



Peter Trubowitz

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As the 2024 presidential election nears, Trump and Harris make their closing arguments to their core supporters



*As we head into the final week of the US 2024 presidential election campaign, Phelan US Centre Director, **Professor Peter Trubowitz** writes that the polls show a very close election which will likely be decided by a small number of swing states. While Vice President Kamala Harris is focusing on democracy and abortion rights in the final stretch to November 5<sup>th</sup>, former President Donald Trump is doubling down on male voters. To win, both campaigns need to mobilize their core supporters in swing states.*

## What are the opinion polls showing?

Most of the polls point to an extraordinary close election that will be decided by a relatively small number of voters in just a handful of swing states like Georgia, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Former President Donald Trump has closed on Vice President Kamala Harris in the **polls** in the past two weeks, but those same polls show Harris with an edge among undecided voters, especially younger ones. Much depends on which candidate's closing argument proves more persuasive to those voters still on the fence in the swing states and critically, which campaign is best able to mobilize its core supporters in the closing week of the race.

## What should we be keeping an eye on?

Harris and Trump's closing arguments. They tell us a lot about which voters each campaign thinks they need to win. This is why Harris is focusing on the two D's — **democracy** and **Dobbs** — in her closing argument. She needs to win over **moderate Republicans** and independents who worry that Trump is a threat to the republic and drive her huge lead in the polls with women. What about Trump? He's **doubling down** on male voters, where he enjoys a double digit advantage over Harris.

Hence, his appearance last Friday on ‘[The Joe Rogan Experience](#),’ a podcast hugely popular with [young males](#).

## How important is the gender gap?

If there is one thing the two campaigns agree on, it’s that there is a gender gap. It is [massive](#) in this election cycle. Poll after poll show women trending strongly toward Kamala Harris, while men strongly favor Donald Trump. This is true nationally, but also critically, in the key swing states that Harris and Trump need to win a 270 majority in the Electoral College. To be sure, women and men have been [trending](#) toward Democrats and Republicans respectively, for years. But this divide has widened in recent election cycles, and the gender gap looms large in the closing days of this race.

## Will it all come down to turnout?

Many Republican analysts are confidently predicting a Trump victory on November 5. They point to [internal polling](#) that shows Trump gaining momentum in critical swing states. They could be right, but it is worth recalling that back in 2012, internal GOP polling also led influential Republicans (see [here](#), for example) to predict that Utah Senator Mitt Romney would handily defeat then President Barack Obama. Why were they wrong? In a word, turnout. On Election Day, Obama [surged](#) in areas favorable to Democrats, leaving Republicans shell shocked. Once again, the outcome this year may turn on whether the Democrats’ [ground operation](#) proves to be as good as it is cracked up to be.

- *This article is based on a 28 October CNBC interview with Professor Trubowitz.*
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### About the author



**Peter Trubowitz**

Peter Trubowitz is Professor of International Relations, and Director of the LSE's Phelan US Centre. His main research interests are in the fields of international security and comparative foreign policy, with special focus on American grand strategy and foreign policy. He also writes and comments frequently on US party politics and elections and how they shape and are shaped by America's changing place in the world.

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