

## Kenya's emerging middle class(es)

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# Abstract

The middle class is often described as innovators, carriers of new political and social values as well as a driving economic force, and hence, change-makers in a social arena. In contrast to many other African countries, Kenya has a significant middle-class population which has grown in importance and size since then. Today, it is estimated that about 40% of the Kenyan population have escaped poverty and 17 % belong to the middle class (cf. African Development Bank 2011). However, the term middle class comprises groups with a large variety of lifestyles, interests, and consumer behaviour. Drawing from ethnographic and sociological research in Kenya I will therefore address the following questions in this paper:

- 1) What does being middle class mean and how is the middle class defined?
- 2) Who is Kenya's middle class? What milieus can preliminarily be clustered?

I will provide a discussion on the definition of what middle class is and sketch some milieus found so far to illustrate the heterogeneous lifestyles of middle class(es) in Nairobi, Kenya.

## Keywords

Kenya, Middle Class, Anthropology, Sociology, Milieu

We arrived in an era in which we can no longer speak of the poor global South and the wealthy global North. A traditionally thought dichotomy between the North and the South is increasingly blurring, and some social phenomenon span across the globe while others are merely visible on local level. A wealthy elite had been present even in the poorest countries on the African continent and it gains in size and influence. In recent studies the middle class is in the limelight as innovators, carriers of new political and social values as well as a driving economic force, and hence, change-makers in a social arena (Bhalla 2014). South Africa's Mail & Guardian, for instance, stated recently:

"It may not be immediately obvious, but South Africa's burgeoning black middle class is the country's largest driver of growth (...) While often presented in the media as being frivolous spenders, the facts suggest otherwise: 65% of the new black middle class own their own homes. They also invest heavily in education — 65% send their children to model C or private schools." (Steyn 2013)

It is a development that has been going on since a decade in South Africa as well as in other African countries and by now about 1% of the global middle class can be found in Africa (Kharas 2010). Countries such as The Gabun, Botswana, Ghana, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Kenya (Ncube 2011) have developed significant social stratas in the middle which also span networks across national borders. Descriptions of social class might thus be valuable with respect to geographic expansion. Here, I will focus on Nairobi (Kenya) which has a significant middle-class population already since the 1950s. Today, it is estimated that about 40% of the Kenyan population have escaped poverty and 17 % belong to the middle class (cf. Ncube 2011). Particular sub-groups, respectively milieus, are found on local level in Nairobi but reach out to nationally or internationally.

In this presentation I address two questions:

- 1) What does being middle class mean and how is the middle class defined?
- 2) Who is Kenya's middle class? What milieus can preliminarily be clustered?

The idea of African middle classes as carriers of economic progress and as a democratizing force is strongly connected with their visions of the future. These images of the middle classes as drivers of development contain strong, imaginative, visions of the African future: these may be, for example, development strategies, political initiatives, or cultural and economic arrangements and are at the core of our ethnological-sociological research project. The project is situated at Bayreuth University under the umbrella of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies. The title of the project is "Middle Classes on the Rise - Concepts of the future among freedom, consumption, tradition, and moral"<sup>1</sup>.

By now, we are convinced that at least in the case of Kenya the term middle class comprises groups with a large variety of lifestyles, interests, values and consumer behaviour. In fact, the term can hardly describe a group between the poor and the rich but represents a vast variety of heterogeneous sub-groups. Drawing from ethnographic and sociological research in Kenya I will therefore discuss the terminology and present some preliminary findings on the heterogeneous middle class in Kenya.

## Defining the middle class

The emerging middle class has been celebrated as successful development towards economic stability and democratic manifestation in Africa. Recent newspaper articles address the middle class and their rise, however, without clarifying what this term stands for. Sociological literature on the middle class has found definitions, yet, they are mostly based on the European or American genesis of the middle class. However, studies on globalisation have shown so far that concepts produced and discussed in the northern hemisphere can not be applied in the same way and with the same definitions in the global South. Comaroff and Comaroff argue in their book "Theories from the South - or how Euro-america is evolving toward Africa":

"The first argument is that modernity in the south is not adequately understood as a derivative or a *doppelganger*, a callow copy or a counterfeit, of the Euro-American "original." To the contrary: it demands to be apprehended and addressed in its own right. Modernity in Africa (...) is a hydra-headed, polymorphous, mutating ensemble of signs and practices in terms of which people across the continent have long made their lives; this partly dialectic relationship with the global north and its expansive capitalist imperium, partly with others of the same hemisphere, partly intra-continentially, partly in localized enclaves." (Comaroff&Comaroff 2012: 7)

In the research project we assume that definitions and concepts on the middle class must also be studied in relation to the local context and that Euro-american concepts can not be transferred to Africa without adaptation (cf. Neubert 2014). However, studies from other African countries and the global South may provide some interesting comparisons.

