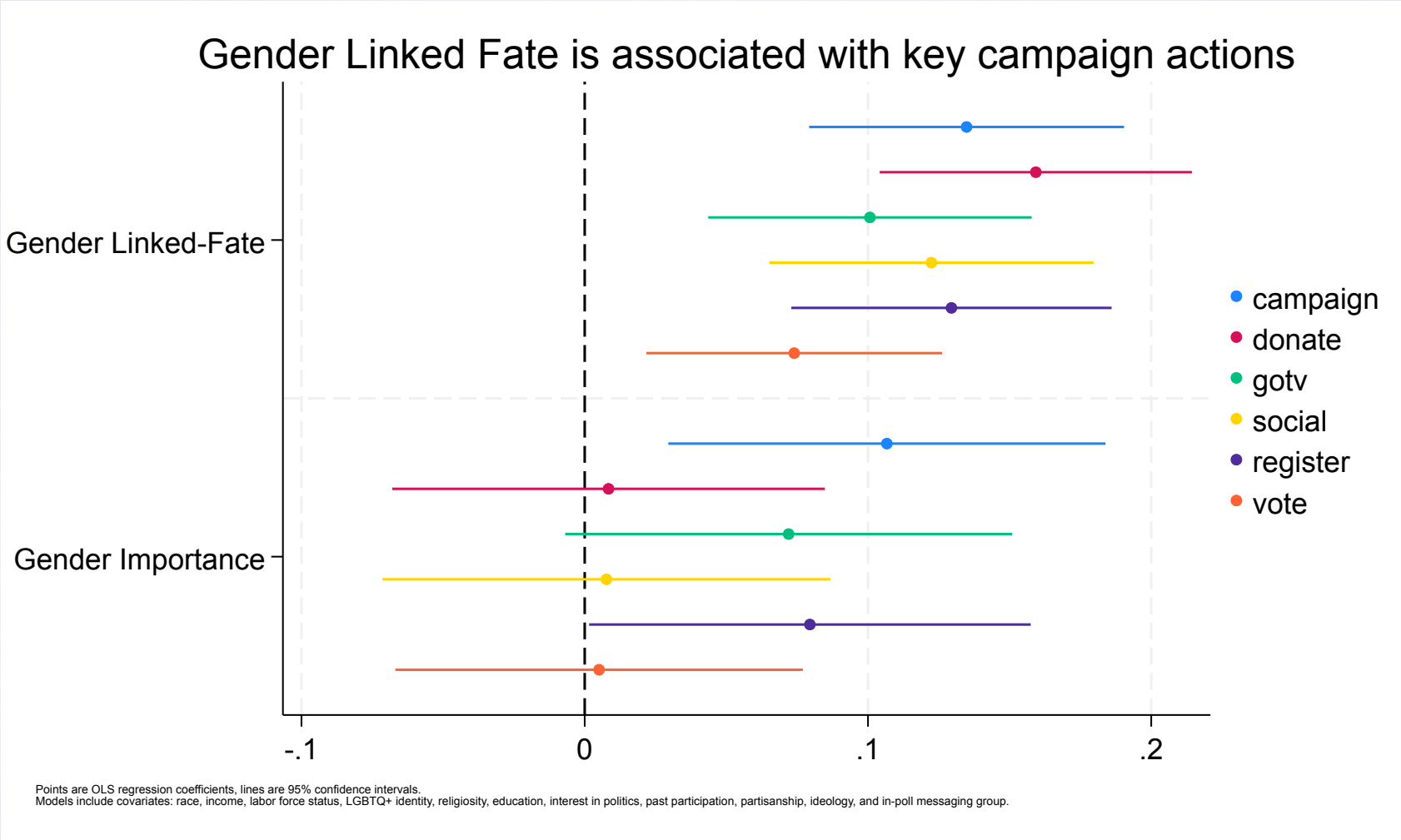




DV: KH nom means Dems will support women's rights







Onward!

- The core elements of Harris's plan to further introduce herself tend to positive or neutral reactions from Black voters.
 - All five frames for introducing Harris increased approval and favorability among voters who don't know her already, and majorities connected them with Democratic values
- However, the Hawk and Prosecutor frame are riskier
 - They increase approval overall, but also slightly turn off some key groups of voters.
 - For messages targeted at Black voters and women, we recommend these messages be muted or crafted with great care.
- Building consciousness of connections between women—their Linked Fate—may boost support for WOC-led politics generally and KH as a candidate in particular



Thank you!



