(RE) SEARCHING the MIDDLE CLASS in NAIROBI

NAIROBI 15

kompreno.org

1st Edition: October, 2016

kompreno.org

KRR 0001

(RE) SEARCHING the MIDDLE CLASS in NAIROBI

KOMPRENO

(Re)search - Understand - Share

kompreno.org

KRR 0001

Acknowledgement

Table of Content

(Re)Searching Nairobi's Middle Class

By Waldmüller. Johannes M., Gez, Yonathan N., Boanada-Fuchs, Anthony

Kompreno, Geneva; Contact: office@kompreno.org

Introduction

Since the early 1990s, most African countries have been seeing encouraging signs of democratization and economic improvement, leading some analysts to rejoice in Africa's so-called "second independence." An often-alluded to indicator behind such optimism is the alleged emergence and, in some cases consolidation, of a substantial African middle class. Following the numbers issued by the African Development Bank, about 355 million Africans (34% of the general population) qualified as middle class in 2010, representing a substantial rise from 27% only ten years earlier (AfDB 2011b, a).[1] The bank further predicted that this figure is to reach 1,1 billion Africans (42% of the general population) by 2060 (AfDB 2011a, 20).

Such growth attracts much interest from various national and international stakeholders. Governments turn to the middle class as a critical target for winning elections, financial organizations and businesses identify it with potential clients and a new range of consumer demands, and international donors largely perceive it as a key (f)actor in the move towards greater democracy and political participation. While these stakeholders are largely united by a positive spirit regarding the alleged rise of the African middle class, the academic literature has been pointing at some of the complexities associated therewith (Darbon and Toulabor 2011, 2014, Maupeu 2012, Cheeseman

---

[1] By middle class, the bank counted all households with earnings of between 2 USD and 20 USD per day (floating class included) (AfDB 2011b).

2014). For example, scholars suggest that, from a sustainability angle, the growth of the middle class leads to over-exploitation of natural resources and increased energy consumption, which in turn can have negative bearing on stability and social justice in the medium and long term (Holland, 2008). Indeed, cautious voices have warned against overreliance on development-related statistics in Africa (see Jerven 2013). But even if taken at face value, statistics such as offered by the African Development Bank reveal that, in fact, the majority of the so-called African middle class is actually made of a 'floating class,' a highly vulnerable economic group constantly at risk of sliding into poverty (AfDB 2011b). Moreover, just as the very qualification of the floating class as middle class has been debated, the topic also raised other fundamental questions, such as with regard to the very relevance of employing such a foreign terminology, which took shape within a very specific (Western) historical period, within contemporary African contexts. A key question in this regard is whether, for Africans themselves, class represents a central locus of identity, and if so, where does it stand vis-à-vis other significant loci such as ethnicity (Spronk 2006).

It is within this context of lively discussions that the editors decided to organize a workshop on the topic of the middle class in Nairobi.[2] The choice of Kenya has been informed, among other things, by the 2008 African Development Bank calculation whereby 44,9% of the country's general population qualified as middle class, a figure that is among the highest anywhere in sub-Saharan Africa (AfDB 2011b). The workshop aimed at breaking with economistic preconceptions by approaching the topic from an interdisciplinary angle, wherein the middle class rather than being a mere question of income levels, carries substantial social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental implications, many of which are yet to be seen.

The workshop, held between 28th September and 3rd October 2015, brought together a broad spectrum of lectures and discussions around the topic of the emerging and consolidating middle class in Nairobi and in parallel case studies. It hosted, most notably, collaborators from the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, which has been running a project on the Kenyan middle class since 2012, and featured among its international contributors such leading Kenyanists as Rachel Spronk, Nicolas Cheeseman, and Dieter Neubert. The participants themselves—19 overall—were selected from multiple disciplinary backgrounds, and mainly included young Kenyan urban professionals who would themselves qualify as middle class. The workshop combined three days of

---

[2] The workshop was funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), and was organized by Kompreno (www.kompreno.org) in collaboration with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA) in Nairobi.