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## Definitions of the middle class

Several approaches to defining the middle class are currently in use. Elder sociological definitions describing European contexts and histories base on Marx, Weber and Bourdieu and seem hardly workable in an African context.

- Karl Marx' socio-cultural differences based on ownership and historically grown arrangements between the nobles and their dependent shares of the population. Basically, haves and have nots depended on ownership and the means of production and common class interests resulted from belonging to a certain group (Marx 1975). Social mobility was not envisaged in this concept. Neo-marxists transferred these ideas to describe underdevelopment, dependencies and power relations in the global South and argue that a class in the middle class favours democratic, more egalitarian values. Due to colonial histories which overshadowed previously existing historic social arrangements of the society and pre-industrial modes of production it is however arguable whether Marx' concept fits to African modernities. Moreover, even in Euro-american countries with globally acting share holders have and have nots are hard to define.
- Max Weber (2012) firstly presented socio-cultural distinctions along varying patterns of livelihood and values as well as solid social classes and ranks. Social mobility was possible, however, to a very limited degree and within the historic context of privileges and ownership.
- According to Bourdieu, members of a particular class have a certain way of behaviour, a specific *habitus* and a particular taste, which distinguishes them from other social groups Bourdieu's social classification typology considers economic, political, educational and cultural entanglements and thus a large variety of factors that strengthens or weakens someone's position in society. Personal decisions and modes of behaviour are for Bourdieu as important as the background of the family of origin, hence, what someone acquires by own efforts and what someone has due to social affiliations. This link between class, social mobility and socio-cultural backgrounds is captured by his concept of milieu (Bourdieu 1987).
- Current descriptions of the middle class base predominately on income without taking into account where this capital came or comes from. Wilson (2013) suggested a definition of middle class: of people earning between \$10 and \$100 per day. This could be considered a "global middle class" — middle class by the standards of any country" (Wilson 2013). This definition, however, disrespects purchase parity differences and there is a large difference between \$10 and ten times that amount which allows very different patterns of consumerism. Moreover, in an international comparison \$10 per day would most probably suffice for maintaining a decent lifestyle in some African regions whereas in Germany \$10 per day would not allow to cross the current poverty line.
- Other definitions are based on poverty lines from countries of the Global North and South and are predominately informed by actors in development studies, globally active agencies and with respect to economic terms. The resulting definitions base on daily income per person but vary between \$2 to \$10 (Banerjee and Duflo 2008), to \$2-13 (Ravallion 2010), \$2-20 (Ncube 2011). Kharas takes as a guideline the lowest income of a rich country (Portugal or Italy) and twice the median income of Luxemburg as the richest of the European countries and arrives at an income spanning from \$10-\$100, which still poses the same problems as above mentioned definition. Banerjee and Duflo moreover define subgroups (\$2-4 and \$6-10) while Ravallion group incomes of \$2-6 and \$6-13. The African Development Bank (Ncube 2011) divides the scale from \$2-20 into

three strata: \$2-4 is the floating class, \$4-10 the lower-middle class, and \$10-20 the upper-middle. The World Bank (2007) defines class between mean income level in Brazil and low income level in Italy or USD4000 to USD17000 in 2000. Bhalla (2009) takes an absolute approach, defining the middle class as those with annual incomes over USD 3900 in purchasing power parity terms (Bhalla 2009 in: Kharas 2010). Ravallion (2009) takes a hybrid approach, defining a “developing world middle class” as having one range of incomes that is oriented between the median poverty line of countries in the developing world and that of the USA and a “Western world middle class” above the US poverty line (Kharas 2010). This variety of income spans and subgroups indicate that we are far from a universal definition based on income.

