

Egypt's Cognition of the "Belt and Road" Initiative from the Perspective of Cognitive Psychology

Shiwu Liu

(School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, 200083, China)

Abstract: The "Belt and Road" initiative is a foreign cooperation initiative proposed and actively promoted by China in 2013. Its purpose is to promote the formation of a community of responsibilities, interests, and destiny among countries along the route by building mutually trusting economic and trade relations under the background of a new type of globalization. The Middle East is an important region for the "Belt and Road" initiative, and its attitudes and policies are crucial to the smooth progress of the "Belt and Road" initiative. There are many countries in the Middle East, and their national conditions are also different. It is not realistic to study one by one. Therefore, this article attempts to start from the representative and overall significance of regional powers to study their perceptions of the "Belt and Road" initiative. This article takes Egypt, a major country in the Middle East, as the main research object to study its perception of the "Belt and Road" initiative. This article applies the theoretical methods of cognitive psychology to Egypt for case analysis. First, this article divides the subject of cognition into three levels: political, academic, and non-governmental; In the end, this article proposes countermeasures to deepen the benign cognition based on Egypt's cognition of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

Keywords: Egypt; Belt and Road; Cognition

DOI: 10.12346/ems.v2i3.3366

Author Introduction: Shiwu Liu, In January 1992, Male, Han, Shangqiu City, Henan Province, PhD candidate in 2018, Engaged in One Belt And One Road research.

Project: The 3rd Academic Leading Program of Shanghai International Studies University "Collaborative Research on De-radicalization between China and Organization of Islamic Cooperation".

1. Egypt's Status and Role in the "Belt and Road" Initiative

1.1 Link between China and the Arab World

Egypt and China share common interests in the Arab world, which is the basis for Egypt-China cooperation. Egypt has close cooperation with Arab countries and has held many meetings in the League of Arab States, emphasizing the importance of strengthening relations with China to leaders of Arab countries. Egypt is the forerunner in the establishment of friendly relations between the Arab world and China. It is the first Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with China. Following Egypt's establishment of diplomatic relations with China are Oman, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Palestine and Saudi Arabia, highlighting Egypt's

role in Arabic World leadership.

In the cooperation between China and the Arab world, the "1 + 2 + 3" Sino-Arab cooperation model has laid the foundation for bilateral cooperation. The number "1" represents the leading sector of energy cooperation. That is, cooperating to produce more oil and natural gas will help China and Arab countries ensure the safety of oil and gas transportation and carry out long-term cooperation in energy. The number "2" refers to the two wings of trade and investment, and is the two pillars of infrastructure development. In the above two areas, China and Egypt have conducted in-depth cooperation. Although most of China-Egypt cooperation projects are initiated by the government, most of them are implemented by ordinary people, which protects the interests of the people.

The number "3" refers to the three new areas of cooperation in new energy such as nuclear energy, sat-

ellites, and solar energy. These three areas are likely to become important areas of cooperation for strengthening the relationship between China and Arab countries and realizing strategic mutual trust. The “Belt and Road” initiative provides a variety of new platforms for the economic development of the countries along the route, and has brought many benefits to the economic development of the countries along the route. Egypt uses its huge influence in the Arab world to play an important role for China to promote the “1 + 2 + 3” Sino-Arab cooperation model in the region. Egypt is a leader in the Arab world, plays an important role in 22 Arab countries, and has abundant human resources in the Arab world. Egypt has an excellent education system and a developed culture that affects neighboring countries. It is one of the countries with the strongest hard and soft power in the region.

China needs to cooperate with the League of Arab States through Egypt. The Arab League is headquartered in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, and its secretary-general is mostly Egyptian (7 out of 8 are Egyptians and the other is Tunisian), which highlights Egypt’s prominent position in the organization. In addition, the initiator of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum is Egypt. China can use the two platforms of the Arab League and the China-Arab Cooperation Forum to establish cooperative relations with the Arab world. Through joint efforts, Egypt and China can cooperate in the Arab world on the principle of equality and mutual benefit.

The Arab world has vast land, human resources and a huge market. The total area of Arab countries is 14.26 million square kilometers, accounting for 9.5% of the world’s land area. As of May 2018, the Arab world accounts for 5% of the world’s population and is the region with the fastest population growth. Egypt has a population of 100 million, of which young people (0-30 years old) account for 60-70%. Due to its large population, Egypt is the largest consumer market for commodities in the Arab world. Egypt and China have maintained friendly relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956 and have become China’s important partners in promoting the construction of the “Belt and Road” in the Arab world.

1.2 Link between China and Africa

Through the “Belt and Road” initiative, China and Egypt are jointly assisting the development of Africa for common interests. Egypt is world-famous for the Nile River, which connects Egypt with ten other countries in Africa, making Egypt the northern gate of Africa. China is opening a number of factories in Africa, and the Nile

River is a key transportation point for China Railway Express and other African countries to enter China. Egypt’s total population ranks third on the African continent, second only to Nigeria and Ethiopia, and its GDP ranks first in Africa.

After the Mubarak era, African countries have played an important role in Egypt’s foreign policy. President Sisi visited many African countries and attended a series of conferences on the theme of “Let Africa Unite”. The most important of these is the 2015 Climate Change Summit in France, led by Egypt. In 2015, Egypt hosted three important economic summits of the East African Community, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa, and the Southern African Development Community. During the summit, 26 African countries signed a free trade agreement called the “Tripartite Free Trade Area”. After Sisi came to power, he vigorously carried out economic reforms and gradually walked out of the haze of the “Middle East Upheaval” in 2011. In 2017, GDP data confirmed Egypt’s leading position in Africa. South Africa’s GDP was US\$344 billion, Angola’s US\$124 billion, Ethiopia’s US\$80 billion, and Egypt’s GDP was US\$349 billion. South Africa’s Rand Commercial Bank released the “List of the Most Attractive African Countries for Investors in 2019”^[1]. Evaluated the business environment of Egypt, and Egypt has become the country with the best business environment in Africa. A survey conducted by Gallup using security indexes such as law and order as a measurement standard shows that Egypt ranks 16th in the world, even higher than the United Kingdom and the United States (21 and 35 respectively), and ranks first in African countries. Egypt’s GDP growth and the biggest factor in attracting foreign investment over South Africa is that investors are becoming more aware of Egypt’s gradual social stability since 2011. Another important factor is Egypt’s promulgation of new laws and policies on foreign investment. Provides many conveniences for investors.

1.3 Link between China and the Mediterranean Countries

Egypt has been connected to European countries since ancient times. During the Mubarak era, Egypt’s foreign policy began to focus on the Mediterranean region. One example is the Pope’s visit to Egypt from April 28 to 29, 2017. This diplomatic visit also symbolized peace between the Islamic and Christian communities. Egypt’s policy towards the Mediterranean is mainly focused on newly discovered oil and gas resources in the region. A large natural gas field called “Aphrodite” between Egypt

and Cyprus has produced 5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and Egypt, Greece and Cyprus have signed an agreement to delimit the border. In 2015, the largest natural gas field in the Mediterranean Sea was discovered in Egypt's offshore area. The Zohr gas field covers an area of about 100 square kilometers and has a potential reserve of 850 billion cubic meters ^[2]. With this discovery, the Eastern Mediterranean has become a strategic location for Egypt, and Egypt's foreign policy has begun to pay attention to this area. In addition, an as yet unnamed organization is formed by Mediterranean countries surrounding natural gas fields and is cooperating to export natural gas to European countries. Egypt can provide the organization with expertise from its experience in exporting natural gas to Israel and Jordan. In addition, these natural gas fields can attract China to cooperate with Egypt and Mediterranean countries.

