

# The Establishment versus The Reality TV Star: Hillary Clinton versus Donald Trump →

A commentary on the U.S. Presidential Election by Shahid Miah | November 2016



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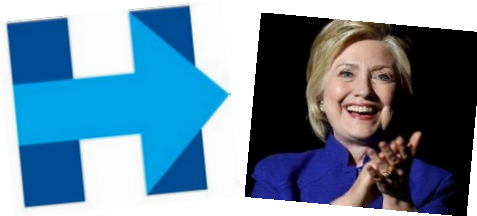
# 1 Introduction

The United States is embroiled in a Presidential election like no other.

Unlike other Presidential campaigns, this one has become very controversial because it has been very unconventional. It is a race between an establishment figure and a reality television star. And they are both the most unpopular Presidential candidates in history.

On Tuesday 8 November 2016, the United States of America (U.S.A. or U.S.) will go to the polls to elect the 45th President and the 48th Vice President in what has become the most controversial Presidential campaign in history. It has been unconventional, uncontrollable and at times, unimaginable.

The Democratic Party have nominated Hillary Rodham Clinton, a 69-year-old former First Lady to President Bill Clinton. She has one daughter and has a net-worth of \$45 million.



The Republican Party have nominated Donald John Trump, a 70-year-old businessman, television personality, and now politician. He has been married three times, has five children, and he has a net-worth of \$3.7 billion.

Hillary Clinton managed to see off the populist left-wing Senator from Vermont Bernard Sanders, whilst Donald Trump beat 11 Republican candidates including favourite Jeb Bush who is the son and brother of former Presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush respectively.

Since 2015, when both Clinton and Trump announced their candidacy, the campaign became fuelled with controversy. There have been allegations of racism, sexism, misogyny, treason, and the never-ending email scandal. The election has been difficult for the U.S. It has been very toxic and disrespectful in every sense imaginable.

It is broadly acknowledged both by Republicans and the Democrats that Clinton is the most qualified Presidential candidate in history and conventional thinking might tell you that she

should win by a landslide against a candidate with no public office experience, very little knowledge on policy issues and who has just about offended everybody, even those in his own party.

But this is a Presidential race like no other. The race has become so toxic and negative that neither candidates are talking about policy anymore, but rather about each other. At every rally, Trump attacks Clinton and Clinton attacks Trump.

The American people seem to be divided and undecided, as both candidates are embroiled in controversy. And the funny thing is that everyone is praising President Obama – even Republican Senators!

In this commentary, I am going to focus on the 8 issues that I believe are important to both candidates, providing a brief synopsis on what they believe. I will also provide brief analysis on the campaign and share some perspectives.



## 2 Policy & Analysis

| ABORTION   |   |
|--|---|
| What Hillary Clinton says...   | What Donald Trump says...   |
| <p><i>"I believe we need to protect access to safe and legal abortion, not just in principle but in practice."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports keeping abortion legal</li><li>• Supports abortion if the life of the woman is at risk</li><li>• Supports abortion in the case of rape or incest</li><li>• Supports some restrictions on late-term abortions</li></ul>   | <p><i>"Friends of mine years ago were going to have a child, and it was going to be aborted. And it wasn't aborted. And that child today is a total superstar, a great, great child. And I saw that. And I saw other instances."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does not support keeping abortion legal except in the case of rape, incest and life of mother</li><li>• Supports abortion if the life of the woman is at risk</li><li>• Supports abortion in the case of rape or incest</li><li>• Support some restrictions on late-term abortions</li></ul> |
| ECONOMY  |   |
| What Hillary Clinton says...   | What Donald Trump says...   |
| <p><i>"Throughout this campaign, I've said that creating good-paying jobs and raising incomes is the defining economic challenge of our time, and that in order to get where I want us to go, we need growth that is strong, fair and long-term."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Believes minimum wage should be raised</li><li>• Believes taxes should be raised on the wealthiest Americans</li><li>• Believes that the U.S. should tax corporate profits that are stashed overseas</li></ul> | <p><i>"I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created. I tell you that."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does not believe minimum wage should be raised</li><li>• Unclear whether he believes whether taxes should be raised on the wealthiest Americans, but believes that benefits should be cut for the wealthy</li><li>• Believes that there should be a one-time tax repatriation taxed at the reduced rate of 10% for corporate profits that are stashed overseas</li></ul>  |

## EDUCATION

### What Hillary Clinton says...

*"I want everyone to be able to refinance your student loans so you never have to pay more than you can afford."*