2040 Strategy Group
SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

For more details or specific
questions, contact
info@2040strategygroup.com



More of our recent work on Black voter attitudes:
Memo

[Memo on messaging Project 2025](#) (July 2024)

[Research brief on Black Mens' ideology](#) (Spring 2024)

[Keys to a Black Voter Strategy](#) (Fall 2024)

[Black Voters' Views of Kamala Harris](#) (Fall 2023)

Report Authors:
Thomas Ogorzalek, PhD
Tabitha Bonilla, PhD

About this poll

- Respondents recruited through Cloud Research panel, September 5-10, 2024
- Total N=1487; oversamples of Black and Latina women
- Weighted for national representativeness where appropriate, for within-group representativeness on race-group-only estimates
- More details on individual analyses available upon request.



Message Test: Experimental Framework

Pre-treatment

Treatment
(randomly assigned)

Post-treatment

- Issue Priorities
- Past participation
- Approval, favorability

- Control
- Book Bans Message
- Abortion Message
- Hawkish Message
- Prosecutor Message

- Perception of Dem priorities (“Substance”)
- Approval, favorability (“Support”)
- Intentions to act

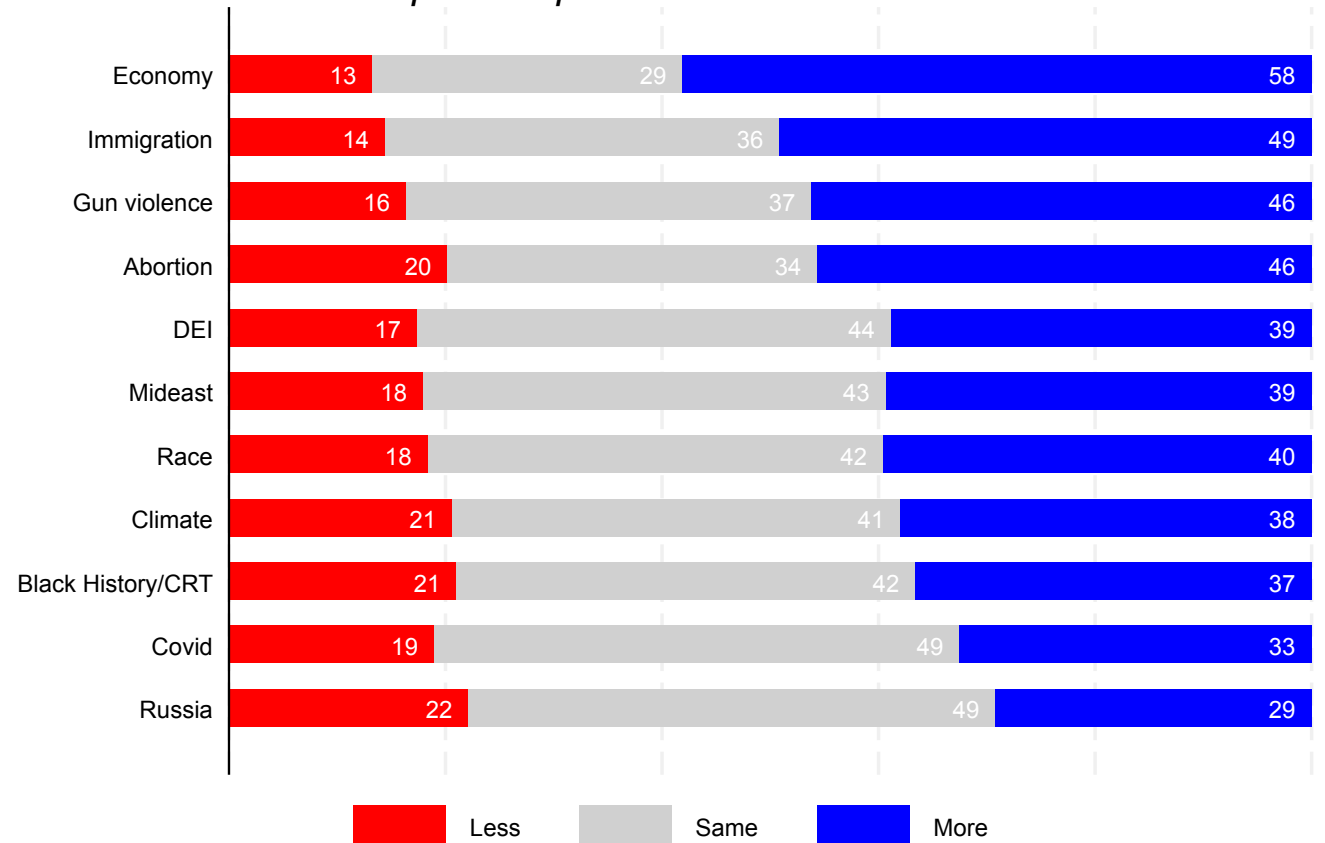


The Agenda: In General, the Harris Campaign Engages on Women's Top Issues

- Women are half the population, so on questions like issue priorities we're not surprised to find that women's top priorities are similar to other polls' results in the population at large.
- The variation in issue priorities across racial subgroups of women (following slides) are more noteworthy
 - Black women prioritize race; other POC groups all de-prioritize it, or emphasize immigration

Would you like to hear More, Less, or about the Same amount from Harris on issues related to _____?

Sept 2024 poll of American women



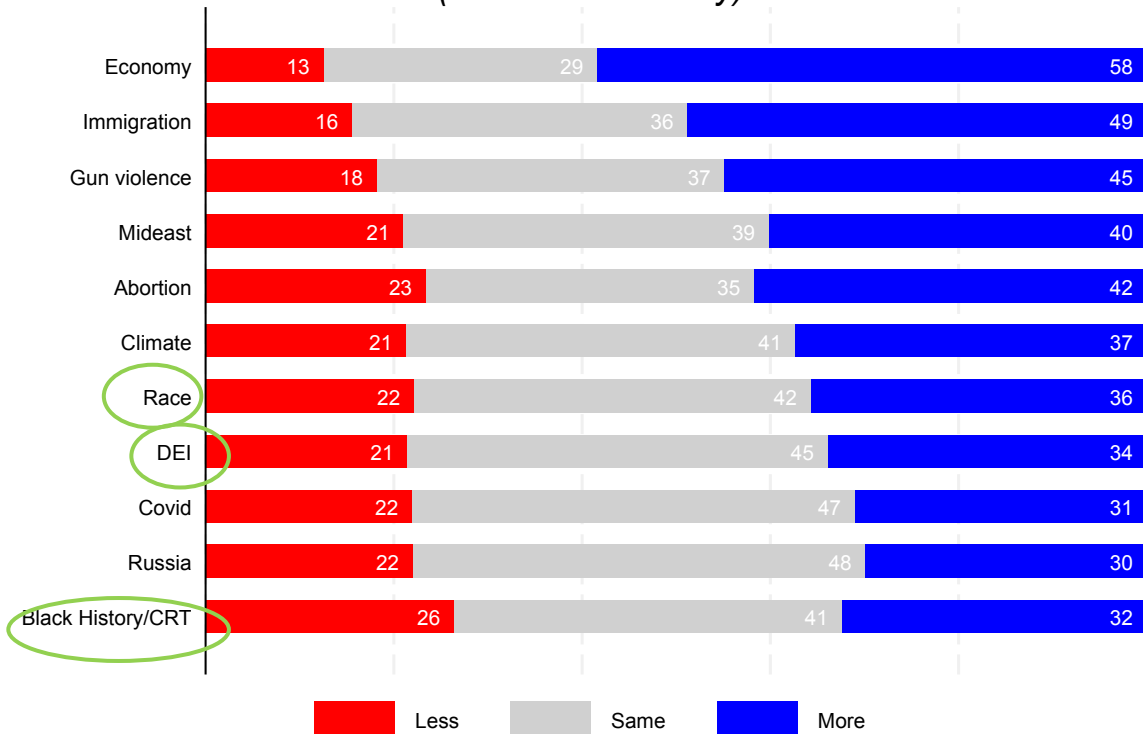
Source: Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group poll of American women, Sept 4-10, 2024.



...But Subgroups of Women Want Different Emphases

Would you like to hear More, Less, or about the Same amount from Harris on issues related to _____?