Egypt has been linked to European countries since ancient times. During the Mubarak era, Egypt's foreign policy began to focus on the Mediterranean. One example is the Pope's visit to Egypt from 28 to 29 April 2017. The diplomatic visit also symbolized peace between the Islamic and Christian communities. Egypt's policy towards the Mediterranean has focused on newly discovered oil and gas resources in the region. A large gas field called Aphrodite (Aphrodite) between Egypt and Cyprus has produced 5 trillion cubic feet of gas, and Egypt, Greece and Cyprus have signed an agreement to delimit the border. Egypt's offshore region discovered the largest gas field in the Mediterranean so far, known as Zohr, which covers about 100 square kilometers and has potential reserves of 850 billion cubic meters ^[2]. With this discovery, the eastern Mediterranean became Egypt's strategic location, and Egypt's foreign policy began to focus on the region. In addition, an unnamed organization is composed of Mediterranean countries around gas fields and is cooperating to export natural gas to European countries. Egypt could provide expertise to the organization from its experience in exporting natural gas to Israel and Jordan. In addition, these natural gas fields can attract China to cooperate with Egypt and Mediterranean countries.

Egypt and the Mediterranean countries have also established military cooperation. In July 2015, the Egyptian military issued a statement stating that it had received the first batch of three Rafale fighter jets and a multi-purpose frigate purchased from France. Military experts believed that this would greatly promote the combat capability of the Egyptian armed forces ^[3]. At the Egyptian Economic Development Conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh in

March 2015, Egypt and Germany signed a number of economic agreements and reached a power generation agreement with Siemens.

President Sisi attaches great importance to the development of relations with Mediterranean countries. In terms of counter-terrorism, in 2016, the Egyptian Security Minister proposed a security agreement to Germany, which was accepted and signed by Germany on April 28, 2017. This agreement covers many areas, including cooperation between Egypt and Germany to cut off terrorist funding sources and intelligence sharing. Germany considers Egypt to be its biggest partner in combating extremism in the Middle East, especially Al-Azhar's International Counter-Terrorism Institute.^[4]

European countries believe that the stability of the Middle East has an important impact on its economic, political and overall stability. For example, the flow of refugees has had a negative impact on the economy and stability of Europe. Due to its special geographical location, Egypt has become an important factor influencing the flow of refugees. Refugees from Ethiopia, Sudan or other parts of Africa, refugees from the Mediterranean to Europe, have to pass through Egypt. President Sisi started discussions with European countries on the issue of refugee flows and studied solutions.

France, Turkey, Italy and Egypt are military powers in the Mediterranean region. China can ensure the safe advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative through cooperation with regional powers. Egypt has a strong military force in the Mediterranean region, which can create a safe external environment for the advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative in the region.

In addition, the "One Belt, One Road" initiative not only includes economic cooperation, but also civil and cultural exchanges. Egypt has had civilizational interactions with Europe for thousands of years, and its cultural ties with European countries have become even closer. China can take advantage of Egypt's role as a bridge to further develop cultural exchanges and cooperation with Europe. In addition, China can build Confucius Institutes in countries along the "Belt and Road" to spread Chinese language and culture.

2. Egypt's Perception of the "Belt and Road" Initiative

Cognition is the basic knowledge, opinions, and conclusions that people get after observing things. When extended to the field of international relations, it refers to the views, positioning, and strategies among international

relations actors. Cognition can also be the construction of international relations actors to influence other actors' perceptions and cognition of themselves. Cognition belongs to the category of ideas and consciousness in the field of international relations, and occupies a subordinate position in traditional international relations.

Cognitive science is a science that studies the formation and transcription of information. The main research fields include psychology, neurology, linguistics, philosophy, etc. This article mainly uses cognitive psychology to conduct a systematic study on the cognition of the "Belt and Road" initiative in the Middle East countries, supplementing the deficiencies of traditional international relations research. The book "Cognitive Psychology" by American scholar Best gives a brief introduction to the research methods of cognitive psychology, and provides theoretical and methodological guidance on the psychological level for cognitive research.

The cognitive psychology school believes that the human brain is similar to a computer, and both are an information processing system. Although the human brain structure is different from the computer's hardware, the computer's operating system can be compared with the human cognitive process. The computer accepts symbol input and encodes, and then organizes and processes the encoding to output the symbol. This kind of information processing system can be compared to humans. After receiving information, people store and memorize the information, and then output the information after analysis.

As far as Egypt's perception of the "Belt and Road" initiative is concerned, it is difficult to analyze the cognition of diplomatic decision-makers. They can only draw conclusions from the research methods of cognitive psychology and draw conclusions through the analysis of the appearance and the information of the relationship between the two parties. From the perspective of information input, it is possible to analyze the cross-border flow of commodities, materials, etc., and the level and frequency of exchange visits by top leaders; from the perspective of information processing, it can be recognized from the memoirs, diaries, and notes of diplomats and decision makers. Analyze the process of knowledge formation; from the perspective of information output, it can be analyzed in terms of agreements, diplomatic declarations, and leaders' speeches.

Egypt's cognition of the "Belt and Road" initiative can be fully linked to the cognition of cognitive psychology, and learn from the research methods of cognitive psychology to analyze the relationship between the cognitive

behavior subject itself and the behavior subject. The traditional theory of international relations focuses on the material aspect, and the research object of this thesis-Egypt's cognition of the "Belt and Road" initiative must first be based on the existing theoretical results. On this basis, it is undoubtedly of pioneering significance to introduce the basic views and methods of cognitive psychology into Egypt's research on the "Belt and Road" initiative.

Cognitive psychology of international politics believes that individuals are important factors in a country's foreign behavior and foreign policy formulation. As a rational actor, the individual is affected by cognitive ability and environment. The status of the individual in the study of international relations can be studied using the analytic hierarchy process. The study of Egypt's cognition of the "Belt and Road" initiative can be conducted from three levels: politics, academia, and non-governmental.

The political level can analyze the official views on the initiative, and leaders and government officials are important reference factors for the generation of cognition. The academic level surpasses most ordinary people in society in terms of material and spiritual abilities, and plays an important role in promoting the development of society. The academic level generally has a high level of education, relatively rich experience, and even directly participates in national decision-making. It has a prominent influence on national affairs and has an important impact on the country's awareness of the "Belt and Road" initiative. The non-governmental level can start from the individual consciousness of the people and analyze the characteristics of cognition more intuitively. As a representative of public opinion, the non-governmental level can also examine the extent and depth of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

2.1 Egyptian Political Circles' Perception of the "Belt and Road" Initiative

Soon after China announced the "Belt and Road" initiative, it was welcomed by Egypt. Egyptian political circles generally welcome and support the "Belt and Road" initiative. This article intends to analyze their perceptions with the Egyptian president, prime minister, ministers, Egyptian ambassador to China, and supervisors of the Suez Canal Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone as political representatives.

First, Egyptian President Sisi has an active support for the "Belt and Road" initiative.

In 2014, Egyptian President Sisi announced his support for China's "One Belt One Road" initiative before his first visit to China. Before his first official visit to Egypt,

President Xi Jinping said that China's "Belt and Road" initiative is an opportunity for China-Egypt cooperation, and he hopes Egypt will actively participate ^[5].

In January 2016, President Xi Jinping visited Egypt. The two sides signed the Five-Year Implementation Outline on Strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Arab Republic of Egypt, covering political, economic and trade, military, security, energy, and oil and gas industry cooperation. After 10 major projects with 80 sub-items, detailed arrangements have been made for the development of China and Egypt in the next five years.

In September 2017, the BRICS Summit was held in Xiamen. During the talks between the Chinese President and Egyptian President Sisi, Sisi said that Egypt and China should strengthen the alignment of development strategies and increase investment, infrastructure and other fields with China. Cooperation and expressed Egypt's support for the "Belt and Road" construction ^[6].

In September 2017, Xi Jinping welcomed Sisi to China to attend the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese War and the World Anti-Fascist War. President Xi pointed out that the China-Egypt strategic partnership continues to develop, and the areas of cooperation between the two countries have also continued to expand. They have similar positions on international and regional affairs. He also said that in the next phase, China and Egypt should strengthen high-level interactions and strengthen infrastructure construction, security and cooperation. Production capacity cooperation, jointly maintains international security and promote common development under the framework of the United Nations. Sisi said that Egypt attaches great importance to the comprehensive strategic partnership with China and hopes to strengthen cooperation with China and actively participate in the construction of the "Belt and Road" ^[7].

