

# OPINION

## AMERICAN ELECTIONS: THE BATTLE OF VISIONS

*George Manios*

### **Prologue**

With a few days left in the race for the American Presidency, all the polls show an extreme tight race between former President Donald Trump and Vice-President Kamala Harris.

The latest Nate Silver's polling shows Trump has an edge over Harris in four of the five battleground states. Both campaigns are focusing on the undecided voters, who can make the difference of winning or losing.

Voter mobilization and motivation are key to winning this election.

The ability to motivate the undecided to vote will be a key factor in this election, as the difference between Harris and Trump is a few votes in many states.

In any election there are many factors that will impact the vote is the turnout. If the voter turnout is low, only the hardcore voters in both camps will turnout to vote and based on the statistical tight race, it could benefit Trump.

Given the war in Ukraine and the Middle East, the minorities factor that emanate from these regions could also be crucial in this election. Ukrainians, Jews, and Arabs could be the determinants as to when gets to the White House.

For instance, in Georgia the poll shows Harris with 47.6 % and Trump with 48.8%. Georgia has been blue for the last two elections. Chinese Americans are about 80,000. The question is how would they vote? If they vote for Harris, along with other Asian Americans as they did in the last elections Harris gets Georgia. If they stay home or vote for Trump, he gets Georgia and that will impact the electoral college vote.

The polls show that many Americans have made up their minds as to who they will vote on November 5<sup>th</sup>. There are about 15% percent of the voters who have not decided. Their decisions will make a difference. These voters will determine the vision that will dominate in America political society and abroad in the next four years.

Below I set out the visions of the two campaigns and what such visions means to the America people and the international community. I then conclude that Kamala Harris is the best candidate because of her progressive policies to be elected to the White House. [1]

## **The Trump Vision**

The Trump vision is dictatorial and authoritarian, and its goal is to institutionalize the MEGA movement and Project 2025 with massive consequences for governance, civil rights, health, education, and international relations.

Trump's vision is to do away with the rule of law, the Constitution, isolate America from the world by withdrawing from international organizations and govern as a dictator along his extreme right-wing minions. Trump will also use the government machinery to seek revenge against his perceived enemies.

*"Trump would pursue a dramatic expansion of presidential power, [with no guardrails, given the Supreme Court decision on immunity] – gutting the federal bureaucracy and installing thousands of executive branch loyalists to rip off the guardrails that restrained his first term."*  
Axios, October 14, 2024.

The Trump vision contemplates radical changes to immigration and border control with massive deportations, expelling millions of people that are illegally in the U.S., using the military and placing new barriers on asylum seekers. Build the border wall and exacerbate tensions with Mexico and Central American countries, moving closer to other authoritarian regimes such as Russia and China.

Project 2025 which Trump has adopted as part of his vision calls for weakening the Affordable care Act through new requirements and eligibility restrictions. These changes will impact women's reproductive rights and vulnerable groups such as low-income families, women, and elderly.

In the international sphere Trump would continue his first term protectionist policies, namely, 10% to 20% blanket tariffs on all American imports and 60% on tariffs on China. EU, Canada, and Asian countries will bare the brunt of these protectionist policies and would impact their economies, including loss of jobs and further such policies would impact global supply chains.

The consequences would be trade wars causing disruption of consumer prices and loss of employment in America and the affected countries. Relationships with key allies - EU, Asian countries will be strained. Further the threat of withdrawing U.S. military from the European and Asian theaters would radically change the relationship, as these countries would look to develop their own military capabilities independent from the Americans.

Trump will give tax cuts to the rich and corporations and through de-regulation increase the power of the corporation.

## **The Harris Vision**

The Harris Vision of governing America will be based on respect and adherence to the rule of law and the Constitution along with an array of progressive policies across all sectors of society.

Climate change will push in the forefront, focusing on reduced emission and advancing green energy, including creating green jobs.

The Harris Administration will strengthen the Affordable Care Act, with emphasis on expanding Medicaid services to cover dental, vision care and home care for seniors and subsidies to low and middle-income America. These changes will give health care access to millions of Americans.

Expand social safety nets to address the growing inequality - including childcare, paid family leave, affordable housing, and childcare credit.

Fortified reproductive rights, defending access to abortion, contraceptive, gender affirming care, especially in states that have passed restrictive laws.

In the labor and economic sector Harris will pursue workers' rights and corporate regulation through raising the federal minimum wage, increasing labor protection, strengthening collective bargaining rights, and expanding union rights across industries.

Curb corporate power through anti-monopoly regulations.

The Harris tax policies will focus on wealth redistribution, including higher taxes on the wealthy and corporations.

On education and social equity, the Harris policies will focus on advancing racial and gender equity, in education and beyond. The Harris policies would push for student loan forgiveness, expand access to free community college and vocational training, eliminate system inequalities, with an emphasis on improving access to affordable housing and health care.