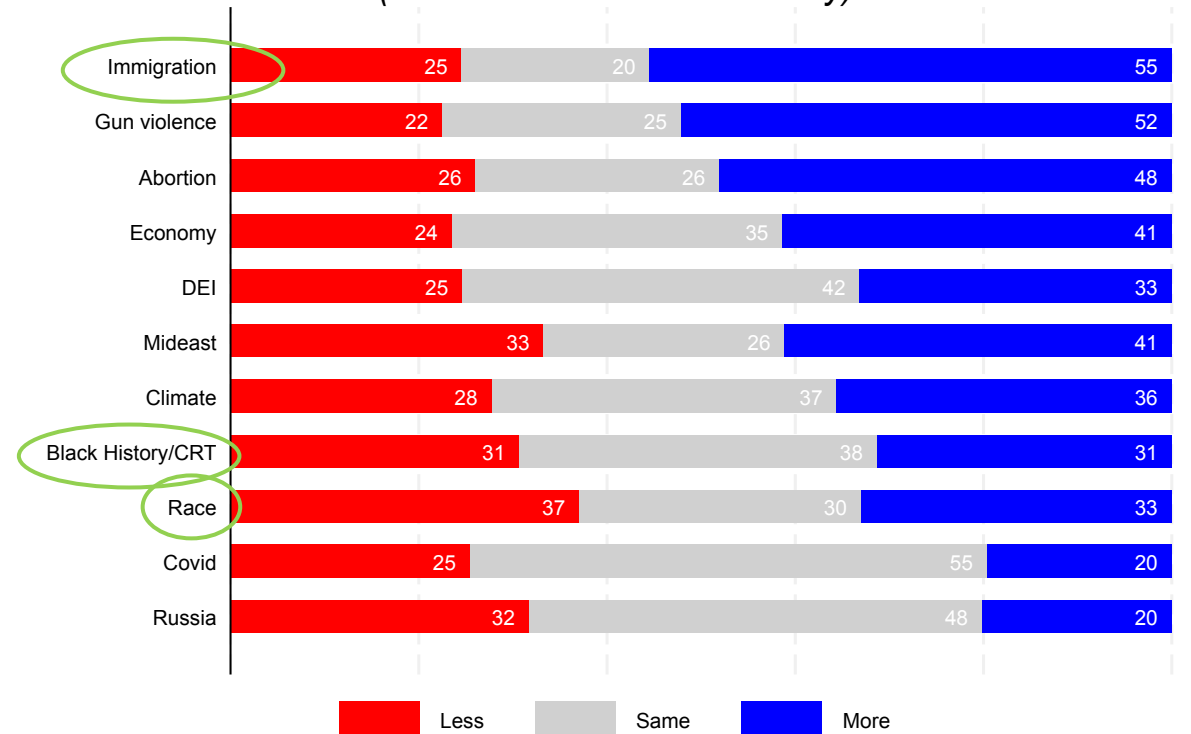
(White women only)



Source: Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group poll of American women, Sept 4-10, 2024.

Would you like to hear More, Less, or about the Same amount from Harris on issues related to _____?

(Asian/Asian-Am. women only)