On November 8, 2017, Egyptian President Sisi said at a press conference of the World Youth Forum held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt that China and Egypt are important partners, and the two sides have carried out extensive activities under the "Belt and Road" initiative. Cooperation. Sisi said that the bipolar situation has passed, and what the world needs is a broad and balanced cooperative relationship. Sisi pointed out that the Suez Canal Economic Zone and the promulgation of Egypt's "Investment Law" have improved the investment environment in Egypt, and he hopes that Chinese companies will invest in Egypt. The economic and trade cooperation between Egypt and China, focusing on the textile industry and

renewable energy, has promoted the "Belt and Road" initiative and at the same time improved the trading status of the Suez Canal ^[8].

In September 2018, Egyptian President Sisi attended the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing and held talks with President Xi Jinping. Sisi said that Egypt and China maintain traditional friendship and a high degree of political mutual trust, and both sides have similar positions on regional and international issues. Egypt is one of the first countries to support the "Belt and Road" initiative and firmly believes that this initiative will bring major opportunities for Egypt-China cooperation. As the next rotating chairman of the African Union, Egypt will continue to promote cooperation between African countries and China. The most important issue for African countries at the moment is development. The "Belt and Road" initiative is conducive to the economic development of African countries. The convening of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum shows that China attaches great importance to Africa, and Egypt supports cooperation between Africa and China ^[9].

On March 25, 2019, Egyptian President Sisi met with Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe in Cairo. Sisi said that Egypt firmly supports the "Belt and Road" initiative and hopes to strengthen cooperation with China in infrastructure investment and construction, and looks forward to further cooperation between China and Egypt in the field of defense. Sisi highly praised the "active and strategic" cooperative relationship between the two countries. President Sisi stated that the "Belt and Road" initiative is conducive to Egypt's attraction of foreign investment and is of great significance to major projects such as the construction of the Suez Canal Economic Zone, the Red Sea and the new Mediterranean port ^[10].

On April 26, 2019, Egyptian President Sisi attended the opening ceremony of the second "Belt and Road" International Cooperation Summit and stated that Egypt's participation in the "Belt and Road" initiative will enable the Suez Canal Economic Zone to develop into an important logistics and trade center. Infrastructure construction is an area of common concern for Egypt's "Vision 2030" and the "One Belt and One Road" initiative. Joining this initiative is conducive to promoting the economic development of Egypt ^[11].

Second, the Egyptian prime minister, ministers and Egyptian ambassador to China also support the "Belt and Road" initiative.

The Egyptian government recognized the signifi-

cance of the “One Belt One Road” initiative and established a Chinese Affairs Group headed by the Prime Minister. The former Prime Minister of Egypt said that the “Belt and Road” initiative can unite China and the vast number of developing countries in Africa to achieve common development. The Egyptian ambassador to China stated that the “One Belt, One Road” strategic initiative has brought opportunities to Egypt^[12].

On May 11, 2017, on the eve of the “Belt and Road” International Cooperation Summit Forum, Egyptian Ambassador to China Mohamed Magdubu stated that the “Belt and Road” initiative is highly compatible with Egypt’s “2030 Vision”. The main focus of the “Belt and Road” initiative is infrastructure construction, including the construction of roads, bridges, ports and other transportation routes. Egypt is also carrying out infrastructure construction in an all-round way. The strategies of the two sides are very compatible^[13].

In July 2018, during the 8th “China-Arab Cooperation Forum” meeting, Egyptian Foreign Minister Samiha Shukri stated that the China-Arab Cooperation Forum is an important exchange platform between China, Egypt and Arab countries. “Egypt and China have a solid foundation for cooperation.” These foundations are based on mutual understanding. The leaders of both sides have expressed their political will to continue deepening cooperation in political, economic, social, cultural and other fields^[14].

On April 22, 2019, Azat Saiad, the executive chairman of the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Commission, was a famous politician and diplomat in Egypt. He was the Egyptian ambassador to the Soviet Union and the head of the Egyptian delegation of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. He believes that the main goal of the “Belt and Road” initiative is to narrow the development gap between developing countries and developed countries, and it is also conducive to improving China’s international status^[15].

On May 5, 2019, former Egyptian Prime Minister Issam Sharaf believed that the “Belt and Road” initiative is a grand project that promotes global harmony and common development. Currently, more than 150 countries and international organizations have joined the initiative. The “Belt and Road” initiative has been widely recognized by the international community and has formed a good atmosphere for the joint construction of the “Belt and Road”^[16].

Third, the executives of the Suez Canal Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, the flagship project of China-Egypt cooperation, also strongly support the advancement of the “Belt and Road” initiative in Egypt.

On May 3, 2017, Nasser Foed, secretary-general of

the Egyptian Suez Canal Management Board, stated that the Suez Canal Economic and Trade Zone is not only a pillar of Egypt’s economic development, but also a model of China-Egypt cooperation. The Suez Canal connects the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe and has an advantageous geographical location. The Suez Canal Economic Zone is an important development project in Egypt and has a good potential for docking with the “Belt and Road” initiative^[17].

On March 20, 2019, Egyptian Planning Minister Hara Said stated that the Suez Canal Economic and Trade Zone in Egypt can continue to integrate with the “Belt and Road” initiative to promote connectivity and international trade between the two sides. After a long period of construction, the Suez Canal Economic and Trade Zone will develop into an important global logistics center and promote the economic development of Egypt.

2.2 Egyptian Academic Circles’ Cognition of the “Belt and Road” Initiative

The Egyptian academic circles mostly approve and support the “Belt and Road” initiative, and only some scholars expressed concern about the problems arising from the “Belt and Road” initiative in Egypt, but they did not criticize the initiative. This article attempts to explore the understanding of the “Belt and Road” initiative in Egypt by academics from universities and think tanks.

First, Egyptian scholars recognize the “Belt and Road” from the perspective of globalization and the “Belt and Road” initiative to promote global economic development. The concept of the “Belt and Road” initiative is “consultation, co-construction, and sharing”. In the process of promoting the “Belt and Road” initiative, no country will be excluded, and the national interests of all countries will be fully respected, and jointly create a “community of interests” and a “community of responsibility”.

Ambassador Ezzat Saad, Director of the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Commission, believes that the links between Asia and Europe established under the framework of the “Belt and Road” initiative will not only benefit China, but also make it within the framework of the initiative. All countries benefited. He viewed the “Belt and Road” initiative from both domestic and foreign perspectives: from a domestic perspective, the initiative is related to China’s desire to develop impoverished western regions and connect the region with neighboring countries; from an international perspective, the initiative’s The initiation is related to the following factors, such as strengthening the vitality of global economic development, narrowing

the gap between developed and developing countries, promoting the development of globalization, and forming a sound global governance system^[18].

Dr. Mohamed Faz Farahart, director of the Pyramid Politics and Strategic Research Center, believes that, contrary to a series of “anti-globalization” practices such as the withdrawal of the TPP and the Paris climate agreement by the United States, China has adopted a regional comprehensive economic partnership agreement. RCEP deepens the integration between Asia-Pacific countries. “We are in a new stage of transition from a globalization with American and Western characteristics to a globalization with Chinese characteristics.”^[19] He believes that the “Belt and Road” initiative is to reshape the phenomenon of economic globalization from two aspects: First, China has deepened its relationship with about 64 countries along the route (With a total population of 4.4 billion), the relationship between production, manufacturing, investment, and trade ensures that China is transformed into an important center of globalization. The second is to redefine globalization, starting with a shift from “commercial globalization” based on trade and capital flows to “development globalization” that emphasizes development. Secondly, through the infrastructure construction projects in the initiative, globalization will shift from being biased towards Western industrialized countries to be biased towards developing countries^[20].

Ibrahim Huytani, chief researcher of the Egyptian Regional Strategic Research Center, said that the “Belt and Road” initiative advocated by China not only promotes regional economic development, but is also an important driving force for global economic development. Driven by the “Belt and Road” initiative, all countries are promoting investment and trade facilitation, strengthening cooperation in production capacity, and expanding the development of global trade and investment^[21].

