

## Editors' Preface

This volume is a record of the workshop series entitled, “International Workshop for Trans-Asian Academic Communication,” held in January and February 2021, organized by Asia-Japan Research Institute, Ritsumeikan University.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which spread rapidly across the world in the spring of 2020, put many researchers in a challenging situation. In the area of field science, many researchers had to cancel their field surveys, and were unable to travel to participate in academic conferences overseas. From the very early stage of the pandemic, the Asia-Japan Research Institute has been seeking ways to continue research activities and have academic exchanges with researchers abroad, even when overseas travel is impossible. The international workshops held in January and February 2021 are some of the fruits of such efforts.

In this workshop, early-career scholars in Middle Eastern studies gave their presentations and engaged in lively discussions on how to understand politics, society, and ideologies in the Arab East. Coming ten years after the Arab Uprising, it was the perfect time to discuss the political, social, and cultural transformations in the region. Although not all the presenters mention the Uprising directly, all the presentations included in the booklet deal with the transformations that have happened in this region in the last decade. As a valuable record of our attempt to seek academic exchange under the pandemic, we decided to publish the contents of the selected presentations.

We organized two workshops under the series of “International Workshop for Trans-Asian Academic Communication.” The first

workshop, “Understanding Political Quandaries in the Modern Arab East” was held on January 26 and the second one, “Ideologies and Social Movements in the Modern Arab East” was held on February 2.

Although we cannot list all their names here, we received tremendous support from many people in organizing the workshop and publishing the booklet. First of all, we would like to show our deepest gratitude for those who all participated and engaged actively in the workshop, especially Dr. Susann Kassem from the University of Oxford, Dr. Nate George from SOAS University of London, and Prof. Takuro Kikkawa from Ritsumeikan Asia-Pacific University, Japan.

The first workshop was held with the cooperation of Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan. We would like to show our deepest gratitude to the Director of the Foundation, Ms. Junko Chano. Thanks to the fellowship program provided by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Shun Watanabe, one of the editors, had an opportunity to engage in research at the University of Oxford for two years, which later became the basis of this workshop. Our sincere gratitude also goes to Prof. Eugene Rogan from the University of Oxford, who supported his research life while in the UK and assisted in organizing this event.

This series of workshops was also supported by the research grant of Asia-Japan Research Institute to organize international academic gatherings. Prof. Yasushi Kosugi, the director of Asia-Japan Research Institute has been extremely supportive in organizing this workshop. Prof. Anthony Brewer, Dr. Toshiyuki Takeda, and Mr. Tahei Okamoto have made enormous efforts to edit and publish this volume. Dr. Ammar Khashan provided technical support for organizing the workshop online.

At the time of the workshop, we did not know when this difficult health emergency would end. We have tried to continue exploring new forms of research as building new friendships was essential in our research activities, even under the circumstances in which people rarely

meet face to face and have difficulty in traveling.

After two years, the situation has improved markedly. However, we are not back in the pre-Covid era but seem to have started living in the post-Covid one. We must carry the lessons of those pandemic years, when we tried to establish a new style of research life, into the next period. We hope that the fruits of our efforts in that era remain meaningful in the post-Covid era as well.

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## Dr. Ayaka KURODA



Chapter 4: Questioning Secular Modernity:  
The Political Visions of Islamic Intellectuals  
in Egypt and their Quest for the Civil  
Society

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Rights: The Reconstruction of Political Thought in Egyptian Moderate  
Islamic Trend” (*Orient: Journal of the Society for Near Eastern Studies  
in Japan*, (56), 2021, pp. 121–140) ; “Rethinking Discussions on ‘Islam’  
and ‘State’ in Contemporary Egypt: The Community Based Approach  
in Ṭāriq al-Bishrī’s Political and Legal Thought” (*Annals of Japan  
Association for Middle East Studies*, 34 (2), 2019, pp. 1–34).

## Contributors

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Chapter 1: Transformation of the Ruling Coalition in Contemporary Jordan: Implications from the Process of Decentralization

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