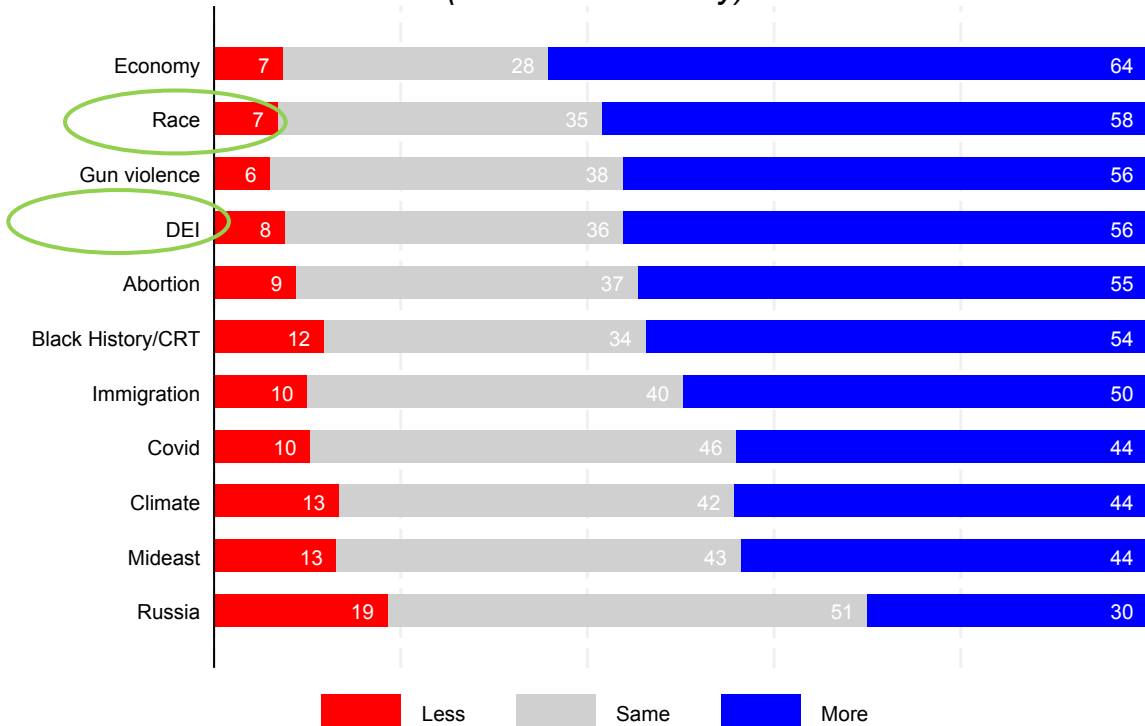
Source: Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group poll of American women, Sept 4-10, 2024.



...But Subgroups of Women Want Different Emphases

Would you like to hear More, Less, or about the Same amount from Harris on issues related to _____?

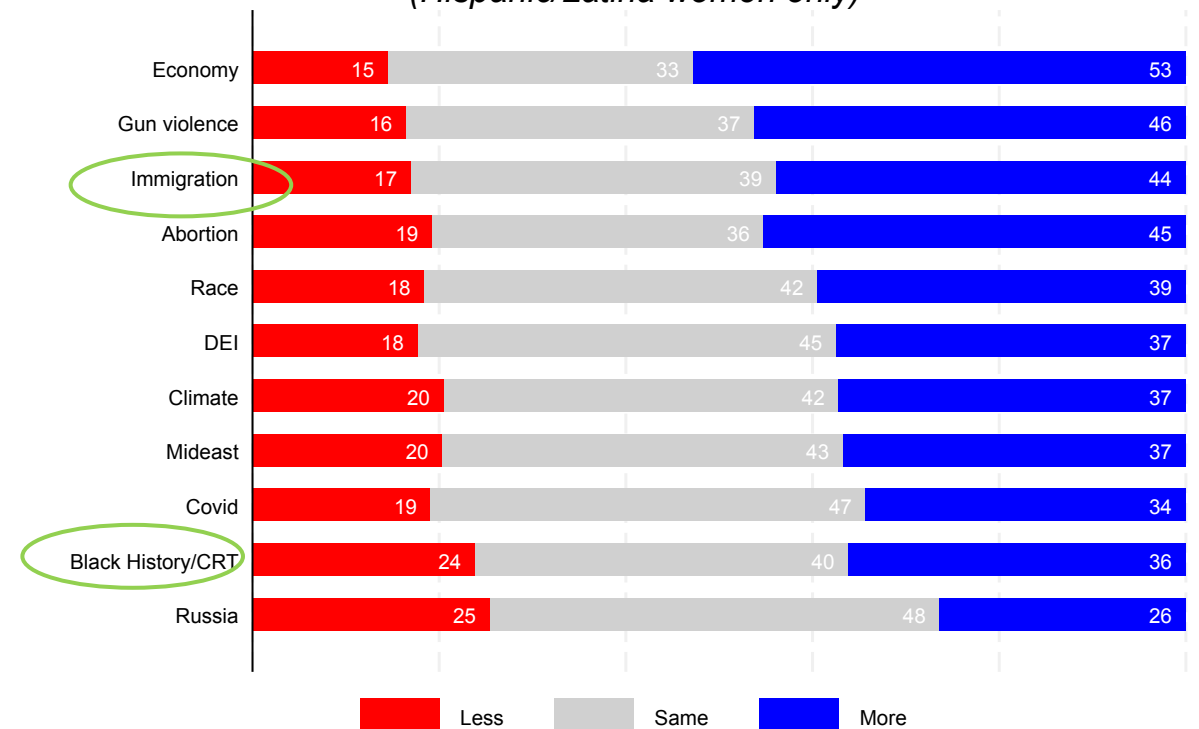
(Black women only)



Source: Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group poll of American women, Sept 4-10, 2024.

