

BOOK REVIEW

Politics, Military Affairs and Social Movements in Jordan: Regime-Security Frameworks for the Survival of the Kingdom

Takuro KIKKAWA, Kyoto: Koyo Shobo, 2020*

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Jordan marked the centennial of its survival as a nation on April 12, 2021. The resource-poor country has maintained its stability in an unstable region of the Mashreq (Arab East) while facing serious regional challenges, including the Iraq War, the Arab Spring, the civil war in Syria, and the rise of the Islamic State (IS). This book addresses the question of how Jordan has survived in the face of numerous domestic and international challenges and created a solid ruling regime under Hashemite kings.

The author, Professor Takuro Kikkawa, has studied Jordanian politics intensively for more than 20 years. In his first book, *Islamic Politics and Nation State: Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan* (2007, Nakanishiya Shuppan; in Japanese), he examined the development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan in comparison to the case of the Brotherhood in Egypt. Since then, his exploration of Jordanian politics has expanded beyond the Muslim Brotherhood to include diverse actors and topics that influence Jordanian politics and the survival of the monarchy. This book is a compilation of his efforts in these years in examining various aspects of Jordanian politics.

The contents of the book are as follows:

Introduction: Paradox of a Strong “Weak State”

Chapter 1: History of State Creation: Discussion over the Legitimacy of the Hashemite Monarchy

Chapter 2: Strength of the Political Regime: Case of the “Arab Spring”

Chapter 3: Another Side of Jordanian History: Development of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement

Chapter 4: Social Movement: Whether Jordanian “Arab Spring” has ended or not

Chapter 5: Structure of the “Army of the His Royal Highness” in the Buffer State

Chapter 6: Development Assistance and National Security: Case of Japan’s ODA to Jordan

Conclusion: Present and Future of the Ruling Regime

* 吉川卓郎 『ヨルダンの政治・軍事・社会運動：倒れない王国の模索』 晃洋書房

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In the introductory chapter, the author proposes his overall argument and the structure of this book. He examines the question of how the Jordanian state has been able to maintain its independence and order, and the ruling Hashemite monarchy has maintained their control, despite numerous disadvantages. To achieve this aim, the author introduces the concept of regime security, “the condition where governing elites are secure from violent challenges to their rule, and the unique security dilemma facing many developing countries” (Jackson, Richard. 2015. “Regime Security,” in Alan Collins ed., *Contemporary Security Studies*, 4th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 200-214). This concept allows the author to examine the multidimensional challenges that the Jordanian state and its regime have been facing.

Chapter 1 examines the early history of Jordan to demonstrate the process by which the Hashemite monarchy gained its legitimacy to rule. The author illustrates how the Hashemite monarchs developed political and social institutions and laid the foundations for a modern nation-state, while interacting with domestic and international actors.

Chapter 2 turns our eyes to recent political dynamics in the country, namely those related to the Arab Spring. This chapter analyzes how the Jordanian monarchy survived the pro-democracy movements in 2011. It reveals the resilience of the existing ruling institutions to the social uprisings, while also referring to the gradual transformation of the power relations within Jordanian politics due to the course of events in 2011.

In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the author examines the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan. Chapter 3 traces the history of the movement, and its transformation in response to the domestic and regional dynamics, including the restored parliamentary politics and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Chapter 4 then focuses on the role of the social factions in the pro-democracy movements in Jordan, with specific attention to the role of the Muslim Brotherhood, the main challenger to the Jordanian monarchy’s regime security. The chapter highlights how the Muslim Brotherhood reacted to the changing situations in the Arab Spring and transformed itself in the course of the events following the uprisings. The author eventually demonstrates that Jordan’s social movements in non-institutional politics today entered into an era of reorganization.

Chapter 5 examines the role of the Jordanian army in the regime’s security in Jordan. This chapter traces the historical development of the army and analyzes Jordan’s national security. These analyses are followed by a case study, which examines how Jordan perceived and addressed the Islamist movements as a threat to its national security.

Chapter 6 examines the development of Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy towards Jordan. This chapter not only examines Japan’s policy developments, but also analyzes the Japanese ODA’s influence on Jordanian and regional societies, who were facing region-wide destabilizing factors, including the Iraq war, the Arab Spring and the rise of the Islamic State (IS).

In the concluding chapter, the author summarizes the findings and the argument of each chapter and presents his views on the Jordanian state and its regime today. He argues that Jordan has become a moderate buffer state during the continuous regional changes, and that this eventually led the country into its current dilemma: it must address the continuous inflow of refugees while suppressing dangerous state/non-state actors by force.

The book is a novel contribution that addresses post-Arab Spring Jordanian politics. There is a growing body of work contributing to this field, but the number of monographs that examine the issue

is quite limited even in the case of publications in English. Therefore, this book will be an essential reference for those who study Jordanian politics today.

Compared with existing works on post-Arab Spring Jordanian politics written in English, this book has two significant advantages. The first is the author's deep insight into the development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. Based on his continuous examination of the movement, which has appeared in an article in English as well¹, he analyzes the current political struggles of the Brotherhood in Jordan in a historical and regional context. Furthermore, the book's broad focus on multiple dimensions of Jordanian politics is worth mentioning. The book examines various issues of regime security in Jordan, across the state and the society, domestically and internationally. It is a sharp contrast to the conventional works on Jordanian politics, which are thematically divided, including the themes of democratization, nationalism, foreign policy, and social movements. Such an inclusive feature of the book will help readers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Jordanian politics today.

1 Takuro, Kikkawa. 2012. "A Turbulent Decade between the Jordanian Government and the Muslim Brotherhood," *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, 5-1&2, pp. 61-77.