

Curated Reading List for the Study of Sino-Egyptian Relations

This bibliography provides an in-depth outline of the current state of Sino-Egyptian relations. The sources included in this bibliography are peer-reviewed articles produced in the past 8 years by leading China and Egypt experts, as well as first-hand accounts of historic meetings between Chinese and Egyptian heads of state. The bibliography reflects scholarship from a wide variety of disciplines covering the geopolitical, economic, social and cultural facets of the Sino Egyptian relationship. While some of the following works don't focus exclusively on Sino Egyptian relations, their discussion of broad economic and political trends in Sino-African and Sino-Arab relations are crucial to contextualizing China's ties with Egypt.

Bilateral relations between China and Egypt were established in 1956, with Egypt becoming both the first Arab country and first African country to establish diplomatic relations with China. The establishment of formal relations came at the sidelines of the Bandung conference, where Chinese premier Zhou Enlai and Egyptian president Jamal Abdul Nasser articulated their shared opposition to Western Imperialism. Premier Enlai would later visit his Egyptian counterpart in 1963 and 65, to discuss regional issues like the Israeli-Arab conflict, discoveries of oil reserves in the Red Sea, political upheavals in Algeria, Libya and Tunisia. The transcripts of these historic meetings, which can be accessed through the Wilson Center's digital archive, provide an illuminating insight into China's mid-century foreign policy in the MENA region.

Sino-Egyptian relations have been characterized by Chinese adherence to the principle of non interference in Egypt's domestic affairs. This policy was challenged by the overthrowing of Mubarak in the Arab Spring, and in the 2013 military coup that installed Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. The works included in this bibliography analyze the ways in which China has adapted its Egypt policy to the country's political upheavals. Elena Bazanova and Andrey Kudelin's paper (2018) on Sino-Egyptian relations under the Mubarak government, provide a good launching point for this research. The scholarly works of I-Wei Jennifer Chang (2014) and Degang Sun (2015) on Chinese diplomacy during the Arab spring provide an insightful analysis on the implications of political upheaval in Egypt (and other Arab states) on Chinese interests in the region. Finally, Mordechai Chaziza's (2016) paper on the "New Stage in China-Egypt Relations," examines the ways in which relations have intensified under Al-Sisi's government.

Chinese firms have also played a significant role in Egypt's economic development in recent decades: China is Egypt's largest trade partner, and its sixth largest investor. Yasser Gadallah's

(2016) scholarly article on the “Evolution of Sino-Egyptian Economic Relations” provides a good basis for understanding how China’s emerged as a major stakeholder in Egypt’s economic modernization. Gadallah’s work on the Sino-Egyptian exchange of goods, services, and capital is best analyzed in the broader context of increased Chinese economic involvement in the OBOR countries. Thus, the bibliography includes Mordechai Chaziza’s (2018) paper on the “The Role of the Mediterranean in The Chinese Maritime Silk Road Initiative”, which explains why Egypt’s location on the convergence of busy global shipping routes makes it the ideal destination for Chinese OBOR-related FDI. A discussion of the high growth prospects of Sino-Egyptian economic cooperation should also address potential frictions caused by this growth. In her work, Stellenbosch University’s Emma Scott discusses the negative implications of Egypt’s growing trade deficit with China and provides suggestions for how Egypt can best mitigate this deficit.

While most scholarly works on the Sino-Egyptian relationship have analyzed it from the lens of Chinese hard power, i.e. the role of China’s economic and political power in attracting Egyptian cooperation; it is also important to consider the value of Chinese soft power in the Sino Egyptian relationship. China’s soft power lies in its ability to positively shape the way it is perceived by Egyptian elites through the promotion of social and cultural exchanges. One interesting example of Chinese exerting soft power in its relations with Egypt is through Chinese state’s promotion of Chinese-Muslims abroad as its unofficial ambassadors to Egypt (and other Muslim countries). The phenomenon is discussed in Frauke Drewes’ (2013) scholarly article on the Role of Islam in Current Sino-Arab relations. Another important example of Chinese soft power is through its promotion of Confucius institutes, which facilitate cultural exchanges between China and academic institutions around the world. Mahdi Sari’s (2017) paper examines the significance of the Confucius Institute in Egypt’s Suez Canal University, the reasons behind its establishment, and its impact on Egyptians perceptions of China.