The Egyptian Center for Strategic, Political and Economic Studies and Democracy published a research monograph “China’s” One Belt One Road “Initiative: Century Economic Engineering” in 2019. The authors of the book are 10 scholars from different Arab countries, reflecting to a certain extent. The book is broadly representative and reflects the main views and attitudes of Arab academic circles. The editor believes that the “Belt and Road” initiative connects Asia, Africa and Europe through infrastructure construction and promotes world interconnectivity. It is a historic project in the 21st century. The main points of the book include: The “Belt and Road” initiative is the focus of China’s foreign policy in the new

era, and its purpose is to promote the further development of globalization.

On June 22, 2020, Walid Jabala, Professor of Economics and Finance Law at Cairo University, Egypt, stated that China’s “One Belt One Road” initiative is based on a win-win partnership and provides a fairer approach to exchanges between countries. The new paradigm of China will help build a new international political and economic order. As the second largest economy in the world, while developing itself, China is willing to cooperate with countries along the Belt and Road through various means such as infrastructure interconnection, unimpeded trade, and financing, to expand exchanges, promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in the target countries, and create a large job opportunity^[22].

Second, because Egypt has the triple attributes of Arabia, Africa, and the Middle East, Egyptian scholars recognize the “Belt and Road” initiative from the perspective of regional cooperation such as China-Africa cooperation, China-Arab cooperation, and China-Middle East cooperation.

Egyptian Think Tank Cairo Regional Strategic Research Center^[23]. In the “China’s Growing Interests in the Middle East” report, it was pointed out that China is establishing economic partnerships with countries in various regions to improve the level of cooperation with Middle Eastern countries. The “Belt and Road” initiative aims at mutual benefit and supports regional peace and development. In addition, China has made important contributions to reducing conflicts in the Middle East, easing the conflicts between Saudi Arabia and Iran, maintaining the unity of countries in the region, and promoting anti-terrorism cooperation.

Dr. Samaha from the Institute of African Studies at Cairo University believes that since the “Belt and Road” initiative was put forward, the African economy has been closely linked to the Chinese economy. Research on the “Belt and Road” initiative has become an important part of the study of sustainable development in Africa, and has also become a key focus of the Egyptian academic community. We look forward to more cooperation between think tanks and academic communities in China and Egypt.

Yasser Jadra, director of the Egypt-China Research Center of Ain Shams University, Egypt, said that under the influence of the “Belt and Road” initiative, Egypt has become one of the important countries for China to carry out economic and trade cooperation, which is conducive to promoting the economic development of Egypt. And

infrastructure construction. At present, China has invested in the construction of, for example, the Suez Canal Economic and Trade Zone, the new administrative capital of Egypt, as well as wharf, railway and highway network construction projects ^[24].

The Egyptian National Planning Institute was established in 1960 and is affiliated to the Egyptian Ministry of National Planning. It is responsible for providing suggestions on important development plans and strategies of the government, and conducting feasibility assessment of major projects. The main research areas are international cooperation, environment, and sustainability. Development issues, regional development, etc. Dr. Heba Jamal, head of the “Belt and Road” research team of the Egyptian National Planning Institute, said that the “Belt and Road” initiative is currently being discussed in Egypt and even on the African continent. This initiative has been explored in Egypt’s academic, political, and business circles, which is why she has conducted research on the “Belt and Road” initiative ^[25].

Third, Egyptian scholars recognize the “Belt and Road” from the perspective of strengthening the exchange and dialogue between Chinese and Egyptian civilizations.

Issam Sharaf is a well-known Egyptian scholar and politician. He served as the Prime Minister of Egypt in 2011. After stepping down as Prime Minister, he established the Sustainable Development Organization and served as its chairman. As a staunch supporter of the “Belt and Road” initiative, Sharaf has visited China more than ten times. Sharaf understands the origin and connotation of the “Belt and Road” initiative. He said that the “Belt and Road” initiative originated from the historical Silk Road. Continue the traditional friendship between China and Africa and achieve common development.

Sharaf also said that culture is the foundation of development. Chinese traditional culture is extensive and profound and has a long history. The “Belt and Road” initiative is a concentrated expression of China’s excellent traditional culture. The Chinese people treat traditional culture in two and take the essence and the dross to adapt it to modern society. He believes that China’s economic and military strength is in a leading position in the world, but the soft power of cultural dissemination needs to be improved. He suggested that China should strengthen public diplomacy and promote exchanges between China and Africa, especially in the field of non-governmental exchanges, to enhance the understanding of Chinese culture and the “Belt and Road” initiative among African people. He believes that the “Belt and Road” initiative has

created a good platform for cooperation between China and Africa, and the development of China-Africa relations will be closer. He hopes that there will be more and more academic research projects and cultural exchanges and cooperation channels related to the “Belt and Road”. Provide intellectual support for further cooperation between China and Africa, and also provide a good foundation for people-to-people bonds between China and Africa ^[26].

On the occasion of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2018, Professor Li Habu, Dean of the Chinese Department of Cairo University and Dean of the Confucius Institute, stated that President Xi’s “Eight Actions” for China-Africa cooperation and “to build a closer China-Africa community with a shared future” It is conducive to the development of Africa and Egypt ^[27].

Nadia Ermi, director of the Center for East and South Asian Studies at Beni Suf University in Egypt, said that Africa is currently at a new starting point for modernization, while China is in a period of economic restructuring, and the two sides have a lot of room for cooperation. Africa’s industrial and agricultural industries need to achieve independent development, and China’s industrial structure is facing upgrading. The two sides can achieve complementary advantages through international production capacity cooperation ^[28].

On January 13, 2019, the “Belt and Road” Cooperative Research Center jointly established by Renmin University of China and Ain Shams University in Egypt was established, marking the official establishment of Egypt’s first “Belt and Road” research center. Abdul Wahab Izat, President of Ain Shams University, stated at the opening ceremony that the establishment of the “Belt and Road” Cooperative Research Center will not only enable China and Egypt to cooperate in the academic basin, but also The cooperation between China and Egypt in political, economic, and cultural energy provides intellectual support, thereby providing more development opportunities for the “Belt and Road” initiative to enter Africa. The Egyptian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr Khalid Abdul Ghafa, said that the “Belt and Road” research is a very important and meaningful research for Egypt, and Egypt strongly supports the work of the center ^[29].

Fourth, there are some Egyptian scholars who have worries about the problems arising from the advancement of the “Belt and Road” initiative.

On December 23, 2018, Ambassador Ali Hefney of the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Commission was jointly organized by the Foreign Affairs Commission and the

Egyptian National Planning Institute entitled “China’s Belt and Road” Initiative’s Political and Economic Impact on Egypt and China-Egypt. In his speech at the seminar on the prospect of interaction, he mentioned that although the “Belt and Road” initiative has attracted the attention of countries in the world, including European countries, and has attracted the attention of a series of regional and international financial institutions, it still faces many challenges. Especially because of excessive loans to other countries, leading to an increase in the debt of some foreign countries, especially African countries. He proposed that China should expand its direct investment in other countries in the next stage and establish a mechanism that can continue to provide funds to target countries without increasing its external debt burden^[30].

The participating scholars reached a consensus, which to a certain extent expressed the overall evaluation and attitude of the Egyptian scholar elite to the “Belt and Road” initiative. The important points are as follows: 1. What China provides to the world through the “Belt and Road” initiative is not an absolute charity model, but promotes good cooperation between countries through common development; 2. Developing countries including Egypt (Arab countries or African countries) should improve their own cooperation capabilities and realize the maximum benefits of the initiative through joint cooperation; 3. China’s huge cross-border capital not only guarantees loans, but this also brings debt crises to many developing countries^[31].

2.3 Egyptian Non-governmental’s Perception of the “Belt and Road” Initiative

Most people in Egypt’s political and academic circles are in favor and support of the “Belt and Road” initiative, which has also affected the public’s perception of the initiative to a certain extent. This article attempts to analyze the Egyptian folk’s cognition of the “Belt and Road” from the media and business people as the cognitive subject.

First, at the media level, this article selects famous Egyptian newspapers as the subject of cognition to discuss its cognition.

