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Critical Review

Sá, Tiago Moreira de; Soller, Diana (2018). *Donald Trump: O Método no Caos*. Alfragide: Publicações Dom Quixote, 227 pages

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A tale as old as time: A jacksonian in the White House

The American election of 2016 was mined with various atypical events. The first and most important was the victory of a candidate with outlandish promises and with a career which has nothing to do with politics but with business. Rather different from his opposition: the democrat candidate Hillary Clinton, whose politics was always the heart of her career, Donald Trump from the Republicans, a business man and self-made man had populist promises and difficult to make them happen – for instance building a wall in the Mexican border and make them pay for it.

It was with amazement that the US itself and the world received Trump victory in November of 2016. How had a demagog reached the White House? How the US, the land of freedom, let something like this happen? These were examples of the questions that insufflated the streets, the media and the voters. Instant testimonies of insiders – and in just a few months – hit the shelves. As the provocative FIRE AND FURY by Michael Wolff or even A HIGHER LOYALTY by James Comey ex FBI director fired by the president himself, Donald Trump. What was missing in the State of Art was understanding the figure Donald Trump and his actions – that many view as random and without foundation – and his political view, furthermore important than describe his *marvelous ventures* in DC. It is, in this context, and filling the gap, that *Donald Trump: O Método no Caos* by Tiago Moreira de Sá – Phd in History of the International Relations and specialist in US policy – and Diana Soller – Phd in International Studies and Fullbright scholarship – had been written. This book joins the tendency of explaining Trump's phenomena, while trying to keep an impartial and without a prejudice vision about it based on America's own social movements. One of the first Portuguese's books to be written about this theme and one of the most important for the national and international State of Art.

Trump's arrival

In order to understand Trump's rise, the book is divided in four chapters: The first one tries to comprehend: Why Trump?, while being spatially and temporally contextualized. The following chapters try to interpret it through an international relations vision while confronting it with its own limitations and regional dynamics.

The authors start by asking three key questions that will lead the entire book. They are the following:

How is Donald Trump – who questions the national foundation history – widely accepted by the American electorate?

How was it possible to deviled Trump's figure by the media and the electorate instead of trying to understand why?

How is it possible to be astonished by calling his victory "unforeseeable"?

Following these questions, the authors will start by meeting the bias created by the media and by the society, while discussing them. The main bookr's thesis focuses on the possibility of considering Trump as an expectable and methodical candidate. Only then it is possible to determine that there were conjectural and structural conditions to his election.

If some claim that the US does not have a president as reference for the free world and an essential nation for themes like multilateralism and international organizations anymore, *Donald Trump: O Método no Caos* starts by determining when did the US have started to be seen like that and how it was not always this way. Furthermore, it tries to comprehend the jacksonian populism, which is theoretically supported by Donald Trump, by emphasizing questions like the crisis's context, which is always defined – identitarian, social and economic – combined with tales of a glorious past that never existed. Patent exposure, as the authors refer to it, in the inaugural speech of presidency's acceptation as well as the dominance of Trump's rhetoric, *make America great again*. Besides that, in the first chapter, the authors highlight once again how the American society is founded on a civic mythology – as it is as well referred by other authors like Adam Smith in *National Identity* – however they focus this topic when it is combined with the jacksonian principles (honor, equality, individualism, financial spirit, courage and perseverance, nationalism and the inferiority complex). This fact allows us to foresee some of the rhetoric of the actual president of the United States, by either the individualism or the overlapping of the economical or financial side relatively to the humanitarian causes. This way, the authors propose to comprehend Trump not only through the significant part of the population whose follows the jacksonian principles but as well through the folk community.

For Moreira de Sá and Soller the folk community is the core for Trump's victory. This community had the reasons to welcome the republican candidate with open arms – were the reasons: geographic isolation, poor purchasing power and social repression. Donald Trump was the uppermost self-made man, a true American. Someone who the ideals were stole by the Obama Administration, that started to use the state as an interventionist figure and prioritized social issues and the minorities.

Donald Trump: O Método no Caos argues also that the crisis in the republican party was propitious to a candidate like Trump. The "inexistence of a coherent narrative" post

Ronald Reagan, the George W. Bush's legacy and Obama's victory left the Republican Party shattered and without an aim, with the dilemma of condone with Trump and "bite the bullet" or "report the president as a fake republican" these are the reasons that the authors point out for Trump's emerge inside his party and from the various candidates.

According to Moreira de Sá and Soller these were the motives, so Trump was able to have electoral success in 2016, i.e, the re-trend of folk, political crisis, economic and identarian.

Trump and the international dynamics

In the area of foreign policy and relations with the other countries, the authors choose to split in two parts: On the one hand, the theory for Trump's vision and on the other hand, an analysis of Trump clashing with Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

They start emphasizing what media were preaching, the Trump Administration would be unpredictable. With that, and as something essential to deconstruct Trump's thinking, the authors point out the motive of this perception. The instability of the staff of the White House and the roll of dismissals of the Trump Administration plus the set of President's ideas, create the impression of a lack of ideologic aim. Which the authors indorse to be not true.

Regarding the foreign policy Moreira de Sá and Soller defend that Trump has been stepping aside from Obama's international strategy and has been trying to create something new, underlining that the classic strategies were outdated, a jacksonian foreign policy. This jacksonian realism with a "pessimist, protectionist" tendency and with the flag of economic efficiency leads to a pragmatic vision of the relations the US-World. That vision, according to the authors, made the world saw a radical change in the US which abandon some of the principles by which they were a symbol (internationalism, liberalism, democratic obligations in the world).

Furthermore, carve 4 points in which Trump as its Foreign Policy shaped: 1) It must bring economic-social advantages to the US; 2) Make the US a Commercial Republic again; 3) Face China and Russia; 4) Isolation from the Axis of Evil, Iran and North Korea.

After the analysis of the objectives of Trump Administration, as well as its jacksonian policy, Moreira de Sá and Soller defend that Trump is a revisionist president. For the current president the US decay started as the US intervened in the in international order in the 1940s. Make the "America First "a banner of his policy, essential to understanding his persona and to style a policy for his Administration. To sum up, the US don't resign their position in the world, just transfer it from another political realm.

Conclusion

O Método no Caos is out-of-the-box, since it has a comprehensive reading and theory base which provides to Trump and his Administration a framework. The historic framework gives a possibility to draw a plan of what had leaded to the election of a candidate which had populist and jacksonians traits but also offers a wide vision of how the American society has received this phenomenon.

Of what concerns its silences, one can highlight the lack of: Trump and NAFTA partners relation, specifically the question of Mexico and Canada. And also, the regional dynamics which he would change – or try to – in North America, particularly in the southern border of the US with Mexico. Could also have been a mention to the relation US- Latin America as a whole, since the Cuba's issue is still on the table after the progress with Obama Administration. And also, to the relation with South America as economic partner or even the drug war on Colombia, in which the US have a vital role.

To sum up, an elemental book to understand one of the biggest events of the American politics in the second decade of 21th Century, within bounds in theory and a pragmatic vision of the world.

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