History of Sino-Egyptian Relations

Haddad-Fonda, Kyle. “The Domestic Significance of China’s Policy Toward Egypt, 1955–1957.” *The Chinese Historical Review* 21, no. 1 (May 2014): 45–64.
<https://doi.org/10.1179/1547402X14Z.00000000028>.

Khalili, Joseph. “Communist China and the United Arab Republic.” *Asian Survey* 10, no. 4 (April 1970): 308–19.

"Record of the Second Meeting between Premier Zhou Enlai and President Nasser," December 17, 1963, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 107-01027-06, 25-39. (Translated by Stephen Mercado.)

This is a transcript of a meeting between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Egyptian

President Jamal Abdul Nasser, on the first official visit of a Chinese premier to Egypt, in December of 1963. During this meeting, both leaders stress their countries' shared commitment to countering Western Imperialism. Zhou also assures Nasser that China will not recognize the State of Israel, which was Egypt's enemy at the time.

"Minutes of the Second Meeting between Premier Zhou Enlai and President Nasser," June 21, 1965, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PRC FMA 107-01081-10, 21-28. (Translated by Stephen Mercado.)

This transcript comes from Zhou Enlai's visit to Cairo in June of 1965. The two leaders discuss developments in Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia, with both leaders agreeing on the importance of supporting countries that have recently decolonized. The two also discuss Egypt's recent discovery of oil reserves in the Red Sea.

Shichor, Yitzhak. *The Middle East in China's Foreign Policy, 1949-1977*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Sino – MENA Relations

Degang Sun, 'China's Military Relations with the Middle East', in James Reardon-Anderson (ed.), *The Red Star and the Crescent*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) Note: there are other aspects in this volume such as China - US - Middle East which are relevant to Egyptian - Sino ties.

James M. Dorsey, 'The Middle East: Testing the Boundaries of Non-Interference', *China and the Middle East: Venturing into the Maelstrom*, (New York: Palgrave 2019)

Andrew Scobell, 'Why the Middle East Matters to China' in Anoushiraven Ehteshami and Niv Horesh (eds.), *China's Presence in the Middle East*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018)

Jonathan Fulton, *China's Relations with the Gulf Monarchies*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019)

Belt Road Initiative (BRI)

Wenxian Zhang et al, *China's Belt and Road Initiative*, (New York: Palgrave, 2018)

Yoram Evron, 'The Challenge of Implementing the Belt and Road Initiative in the Middle East: Connectivity Projects Under Conditions of Limited Political Engagement', *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 237, March 2019, pp. 196-216.

Hai Yang, 'Time to up the Game? Middle Eastern Security and Chinese Strategic Involvement',

Asia Europe Journal, 16/3, September 2018, pp. 283-296.

US – China Rivalry (and the Middle East)

Rosecrance, Richard and Steven Miller (eds.), *The Next Great War?: The Roots of World War I and the Risk of US – China Conflict*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2014.

Alterman, Jon B. “The Other Side of the World: China, the United States, and the Struggle for Middle East Security”, CSIS report, March 14, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/other-side-world-china-united-states-and-struggle-middle-east-security>

Goldstein, Lyle J. “Persian Spring: The Middle East and US-China Relations”. In *Meeting China Halfway: How to Diffuse the Emerging US-China Rivalry*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011.

Current Political Relations between China and the Egyptian Government Bazanova E.A., Kudelin A.A., Semenova. E.I. China - Egypt Bilateral Relations under Mubarak (1981-2011) // RUDN Journal of World History. - 2018. - Vol. 10. - N. 1. - P. 70-78. doi: 10.22363/2312-8127-2018-10-1-70-78

Elena Bazanova and Andrey Kudelin of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia discuss the expansion of Sino-Egyptian relations under Hosni Mubarak's rule between 1981 and 2011. Mubarak's economic reforms in Egypt coincided with Deng Xiaoping's Open Door policy. This convergence created conditions that allowed China to export its model of economic development to Egypt.