- Supports charter schools
- Supports Common Core
- Believes there should be there be some moratorium on student debt

### What Donald Trump says...

*"I'm a tremendous believer in education, but education has to be at a local level."*

- Does not support charter schools
- Does not support Common Core
- Unclear whether he believes that there should be there be some moratorium on student debt

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

### What Hillary Clinton says...

*"I won't let anyone take us backward, deny our economy the benefits of harnessing a clean energy future, or force our children to endure the catastrophe that would result from unchecked climate change."*

- Believes in climate change
- Believes offshore drilling be banned
- Believes the U.S. stay in the Paris Agreement<sup>1</sup>
- Does not want fracking to be banned but supports regulations on existing fracking sites, and opposes future drilling

### What Donald Trump says...

*"This very expensive global warming bullshit has to stop."*

- Does not believe in climate change
- Does not believe offshore drilling should be banned
- Does not believe the U.S. should stay in the Paris Agreement
- Does not want fracking to be banned

<sup>1</sup> The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gases emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020

## GUN CONTROL

### What Hillary Clinton says...

*"33,000 Americans a year die [from guns]. It is time for us to say we are going to have comprehensive background checks, we are going to close the gun-show loopholes."*

- Supports increased gun-control measures
- Supports increased background checks
- Supports an assault-weapons ban
- Supports expanding concealed-carry permits
- Supports allowing the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to study gun violence

### What Donald Trump says...

*"The right of self-defense doesn't stop at the end of your driveway. That's why I have a concealed-carry permit and why tens of millions of Americans do, too. That permit should be valid in all 50 states."*

- Does not support increased gun-control measures
- Does not support increased background checks
- Does not support an assault-weapons ban
- Does not support expanding concealed-carry permits
- Unclear whether he supports allowing the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to study gun violence

## HEALTH CARE

### What Hillary Clinton says...

*"Affordable health care is a basic human right."*

- Does not believe Obamacare be replaced
- Support the individual mandate
- Believes Medicaid be expanded

### What Donald Trump says...

*"We are going to repeal Obamacare. We are going to replace Obamacare with something so much better."*

- Believes Obamacare should be replaced
- Does not support the individual mandate
- Does not believe Medicaid should be expanded

## IMMIGRATION

### What Hillary Clinton says...

*"If Congress refuses to act, as president I would do everything possible under the law to go even further [than President Obama]"*

- Does not want to deport all 11 million undocumented immigrants
- Does not want to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border
- Does not believe Muslims should face extra immigration hurdles

### What Donald Trump says...

*"We're going to do a wall. We're going to have a big, fat, beautiful door on the wall. We're going to have people come in, but they're going to come in legally. ... Mexico's going to pay for the wall."*

- Believes all 11 million undocumented immigrants should be deported but said in September 2016 that he would prioritise the deportation of 5-6.5m people
- Wants to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border with Mexico paying for it
- Believes Muslims should face extra immigration hurdles

## TERRORISM

### What Hillary Clinton says...

*"A more effective air campaign is necessary but not sufficient. We should be honest that to be successful, airstrikes will have to be combined with ground forces."*

- Does not believe the U.S. needs a significant increase in military spending and has called for a commission to look at ways to "eliminate certain spending."
- Does not believe that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should be toppled and has called for a political solution of the Syrians' own making
- Does not believe that the U.S. needs a significantly increased military presence in Syria to battle the Islamic State
- Would work with Russian President Vladimir Putin to battle the Islamic State
- Does not support an increased military presence in other parts of the world that see increases in extremism
- Support greater domestic surveillance to identify extremists

### What Donald Trump says...

*"I would knock the hell out of ISIS in some form. I would rather not do it with our troops, you understand that."*

- Believes U.S. does need a significant increase in military spending and has called for a commission to look at ways to "eliminate certain spending."
- Does not believe that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should be toppled
- Unclear whether he believes that the U.S. needs a significantly increased military presence in Syria to battle the Islamic State
- Would work with Russian President Vladimir Putin to battle the Islamic State
- Unclear whether he would support an increased military presence in other parts of the world that see increases in extremism
- Support greater domestic surveillance to identify extremists and has said certain mosques should be under surveillance

# TRADE

## What Hillary Clinton says...

*"Any trade deal has to produce jobs and raise wages and increase prosperity and protect our security."*