- Relative approaches argue with country-specific income definitions. The middle class has a median per capita consumption of 75-125% (e.g. Birdsall, Graham & Pettinato 2000). Taking income distributions within the country into account Easterly 2000 positions the middle class in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quintile, which, depending on the country still includes a great difference.
- On sociological footing key indicators for the middle class are likewise under debate. Kharas (2010) stresses that consumerism rather than wealth and saving provides a workable definition of the middle class and emphasises in addition on political involvement. Banerjee and Duflo (2008) question the hypothesis that middle classes create employment and productivity for the society as a whole. The middle class has rather an attitude of acquiring human capital respectively savings and to spend money on quality products. A definition of middle class in consequence would rather be based on a stable job with regular income and consumerism.
- The Unilever Institut intended to describe the Black Middle Class (BMC) in South Africa and found sociological criteria. Only black adults were included who met at least three of the following four requirements: own a car, tertiary qualification, own a business or work in a white-collar or professional industry household income of between 1300 - 4600 US\$ (= 40-150 US\$ per day) (Unilever Institut In: Burger 2013). Hence, criteria were based not merely on income or income distribution but combined economic terms with consumption patterns. This is supported by the argument, that the BMC still lacks behind in terms of income compared to a white middle class. BMC are driven by their aspirations and consumer products for convenience and entertainment, however, they are bought with help of cash grants, since family networks are not able to sustain their lifestyle (Burger 2013).
- Phadi and Ceruti (2011) who also described the middle class among black South Africans took Soweto formerly labelled as slum as starting point and allowed people to define themselves in a class category. Moreover, occupation and employment status as well as a household income between 900 US\$ and 1600 US\$ per month were taken as proxies for the middle class. This approach allowed for emic categories and identity, however, their resulting definition was also broad and vague: 20% of the interviewees defined themselves as belonging to the middle class. If lower and upper middle class was also counted in that figure rose to 66% and apparently everybody tried to be somehow in the middle. Phadi and Ceruti made nevertheless some interesting observations that may describe Soweto's middle class rather than a global middle class:

"People who accepted the label middle class (with or without other labels) were no more likely than the rest of the population to have secondary or tertiary education, nor to work in occupations classically understood to be middle class (like management) or historically understood as middle class in Soweto (teachers, nurses) nor to have engaged in 'middle class'

activities like family holidays or barbecuing at home. They were mildly less likely to have been taken out of school before entering secondary school. Middle class identifiers were mildly more likely to call themselves happy, free and aspirational. They are mildly more likely to have certain decorations in their houses, such as tiled floors, net curtains and blompotte (mass-produced ceramic statues), and the mean overall [Living Standards Measure] score of self-identified middles is higher than the rest of the population." (Phadi & Ceruti 2011)

- Coming back to above mentioned political involvement and the civil society one realises that these factors were not included in any of the definitions. Democratization movements, for instance after the Arab Spring, did not yet gain permanent foothold. Moreover, during upheavals access to technology, access to knowledge and education and an interest in shaping social and political futures are specific to circumstances in a region or country and hence can hardly be taken as definitions in a global sense. Neubert (2014) merely points out: political and social engagement depends on heterogeneous subgroups within the middle class and can not be a definition per se for the middle class. Civil society depends on the middle class, but middle class does not depend on civil society involvement.

In summary, in absence of a workable definition of the middle class in Africa the term seems to capture a social group in the "middle of the society" (Neubert 2014) with a middle income and middle societal position. A minimal standard of formal education, economic stability and an orientation towards social security and savings may additionally be considered (Neubert 2014). This approach can be linked back to Bourdieu's considerations on taste, social affiliation and a variety of factors such as economic, cultural, and social capital which is either generated or provided by the family of origin. Notwithstanding, Bourdieu based his argument on class theory. In contrast, the German speaking sociology of the 1980s and 90s debated milieus in a descriptive way as categories cutting across class. Milieus were defined as "sub-cultural entities within a society that capture people with a similar view of life and way of life" (Flaig, Meyer and Ueltzhöffer 1993 in: Neubert 2014). In particular for market research milieu studies became important, the Sinus milieus being one of the most widely cited studies (Sinus Markt- und Sozialforschung 2013).

If we combine those two approaches, class and milieu, as sub-entities we need to zoom in and take a close look from a frog's rather than a bird's perspective. So far, when talking about global middle classes they appear as being simultaneous, global developments. Our study suggests, however, that ideas, practices, developments are not even simultaneous in own region. African modernities in the plural need to be described in historiographic practice and as on-going process. Hence, milieus can't describe the middle class in a global sense but within its local context. Comparisons with other regions may however tell us about internationally expanded networks of certain milieus. Some authors have already started with similar approaches for instance in Brazil, China, and India, hence, transition countries. A comparative view on African countries is still lacking.

