



Annual Conference  
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# ARNOVA

Presents the

## 2021 Virginia A. Hodgkinson Research Book Prize

to

**Catherine Herrold**

for

### *Delta Democracy: Pathways to Incremental Civic Revolution in Egypt and Beyond*

Delta Democracy: Pathways to Incremental Civic Revolution in Egypt and Beyond by Catherine Herrold is an in-depth, longitudinal study of civil society in Egypt after the Arab Spring of 2011. It succeeds in painting an immensely detailed picture of the reality facing civil society actors and organisations on the ground during this tumultuous period. Deep knowledge of the historical context and socio-political implications are combined with an engrossing depiction of the uncertainty and constraints facing those trying to provide services and undertake collective problem-solving outside of the state. As the political environment shifts from authoritarianism to military rule to theocracy, this significant and substantive research shows how it is still possible to cultivate an active citizenry by creating spaces in which citizens can envision and articulate alternative futures.

Looking beyond the more obvious agencies working on human rights, the research reveals how small, local and service-providing organisations can be a fulcrum for democracy-building because their work enables interaction, co-operation, self-determination and collective problem solving. It convincingly argues that NGOs can provide basic services whilst also coaching people to demand better of the State.

The book is so well-written (“I couldn’t put it down” said one committee member; “Riveting” commented another) that it appeals to a wide range of readers, from those seeking to understand the basic timeline and implications of the Arab Spring, to those well-versed in that period but seeking to understand what that period means for private action and the public good in Egypt, North Africa and the global repercussions.

This is a very fine piece of research in our field, a worthy winner of the Virginia A. Hodgkinson research book prize.