

**Nicholas S. Hopkins, Scohair R. Mehanna and Salahel-Haggar. 2001. People and Pollution: Cultural Constructions and Social Action in Egypt. The American University in Cairo Press; Cairo and New York. xxiii + 192 pp. Hardcover Price: US\$ 27.50.**

Policy making with regard to environmental issues in developing countries often misses the role or contribution of the ordinary citizens to the process of environmental protection and natural resource conservation. The academics, scholars, government officials, politicians and elites are those usually consulted on matters such as this. Hopkins Mehanna's and el-Haggar's book on environmental degradation in Egypt demonstrates how ordinary citizens' input can become the backbone of environmental policy and actions.

This book concentrates on issues that focus on the environmental problems of Egypt. The specific concerns of the authors are garbage, sewage, dirty streets, air quality, pesticide use and noise pollution. This book is a case study of environmental issues of Egypt from the standpoint of what the authors deem pertinent to understanding the environmental concerns of the ordinary people of Egypt.

The authors' approach in writing this book is in the "problem solving" format. The book contains eight chapters: In chapter 1, the authors address the issues of "Environmental Change and Social Response in Egypt. They identified the problem of the study which was to analyze the feeling and experiences of citizens of Egypt especially the urbanites. The book concentrates on the life experiences of Egyptians. The second chapter deals upon the methodology of the study and covers basic procedures of research question, research sites, sampling and data analysis. In the third chapter, the authors describe the measuring of pollution in Egypt while the fourth chapter describes the environmental conditions in Egypt. It is in the fifth chapter that the authors attempt to put together a cultural construction of the Egyptian environment and the pollution problem faced by some areas in the country. The authors' ranks the concerns of the citizens who participated in the study and provide the reader with what the participants think causes the pollution problem. In chapter six, the consequences of the environmental pollution are examined with respect health effects of reported illnesses, sports and smoking, healthcare and insurance. The seventh chapter is about the politics of environmental actions. This is a brief discussion of how and what the government does to battle pollution and how citizens can take action. The final and eighth chapter discusses the topic of sustainability and the cultural model of the environment in Egypt.

This book satisfies the local knowledge in Egypt as to what the immediate concerns of environmental pollution are. It presents an interesting way of studying pollution in a developing

country. However, the book does not provide enough theoretical discussion on key issues of the environment, sustainability and development. It appears that the book is not a place to look for theoretical explanations of phenomena or events related to sustainability, development or environment. It is informative in the sense that it provides a case study of aspects of environmental problems in Egypt. It is recommended only for libraries. It would certainly serve as a resource/reference book for case study approaches to environmental issues.

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