

Abstracts

Characteristics, Causes, and Responses to Africa's "Youthquake" Phenomenon

Li Yujie

Abstract: Africa has the youngest population of any continent. The rapidly developing African youth are leading a transformative period and have significant calls for changing the existing situation. Africa is undergoing a youthquake and gaining increased worldwide focus. Africa's youthquake emphasizes the fundamental issues faced by young individuals. They aim to elevate their living standards through quality and adequate jobs, boost their economic participation by acquiring quality skills training, and address concerns about democracy and corruption by enhancing governance. African youth are deeply affected by the political and economic structural difficulties of African countries, as well as popular culture, international forces, social media, and other factors. These internal and external factors interact to shape their unique mindsets and behaviors. The unique nature of Africa's youthquake that distinguishes it from different parts of the world lies in the structural rift between a precocious superstructure and a lagging economic base. Powered by social media, African youth have acutely experienced the multiple disparities this rift brings, leading to dashed expectations and the ignition of street protests. The unique nature of this youthquake also complicates responses, requiring both the African continent to play a leading role in governance and the concerted support of countries from both the Global North and the Global South. Notably, cooperation led by China with the Global South aligns well with Africa's specific needs, empowering its youth. This partnership might enable Africa to effectively leverage the youthquake and achieve the demographic dividend, and significantly enhance the inherent driving force behind Africa's future development.

Key words: African youth; "Generation Z"; youthquake; youth bulge; China – Africa youth cooperation

The Dilemma of the Middle East under the Western Hegemonic System and Its Options

Tian Wenlin

Abstract: At present, the world is facing the major challenges of the "four major

deficits” of governance deficit, trust deficit, peace deficit and development deficit. The Middle East region is characterized by “security deficits” and “development deficits”, resulting in the so – called “Middle East dilemma”. The main source of this phenomenon is the hegemonic interference of the West. The “divide and rule” policy of the European colonizers led to the fragmentation of the geopolitical map of the Middle East and sowed the roots of turmoil in the Middle East; after the Cold War, the United States pursued unilateralism and hegemony in the Middle East, activating and exacerbating various contradictions in the region, leading to a prominent “security deficit” in the Middle East. The “security deficit” and “development deficit” in the Middle East are mutually reinforcing, jointly leading to the “difficulties of the Middle East”. First, Geo – fragmentation has limited the development potential and regional cooperation potential of the Middle East countries; second, the Middle East region’s powerful countries compete for hegemony, resulting in overdraft of their own strength; third, the regional situation is turbulent, leading to the Middle East countries competing in the arms race, which leads to a serious shortage of development inputs. In order to get rid of the “Middle East dilemma”, Middle East countries must, first, oppose hegemony and enhance their strategic autonomy; second, strengthen the solidarity of the countries of the region and break the “security deficit” through the collective security mechanism; and, third, take a path of development that is consistent with their national conditions.

Key words: regional governance; Middle East dilemma; hegemonic interference; security deficit; development deficit

The Origins, Practice and Dilemmas of Anti – Westernism in Iran

Xu Zhangyi & Liao Bo

Abstract: Iran’s anti – Westernism in essence epitomizes how countries of the Global South defend their cultural sovereignty and developmental autonomy in the process of modernization. As a school of thought, anti – Westernism can be traced

back to the 19th – century reform movements. Early intellectuals advocated resisting Westernization via revival of philosophy and reinforcement of national spirit. During the Cold War, the anti – Westernization sentiment evolved into a critique of dependency theory. Ultimately, through the “war of position” led by figures like Khomeini, anti – Westernization in Iran transformed into a revolutionary ideology which led to the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime. After the Islamic Revolution, Iran institutionalized its anti – Western narratives through a three – pronged approach: establishing a political censorship system to monitor both civil and political societies, implementing a “resistance economy”, and utilizing propaganda apparatus and religious education to shape symbolic power in the cultural sphere. In spite of achieving certain results and defending cultural sovereignty, Iran’s anti – Western measures are faced with structural challenges. Political control leads to social suppression and brain drain; livelihood hardships weaken symbolic power; generational shifts alienate young people from official narratives; and external pressures intensify ideological contradictions. The fundamental dilemma of Iran’s anti – Western path lies in the fact that, although its resilience stems from its linkage with national dignity, its legitimacy depends increasingly on economic inclusivity and governance efficacy. The Iranian case suggests that for the Global South to achieve cultural leaderships that are durable and stable, there must be transcendence of the Westernization versus anti – Westernization dualism. This requires the concept of modernity which integrates subjectivity with developmental effectiveness founded upon good governance and internal reforms.