- Does not support the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)<sup>2</sup> and the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)<sup>3</sup> with the European Union, although she did support it before receiving the support from Bernie Sanders
- Wants to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)<sup>4</sup>
- Supports the idea of 'free trade'
- Does not support increasing tariffs on U.S.' trade partners

## What Donald Trump says...

*"I don't mind free trade. I'm a free trader, I'm a very conservative person. They say: 'He can't be conservative, he doesn't believe in free trade.' I don't believe in free trade. I believe in really, really smart trade, where we can come out on top — that's what I believe in. All right?"*

- Does not support TPP nor the TTIP with the European Union
- Does not support NAFTA
- Unclear whether he supports the idea of 'free trade'
- Does not support increasing tariffs on U.S.' trade partners

<sup>2</sup> Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a trade agreement among twelve of the Pacific Rim countries (not including China) signed February 2016 in Auckland, New Zealand

<sup>3</sup> Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a similar arrangement like the TPP for the European Union

<sup>4</sup> North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an agreement signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, creating a trilateral trade bloc in North America. The agreement came into force on 1 January 1994



## Populism is a worldwide phenomenon

Given that Donald Trump has not held a public office and tends to offend people, many have wondered why he has such support from Republican Party membership.

The answer probably lies in the fact that there has been a populist surge throughout the western world whereby the people have been frustrated against established politicians and have turned to figures who appear to represent their concerns.

Populism does not have any boundaries and appeals to people across the political spectrum – left-wing and right-wing. Trump is like any populist politician in the world. They have an appeal because they are against the political status quo, political class and the establishment.

Now, let's take a few other populist figures and outline the similarities. These include Bernard 'Bernie' Sanders, Democrats (U.S.), Nigel Farage, UKIP (U.K.), Jeremy Corbyn, Labour (U.K.), Marine Le Pen, National Front (France), and Alexis Tsipras, Synaspismos (Greece).

Populist demagogues have similar characteristics regardless of ideology:

| The Appeal of Populist Politicians            | Politicians |
|---|-------------|
| Why do people support them?                   | Trump       |
| - Considered an 'outsider' and unconventional | Sanders     |
| - Anti-establishment                          | Farage      |
| - 'Principled' and say what he/she thinks     | Corbyn      |
| - Some are not a 'career politicians'         | Le Pen      |
| - Become the 'voice' of the 'people'          | Tsipras     |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| They are popular amongst Party membership<br>- They tend to have the mandate of the membership<br>- They easily attract thousands of people to their political rally   | Trump<br>Sanders<br>Farage<br>Corbyn<br>Le Pen<br>Tsipras |
| They are divisive amongst public<br>- They don't have the mass appeal with the general electorate  | Trump<br>Sanders<br>Farage<br>Corbyn<br>Le Pen            |
| Little support from their Party's establishment<br>- Elected Party officials tend not to like them<br><br>Some Republican Senators have withdrawn support for Trump. Other Republicans including Colin Powell and George W. Bush have 'endorsed' Clinton | Trump<br>Sanders<br>Corbyn                                |
| Blame it on the media<br>- They tend to blame the media if they get scrutinised e.g. Right-wingers call the media 'liberal' and Left-wingers call the media 'Conservative'   | Trump<br>Sanders<br>Farage<br>Corbyn<br>Le Pen<br>Tsipras |
| Passionate but abusive supporters<br>- Supporters tend to abuse people who disagree with them on social media with foul language and tone, make rape and death-threats against women and hurl anti-Semitic & Islamophobic abuse                          | Trump<br>Sanders<br>Farage<br>Corbyn<br>Le Pen<br>Tsipras |
| Share similar policy ideas<br>- Anti-austerity<br>- Anti-globalisation<br>- Against the European Union<br>- Against NATO   | Trump<br>Sanders<br>Farage<br>Corbyn<br>Le Pen<br>Tsipras |
| Where is their electoral base?<br>- Disfranchised working-class people<br><br>Despite being a billionaire, Trump has an appeal amongst the white working class   | Trump<br>Sanders<br>Farage<br>Corbyn<br>Le Pen<br>Tsipras |

Populist demagogues can galvanise people under populist themes and conjure up conspiracy theories against the establishment and the government of the day.

Although Trump has similar appeal to that of other populist demagogues, he has gone about it in a very different way. He has not fought on policies and issues but rather on personality. He has made offensive remarks about his Republican rivals during the primaries particularly Ted Cruz and his wife, and anyone else who has scrutinised or criticised him.