Would you like to hear More, Less, or about the Same amount from Harris on issues related to _____?

(Hispanic/Latina women only)



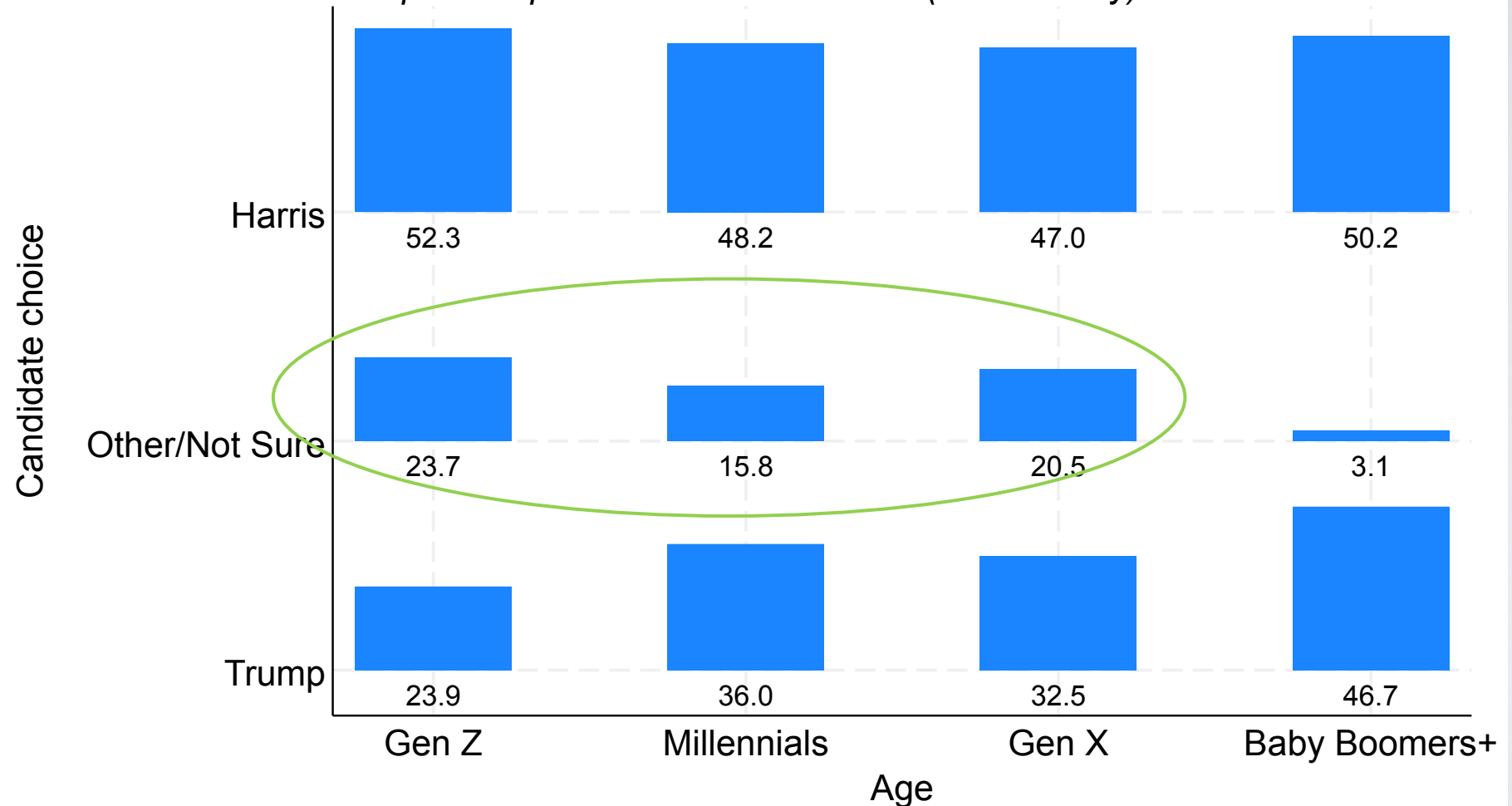
Source: Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group poll of American women, Sept 4-10, 2024.