Key words: cultural sovereignty; Iran; anti – Westernism; cultural hegemony; cultural leadership; modernization

Setbacks in Iran’s Resistance Strategy and Their Impact on the Middle East Regional Order

Jin Liangxiang

Abstract: The setback in Iran’s resistance strategy is one of the most significant

spillover effects of the new round of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. Iran’s resistance strategy is fundamentally based on maintaining national security rather than exporting revolutionary ideology, adopting a defensive posture rather than offensive stance, using anti – American and anti – Israeli stances as a unifying force, and employing missile deterrence as a key tool. Following the outbreak of the new round of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict in 2023, Iran and its resistance front suffered military strikes from Israel and the United States, resulting in a major setback for its resistance strategy. This was mainly manifested in the severe damage to the resistance network, a significant weakening of its domestic foundation, and a severe compression of its strategic space. The reasons for this setback are threefold: first, Iran’s economic strength is insufficient to support its vast resistance strategic network; second, domestic political maneuvering leads to its wavering between resistance and de – escalation, preventing it from fully implementing its deterrence strategy; and third, the long – term weakening efforts of the US and Israel, along with their repeated breaches of moral boundaries, have given them the upper hand. This setback will have many profound impacts on the regional order: first, it will lead to a new round of regional power fragmentation and reorganization; second, it will further undermine regional rules and norms; and third, the regional agenda structure will undergo new adjustments. The resistance strategy is a crucial component of Iran’s national security strategy, and its setback could intensify to a severe systematic political and security crisis in Iran. If such a scenario occurs, the geopolitical landscape of West Asia and Central Asia could become even more complex.

Key words: Iran’s geostrategy; the Shiite Crescent; the new round of Palestinian – Israeli conflict; the Middle East regional order; deterrence theory

The Deep Logic and Essence of U. S. Aid to the Middle East: A Case Study of the Rockefeller Foundation’s Funding Projects in Türkiye

Li Bingzhong & Liu Jiang

Abstract: Foundations have been important tools for the United States to expand its

influence globally, among which, the Rockefeller Foundation has played a significant role in helping the United States establish global hegemony. Behind its powerful capacity for cultural penetration lies its deep promotion for Western civilization along with a clear demarcation between “highlands” and “lowlands” of civilizations. From the 1920s to the 1960s, the logic behind the Rockefeller Foundation’s funding of projects related to Türkiye was based on the belief that shaping a Türkiye loyal to the West requires a complete understanding of Turkish culture, especially Islam. The fundamental strategy for change was to promote the American way of life and values, primarily by funding the “creative minority”, in the hope of making the key minority become the leaders who could guide the “impregnable majority”. Rooted in the belief of “superiority of Western civilizations”, in the name of civilization, it aimed at the cultural transformation. The ultimate goal of the Rockefeller Foundation is to solidify Türkiye’s Westernized development path, consolidate its loyalty to the United States and its allies, and ultimately safeguard the global hegemonic interests of the United States. Since the funding direction of the Rockefeller Foundation largely aligned with the established development path of Türkiye, its efforts achieved certain degree of success. However, the diversity and traditions of Middle Eastern civilizations have a profound social foundation, which means that Türkiye’s modernization must be based on its own traditions. This, at the deep level, determines the limitations and short – lived nature of the Türkiye projects funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Key words: international aid; Rockefeller Foundation of the United States; Türkiye projects; social science; humanities; “Theory of Civilizational Superiority”; path to modernization

**Formation of Desires, Activation of Beliefs and Engagement with Opportunities:
An Analysis of the Behavioral Mechanisms of Qatar’s Foreign Aid**

Li Yi & Zheng Zhaochen

Abstract: Foreign aid serves as a crucial instrument within Qatar’s diplomatic

policy toolkit. While existing scholarship predominantly analyzes the motivations behind Qatar's foreign aid through descriptive policy examinations, this study employs the "Desires – Beliefs – Opportunities" (DBO) theory to interpret Qatar's foreign aid strategies. The DBO framework conceptualizes the state as a unitary, bounded rational, and self – interested actor, positing that national behavior is driven by the dynamic interaction of three core variables—desires, beliefs, and opportunities. It contends that Qatar's foreign aid constitutes a rationally self – interested strategy shaped collectively by these variables. At the level of desires, Qatar deploys foreign aid to protect practical interests such as national security and economic development, countering geopolitical challenges while advancing economic diversification. In terms of beliefs, to expand regional influence and navigate strategic competition among external powers, Qatar capitalizes on its hydrocarbon wealth and diplomatic heritage to cultivate an independent foreign policy space. Regarding opportunities, Qatar seizes changes in aid demands, actively participating in international aid cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations, aiming to enhance its international prestige and status. Qatar's foreign aid is characterized by distinct features and notable efficacy. This strategic deployment of aid has successfully cultivated a favorable international image for the state and advanced its national interests within complex geopolitical competitions. Concurrently, it has pioneered a novel aid paradigm that emphasizes South – South mutual trust and community resilience, signaling the emergence of a more multipolar global aid ecosystem. Although it has brought increased influence to developing countries, its limitations and challenges are also undeniable.

Key words: international relations in the Middle East; foreign aid; Qatar; DBO theory; behavioral mechanism

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