CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE AGRICULTURAL IN EGYPT HOLDINGS: 1929-2010

[94]

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural land holdings went through several changes during the period 1929-2010 due to the changes in the economic orientations and the underpinning economic policies. The study shows that average area of a land holding has declined from 6.13 feddan in 1929 to about 2.19 feddan in 2010. However the average area of a land holding in the old lands has declines from 1.93 feddan in year 2000 to 1.61 feddan in 2010. In contrast the average area of a land holding in the new lands is almost fixed at 9.6-9.7 feddan during the period 2000-2010.

To assess the inequality of the distributions of land holdings the study estimated the Gini coefficients of land holdings for several agricultural censuses. The Gini coefficients were rather high for the years of 1929, 1939 and 1950 with the corresponding values of 0.892, 0.783 and 0.733 respectively. After the 1952 revolution and the issuance of the land reform laws the distributions of land holdings became more equitable as it became evident from the Gini coefficients of 0.597, 0.532 and 0.582 for the years of 1960, 1980 and 1990 respectively.

But apparently there was a reversal in the distribution of agricultural land holdings as the Gini coefficient has shown an upward trend during the period 1990-2010. The Gini coefficient increased from 0.582 in 1990 to 0.628 in year 2000 and then to 0.658 in 2010. This upward trend could be explained by the tendency to concentrate the newly reclaimed agricultural lands in the hands of large farmers and investment companies.

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