Abstract

Revisiting the Co-optation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood by the Ḥusnī Mubārak Regime

Takayuki Yokota

The aim of this article is to re-examine the co-optation of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood by the Ḥusnī Mubārak regime. The Mubārak regime often suppressed the Brotherhood, the largest Islamist organization in Egypt, and continued to ensure its illegal status because of the regime's fear that it might emerge as a political challenger. The Brotherhood was excluded from the formal political sphere and obtained fewer selective incentives than the co-opted legal opposition parties. However, the Brotherhood tolerated this suppression and refrained from all-out confrontation with the regime.

Why did the Brotherhood acquiesce in the rules of the game as set by the regime? In order to explore this question, I divided the activities of the Brotherhood into two categories: social and political. While the political activities of the Brotherhood were illegal and prohibited in principle, its social activities were legal and allowed in the formal social sphere. Within the Brotherhood, its social activities were regarded as major and prior to the political ones, and they formed the structural base of the organization. Furthermore, most leaders of the Brotherhood had been engaged in these social activities. As a result, the Brotherhood regarded the legal status of its social activities as selective incentives, so it played within the regime's rules.

Abstract

State-Islamist Relations in Jordan: The 2011 Democratization Movements and the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood

Takuro Kikkawa

Why couldn't the wave of protests in Jordan during the Arab Spring sweep away the government? The aim of this article is to explore the dynamics of state-society relations in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with special reference to the biggest Islamist organization, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. Prior to the Arab Spring, the Brotherhood had reached a political deadlock because of the government's changing foreign and economic policies since the 1990s. Thus, when nationwide democratization movements began in Jordan, the Brotherhood tried to maximize its political voice by launching an anti-government campaign and demanding the introduction of a constitutional monarchy.

The Brotherhood and other opposition organizations shared core demands such as political reform and anti-corruption. However, they lacked solidarity. On the other hand, the government successfully involved major social forces in their government-led reforms by selectively accepting opposition demands and then seeking to split the opposition. Brotherhood leaders soon found themselves on the streets and left behind the other opposition groups.

The sudden changes in Jordan in early 2011 shook the monarchy's legitimacy for a short period and encouraged the Brotherhood to delude themselves that they had sufficient power to openly challenge the government and become the real power in Jordanian society. Since its failed mass mobilizations, though, the Brotherhood has kept away from the Amman power game.

Abstract

Islamic Extremists in Mashriq: The Future of Terrorism as a Political Action

Yutaka Takaoka

After the "Arab Spring," there were some optimistic arguments concerning the future of Islamic extremism, but these arguments tended to miss two important points regarding this issue. The first is that the extremists' use of armed struggle through terrorism should be considered as a violent pattern of political action. The second is that the series of political changes in Arab countries does not automatically distance extremists and their supporters from terrorism.

The article tries to reveal the responses and perspectives of Islamic extremists who are active or have influence in the Mashriq region (the East Arab region) with respect to the recent political changes. To achieve this purpose, the author examined the statements and activities made public by these extremist organizations and activists in the period between 2011 and the beginning of 2012.

Judging from the article, the tendency of the majority among these organizations and activists maintaining their traditional outlook on the world has become clear. In line with this trend, Islamic extremists seemed to be behaving opportunistically or taking advantage of the current political disorder. These responses suggest that even after the "Arab Spring," the circumstances which led Islamic extremists to choose armed struggle have not essentially changed. In particular, the "Arab Spring" could not provide anticipated improvements in the effectiveness of the legitimate political process within Arab societies.

Hence, to foresee the future of these extremists, one should pay more attention to their international, political, and social environments than to events in the short term.

Dilemma of the Contemporary Mexican Left: The Case of Informal Politics between the Leftist Party, Social Movements and Indigenous Migrants in Mexico City

Hiroyuki Ukeda

The Mexican left, like those of many other Latin American countries, is struggling to build a new identity to differentiate itself from both the neoliberal realists and its own old-fashioned practices. However, the main leftist political party, the PRD, has remained the second or third force in the national political scene after the right-wing party, the PAN, and the formerly hegemonic, corporativist party, the PRI. Moreover, the social movements of Mexico, their rich traditions notwithstanding, could not pave the way for a novel form of "doing politics," such as that exemplified by the participatory democracy that has been established in several Brazilian cities. To explain the challenges of the Mexican left, we focus on the role of informal politics, i.e., politics related to informal economic activities, which can have a variety of dynamics when leftist actors are involved. The case chosen for our field research is the relationship observed in Mexico City between the vote-seeking PRD and support-seeking indigenous migrants, as mediated by UPREZ, one of the most important organizations belonging to the Urban Popular Movements, which were founded by radical activists with a revolutionary orientation in the 1960s and 70s but were then transformed into a popular base for some internal factions of the PRD. Such an informal politics has maintained its presence by making flexible use of different strategies: 1) protests against non-left governments, 2) clientelistic exchanges with local governments in the capital, and 3) the promotion of democratization. However, the advantages derived from these strategies' flexible and improvisatorial nature tend to hinder the institutionalization of new democratic practices, since this requires open and transparent political participation beyond simply the mobilization of specific groups.

Abstract

Energy Saving and CO_2 Emission Reductions in the Chinese Iron and Steel Industry

Nozomu Kawabata and Yang Zhao

There is a strong correlation between energy consumption and CO_2 emissions in the iron and steel industry. Both of these variables are determined by the volume of steel production, technology, and energy efficiency within any specific technological system. In the Chinese iron and steel industry, the implementation of several measures is in progress. This includes the installation of modern and large-scale facilities, the introduction of energy-saving equipment, and the shutdown of small-scale facilities. Disadvantages relating to the energy efficiency of "Major Enterprises" are being reduced. The issue of small-scale facilities is moving toward a resolution. However, a very large amount of crude steel production and a system of technology that has high pig-iron intensity are becoming the major determinants of increased energy consumption and CO_2 emissions. Although the Chinese government is engaged in improving energy efficiency and in capping production volumes, these policies will not be effective without a radical restructuring of China's economy. Even if such changes were to be realized, reducing the total amount of energy consumption and CO_2 emissions by 2020 would be difficult. Given this situation, effective policies for energy saving and CO_2 emission reduction will involve breakthroughs in iron-making technology, extending the range of applications for scrap-EAF (electric arc furnace) technology, and further depression of crude steel production. In terms of technical co-operation between Japan and China, priority should be shifted from the transfer of available technologies to a Japan-China partnership that relates to effective policies like these.