

Mechanisms for the impoverishment of the Egyptian middle-class

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Abstract

There is much controversy about the middle class: about its poverty, the factors of impoverishment, its vulnerability and fragility, way of life, its crisis, erosion, departure, ambitions, dreams and its new form. In light of the rapid and successive changes, there has been a need to review the parameters of the traditional layers in general and for the middle class in particular (the site of production relations, the separation of manual and intellectual work ... etc.). Therefore, the current study aims to monitor the mechanisms of impoverishment practiced on the diverse segments of the middle class in light of the different effects of the new policies on the status of such class in Egypt, the implications of these policies on the capacities and practices of this class in the community and formulas for adjustment or resistance of the class in response to these policies. In an attempt to attain these aims, the study poses the following questions: (1) How have the new policies affected the status of the middle class in Egypt? (2) What are the mechanisms of impoverishment practiced against different segments of the middle class? (3) What forms of adaptation or resistance adopted by the middle class in response to these policies? (4) What the implications of the impoverishment of the middle class in society? the current study is guided by the approaches of class-based analysis of sites of class in society for Erik Olin Wright, especially the approach which emphasizes on how the distribution of people on the sites of class in an objective manner in light of the absence of material equality in life chances and material standards of living, the

need to understand the conditions of the middle class in terms of the dialectical relations with other classes, in terms of relations of impact and vulnerability of policies and legislations issued by the State and in the context of the nature and quality of contemporary global changes and the challenges they pose to the governments and peoples. The study concluded that if the mechanisms for the impoverishment of the Egyptian middle-class continued, the result would be brain drain or corruption forms and thus destabilize the social security, that would increase the deterioration of the performance that is already deteriorating.

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