

**THE RISE OF THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS**

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**Abstract**

This paper explores the changing patterns of self-employment in postwar United States. It is found that self-employment declined in the United States almost steadily from the 19th century to the early 1970s. Since then, it has risen every year. The main reasons for this reversal are (1) risk-avoidance and responses to unions' strength; (2) responses to unemployment and recession; (3) post-industrialization and technological innovations; (4) diffusion of the old traditional sectors; (5) political factors; and (6) immigration. In addition, it is claimed that the oil-crisis and the subsequent global recession triggered the above factors. The sociological implications of the fall and rise of the petty bourgeoisie are also discussed.