

Civil war and the plight of a modern Arab republic: Syria in area study's perspective

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Place of fieldwork: Jordan

Name: Minako Muranaka

Key Words: The civil war in Syria, International relations, Syrian refugees

- Research background

The civil war in Syria is currently one of the most serious issues in the Middle East. The modern state of Syria was established based on the system of the nation-state following French colonial rule. The structural contradictions arose during the process of its establishment. In addition, there are political, economic, and social contradictions that have accumulated during the rule of the Ba'ath party for about 40 years. These contradictions have now manifested themselves as a civil war related to the transformation of both international and Middle Eastern politics in the global era.

- Research purpose and aim

The purpose of this study is to clarify the reasons for the civil war in Syria and describe what is actually happening. For this purpose we need to analyze comprehensively the structural contradictions, and to consider any interrelationship with the transformation of politics inside and outside the Middle East. In addition, considering people's lives under the long-term dictatorship and the current situation whereby a large number of people have been killed or uprooted from their homes, it is important to examine how people's lives have been transformed.

- Results and achievements of fieldwork

I conducted fieldwork in Jordan where there are a number of Syrian refugees. On this occasion, I visited refugees' homes in the capital city, Amman, to see how they live there and to hear from them about the civil war, to see it from their points of view. I also visited Zaatari refugee camp in Mafrak located in northern Jordan and got to know the refugees' current situation by looking around the camp and observing classes in a school.



(Photo 1: Children in a refugee family)



(Photo 2: In Zaatari refugee camp)

In addition to these visits, I collected some books and tried to improve my Arabic skills during my stay. Having completed this fieldwork in Jordan, which borders Syria, I may say that I witnessed a part of the Syrian civil war.



(Photo 3: In a book store in Amman)

- Implications for and impacts on future research

Considering the security situation, it does not seem to be feasible to enter Syria in the immediate future. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how I can carry out worthwhile research under these circumstances. Though I conducted fieldwork in Jordan this time, the question that arises is how to get information in the countries around Syria, and how to use it. I have studied and analyzed the structural contradictions of the civil war in Syria until now, and I will continue my study using the information I acquired through the fieldwork in order to broaden my research.