“The Pyramid” was founded in 1875 and enjoys an important influence in Egypt and the Arab region. “Pyramid” is known for publishing major news in the Middle East and international column comments. Although the newspaper is a commercial operation, it belongs to a semi-official background and can basically represent the common attitude of the Egyptian government and people. “Egyptian Today” was founded in 2004 and

is the largest private newspaper in Egypt. During the Egyptian revolution in January 25th in 2011, “Egyptian Today” became an important channel for Egyptians to understand the situation in the country and region. “The Seventh Daily” is a private media. It first issued a weekly magazine in 2008 and turned into a daily publication in 2011. “The Seventh Daily” has a relatively large network influence and was rated as the most influential website in the Middle East by “Forbes Middle East” magazine. In 2016, according to Alexa website ranking statistics, the official website of the newspaper became the most visited website in Egypt.

Based on the analysis of the reports on the “Belt and Road” initiative by the three newspapers, “The Pyramid”, “Egypt Today”, and “The Seventh Daily” during the period 2014-2019, the above three newspapers have a comparative perspective on the interpretation of the “Belt and Road” initiative. Diversified, but most of them have a positive attitude towards the initiative. The above-mentioned three newspapers mainly reported on the three aspects of “leadership visits”, “international conferences” and “economic and trade cooperation”, showing the importance and recognition of the “Belt and Road” initiative by the Egyptian media, and also showing the “Belt and Road Initiative”. The influence in Egypt is also increasing^[32]. The positive reports of the Egyptian media not only reflect the importance and recognition of the “Belt and Road” initiative by the Egyptian government, but also the support of the Egyptian people for the initiative.

Second, at the industrial and commercial level, this article selects the relevant personnel of the Suez Canal Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone and the Egyptian industrial and commercial circles as the cognitive subjects for analysis.

TEDA Suez Canal Economic and Trade Zone is the second batch of national-level overseas economic and trade cooperation zones established by the Chinese government. It was established in 2008 and operated by China-Africa TEDA Investment Co., Ltd. The cooperation zone is located in Sokhna Springs, Suez Province, Egypt, and is far from the capital Cairo. More than 120 kilometers.

On September 3, 2018, Mahfouz Taha, Deputy Chairman of the Suez Canal Economic Zone in Egypt, stated that the China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone is a successful example of the economic and trade relations between China and Egypt. It has led to the signing of various cooperation agreements

between the two countries. Be implemented. At the same time, Taha was satisfied with the achievements of TEDA in attracting investment. TEDA introduced China Jushi Egypt, a famous glass fiber manufacturer in China. The presence of Jushi has made Egypt a major producer and exporter of glass fibers in the world.

On August 28, 2018, Taha attended the commissioning ceremony of the 200,000-ton glass fiber production base of Jushi Egypt and the launching ceremony of the production competition of China Harbor Engineering Co., Ltd. at Sokhna Spring Port. He said that Jushi Egypt has created more than 2,000 jobs for Egypt, and has paid US\$16.8 million in taxes and fees to the Egyptian finance department and US\$33.5 million in taxes and fees to the customs department in the past four years. Taha said that there is a mutually beneficial and win-win partnership between Egyptian and Chinese investors, as exemplified by Jushi Corporation and China Harbour Engineering Co., Ltd. Taha said that Egypt has advantages in investment. For example, Egypt has recently passed a new investment law, has a relatively safe and open investment environment and a large labor force, and welcomes Chinese companies to invest in Egypt. With the further deepening of China-Egypt cooperation, Egypt will not only be a transit point, but an important hub of the “Belt and Road” initiative^[33].

Hamad Munir, Chairman of the Economic Cooperation and Development Committee of the Egyptian Entrepreneurs Association, said that since the “Belt and Road” initiative was put forward, China’s investment in Egypt has been continuously expanding, and it has cooperated with local enterprises in the Suez Canal Economic Zone to develop new industrial bases. Injected capital and technology into Egypt, improved the competitiveness of Egyptian enterprises, and played an important role in the economic development of Egypt^[34].

3. Factors Influencing Egypt’s Perception of the “Belt and Road” Initiative

3.1 Benign Diplomatic Relations between the Two Sides

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt 60 years ago, China and Egypt have maintained strong and reliable relations. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the two countries have always supported each other and cooperated with each other at the regional and global levels. The relations between the two countries have been progressing smoothly.

Egypt and China have always maintained friendly relations, which have been upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership in the past few years. At present, both countries focus on social and economic development and national rejuvenation. High-level visits between China and Egypt have become more frequent. The two sides support each other’s core interests, and the connotation of the strategic partnership has been continuously enriched. The development strategies of the two countries have been aligned, and cooperation in infrastructure construction and production capacity has been continuously strengthened. Egypt has become one of the important fulcrum countries along the “Belt and Road”^[35].

As an important member of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum and the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, Egypt’s status as a regional power is conducive to the contact and cooperation between China and Egypt’s neighboring countries. Therefore, the development of China-Egypt relations is conducive to the development of the “Belt and Road” initiative in West Asia and North Africa.

Egypt applied to join the AIIB in March 2015. In September of the same year, the Egyptian president, at the invitation of the Chinese government, participated in the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese people in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, and watched the celebration with representatives from other countries, and sent troops to participate in the military parade^[36].

In December 2014, the President of Egypt visited China and the two countries signed the “Joint Statement on Establishing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.” As the world’s second largest economy and Egypt’s largest trading partner, China has become a key country in Egypt’s “look east” policy^[37].

In addition, in January 2016, the Chinese President visited Egypt, which was the first official visit to Egypt by a Chinese leader in 12 years. The leaders of the two countries agreed to implement and strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries, and signed the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Jointly Promoting the Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, and a number of bilateral cooperation documents in the fields of infrastructure construction, economy and trade, energy, finance, aerospace, culture, news, technology, and climate change.

On January 21, 2016, President Xi Jinping and Egyptian President Sisi unveiled the second phase of the TEDA Cooperation Zone project. Currently, the second phase of the project has actually invested a total of 55 million US dollars, and the first phase of two square kilometers of road and municipal infrastructure projects has been completed in the first quarter of 2017^[38]. This visit facilitated the in-depth development of China-Egypt strategic partnership, promoted the in-depth integration of the “Belt and Road” initiative and Egypt’s “2030 Vision”, and also promoted the investment of Chinese companies in Egypt.

In 2017, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) leaders’ meeting was held in Xiamen, China. At the special invitation of the Chinese government, the President of Egypt also attended the summit. In order to share development experience, the summit provided an important forum for exchanges between the BRICS and other countries, thereby promoting mutual cooperation. China and Egypt have successfully maintained coordination and cooperation on security, international and regional issues^[39].

In addition, in July 2018, the 8th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum was held in Beijing. Foreign ministers from more than 20 Arab countries, including Egypt, attended the meeting^[40]. China and the Arab States jointly issued the China-Arab States Joint Declaration on the Action of “One Belt and One Road” And many other cooperation documents. In his speech, the Egyptian Foreign Minister pointed out that the goal of China-Egypt economic cooperation is to build infrastructure in Egypt and other parts of Africa^[41].

3.2 Benign Cultural Exchanges between China and Egypt

As the first Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with China, the two sides have maintained good political and economic cooperation for a long time, which has promoted cultural exchanges between the two sides. Since the “Belt and Road” initiative was put forward, China-Egypt relations have become closer and cultural exchanges have become more active.

First of all, in the cultural field, China-Egypt cultural exchanges are getting closer. In August 2015, China and Egypt signed the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Culture of China and Egypt on Mutual Organization of the Cultural Year in 2016”. When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Egypt in 2016, it coincided with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt. The

two sides unanimously decided to designate 2016 as the China-Egypt Cultural Year, and China-Egypt cultural exchanges entered a period of rapid development. In the context of the “Belt and Road” construction, with China’s massive investment in Egypt and the entry of Chinese companies, it has laid the foundation for Chinese elements and Chinese stories to enter Egypt. In Egypt, there has been a craze for Chinese language, “traveling across the ocean to learn Tai Chi”, learning Chinese songs, and other cultural exchange activities with Chinese characteristics. According to the Cairo Cultural Center, China held 101 cultural exchange activities in Egypt in 2017, attracting more than 100 people. Tens of thousands of Egyptians participated. With the increase of Chinese cultural influence, Chinese TV dramas are also widely sought after in Egypt. Many young Egyptians like to watch Chinese TV dramas, such as “A Slight Smile is Allure”, “Battle in Changsha”, “The Legend of Nagzhu” and other film and television works. Iman Said, Director of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Egyptian Broadcasting and Television Alliance, said that film and television works can enhance non-governmental exchanges between the two countries and contribute to the development of China-Egypt bilateral strategic partnership.