## Kenya's history of middle class-formation

During colonial times ethnic Kikuyu were agriculturalists and involved in trade with Maasai and other tribes. Land-redistribution to white settlers by colonial powers and a need for cash money brought them into wage labour and trade in Kenya's urban centres. Notwithstanding, many were forced to adjust their economic system since their land was expropriated. Some Kikuyu subgroups cooperated with the Britons, others did not. Those who cooperated were included into the colonial administration and were given jobs

in the white-collar sector. Those formed the first generation of Kenyan middle class people. Nubi became privileged mercenaries in the British army and were given land. Hence, they also enjoyed privileges of a local middle class. Since the 1950s we can speak of an emerging black Kenyan middle class in certain quarters of Nairobi. Apartheid-like urban planning separated the white elite, black middle class and underprivileged spatially during the colonial period. Today, spatial arrangements transgressed from racial to income definitions and quarters have a multi-ethnic population, which shares certain characteristics or interests. Key concepts, such as gender, ethnicity and religion, no longer worked to define settlement areas but along lines of income, lifestyle, security concerns and peer groups or occupational patterns. Wherever the state did not function neighbourhood committees started private initiatives for safety and infrastructure. Social up- and downward mobility defines the middle class rather than ethnic origin or affiliation to traditional elites. In South Africa as well as in Kenya where urban planning was along ethnic affiliation we nowadays have mixed quarters. Last but not least, Nairobi is a city with a young, fast growing and urban demography. Young employees and entrepreneurs strongly contribute to intense growth and a rising population above the poverty line. Yet their stay in town may be temporarily for the time of further education and an economically productive phase of life. However, a smaller share of inhabitants has grown up in town as second or third generation middle class affiliates.

## Preliminary ideas on Kenyan milieus

Due to the early stage of the study below mentioned clusters are not yet confirmed in terms of character and significance and I will thus present them in form of case studies. Some of these preliminary findings match nevertheless with milieus found in the literature on other African countries and can hence be compared:

### **Young Urban Professionals (“Yupis”):**

Kennedy is about 40 years old, married with two daughters. He is currently managing a health food shop but has had several jobs in the past, i.e. employee in a hotel, free lancer for an insurance company, Starbucks-employee in Dubai, international sales etc. He shows me pictures of his high class living room interior on his fancy mobile phone, wears expensive suits and likes to display material wealth. He is always looking for better paid job opportunities and currently tries to set up a business for imported BMW and a hotel business at the coast line. Kennedy describes his guiding principles by stating: “Sometimes it is also good to be selfish and to look after yourself. My own forthcoming and progress is first”. He can not tell where he will find himself in one year to come but excludes moving again to foreign countries for better opportunities as he did before because of his family.

For Kenya, Spronk (2012) described this milieu. Her and my findings suggest that generally, Yupis seem to be between their mid 20's and early 40's, little involved in urban-rural family ties or rural life, well educated and earning own means. Their career orientation is rather individual with a focus on consumerism and style, which is also displayed. Marriage is rather postponed and partners and peer groups are from mixed ethnical background since common interests seem more prominent features (cf. Spronk 2012).

**Religious / Traditionalist oriented milieu:** abstaining from certain leisure activities (i.e. alcohol, partying), oriented towards family norms, religious values and church community, economic and professional success due to hard work and high demands, well educated and working towards upward social mobility, often socially involved in family networks, protestant work ethic comparable to Max Weber?

### **Neo-traditional / Family Based Planners:**

Charles, around 45 years, commutes between his job in the IT-administration of a hospital in Kisumu, his residence at the outskirts of Nairobi where his wife stays with the three daughters and his family home near Mt. Kenya. He longs for further education but weights it against spending time with his (extended) family. Therefore, he did his M.A. in a long-distance learning program and applied for a transfer to Nairobi despite his well paid job in Kisumu which did not yet work out. Charles spends most weekends with his wife and daughters in the rural areas at his father's place where he also built a house and bought a plot for farming for himself. When he retires Charles wants to be a farmer at his ancestral land. Charles wants his children to spent weekends and holidays with their grandparents to learn how to cook on fire wood besides staying in a comfortable western style 4-bedroom house during the week. At his rural home he is involved in the church community, arranges collections for bride wealth or the local primary school and initiated a private infrastructure development community with his neighbours.

