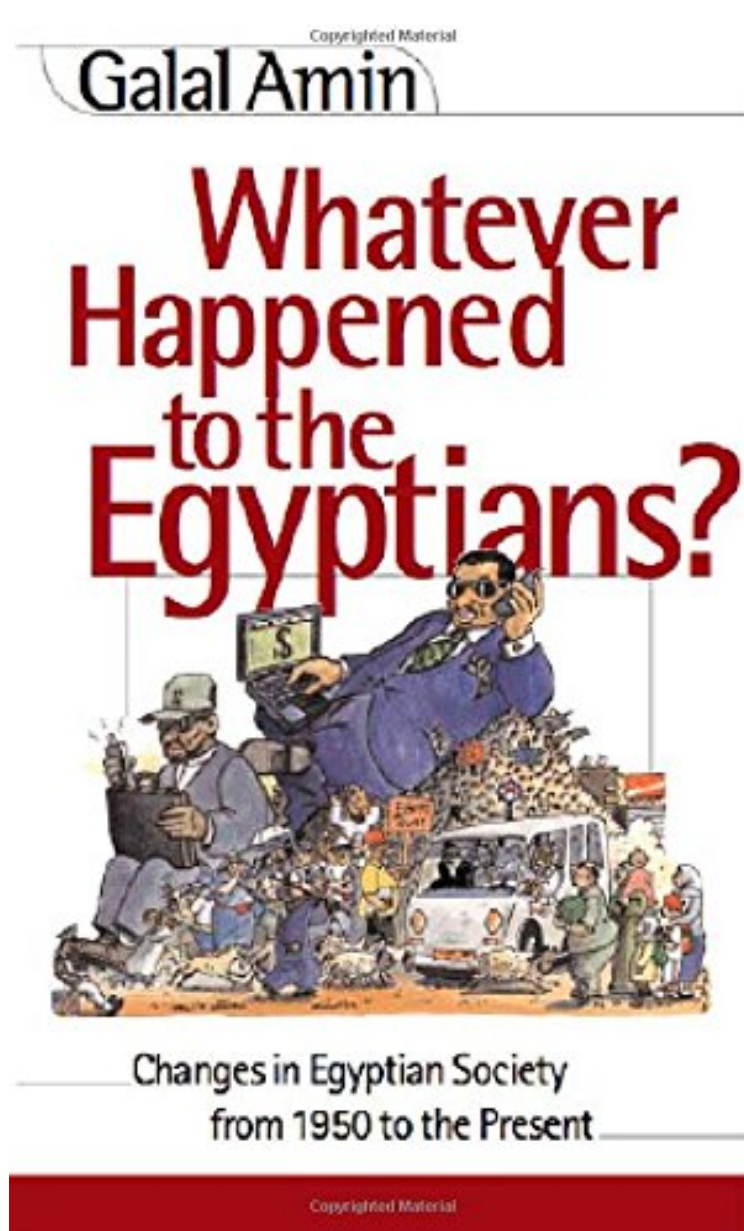


Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? Changes in Egyptian Society from 1950 to the Present

Galal Amin

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Galal Amin : Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? Changes in Egyptian Society from 1950 to the Present
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Whatever Happened to the Egyptians? Changes in Egyptian Society from 1950 to the Present:

