
This book adapts 12 previously published articles into a cohesive volume with an extensive theoretical introduction, integrating the author's latest contributions to social movement theory, urban sociology, and Middle Eastern and Islamic studies. Chapters discuss the various strategies and tactics that ordinary people in urban areas use in their daily lives to change and reduce the negative effects of constrictive processes and structures imposed on their cultural, social, political, and economic lives. While theoretically integrated and enriched by a host of concepts from social movement theories, the topics are wide ranging. Sociologist Bayat (Leiden Univ.) is interested in agency among noncollective actors, nonmovements, and the dynamics of both subversive and constructive practices and utterances in the "political street." He contends that Middle Eastern Islam needs to be treated as the subject as well as the object of political contention. In the era of "post-Islamism," urban youth, women, and the secular middle classes are demanding a "rights-based" interpretation and implementation of Islam versus the "duty-based" expectations of Islamicists. Bayat is an innovative urban social movement theorist whose field research has contributed to a better understanding of social change in the Middle East and the theoretical significance of bottom-up movements as opposed to top-down organized political change. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.

– A. A. Mahdi, emeritus, Ohio Wesleyan University

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