Pauli (2014) described a similar lifestyle among Namibian part-time farmers with strong urban-rural ties. These mobile people spend leisure time and festivities in their rural home locality where good income is shown in large weddings and funerals, investment in land ownership often with prestigious houses, but not necessarily showing wealth in town. Often a neo-traditional milieu overlaps with traditional elites and many are involved in local political bodies. Behrends and Lentz (2012) describe a generational development of those who were traditional elites in pre-colonial times in Northern Ghana. The next generation benefited from being integrated into the colonial administration and hence became colonial elites. The following post-colonial generation can now be labelled as urban middle class (Behrends & Lentz 2012).

### **Female Floating Class:**

Because of women's lower level of education many entered the informal business, namely petty trade, with little securities and high risks. Many do not own permanent stalls but sell at the street sides or at the fringes of formal market places without payment of rent. Their stalls are therefore likely to be removed by the police or market administrators. Many of those women are widowed, divorced, single, or separated from their husbands, live in marginal areas and are household heads. Most are able to provide for themselves and their children with meagre resources but live in the risk to fall back into the poverty they just managed to escape (for Kenya see also House-Midamba 1995).

### **Social Climbers:**

Similar to the Female Floating Class Social Climbers have just escaped poverty and managed to make the best of the chances formal and informal markets have to offer. For Nairobi Wainaina (2007) gives a good examples:

“Over the past few years (...), an industry has grown, from nothing, in River Road, Nairobi's infamous street of brokers and small mafias, of thugs and the music business and small-scale enterprise. It is called Riverwood, and movies are being made - some in one week, from concept to production to market. Many, Richard tells me, sell up to 50,000 copies. Richard set up a studio to make music videos (in one day) of the latest Gikuyu musicians. Then he approached East African Breweries, one of the largest companies in Kenya, and it is now paying him handsomely to do product placements in his music videos. The informal market meets the formal market.”

Here also men are involved in making the best of meagre live chances. In my interviews many indicated



that they would like to teach others how to climb up on the social ladder. Several were involved in community projects which were closely tied to their self-trained profession. The experience of having (temporarily) escaped poverty made them aware of fast climbing but also of the risks of fast falling back into poverty.

### **Artists/musicians/creative milieu:**

Nairobi is a hub for the creative branch all over East Africa. Dayan understands himself as an artists of fashion design. He is in his early 30s and exhibits shoes, hand bags and clothes made of traditional African fabrics at the Nairobi Fashion Show. Nairobi's art scene is manifold and he is also involved in advertisement and was part of a theatre company. Dayan states many artists have grown up in artistic households since it needs an ideological background to chose this metier and to be able to sustain financial hardships. Artists moreover depend on the middle class since the middle class supports artists and artists serve the middle class with their products in return. "Buyers are not those who think about the bread on the table, but those who fall in love with my hand bag and want it even if they have to save or pay in instalments", he explains. In summary, the creative milieu is apparently part of the middle class not by income but by social environment and mutual support networks.

The artists I met stayed mostly in low-cost housing areas due to insecure income and a volatile future prospect but relied on their supporters and peers. Many were internationally connected, socially involved and often critical towards clientelistic and party politics as well as critical towards ethnic and religious authorities (for Nairobi see also Binavanga 2007).

### **Single Mum / Divorcees:**

Having gotten out of difficult conjugal situations seems to have made some women particularly outspoken, extroverted and strong characters. Many were well educated and financially independent which had allowed them to walk out of an unsatisfying marriage.

Naima, mid 30's and producer of an advertisement company, has left after her husband, a soldier, came home drunk with his rifle in his arms. She wanted to protect her children of anything worse that may happen. Both families stressed that she had promised in her vowels to stay with her husband, however, she filed a case for divorce. She argues in favour of environment and consumers protection, claims for good quality service in governmental health facilities and is willing to pay more if quality is assured. She tries to enlighten other women about their rights and to think out of the box of gendered norms.

Naima and other single mums were eagerly involved in pointing out social deficiencies, particularly with respect to gender and generation. In fact, I only heard single mums and divorcees besides artists to speak openly and supportive about homosexuality and alternative life styles (cf. Wainaina 2014).

