



Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters: Encountering the Everyday State

By Salwa Ismail

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Since the 1970s, Cairo has experienced tremendous growth and change. Nearly three million people now live in new urban communities characterized by unregulated housing, informal economic activity, and the presence of Islamist groups. Salwa Ismail examines the effects of these changes in *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters*. Working in Cairo, Ismail interviewed new quarter residents, observed daily life in markets and alleyways, met with local leaders, and talked with young men about their encounters with the government. Rich in ethnographic detail, this work reveals the city's new urban quarters as sites not only of opposition and relative autonomy, but also under governmental surveillance and discipline. In doing so, it situates the everyday within the context of wider developments in Cairo: the decline of welfarism, the shift to neoliberal government, and the rise of the security state. Original and timely, *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters* highlights the interplay of structural changes, state power, and daily governance, and presents a fascinating analysis of urban transformation and power struggles—as international forces meet local communities in a major city of the global south. Salwa Ismail is a senior lecturer in politics at the University of Exeter.

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