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[热点透视] 对美国民主制度的再思考

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FOCAL TOPIC: Rethinking Democracy in the U. S.

Why Was it Possible for Donald Trump to Win the Election?

A Historical Reflection on the 2016 U. S. Presidential Election Wang Xi (9)

The 2016 U. S. presidential election was regarded as the most fiercely fought, emotionally charged and divisive contest for power in recent years. Donald J. Trump, a political “outsider” who was least favored by the media and pre-election opinion polls, won a surprise election victory. What made it possible for Trump to win the presidency? How did he manage to win the election? Was his election an accidental success or was it the result of the instigation of more in-depth forces as embedded in the electoral system and the electoral culture? This article takes a historical perspective to examine the election of Trump by looking at some of the more profound causes, including the professional- and elite-operated electoral process, the increasingly polarized party politics and frequent legislative deadlocks in recent decades, the confrontations of divided American core values in the age of globalization, and the subsequent realignment of voters as derived from the reconfiguration of political power and the reconstitution of rights for modern citizenship. The author argues that each of these factors had played a role in shaping the outcomes of the presidential election and has posed challenges to American democracy in the 21st century.

A Divided America Zhang Yi (30)

The U. S. 2016 general election shows that America is deeply divided, with Trump and Clinton being the least favourable candidates of the two parties in history. Income inequality has become appalling in recent years; The richest 1% of the families now make on average more than 20 times the average of the remaining 99%. Race relations have generally improved in the past decades, but Obama’s election in 2008 and re-election in 2012 have also triggered a negative, racist response. The influence of alt-right and other white supremacist groups is on the rise. Culturally, while LGBTQ and abortion continue to divide the electorate, the values gap has also widened between the highly educated cultural elite and the less well educated white working class. All these explain the emergence of a profoundly divided society, but President Trump, with his anti-establishment and divisive

rhetoric and policies during the campaign and since the election, is the main reason why the United States today is more divided than at any time since the Vietnam War.

Contemporary Transition of American Political

Culture *Pan Yaling* (44)

Within 30 years after the end of the Cold War, the people in the U. S. has experienced a drastic swing from exciting “end of history” to annoying “Republic of Fear.” America is undergoing a historic transition, which greatly affects American political culture, moving it from traditional consensus building to extremist confrontation. Such changes are reflected in all three dimensions of political culture, namely, political value, political institution and political behaviour. Current wave of transition of American political culture further amplifies the impacts of US institutional rigidity and social fragmentation on the culture itself. Considering the fact that the U. S. is facing a reversion of American development trajectory, there are huge uncertainties both in the transition of American political culture and in American domestic and foreign policies.

ARTICLES

Labor, the Market, and the US All-Volunteer

Force *Beth Bailey* (60)

In 1973, the United States ended its 33 year reliance on military conscription and moved to an All Volunteer Force (AVF). While there were multiple reasons for this shift, many of those who designed the transition rejected the idea that military “service” was an obligation of citizenship, insisting that it should instead be defined as labour. In this design, military ranks would be filled, like other forms of employment, through the labour market. The Army turned, by necessity, to the market, and in often creative ways. But the loss of the draft was difficult for the Army. In the wake of the war in Vietnam, an institution that was wracked by internal crisis and held in poor public esteem needed to recruit between thirty and forty thousand people each month. Army leaders undertook internal reforms and commissioned high profile advertising campaigns. Relying on the labour market, the Army discovered that “some of [its] best men were women,” and that African Americans (who suffered in the civilian labor market) were more likely to enlist than white Americans. But the overall “quality” of recruits declined throughout the 1970s and—as geopolitical tensions escalated in 1979—leaders saw an Army in crisis. That was due in part to in-

creasing distance from the Vietnam war, to the rising patriotism in Reagan's America, and to the Army's reduction in targeted end strength. But it was also because the Army, using a labour market model, targeted desirable recruits with benefits, such as college tuition, meant to attract them. But the turn to the market, the repositioning of military service as an opportunity rather than an obligation, created a fundamental tension between the offer of benefits and the possible demands of war. Furthermore, by replacing the logic of citizen's obligation with that of the market and defining soldiering as employment, the system excuses citizens from their basic obligation to pay attention to what is done in their name and of acting, as citizens, whether to support or to prevent US military actions.

Factors Influencing U. S. Energy Decision Making: A Case Study on the Keystone XL Pipeline Zhao Xingshu (77)

Keystone XL pipeline system is not simply an important energy infrastructure project. It reflects the special political reality of the United States. In the past 10 years, TransCanada Corporation's first two applications for the pipeline were rejected by the Obama Administration and the third one won approval smoothly and quickly in only two months after Trump came into power. In the course of making decisions by the US for the Keystone XL pipeline project, there are several factors affecting the decision-making, including technical, institutional and political ones, which are interrelated and interacting. In the future, the Keystone XL pipeline will face a number of further challenges, coming from federal laws and regulations, Nebraska state permission, lower oil prices, and competing pipelines.

An Examination on American Education Reform: A Case Study of "Save Our Neighbourhood School" Campaign Cai Hong (95)

From 2009 to 2010, due to the local school district's budget problems, four elementary public schools were at the risk of closure in Lawrence, Kansas, in the Midwest of America, and this started a "Save Our Neighbourhood School" campaign. Benefitted from the sociability of America's education system, open information, people's awareness and participation, effective communication among different ethnic groups, as well as campaign organizers' competent conflict management strategies and capabilities, the four schools were saved. This case, however, shows that ample public fund plays a very important role in securing the sustainable development of American public school education. So, the scholarship tax credit policy, promoted by the Trump administration, will probably meet with difficulties due to its innate weakness that overlooks the differences in American public districts and by nature has reduced the education fund for American public

schools.

Debates on the No-First-Use Pledge of the Obama

Administration *Yuan Xinyi* (112)

Since the end of the Cold War, US has retained the option of initiating a nuclear attack in its nuclear strategy. Unfortunately, although there were No-First-Use initiatives, all of them have failed, including President Obama's two efforts. Obama made consideration of No-First-Use pledge based on not only his political needs, but also his judgment of security threats. The opponents have partially endorsed Obama's judgment, but they stressed that the United States would need to retain the option of First Use of nuclear weapons in case U. S. conventional military is at a disadvantage in some certain regions. Actually, both supporters and opponents have ignored intrinsic requirements of the war-fighting nuclear strategy of retaining the preemptive or first strike capability. In fact, these two points are the key reasons why Obama has failed to promote the No-First-Use pledge.

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