China and Egypt have also developed close cooperation in the field of tourism. The cultural exchanges between China and Egypt have also promoted the development of Egypt’s tourism industry. As one of the four pillars of Egypt’s economy, tourism plays an important role in Egypt’s economic development. The statistics report of the Egyptian tourism industry shows that in the first half of 2016, the number of tourists from China to Egypt was only 92,800, compared with 159,000 in the same period of 2017. Ahmed Hamdi, deputy director of the Egyptian Tourism Development Agency, believes that the traditional friendship between China and Egypt, the deepening of non-governmental and cultural exchanges between the two countries, and the simplification of visa procedures are the main reasons for the substantial increase in the number of Chinese tourists. The Ministry of Tourism of Egypt regards the Chinese market as a key task, while the China Tourism Research Institute regards Egypt as one of the top ten dark horse destinations for Chinese outbound travel^[42].

Statistics from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China show that in 2016, the number of Chinese tourists to Egypt was 180,000, 300,000 in 2017, and 400,000 in 2018, showing an upward trend year by year. Egyptian Tourism Minister Rania Masat stated that Egypt attaches

great importance to the Chinese market, and the large number of Chinese tourists is the focus of the tourism industry around the world. Nadia Hermi, a professor of political economy at Beni Suave University, also said that Chinese tourists are one of the important driving forces driving the development and prosperity of the world's tourism industry. Many countries, including Egypt, have begun to cater to China through various forms. The Cairo Chinese Cultural Center organizes several Chinese cultural promotion activities every year, such as "Chinese Cultural and Creative Products Exhibition Week", "Happy Chinese New Year Temple Fair", "Kung Fu Journey-Chinese Tourism and Culture Week" to attract Chinese tourists. Fatah Abdul Vihab, Chairman of the Cultural Development Foundation of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, said that the various Chinese cultural promotion activities held in Egypt are not only conducive to attracting Chinese tourists, but also conducive to the spread of Chinese culture in Egypt. Cultural exchanges between Egypt and Egypt. Dr. Suha, consultant of the Ministry of Tourism of Egypt, even proposed that Egypt should expand cooperation with China in the field of tourism and jointly promote non-governmental exchanges. Ola Jamal, Director of the Domestic Tourism Department of the Egyptian Tourism Promotion Association, said that although a large number of Chinese tourists come to Egypt every year, the places to visit are limited to traditional attractions such as Cairo, Aswan, and Luxor. Holghada and Port Alem have not been explored in depth. He believes that with the deepening of the "One Belt One Road" initiative, it will bring new opportunities for the development of Egypt's tourism industry^[43].

China-Egypt cooperation in the field of education has also made great progress. Kamelia Subhi, Assistant Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Egypt, said that the educational exchanges between Egypt and China have a long history. As early as the 1930s, Chinese scholar Ma Jian went to Egypt to study at Al-Azhar University and returned to China. Later, he translated the "Quran" into Chinese and became a landmark figure in Sino-Egyptian education and cultural exchanges in the last century. In 1958, Ain Shams University in Egypt opened a Chinese major. Especially since the "Belt and Road" initiative was put forward, China-Egypt exchanges have become closer, and many universities in Egypt have successively opened Chinese language majors. Since then, the number of people studying Chinese in Egypt has continued to rise. At the same time, Egypt has established a number of Confucius Institutes and opened a number of

Confucius Classrooms. Educational cooperation is an important part of people-to-people exchanges and an important way to promote people-to-people bonds. The Chinese government provides strong support to international students. In the 2019-2020 academic year, the Chinese Government Scholarship will receive a total of 364 Egyptian students studying in China, but before 2016, there were only about 20 students. On January 13, 2019, the "Belt and Road" cooperative research center jointly established by Renmin University of China and Ain Shams University in Egypt was formally established. This is the first "Belt and Road" research center in Egypt. The establishment of the research center not only enables China and Egypt to carry out exchanges in the academic field, but also further promotes cultural communication between the two countries, thereby laying a good humanistic foundation for the implementation of the "Belt and Road" in Egypt and Africa.

4. Policy Recommendations for Deepening Egypt's Positive Perception of the "Belt and Road" Initiative

Since the launch of the China-Egypt "Belt and Road" cooperation initiative, relations between the two countries have continued to develop rapidly. Since 2014, in a complex international environment, the two sides have always maintained exchanges at all levels, and cooperation in various key areas such as economic and trade exchanges and cultural exchanges has developed steadily, laying a more solid foundation for the cooperation between the two countries under the framework of the "Belt and Road".

4.1 Favorable Political Mutual Trust Lays the political Foundation for Deepening Benign Cognition

Both China and Egypt have a long history and culture. At the same time, both countries have been invaded by Western powers in modern time and share a common historical experience. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956, the two governments have always supported and respected each other. In the new era of China-Egypt co-construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the two sides adhere to the principle of "mutual consultation, co-construction, and sharing", fully considering each other's interests, and have played a demonstrative role in cooperation between China and other developing countries.

First, China and Egypt have always valued a reliable and sincere partnership between each other. Whether in the development of bilateral relations or on major international and regional issues, the two countries have

maintained mutual exchanges and cooperation. Since the two sides jointly built the “Belt and Road” initiative, they have continued to deepen political mutual trust on the basis of maintaining traditional friendly exchanges, adding new measures to the construction of the “Belt and Road”. In the relations between the two countries, the original bilateral strategic partnership has been upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership, and the “China-Egypt Five-Year Implementation Outline on Strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Two Countries” has been formulated, which covers politics, economy and trade, military affairs, and security. In ten major areas, the two sides have formulated plans to strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries in the next five years.

On the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt in 2016, President Xi Jinping paid a visit to the Middle East. The Chinese government also announced the first “China Policy on Arab Countries” to Arab countries. The publication of this document shows that China attaches great importance to the China-Arab partnership. Egypt, as a major country in the Arab world, can become a bridge for exchanges between China and Arab countries.

In addition, Egypt has always given strong support to China’s South China Sea issue, Taiwan issue, Hong Kong independence, Tibet independence, Xinjiang independence, and anti-terrorism security issues, which has consolidated the traditional friendship between the two countries. For Egypt, after the turmoil broke out in Egyptian society in 2011, China also expressed its firm support for Egypt’s restoration of domestic political stability. On the Middle East, Arab-Israeli, Palestine-Israeli and Syria issues, China has also maintained communication and coordination with Egypt on many occasions, and has taken measures to ease the regional situation, which has promoted regional security and stability.

Second, the bilateral national development plans are highly compatible. In the process of China-Egypt co-construction of the “Belt and Road”, Egypt has formulated plans such as the “Revitalization Plan”, the “Suez Canal Corridor Economic Belt” strategy, the “New Administrative Capital Plan”, and the “Egypt 2030 Vision”, and it has continued to accelerate its cooperation with China. Alignment of development strategies. Egypt has organized cooperation seminars and investment consultations with China, signed the “China-Egypt Capacity Cooperation Framework Agreement”, Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Promoting the “Belt and Road” Construction”

and other investment agreements and memorandums to better optimize and expand the two countries Cooperation projects in key areas such as energy, transportation, and power have achieved a high degree of docking with China’s production capacity, enhanced mutual understanding and awareness, and laid a solid foundation for the sustainable development of China-Egypt cooperation.

