

International Workshop
Syrian Civil War:
Comparative Perspectives with Lebanese and Yugoslavian Civil Wars

Date: Saturday, February 2, 2019

Venue: The Library Hall, Izumi Campus, Meiji University

1-9-1 Eifuku, Suginami-ku, Tokyo 168-8555, JAPAN

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Program:

- 13:00 Opening the doors
- 13:30-13:50 Hidemitsu Kuroki (ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)
 “Preamble: Syrian civil war in comparative perspectives”
- 13:50-14:30 Dima de Clerck (Saint Joseph University, Beirut)
 “The war on civilians: Living and surviving on a daily basis
 during a ‘civil’ war”
- 14:30-15:10 Danilo Mandić (Harvard University)
 “War, camps, and Syrian refugees: Precedents and politics”
- 15:10-15:30 Coffee Break
- 15:30-16:10 Karim Makdisi (American University of Beirut)
 “Reflecting international order: United Nations interventions
 during the Lebanese and Syrian civil wars”
- 16:10-16:50 Andrey Edemskiy (Institute for Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of
 Sciences, Moscow)
 “Russia’s foreign policy from passive embedding into the unipolar
 world to active actions in a multipolar international community:
 The example of post-Yugoslav space and Syria (1991 – the present)”
- 16:50-17:10 Coffee Break
- 17:10-18:00 Comments by Tetsuya Sahara (Meiji University) followed by
 general discussion

Chair: Kenichiro Takao (ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

Language: English

Participation Fee: Free

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Resumé of the Workshop

Leaving half of the total population in the predicament of refugees and displacement inside and outside of the country, the Syrian civil war is still going on. During the past seven years, the war has transformed drastically. Starting as a confrontation between nonviolent popular protesters and the authoritarian government, it emerged into urban warfare between rebels and governmental forces, and then into a sort of proxy war, resulting in a de facto military partitioning by various powers, for one, the Assad regime. Foreign interventions have been unrestrained, and tens of thousands of militia gathered from around the world. Although the regime’s power survived and succeeded in controlling a vast number of the remaining population, full-scale reconstruction and national reconciliation are still far out of the realm of possibility.

How can we interpret this highly multi-faceted and metamorphosing war that involves and raises various questions on ethnicity, sectarianism, Islamic radicalism, population movement, the urban-rural divide, environmental disaster, and other issues?

The significant complexity of this war’s features may be attributed to the area’s multiplex structure and its centuries-long history of overcrowding interactions among various local and international powers. A multi-layered model representing its kaleidoscopic dynamism would be effective in understanding this chaotic situation, which has emerged during years of conflict. However, such a model might not be adequate to foresee Syria’s post-war stages. We need empirical studies of civil wars from comparative perspectives.

Despite certain differences from the Syrian civil war, the cases of Lebanon (1975–1990) and Yugoslavia (1991–2000) deserve consideration in exploring Syria’s future, especially its post-war processes in political, economic, and social spheres. The three countries have

common historical experiences of Ottoman rule and backgrounds of ethnic and religious diversity. During their wars, cantonization and ethnic genocidal killings took place. Foreign powers could not achieve diplomatic settlement and intervened militarily. Large-scale forced migration and displacement occurred.

In addition, the three wars are interrelated: Syria intervened in Lebanon's civil war; the end of the Cold War caused the end of civil war in Lebanon and started Yugoslavia's; a significant number of Jihadists from Lebanon and Yugoslavia participated in Syrian warfare.

At this workshop, specialists on Lebanese and Yugoslavian civil wars will present their insights and exchange their views on Syria's current civil war based on the points mentioned above.

Hidemitsu Kuroki