### **Internationally Exposed:**

Kangere has been living in the US for several years. He came back to Nairobi to find a job. He sees his future rather in Kenya than in the US and wants to make use of his profession for the benefit of his home country, even though "it has changed a lot, since I left". While studying in the US he got interested in environmental protection and would like to strengthen eco-friendliness in Kenya. Here he sees a potential for tourism as well as a niche for Kenya's economic prosperity.

Internationally exposed people would include those who have been abroad or have close contact to foreigners and pick up on ideas and debates not (yet) present in the Kenyan society. Seeing Kenya from an outsiders perspective and appropriating ideas on environment protection, social welfare, gender, politics, lifestyle practices and production forms this milieu. Apparently, ideas are rather focussing on the Kenyan nation and it's well-being than on smaller units or sub-groups. Moreover, internationally exposed people may share common features with foreigners and international peer groups and therefore may be more often employed in (international) NGO or UN agencies and educated on international rather than local standards.

Not found in Kenya so far:

**Sapeur:**

A movement which started in Brazzaville in the 1930s and spread out to other predominantly francophone, West African countries includes a hedonist lifestyle oriented towards flamboyant fashion, music, dance style and parties. However, in terms of income Sapeur, who are now also found in Paris live a rather self-effacing life and depended on family income and international networks to gather their luxury assets (Pavlovic 2012). This milieu was not present in Kenya as far as I know.

## Summary

To be precise, we need to speak of simultaneously present middle classes, respectively milieus, instead of one middle class. The multitude of definitions does not allow to speak of one homogeneous group but of various partly overlapping sub-entities. It has meaningful differences for the definition of middle class(es) whether economic parameters, a combination of social and economic parameters or self-identifications are applied. Economic terms based on income can give a guideline, but do not capture informality of markets and diversity of incomes. Notwithstanding, multiple sources of income, material and immaterial wealth blur official statistics. Moreover, urban-rural connections and support of family networks, common characteristics in Africa, are not included in economic definitions. The milieu study shows additionally, that it may make a difference if speaking of emerging middle class people or a settled third generation with a background in the middle class or traditional elite and hence individual income may be a less reliable parameter.

Secondly, even if one definition is accepted as guiding principle, the study of milieus indicates a broad diversity and a heterogeneous field. Euro-american definitions can not be transferred to African contexts disregarding local particularities, such as colonial privileges, ethnic affiliation, political, historical and educational landscapes, hence, emic categories, need to be considered.

In particular the family based milieu as well as the Yupi milieu entail criteria based on time and space. Belonging to this milieu depends on a particular time in the life-cycle of the individual as well as on the socio-geographic domicile. Someone may belong to a socially and politically highly accepted elite in the village of origin during weekends and to an economically driving middle class milieu at work days in the urban setting (cf. Pauli 2014). Therefore, space and time may alter belonging and we may need to speak of part-time milieus.

Moreover, the individual depends as well on the social and economic social group who gives a certain position to the person (in passive voice). Traditional elites receive status and acceptance by their entourage which accepts decisions, respects social functions and agrees with local structures of hierarchy. This notion

bases on political considerations of power by Hannah Arendt (1996) who noted that power needs to be given by supporters and in contrast power vanishes by the time supporters do no longer follow. Likewise, a traditional authority who does not spent most of the time in the village may lose touch to the people, however, as long as people wait for his or her decision-making and follow orders the social status will remain powerful. The same may be true for the artistic milieu. Economic terms hardly work for defining artists/musicians/the creative milieu as middle class people, whereas the social surrounding, i.e. art consumers, exhibitors, art collectors and fans make the artist belong to a certain peer group. However, if supporters lose interest and trust in the artist's ability, social recognition as artist may also disappear. In consequence, the definition of middle class is one of social negotiation.

Finally, the floating classes, which were here called Female Floating Class and Social Climbers need to be seen in the limelight of social mobility. Yet, mobility may work in both directions and people who used to belong to a steady middle class milieu may also fall into poverty. An assessment of downward mobile social groups is, however, still lacking.

As a further field of study the question arises whether informality of markets and dysfunctionality of administrations open spaces for social mobility. Are African markets generally a breeding ground for start-up enterprises, i.e. in multimedia, as indicated in Wainaina's (2007) case study?

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