

“Whatever their immediate outcomes, the experience of the upheavals that began in 2011 will shape the Arab world for generations to come. What prompted youth activism in these authoritarian settings? And what accounted for the regime responses? In this rich and nuanced study, Nadine Sika draws on original surveys and interviews with young Egyptians to provide revealing insights into the impetus to political protest, the limits of both the regime’s accountability and the opposition’s aspirations, and ultimately, the prospects for political reform in the Arab world.”

Professor Lisa Anderson, The American University in Cairo

“Stepping outside the traditional frame of many studies of protest in the Middle East that focus on an elusive democratization, Nadine Sika situates her study of Egyptian youth squarely within the context of continuing authoritarianism. Bringing together insights from work on authoritarian resilience and social movement theory, this work explores the complex interaction between various forms of regime opposition among Egyptian youth and the response strategies of the Egyptian state whose structures and policies they seek to change. Examining several periods of contestation in the 2000s and then drawing on original survey and interview material collected in Egypt during the crucial 2011–2013 period, Sika’s dispassionate and nuanced study is an important contribution to our understanding of the successes and failures of the young activists who have confronted the corruption and coercion of the region’s ruling regimes.”

Professor Laurie A. Brand, University of Southern California

“Unlike much of the literature on the Arab spring, this volume not only asserts but demonstrates and analyzes the crucial role that young people have played in the protests since 2010. Empirically and

methodologically sophisticated, the study advances current debates about social movements and the renewal and resilience of authoritarian rule.”

Professor Eberhard Kienle, Institute français du Proche-Orient

“Combining a solid theoretical framework linking historical context, repertoires, and networking of social movements, to the political setting of authoritarian regimes and marshaling a wealth of data derived from a survey of seven hundred Egyptian university students and fifty-two activists, Nadine Sika offers a fresh analysis of conditions of success or failure of massive contentious challenges of repressive regimes in the Arab world. A must-read for those concerned with the problematic trajectory of Arab dignity revolts.”


Professor Mustapha Kamel al-Sayyid, Cairo University

“Nadine Sika has written a very smart book about young Egyptian activists. *Youth Activism and Contentious Politics in Egypt* taps both theories of political mobilization and the scholarly literature on authoritarian resilience and applies them to a nuanced account of the 2011 uprisings and their aftermath. Of particular value are the results – presented in both summary tables and extended direct quotations – of surveys of seven hundred Egyptian university students and in-depth interviews with over fifty activists on the context of demonstrations, repertoires of collective action, and formal and informal networks among participants.”

Professor Sheila Carapico, University of Richmond

“This book is a straight-forward, refreshing, and easy-to-read piece of fine scholarship. Theoretically, Sika bridges a long-standing divide between the contending perspectives of ‘politics from below’ and more state-centered approaches, and demonstrates why this bears greater explanatory power than either viewpoint alone. While based on a generally comparative outlook, it provides an in-depth study on Egyptian youth with recent and rare original data that today likely can no longer be gathered inside the country. *Youth Activism and Contentious Politics in Egypt* will remain a firm point of reference not only for students of Egyptian politics, it also makes for a worthwhile reading for students of contentious politics and of authoritarianism more generally.”

Professor Oliver Schlumberger, University of Tübingen



Youth Activism and Contentious Politics in Egypt

During the Arab uprisings of late 2010 and early 2011, nine regimes throughout North Africa and the Middle East were confronted by major demonstrations and contentious events. When the uprisings began in Egypt, it became evident that youth movements were going to play a large part in the uprisings themselves as well as in the ensuing political and social changes. In this book, Nadine Sika demonstrates how youth movements initiated contestation and how the regime in Egypt reacted through a display of authoritarian resilience, creating opportunities, threats to, and constraints on the ability of youth movements to mobilize and to network. On the other hand, she explores how youth movements' repertoires can cause a regime to adapt, upgrade, or downgrade its authoritarian tools in an attempt to control, coopt, or disempower the movement, highlighting how a regime's perception of a threat can propel it toward either defensive or offensive strategies.

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Dynamics of Continuity and Change

NADINE SIKA
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To Celine, Tamer, and Edward

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