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Not quite modern day Maqrizi but nice effortBy AAThe social history of Egypt in the Middle Ages was well documented by the legendary historian Al Maqrizi who wrote volumes of fascinating history of Egyptians, their rulers, classes and habits. In the last few hundred years starting with Edward Lane writing the social history of Egypt became dominated by the Orientalists who brought their own baggage and prejudices and often supremacist attitudes to the task. Few rare exceptions such as Cairo City Victorious defy the traditional orientalist narratives. (This can be observed from the review of the former colleague of Amin who essentially says this is just good enough for the natives if not in so many words.)Galal Amin wrote a light hearted, mostly easy to read book about the massive changes that occurred in the Egyptian society since the 1952 military coup aka The Revolution. Amin attributes much of the change in Egypt's society to a massive expansion of the middle class started under Nasser but accelerated under Sadat with the Open Door policy and the massive demand for Egyptian workers (including unskilled and semiskilled) in the oil rich Arab countries.Amin used a number of personal but very interesting yard sticks to track the changes in the society. He contrasted his university professor salary with that of the house servant. The gap narrowed significantly after 1952 and much more so after 1972 and started to widen again in recent years. Amin also addressed the role of women in the society and contrasted the changes from his mothers, to his sisters to his daughter. Remarkable change has occurred and Amin's admittedly non scientific findings correlate closely with those of Leila Ahmed (Women Gender in Islam). For many women in Egypt the headscarf serves a tool of liberation not oppression, a point almost always lost on many. Also interesting is Amin's demonstration of the reduced dependence on the state comparing the days of his father (the famous Egyptian Writer Professor Ahmad Amin) to the generations of his kids and nephews and nieces.Overall it is a really nice easy to read book, it is a compilation of different articles and research papers that mostly mesh in nicely to form a reasonably coherent whole0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Joanjust ok2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Informative and inspiring look at what happened in Egypt post the 1952 revolutionBy Khaled AggaIf you want to know how egypt changed socially and economically in the last 50 years this is the book to start from. It offers an entertaining as well as deep, board look and what happened to Egypt and how it slowly transformed to what it became now. One of the great features of Galal Amin in this book is that he maintains strict neutrality, neither supporting and attacking a certain side or group, he simply tries to relay to the reader what happened giving the reader a chance to decide for himself whether what happened was bad or good. For us young Egyptians who want to understand what the older folks are talking about when they ramble about the good old days, this is a must read. Truly entertaining.

Based on both academic research and the author's own personal experiences and impressions, this delightful and informative book examines the underlying causes of some of the more disturbing social, political, economic, and cultural phenomena that characterize Egyptian society in the 1990s.Egypt's crisis of culture and other woes are often attributed to the 'open door policy' (Infatih) initiated under President Sadat in the mid-1970s, and to the large-scale migration of Egyptian workers to the oil-rich states of the Gulf that began around the same time. Galal Amin contends, however, that these factors alone are insufficient to explain the fundamental changes in behavior and attitudes that characterize modern Egyptian life. The 'missing link,' Amin argues, lies in the social mobility unleashed by the July Revolution of 1952, which was later accelerated by Infatih and workers' migration. The sudden upward mobility and attendant prestige, self-confidence, and purchasing power of a large segment of Egyptian society and the desire to display this new-found social position as conspicuously as possible have had an enormous effect on the attitudes and allegiances of these groups.Through a fascinating and often highly entertaining examination of issues ranging from the middle class, religious fanaticism, and attitudes to the West and Western culture, to the Egyptian institution of the summer holiday by the sea and the performing arts and entertainment, Amin posits that social mobility has changed the customs and habits, moral and material values, and patterns of consumption and investment of the aspiring classes, and has, furthermore, induced the Egyptian people to ignore national and ideological issues of grave importance.This insightful book will prove a thought-provoking read for those concerned with emerging economies, international development, and privatization, and will intrigue anyone with an interest in the social history of Egypt.The Arabic edition of this book was awarded the Cairo International Book Fair Prize for the best book in Social Studies in 1998.Comments on the Arabic edition:'A rare example of combining social theory with concrete observation and intimate personal experience.... A very perceptive account of Egyptian social development with almost the impact of a dramatic creation." Abd al-Qader al-Qutt, al-Ahram, 2000."A very valuable and highly important contribution to social thought and to Egypt's social history.... A highly original and enjoyable book." Faruq Shusha, al-Ahram, 1999.

"A rare example of combining social theory with concrete observation and intimate personal experience.... A very perceptive account of Egyptian social development with almost the impact of a dramatic creation." Abd al-Qader al-Qutt, al-Ahram, 2000.Language NotesText: English (translation) Original Language: ArabicAbout the AuthorGalal Amin is a professor of economics at the American University in Cairo. In 2010, he received the Sultan Bin Al Owais

Cultural Foundation Award in recognition of his contributions to economics, politics, community and culture.