Finally, Egypt’s special geographical location. Egypt is at the western end of the “One Belt One Road” initiative. It is not only a bridge connecting the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, but also the western end of the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”. It is a key node of the “Belt and Road” cooperation initiative in the natural extension of the African continent and plays an important role in advancing the hinterland of the African continent. At the same time, Egypt is the gateway to Africa, located in the northeast of the African continent. Egypt is located in the land of five seas, three continents and two oceans. It is not only the core area of the Arab world, but also an important country in the Islamic world. Egypt is connected to Asia to the east, Africa to the west and Europe to the north. Egypt controls the Suez Canal, an important energy channel in the world, and it is also a golden waterway connecting three continents. The Suez Canal not only shortens the voyage between Asia and Europe, but also bears 7% of global maritime trade and 20% of global maritime trade, which is of great significance to global economic development. As the world’s largest trading country, China is the second largest trading partner of the European Union. 60% of trade with Europe needs to be transported through the Suez Canal, accounting for more than 10% of the canal navigable vessels. Thousands of ships pass through here every year. Strengthening mutual trust and cooperation with Egypt will help China’s merchant fleet to navigate smoothly, and it will also be a major benefit for the future development of China’s shipping companies^[44].

In general, China-Egypt relations have maintained a good momentum of development in recent years. Under the framework of the “Belt and Road” cooperation initiative, the two countries have continuously deepened cooperation in various fields, economic, trade, and production capacity cooperation are full of vitality, interactions at all levels are frequent, and cooperation in the fields of culture, education and tourism is constantly deepened. China and Egypt will firmly seize this rare historical development opportunity and continue to be guided by the Silk Road spirit of “mutual learning, mutual benefit and win-

win”, and continue to create a new era of mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Egypt.

4.2 Equal Economic and Trade Exchanges Lay the Economic Foundation for Deepening Benign Cognition

Since 2013, in the context of the slow recovery of the global economy and Egypt’s recovery from the “Middle East”, the “Belt and Road” cooperation initiative has vigorously promoted the growth of China-Egypt bilateral trade against the trend, and carried out pragmatic cooperation in various fields. On the one hand, the two countries have continuously made breakthroughs in economic and trade exchanges, which have made positive contributions to Egypt’s restoration of domestic economic development and improvement of people’s livelihood. In 2012, China surpassed the United States to become Egypt’s largest trading partner and largest source of imports. In 2013, the bilateral trade volume exceeded 10 billion U.S. dollars for the first time, reaching 10.21 billion U.S. dollars. In 2014, the bilateral trade volume reached 11.6 billion U.S. dollars. In 2015 and 2016, China continued to maintain its position as Egypt’s largest trading partner. With the frequent exchanges between the two countries in the field of economy and trade, the cooperation content of the bilateral “Belt and Road” initiative has been further enriched. While promoting the economic transformation and upgrading of Egypt, it has played a positive role in promoting the stability and development of the Middle East.

On the other hand, the areas of infrastructure construction and production capacity cooperation between China and Egypt are also accelerating. Since 2013, China and Egypt have strengthened relevant cooperation in the fields of power, transportation, agriculture, new energy, communications and other production and infrastructure construction. The two sides have jointly identified 18 priority projects for implementation and have continuously strengthened the level of cooperation between the two countries. In August 2015, with the opening of the new 35-kilometer Suez Canal and the expansion and deepening of the original 37-kilometer channel, the navigation capacity of the Suez Canal has been greatly enhanced. On this basis, Egypt has not only improved its own business environment, but also improved the travel and living conditions of ordinary Egyptians. In order to accelerate the development of the Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, China and Egypt have continuously improved relevant infrastructure and supporting facilities. The construction of the China-Egypt economic and trade cooperation zone has stimulated the accelerated development of the “Suez Canal Corridor Economic Belt” around the

canal, laying a solid foundation for the local absorption and utilization of international investment. In addition, in order to ensure the funding needs for the “Belt and Road” construction, Chinese financial institutions continue to extend loans to Egyptian financial institutions, including the Central Bank of Egypt, to further maintain the stability of the Egyptian financial market and promote bilateral cooperation.

4.3 Active Cultural Exchanges Lay a Cultural Foundation for Deepening Benign Cognition

Humanities exchanges are an important part of the development of friendly relations between China and Egypt. Active cultural exchanges play an important role in enhancing mutual understanding and exchanges between the two countries. On the one hand are cultural exchanges and tourism activities. With the advancement of China’s “One Belt, One Road” initiative, cultural exchanges between China and Egypt have become increasingly frequent. For example, the governments of the two countries have successively signed the 2015-2018 Implementation Plan of the Cultural Cooperation Agreement between the Chinese and Egyptian Governments, and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Culture of China and Egypt on the 2016 Mutual Cultural Year. In addition, the Cairo Cultural Center and other institutions organized the China-Egypt Cultural Year and other Chinese cultural activities, and the Egyptian Embassy in China held the “2015 Egyptian Papyrus Cultural Exchange Exhibition” in Beijing’s 798 Art District ^[45] And other activities have laid a solid foundation for enhancing the friendship between the two countries.

In November 2016, the Chinese films shortlisted at the Cairo International Film Festival in Egypt showed the artistic charm of two different civilizations of China and Egypt from different angles, and promoted bilateral cultural exchanges under the “Belt and Road” initiative. At the same time, the gradual restoration of Egypt’s domestic order will also help Egypt’s tourism industry to recover. The two countries signed the “Executive Plan for Tourism Cooperation between the National Tourism Administration of the People’s Republic of China and the Ministry of Tourism of the Arab Republic of Egypt” as early as 2012, and reached a series of consensus on tourism market, tourism training, tourism investment, etc.

After China and Egypt announced the joint construction of the “Belt and Road” initiative, Egypt has adopted various measures to attract Chinese tourists to visit Egypt, which has greatly promoted the recovery of Egypt’s tourism industry. For example, according to the

needs of Chinese tourists, the Egyptian tourism department has specially designed tourist routes and projects for Chinese tourists. In order to better satisfy the travel experience of Chinese tourists, the relevant Egyptian authorities have also invited Chinese tourism departments, travel agencies and media to go to Egypt to experience the Egyptian tourism environment, travel routes and projects, and cooperate with the Chinese tourism department. The Egyptian aviation department has increased the number of flights between Egypt and China, provided visas and other conveniences for Chinese group and individual tourists on arrival, provided free children services for Chinese tourists participating in parent-child charter flights, and opened up new tourist routes in Egypt.

On the other hand, in terms of education and technical cooperation. Although China and Egypt are thousands of miles apart, the Egyptian people have known China's aspirations for a long time. Since 2013, China and Egypt have continued to promote exchanges and cooperation in the field of education under the cooperation framework of the "Belt and Road" initiative. For example, the number of universities providing Chinese language teaching in Egypt has increased from one to more than ten at present, and the number of students learning Chinese has also increased from less than 100 at the beginning to more than 2,000 at present. This is for China-Egypt friendly exchanges. Provides more multilingual talent reserves. At the same time, based on the extensive establishment of Confucius Institutes around the world, China has also established the first overseas Confucius Classroom in Egypt and taught Chinese through satellite TV. The audience has reached hundreds of millions of viewers in 22 Arab countries. An important means for the spread of culture through technological means. In addition, the cooperation between the two countries in the field of science and technology is also increasingly strengthened. Egyptian scientific research institutions have reached cooperation agreements with Chinese universities and local science and technology departments in agriculture, water management, desertification prevention and clean energy. The scientific researchers of the two countries have jointly carried out research projects, established joint laboratories and science and education bases, which have injected more vitality into the scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries. In short, the active people-to-people exchanges and cultural exchanges between the two countries have not only enhanced the mutual trust and friendship between the governments and peoples of the two countries, but also laid a more solid non-govern-

mental foundation for the two countries' joint construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

