



Environmental Politics in Egypt: Activists, Experts and the State (Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics)

Jeannie Sowers

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Drawing on extensive fieldwork conducted in Egypt from the late 1990s to 2011, this book shows how experts and activists used distinctive approaches to influence state and firm decision-making in three important environmental policy domains. These include; industrial pollution from large-scale industry, the conservation of threatened habitat, and water management of the irrigation system.

These cases show how environmental networks sought to construct legal, discursive, and infrastructural forms of authority within the context of a fragmented state apparatus and a highly centralized political regime. 'Managerial networks', composed of environmental scientists, technocrats, and consultants, sought to create new legal regimes for environmental protection and to frame environmental concerns so that they would appeal to central decision-makers. Activist networks, in contrast, emerged where environmental pollution or exclusion from natural resources threatened local livelihoods and public health. These networks publicized their concerns and mobilized broader participation through the creative use of public space, media coverage, and strategic use of existing state-sanctioned organizations.

With the increased popular mobilization of the 2000s, and the mass protests of the 2011 revolution, environmental politics has become highly topical. Expert and activist networks alike have sought to broaden their appeal and diversify their approaches. The result may well be a more contested, participatory, and dynamic phase in Egyptian environmentalism.

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