The Harris foreign policy would build on the multilateral approach championed by President Biden, bolstering American leadership on global climate goals and strengthening alliance like NATO and ASEAN. Harris will not withdraw American troops from conflict prone zones, nor would she withdraw from international organizations or agreements like Trump did in his first term.

Harris would continue military support for Ukraine in the hope that would improve Kyiv's leverage in peace negotiations with Russia. In the end she seeks a resolution through negotiations.

Harris has affirmed her support of Israel to defend itself, but she is also looking for ways to resolve the conflict in the Middle East. The two-state solution would continue to be part of her foreign policy.

Maintain U.S. presence across the globe and assist countries like Taiwan to counter Chinese aggression. Harris would keep some tariffs on Chinese products and sanction human rights abusers but would impose tariffs across the board that would affect adversaries and allies.

On the immigration front, she has vowed to sign the bipartisan border bill that Trump and his supporters killed. This bill provided new restrictions on asylum, add more border and judicial resources to contain the influx of immigrants.

## Conclusion

Trump is not a conservative. He is a convicted felon that wants to take America backwards and wipe out all the American progress that has been over long political struggles. He is willing to use violence to seize power.

Under a Trump Administration American democracy will be undermined. Trump's goal is to destroy faith in American institutions and the rule of law and move America toward an authoritarian society. This identical to the approach taken by Hitler during the Weimar Republic.

Trump has hijacked the Republican Party to the benefit of his own and his billionaire friends.

The party of Lincoln, Ronald Regan and the Bushes no longer exists, and that is why so many have abandoned it. Key traditional Republicans have openly endorsed Harris because they see Trump as an existentialist threat to American democracy and values. How the rank and file of the traditional Republican party would react, would they stay home, hold their nose, and vote for Trump or choose Harris. Their vote is crucial, like that of other groups.

Trump wages war on the Constitution, puts himself above the law, and is willing to use violence to seize power. The MEGA movement created by Trump to serve his personal purposes and Project 2025 are anathema to the traditional Republicans. The traditional Republicans stands for law and order and loyalty to the Constitution and the country. Trump is the opposite. There is no loyalty to the country or the democratic institutions only to himself. Trump trashes America daily.

He calls America a nation of laughingstock and downgrades with insults the people who built America. Since 2015, Trump has focused and fixated on his grievances, on himself and on dividing America. This harsh attitude has permeated in civil society as they are no guardrails to check it. It has become the norm for the Trump campaign and others.

A case in point is the remarks made by comedian Hinchcliffe, a Trump gust, about Puerto Ricans. At the Sunday rally, October 27th, in New York's Madison Square Garden Hinchcliffe referred to Puerto Rico as a "floating island of garbage".

According to The Hill, Hinchcliffe also used other racist tropes including a reference to Black people and watermelons, and a crude reference linking procreation and immigration.

His remarks sparked outrage and could impact the elections.

Little did Hinchcliffe know that his remarks could have broad electoral consequences, especially in the swing states.

There are tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans or of Puerto Rican descent living in Pennsylvania, Arizona, Georgia and North Carolina. Over 400,000 alone live in Pennsylvania.

Trump is convicted felon awaiting sentences. Only this can happen in America that a criminal is able to seek the presidency not to better Americans but himself, his billionaires' friends and pardon the criminals of the January 6, 2021, uprising.

Trump hopes that as President he can put an end to his civil and criminal litigations and establish a dictatorial regime with loyal civil and military people that would not question his orders or loyalty, as Hitler was able to do in the 1930s.

Harris is the opposite. The principles of the rule of law and the Constitution are sacred. American institutions and democratic values are adhered and respected.

Harris will uphold that rule of law, and lead with strength and compassion give new hope to the American people to paraphrase Liz Cheney, a former senior Republican Congresswoman.

Harris policies are designed to benefit millions of Americans and not the few as Trump proposes.

The race for the White House and Congress is extremely close. What will make the difference is the ability of each campaign to get the vote out.

The American electorate must choose between an authoritarian or a progressive vision.

The choice strictly lies with the American people.

I am not an American citizen; I am a Canadian looking from above the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel.

I cannot have a say in the election, however, if I were able to vote I would cast my vote for Kamala Harris because she is progressive and wants to serve all the people; whereas Trump is in the race to help himself and his billionaires' friends, seek revenged and turned America backwards.

## References

1. In preparation for this article, I rely on several articles posted on the Internet by The Hill, October 29, 2024; AXIOS AM, October 12, 14,15 and 16, 2024; Asia Times, October 25, 2024; WORLDCRUNCH TODAY, October 25, 2024; and PROPUBLICA, October 28, 2024.