References

- [1] "The List of the Most Attractive African Countries for Investors in 2019", Economic and Commercial Office of the Chinese Embassy in Guinea, <http://gn.mofcom.gov.cn/article/jmxw/201809/20180902789863.shtml>.
- [2] "The largest natural gas field in the Mediterranean Sea was discovered off Egypt", Overseas Website, http://m.haiwainet.cn/middle/455817/2015/0901/content_29119868_1.html.
- [3] "The Egyptian military receives the first batch of French Rafale fighters", Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-07/21/c_1115984506.html.
- [4] "Deputy speaker of the German Parliament: we support the role of Al-Azhar in spreading the values of coexistence", <http://www.tahrirnews.com>.
- [5] Chen J, "Strategic Synergy between Egypt 'Vision 2030' and China's 'Belt and Road' Initiative", *Outlines of Global Transformations Politics Economics Law*, Vol.11, No.5, 2018, p.219.
- [6] "Xi Jinping Meets with Egyptian President Sisi", Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2017-09/05/c_1121607635.html.
- [7] "Xi Jinping meets with Egyptian President Sisi, and Egypt is willing to participate in cooperation under the 'Belt and Road' framework", China News Network, <https://www.chinanews.com/gn/2015/09-02/7503273.shtml>.
- [8] "Egyptian President Sisi: China is an important strategic partner of Egypt", Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zflt/chn/zfgx/t1510028.html>.
- [9] "Xi Jinping Holds Talks with Egyptian President Sisi", World Wide Web, <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnKc7Uq>.
- [10] "Egyptian President Sisi meets with Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe, discussing the 'Belt and Road' and the relationship between the two militaries", Sohu.com, https://www.sohu.com/a/304179401_260616?pvaid=ded6b08ce37982f8.
- [11] "President of Egypt: The 'One Belt One Road' initiative will make Egypt an important logistics and trade center", Sina Finance, <http://finance.sina.com.cn/roll/2019-04-26/doc-ihvhwier8370872.shtml>.
- [12] Chen J, "Strategic Synergy between Egypt 'Vision 2030' and China's 'Belt and Road' Initiative", *Outlines of Global Transformations Politics Economics Law*, Vol.11, No.5, 2018, p.222.
- [13] "Egyptian Ambassador to China: The 'Belt and Road' Initiative Aligns with Egypt's Development Plan", Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2017-05/11/c_129601795.htm.
- [14] "Egyptian Foreign Minister: China-Arab Cooperation Forum is an Excellent Dialogue Platform", China Youth Online, http://news.cyol.com/content/2018-07/11/content_17373410.htm.
- [15] Xiao Tianyi, "Egypt and the 'Belt and Road' share weal and woe-Interview with Azat Saiad, Executive Chairman of the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Commission", Guangming Daily, 12th

- edition, April 22, 2019, .
- [16] Jing Yue, Huang Peizhao, “Historic Project Leading New Development” (“One Belt One Road” High-end Interview)-Interview with former Egyptian Prime Minister Issam Sharaf, People’s Daily, 3rd edition, May 5, 2019.
- [17] Han Xiaoming, “Egypt-China cooperation is a model of mutual benefit and win-win-Interview with Nasser Foed, Secretary-General of the Suez Canal Management Board of Egypt”, People’s Daily, 3rd edition, May 3, 2017.
- [18] <https://ecfa-egypt.org/2018/09/23/%d9%85%d8%b4%d8%a7%d8%b1%d9%83%d8%a9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%85%d8%ac%d9%84%d8%b3-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d9%86%d8%af%d9%88%d8%a9-%d8%ad%d9%88%d9%84-%d9%85%d8%b5%d8%b1-%d9%88%d9%85%d8%a8% d8%a7%d8%af%d8%b1%d8%a9/?lang=ar>.
- [19] <https://acpss.ahram.org.eg/News/16520.aspx>.
- [20] <http://acpss.ahram.org.eg/News/16520.aspx>.
- [21] Wang Yunfeng, “‘One Belt One Road’, ‘Mutual Benefit and Win-Win’, ‘Common Development’ Global Public Goods (Wind from the East-International people talk about ‘Belt and Road’ cooperation)”, People’s Daily, 18th edition, February 12, 2019.
- [22] “Interview: ‘One Belt One Road’ Initiative helps to establish a new framework for international relations-Interview with Professor Jabala of Economics and Financial Law at Cairo University, Egypt”, Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2020-06/22/c_1126146696.htm.
- [23] Wang Linggui, *Global Strategic Observation Report-Foreign Think Tanks Seeing ‘One Belt One Road’ (III)*, Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, pp.148-150.
- [24] “Egypt experts are optimistic about the ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative”, Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2017-01/03/c_1120236758.htm.
- [25] Xiao Tianyi, “From the ‘Voice of China’ to the ‘China-Africa Consensus’-The ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative Leads the New Trend of Academic Research in Egypt”, Guangming Daily, 8th edition, June 24, 2018.
- [26] Xiao Tianyi, “From the ‘Voice of China’ to the ‘China-Africa Consensus’-The Belt and Road Initiative Leads the New Trend of Academic Research in Egypt”, Guangming Daily, 8th edition, June 24, 2018.
- [27] “Egypt Expert: Strengthening China-Africa Cooperation will Bring Benefits to Africa”, International Online, <http://news.cri.cn/20180907/690db43a-2927-f4af-ee30-2c9feadf40df.html>.
- [28] “Why is China so attractive to Africa? Listen to what the African media say”, World Wide Web, <https://world.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrmKc9Fb>.
- [29] “Egypt’s first ‘Belt and Road’ cooperative research center was established”, Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/photo/2019-01/14/c_1123983884.htm.
- [30] “Egypt’s first ‘Belt and Road’ cooperative research center was established”, Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/photo/2019-01/14/c_1123983884.htm.
- [31] <http://repository.inp.edu.eg/bitstream/handle/123456789/4565/%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85%20%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82%20%28%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A9%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- [32] Huang Peng, “Analysis of Reports on the ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative in Egyptian Newspapers”, Times Report, Issue 10, 2019, p.91.
- [33] “Interview: China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone is a successful example of China-Egypt partnership-Interview with Taha, Vice Chairman of the Suez Canal Economic Zone in Egypt”, Chinese government website, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2018-09/03/content_5318911.htm.
- [34] Wang Zhengqi, “Egypt’s development needs a reliable partner like China (Chinese investment overseas)”, People’s Daily, 3rd edition, September 16, 2017.
- [35] John C, “Towering Ambitions: Egypt and China Building for the Future”, Middle East Institute. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/towering-ambitions-egypt-andchina-building-future>.
- [36] Mohamed Soliman, MAM & Zhao J., “The Multiple Roles of Egypt in Chinese ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative”, *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, Vol.13, No.3, 2019, p.2.
- [37] Morsy A. F. I., “The Impact of the ‘Belt and Road’ initiative in Egypt’s Economy and Foreign Policy”, *Doctoral Dissertation*, 2019, p.94.
- [38] “China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone”, All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce website, http://www.acfic.org.cn/zjzg_327/nsjg/11b/11bgzhdzt/2019zhinan/2019zhinan_3/202002/t20200229_158706.html.
- [39] “9th BRICS Summit: Background; Highlights and Xiamen declaration”, GK Today, <https://www.gktoday.in/gk/9th-brics-summit-background-highlights-and-xiamen-declaration/>.
- [40] Hu J., “R&B Initiative Strengthens the Cooperation Between China and Arab Countries”, China’s Foreign Trade, No.2, 2019, p.38.
- [41] Chen J, “Strategic Synergy between Egypt ‘Vision 2030’ and China’s ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative”, *Outlines of Global Transformations Politics Economics Law*, Vol.11, No.5, 2018, p.222.
- [42] Xiao Tianyi, “Sino-Egyptian civilization mutual learning promotes win-win cooperation”, Guangming Daily, 8th edition, February 25, 2018.
- [43] Xiao Tianyi, “Tourism is becoming an accelerator for China-Egypt non-governmental exchanges”, Guangming Daily, 8th edition, July 7, 2019.
- [44] “Four Points of Expectations from Chinese Enterprises in Connecting the New Suez Canal with the Belt and Road Initiative”, People’s Daily Online, <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2015/0813/c157278-27459243.html>.
- [45] “Egyptian Ambassador to China Talk The ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative and China-Egypt Cultural and Economic Exchanges, Phoenix.com, http://news.ifeng.com/a/20150424/43626935_0.shtml.