Where is there more room for KH to grow?

Significant Room to Sway Young Latinas

Sept 2024 poll of American Women (Latinas only)



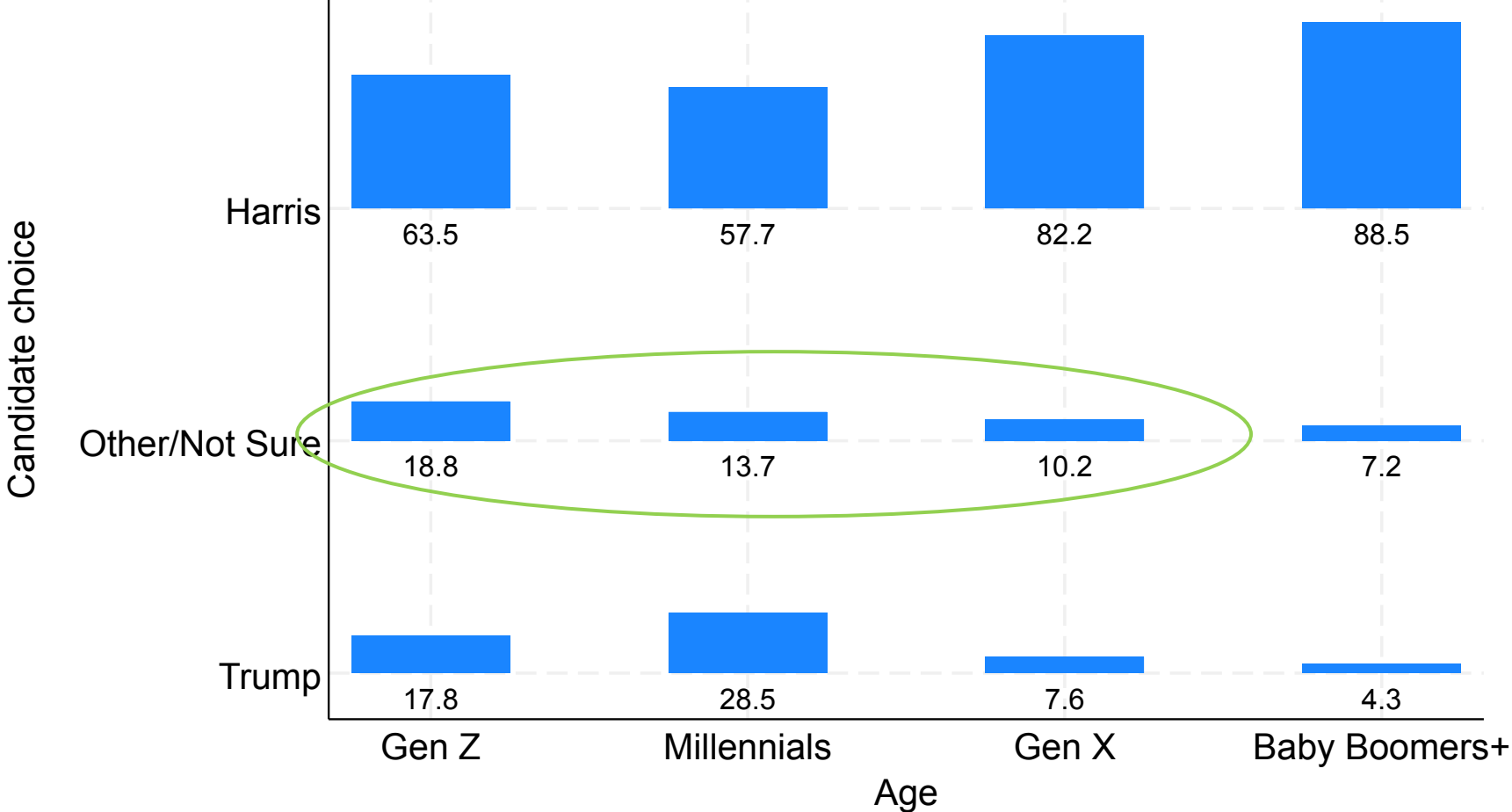
Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group Poll of American Women, Sept 5-10, 2024



Where is there more room for KH to grow?