## Publicity is not always good publicity

Unlike other Presidential campaigns, if the candidate is in the news, it is usually not a good sign.

Candidates usually seek as much publicity as possible but in this very unconventional election campaign, the candidate who receives publicity is usually the one who is under negative scrutiny.

Donald Trump has come under fire for making racist, sexist, misogynist comments throughout the campaign, whilst Hillary Clinton has been criticised for using her private email server.

If the news story is not about Trump's character, it is a bad sign for Clinton, whilst news stories about her emails tend to drum up her base.

### **Racism didn't matter but sexism does**

Before the Presidential campaign, Donald Trump had launched what many have called a bizarre racist campaign to question whether President Obama was born in the U.S. He was proved to be wrong but he kept on the narrative. And even though recently he accepted Obama was born in the U.S., many of his supporters still believe the President is foreign born and is a 'Muslim'.

The President has not been the only one to have come under fire from Trump. Trump has lambasted America's southern neighbour, Mexico. He said that Mexicans are drug-traffickers and rapists. The remarks led several businesses to cut their ties with him but then he followed that up by saying that as President he would build a wall that Mexico would pay for.

Trump also insulted the 'Gold-Star' Muslim mother of a war hero after she and her husband made an appearance at the National Democratic Convention (DNC). But none of these remarks and many others towards anyone he does not like had deterred his supporters from deserting him until recently when the Access Hollywood tapes surfaced showing that he made improper and lewd comments about sexually assaulting women.

That was the last straw for quite a few Republican Senators including House Leader Paul Ryan and many women, who make up over half of the electorate.

The New York Times has summed up everyone Trump has insulted, which makes very interesting reading.<sup>5</sup>

### **No Tax Returns**

Questions about taxes have dogged Donald Trump's run for President for a long time. Unlike Hillary Clinton who has released 40 years of Tax Returns, Trump has not released any.

In an investigation conducted by The New York Times, attention has repeatedly focused on the large loss Trump reported on his 1995 state Tax Returns and whether he had paid his fair share of income taxes. Much of the leaked documents has concerned whether Trump was able to use the net operating loss deduction to avoid paying federal income tax for nearly two decades. There are also speculations that Trump benefited from tax loopholes for the real estate industry and even engaged in questionable tax planning.

In the second television debate Trump responded to Clinton saying that it was smart to avoid paying tax. Although it caused an uproar in some

quarters, it was justified by his supporters and surrogates alike.

To resolve the questions around his personal tax history and therefore his fitness for office, Trump should release his federal Tax Returns so that the American people can judge for themselves whether he deserves to be trusted with the task of executing tax laws.

### **The Hillary Emails**

The charge that Hillary Clinton used a private email server during her time as the Secretary of State at times feels like a red herring because she was not the first to do so – President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell had one too. But because the Clintons have been secretive in many areas, there is a suspicion that she might have violated security by doing so.

FBI Director James Comey already exonerated Clinton but reopening the case to investigate 650,000 emails of former senator Anthony Weiner, does dent Clinton's appeal to voters.

However, it also raises questions as to why Comey, a registered Republican who was hired by President Obama as FBI Director, decided to reopen the case so close to election day.

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<sup>5</sup> The New York Times:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/01/28/upshot/donald-trump-twitter-insults.html>

The new case is so vague that no one knows if Clinton has actually done anything wrong. The emails are about her colleagues and the FBI not providing any information only fuels the narrative of wrongdoing and a boost to Trump.

Under the Hatch Act<sup>6</sup>, government officials are not allowed to influence a Presidential campaign and there are concerns by both Democrats and Republicans that Comey has violated the Act.

The investigation will not be completed before polling day and therefore it has already influenced which way people will vote, as Clinton's poll numbers have dropped.

If Clinton wins, she will be the only President in history to have an investigation hanging over her. And what if she is exonerated, does Comey apologise and everything is simply forgiven? But what if she is guilty? Or what if Trump wins? Interesting times ahead.

Although the FBI might have a legitimate case to reopen the Clinton emails, they have withheld evidence of Russian support for Trump and his tax affairs for fear of influencing the election. Hypocrisy some might say.

### **The Clinton Foundation**

There is a charge against Hillary Clinton that when someone made a significant donation to the Clinton Foundation, they appeared to have access to her when she was Secretary of State. Clinton has denied this but email leaks show that some people did have direct access.

Bill Clinton has said that the Clinton Foundation will be closed if Hillary becomes President or at least they will not have any involvement in it.