Sun Degang & Yahia H. Zoubir, “China's Economic Diplomacy towards the Arab Countries: challenges ahead?,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 24.95 (2015): 903- 921, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2015.1013379

This paper discusses the “business-first” nature of Chinese relations with the Arab world in the decade leading to the Arab Spring revolts. Sun and Zoubir make the claim that this approach may prove ineffective in the long term, as China will find it impossible to avoid political entanglement.

Chang IW.J. , 2014. Chinese Policies on the Arab Spring. In: Mason R. (eds) *The International Politics of the Arab Spring*. The Modern Muslim World. Palgrave Macmillan, New York

In her scholarly chapter, I-wei Jennifer Chang of the United States Institute of Peace makes the argument that the Arab Spring did not change China's strategic calculus in the MENA region. Beijing swiftly established relations with the new governments in power, so there was no significant harm to its economic and financial interests in the region.

Chaziza, Mordechai. “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: A New Stage in China–Egypt Relations”. *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 20.3 (2016): 41–50. In his scholarly

work, Mordechai Chaziza of Israel's Interdisciplinary Center analyzes the emergence of robust Sino-Egyptian relations since Al-Sisi's rise to power during the 2013 coup. Chaziza attributes this phenomenon to China recognizing the opportunities of Egypt's strategic location amid the relative decline in US influence in the region. That being said, Chaziza concludes that closer political and economic ties between China and Egypt don't threaten US interests.

Sino-Egyptian Economic Relations

Gadallah, Yasser M. An Analysis of the Evolution of Sino-Egyptian Economic Relations. In book: *Toward Well-Oiled Relations? China's Presence in the Middle East Following the Arab Spring*. Ed. by Horesh N. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Pp. 94-115. In his work, Gadallah describes Egypt's close economic ties with China as exceptional, even when compared to China's other close partners on the African continent. Gadallah summarizes the history of Chinese investment and trade in Egypt, and provides his outlook for future growth.

Chaziza, Mordechai. "The Chinese Maritime Silk Road Initiative: The Role of the Mediterranean." *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 29.2 (2018):54-69. Project MUSE, muse.jhu.edu/article/696570.

In this scholarly article, Chaziza discusses the growing relevance of the Mediterranean as a major distribution hub of Chinese goods traded with the European Union (China's biggest trading partner). Chaziza examines the investments of Chinese firms like CHEC and COSCO in Egypt's Suez Canal Corridor Project, analyzing these business ventures in the context of China's OBOR initiative.

Scott, E. "China-Egypt trade and investment ties – seeking a better balance". Centre for Chinese Studies. Policy Briefing 6.1 (2015).

In her work, Emma Scott of South Africa's Stellenbosch University, discusses the phenomena of growing Sino-Egyptian trade through the lens of Egypt's trade deficit relative to China, which has increased since the early 2000's. Scott highlights the negative consequences of this Egypt's trade imbalance, like its negative impact on the country's current account deficit.

Examples of Soft Power - Social and Cultural Exchanges between China and Egypt

Drewes, Frauke. "Chinese Muslims Going Global? The Role of Islam in Current Sino-Arab Relations." *China's South-South Relations* 42 (2013): 63-77.

In his article, Drewes analyzes the Chinese state's promotion of cultural exchange visits by Chinese-Muslims to Muslim majority countries as a form of soft-power diplomacy. Drewes explores China's practice of coopting its Muslim citizens as Arabic

language interpreters and cultural ambassadors, especially amid widespread criticism of Chinese repression of its Muslim minority in the Xinjiang province.

Sari, Mahdi. "The Confucius Institute at Suez Canal University: A Tool in China's Public Diplomacy." Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, 2017. Sari's paper discusses the establishment of a Confucius institute in Egypt's Suez Canal University. Sari concluded that this specific Confucius institute was established with the goal of improving educated Egyptians' perceptions of China through the study of

Chinese culture and language. The establishment of a Confucius institute in the city of Suez is unsurprising, as the city contains a Chinese-built special economic zone which has attracted more than 60 Chinese firms.

Other resources (added by RM)

Olimat, Muhamad S. "China's Reaction to the Arab Spring". In *China and the Middle East: From Silk Road to Arab Spring*. London: Routledge, 2013.