A little less room to Sway Black Women

Sept 2024 poll of American Women (Black women only)



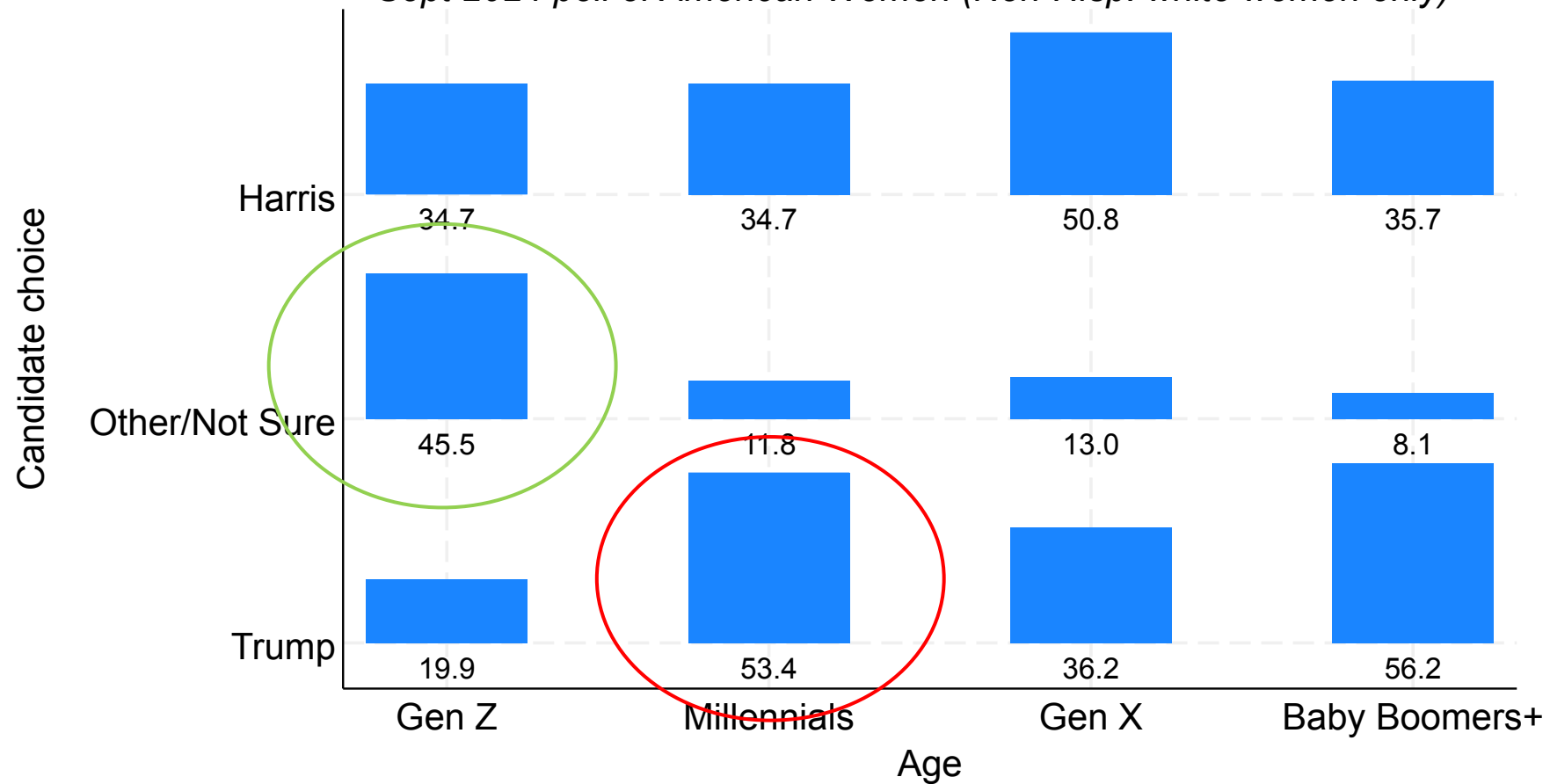
Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group Poll of American Women, Sept 5-10, 2024



Where is there more room for KH to grow?

Young white women do not like Trump,
but have not come around to Harris

Sept 2024 poll of American Women (Non-Hisp. white women only)



Alliance for Black Equality/2040 Strategy Group Poll of American Women, Sept 5-10, 2024