Donald Trump on the other hand has been accused to using monies raised by the Trump Foundation to pay off his debts. The charge has not stuck as there has been many other scandals.

### **The Michelle Affect**

President Obama has high approval rating right now but the First Lady has even higher. Donald Trump has criticised everyone who has criticised him except for Michelle Obama.

That is mainly because Michelle Obama is hugely popular amongst the Republicans as well as the Democrats. She has kept herself away from politics but as her speeches have shown, she can be very political, very inspirational and very appealing.

### **The Bernie Affect**

Even though Bernie Sanders led a left-wing populist movement against the established Hillary Clinton, once he lost he became disciplined and supported candidate the Democratic Party nominated. Sanders has an appeal that Clinton cannot reach and so he will bring quite a lot of votes Clinton's way.

### **New voters**

A lot of Hispanics registered to vote and some have already voted. Many of those have not indicated whether they are Democrats or Republican and so it would be interesting to see what the outcome is.

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<sup>6</sup> The Hatch Act (1939) prohibits government employees engaging/influencing political activity

## 3 Final Thoughts

The 2016 Presidential campaign has been the most unusual in history. It has not been fought on policy but on personality.

Even though I have outlined both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's policies, it is very difficult to critique them because there has been very little spoken about them on the campaign trail.

### **Both candidates replying on others to help them**

Unlike any other candidate before, both candidates are relying on other people to help them win.

Hillary Clinton has the support of President Obama, Vice-President Joe Biden and former President Bill Clinton, celebrities including Katy Perry, Jennifer Lopez, Beyoncé and Jay Z. And she has the support of Michelle Obama, who appears to be her greatest asset.

Donald Trump on the other hand has the support of the former New York Mayor, Rudy Giuliani, the Governor of New Jersey Chris Christie and his family who are incredibly talented and capable.

### **Trump is not fit to be President**

From the day Donald Trump announced his candidacy he has continuously demonstrated that he lacks the knowledge, temperament, steadiness, experience and honesty that is usually a prerequisite skill to become President of the U.S.

Trump is erratic, ill-tempered and ill-equipped to be Commander-in-chief. Furthermore. He has been caught literally lying, he fuels prejudice and speaks recklessly.

But just like other populist demagogues around the world, he does have the courage to speak his mind. He also has a credible running-mate in Mike Pence. But it is Trump that the electorate will be voting for not Mike Pence.

### **Baffled why Hillary Clinton is polarising**

Hillary Clinton is the establishment figure with over 30 years of public service, but she represents the status quo in Washington. She was careless in handling classified information that potentially threatened national security. She is also accused doing very little when holding public office.

But she is the most qualified candidate in history and is recognised throughout the world. She has the temperament, personality, knowledge of issues and experience to be Commander-in-chief.

In the scheme of things, does having a personal server or being a spouse of a cheating former President really matter? She will essentially be carrying on President Obama's policies.

### **Is this the end for the Republican party?**

Donald Trump is different from any Republican candidate. Some Republicans will argue that he is

not even a Republican, as he was previously a Democrat and then an Independent.

After Mitt Romney's loss in 2012, the Republicans said they will go through a post-mortem and will appeal to voters they had not previously such as Hispanic, African-American and Asian.

Nominating Donald Trump wasn't what they had in mind. They will need to consider how they select Presidential candidates and conduct proper due diligence going forward.

### **The aftermath**

Donald Trump has changed American politics forever. Regardless of whether he wins or loses, like other populist demagogues, he has created a movement who will be very vocal in the future.

### **America has a choice**

On Tuesday 8 November, America has a choice to elect a flawed established figure or elect an even more flawed former reality TV star.

At the time of writing, CNN Poll of Polls show a 47% for Hillary Clinton and 42% for Donald Trump. This could be once-in-a-generation moment to shape the future of the U.S. so please exercise your right to vote. However, don't complain if you disagree with the outcome.

## 4 Further Reading

There is a lot of information about the U.S. Presidential election. I have read the following to produce this document, so feel free to read them to further your knowledge too.

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/us2016>

Donald Trump: [www.donaldjtrump.com](http://www.donaldjtrump.com)

Hillary Clinton: [www.hillaryclinton.com](http://www.hillaryclinton.com)

The Huffington Post: <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/news/presidential-election-2016>

The New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/politics/index.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=span-ab-top-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>

The Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com>

USA Today: <http://www.usatoday.com/section/global/elections-2016>