

BOOK REVIEW

Schier, S. E., & Eberly, T. E. (Eds.). (2022). *The Trump Effect: Disruption and Its Consequences in US Politics and Government*. Rowman & Littlefield, 181pp.

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Donald Trump's presidency in the United States rekindles the discourse surrounding leadership's centrality in policy-making and state-building. In the era of democratic governance, characterised by its perceived reliability and stability, Trump's influence on US domestic and foreign policy provides a compelling illustration of how individuals with powerful political agencies can disturb systems and upset equilibrium. This book, titled "The Trump Effect: Disruption and Its Consequences in the U.S. Politics and Government," edited by Steven E. Schier and Todd E. Eberly, analyses the political journey of the 45th president of the United States, Donald John Trump.

The book, which consists of eight chapters authored by eight contributors, offers a comprehensive analysis of American politics, encompassing the social issues and political turmoil that changed the course of American politics during the Trump presidency, which is pivoting on the idea of "America First".

The book defines America First as an idea, that the nation must utilise its economic and military power to improve Americans' quality of life (Schier, 2022). Trump suggests that America First means that all decisions on trade, taxes, and foreign issues are intended for the benefit of American families and individuals (Gingrich, 2018). Simply put, America First means to prioritise America's interests above everything else (Gurtov, 2021).

Chapter 1 sketches Americans' reactions to President Trump's policies. This chapter highlights demonstrations and chaos during the Black Lives Matter movement and the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter additionally encompasses the phenomenon of public scepticism and societal upheaval witnessed both during the presidential campaign and throughout the tenure of the presidency. Furthermore, the author emphasises the impact of media consumption on people's trust and perception of the Trump administration.

Chapter 2 discusses President Trump's domination that changed the course of the Republican Party and his leadership style in his four years in office. In addition to examining the Democrat's view of President Trump, the author discusses the interplay between Trump's personality, political opinion, and his unconventional approach to politics. Trump's disapproval of the Obama administration raised political tension between

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Trump and both Republicans and Democrats. The political dynamics that happened between the two parties resulted in a major transformation for the Democrats. Democrats react to Trump's personality and leadership by taking a strong stance towards Trump and the Republican Party.

Chapter 3 analyses Trump's foray into utilising media coverage and modern communication tools to maintain his persona and directly communicate his ideas to the public. Trump's reliance on social media, especially how he *tweets*, has caused a journalism crisis. The media was challenged because they had to keep up with Trump and other sources of information. According to the author, the most prominent issue is Trump's prevalence of "fake news" on various platforms, which has shaken people's trust in the media. The author believes that Trump's characters influence his public appearance as president.

Trump entered the White House amidst a polarised era, as the Republicans and Democratic parties showed perceptible delineation on their respective ideologies and policies. Chapter 4 examines Trump's political ventures that affected the dynamics of the government and its legislative productivity, such as the attempt to repeal President Obama's Affordable Care Act and the Government Shutdown policy. Chapter 4 also explains political polarisation related to Trump's controversial decisions. Finally, it unravels the Republican's internal struggle with the president in light of the 2019 and 2021 impeachments.

Chapter 5 discovers Trump's inexperience in federal government and politics in general, which affects his presidential style and its impact on the political process. Trump's background as a businessman and familiarity with TV reality shows supported his image-building and set his leadership style apart from his predecessors. The White House dynamics are depicted in the saga of Trump's closest advisors' selections and his political power's exertion.

The controversial decision about the appointment of three judges to the Supreme Court is the focus of Chapter 6. It reveals the controversy behind the judicial agenda of conservative values during the Trump presidency. Issues such as racial issues, women's rights, and reproductive rights once again become a discourse in the nation's political landscapes.

Although the Republican Party is his main supporter, Trump deviates from several conservative values, as explained in Chapter 7. One of the examples is the controversy surrounding trade and protectionism policies. Similar to Chapter 5, Chapter 7 elucidates Trump's leadership in altering the trajectory of American politics as well as the extent of the alignment of Trump's campaign pledges with the actual outcomes.

Chapter 8, the last chapter, illustrates individual actors' centrality in the international affairs' policy-making process, which started with the changes in the White House. From the withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement to the building of a wall on the Mexico border, the author shows the shifting of America's foreign policies from the

traditional conservative ideology to Trump's conservative view. It explains the backgrounds, motives, and mechanisms of each foreign policy change.

The book's eight chapters provide a comprehensive and lucid analysis of the "disruptions and their consequences" of Trump's presidential term. Although the primary focus of this book is to portray American politics, the book decently delivers the people's perspectives. For example, Chapter 1 reveals Trump's influence on public opinion, public trust, and public polarisation towards the administration (Eberly, 2022) and its subsequent ramifications on society. The book's strength resides in its thorough discussion of American politics.

Concerning international relations studies, the book successfully delivers the notion of the centrality of individual actors in foreign policymaking. In an established democracy, it is believed that the urgency of individuals as actors and the level of analysis in foreign policymaking is reduced due to the system that prioritises consensus or majority voices. Individual actors will act following the country's interests as set by the people's representatives in the legislative body. The book's articles, particularly Chapter 8, show that Trump's political beliefs are powerful enough to turn the tide of American policy and agenda both in domestic and international spheres. Sequentially, it influences global dynamics due to the US's position in global politics. The concept of individual centrality reintroduces behavioural analysis into the field of international relations. The book also raises additional queries, such as how much the supreme leader's policy decisions can deviate from the national values in a democratic setting. What variables support the individual actor's agency to set the goal of foreign policy?

As the book delves into American politics, it obliges the readers to be familiar with the US domestic political system and dynamics. Nevertheless, the dive into America's politics can also become the book's weakness, particularly for those at the beginner level of learning international politics. Moreover, redundancy on several topics can be quite disturbing. For example, American foreign policy is specified in Chapter 8 but also discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. At times, redundancy may confuse the reader about certain points of discussion.

Other writers have also covered Trump's administration and its effects on US foreign policy. This book stands on a different point of view from Gingrich's (2018) study, which delivers it from Trump's point of view and his version of Republican values. On the America First policy that revolves around the narrative of America's interests above everything else, Melvin Gurtov (2021a, 2021b) argues that Trump's idea has transformed American politics. It implicated both domestic and foreign policies.

As a compliment to this publication, on disruption and its consequences brought by the Trump administration, a book titled *"The Presidency of Donald J. Trump: A First Historical Assessment"* by Julian Zelizer (2022) is a good one. It narrates how the Republican Party, also known as the Grand Old Party (GOP), has changed over time and the reasoning behind some Republican presidents' actions that differ from traditional Republican values.

Despite its minor limitations, the book, which is priced at 32 USD for the paperback version, is a valuable resource to understand what was happening during the Trump administration and how it affected global politics through the changing of the domestic political realm.

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