lectures, in which we explored the meaning of class in global, regional, national and local-urban contexts, and two days of field research, conducted in six small groups in different parts of the city. Each of the six groups pursued its own themes according to their interest, building on the discussions that preceded over the first three days of the workshop. In this regard, the very themes of the field projects deserve being mentioned, as they offer a hint into the internal diversity of the notion of middle class as reflected through the perspectives of the workshop participants themselves. They included:

- Social policy and political participation
- Housing and real estate
- Consumption habits, shopping and advertisements
- Lifestyles, values, mindsets and culture
- Entrepreneurship, investment and class mobility
- Infrastructure and environmental concerns

Following the fieldwork, the final day of the workshop was dedicated to group presentations to a panel of experts, including academics as well as a senior representative from the Nairobi City Hall's Planning Department. Overall, the workshop, which was declared participatory from the onset, allowed for a unique exchange of voices. Participants registered great keenness and involvement in the workshop's themes, rendering it clear that class terminology and active engagement with attempts at class mobility bear great relevance to their lives. Moreover, our participants' first-hand experiences allowed them to concretize ideas about class, space and perception, and creatively associate them with tangible attainments, both economic and socio-cultural. They were furthermore encouraged to associate questions of class with a wide variety of preoccupations, both personal and public. At times, the middle class was presented in such inclusive terms – and membership therein seemed so desired – that, much like scholars from the University of Johannesburg in their study on Soweto (Phadi and Ceruti 2011), we noted a seemingly hyperbolic tendency for middle class self-identification and performance.

Over the course of the workshop, the two-sided exchange between speakers and participants allowed many topics to be addressed. Importantly, and going well beyond economic accounts, our participants pointed at the issue of class performance, drawing distinction between those that "really are" middle class and those that "fake it until they make it." Lectures and discussions also emphasized the close link between class and kinship, including urban-rural ties and ethnic affinity. When it came to class values and behavioral norms, it has been suggested that these be observed most clearly with regard to politics, as in the question of fostering democracy through middle class growth and political elections. In addition, middle class concerns seem to play out differently when it comes to such topics as

ecological considerations and satisfaction of needs. During our discussions, it emerged that the middle class can be broken down into various sub-forms, and it has been suggested that the lower middle classes and the upper middle classes seem to be drifting apart evermore – as discernable by increasing segregation within urban spaces – hence undermining the very idea of some middle class cohesion.

In short, in Nairobi, middle class does not imply homogeneity. Our workshop's group projects mapped out – in a literal and qualitative sense[3] – the broad variety and internal differences of the city's middle classes and perspectives thereon. They highlighted the need for further research, be it on middle class lifestyles, media and publicity, the visual representation of class in Kenya, changing consumption patterns and the economic sustainability of spending and saving, or ecological and planning-related aspects in an urban environment of fast-changing socio-economic demographics. Housing and land markets also presented themselves as crucial lens for further research, as did the exploration of links between strengthened civic attitudes, political participation and middle class consolidation. Lastly, our participants' fieldwork input offered a good illustration of the need to break down broad questions of political development into local levels of analysis, such as neighborhood and community organization. To translate this approach into effective policies, more transdisciplinary and trans-institutional collaboration (between the academic, private, governmental and public sectors) is certainly required and, as our workshop demonstrated, feasible.

Structure of the Document

This research report presents a selection of paradigmatic findings, and is aimed at facilitating the ongoing trialogue between researchers, city dwellers and policy-makers. The contributions were all collected from workshop speakers. While they share some common core observations, each contribution highlights a particular approach towards understanding Nairobi's middle class. The contributors' common focus is encapsulated, as suggested by Rachel Spronk, in the consideration of middle class(es) as an aspirational, rather than objective (economic or other), category. Questioning the multiple socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions of the middle class should thus help to understand how this concept "operates as a middle ground where aspiration and praxis come together" (p.17), as Spronk writes in her contribution. According to her, any profound analytical

---

[3] An important methodological feature had been the use of GPS geolocation for gathering information during the fieldwork part. This information, together with geospatial and time-related data, had been mapped out in what could be called 'thick' qualitative data maps, that include such data as interviews, pictures, and travel paths.

account of the middle class should be attentive to historical processes: "It is therefore imperative to (re)think what is meant by the notion of the middle class across time, for whom (scholars, professionals, people themselves), and how it is put to use" (p.12). This includes exploring the middle class across multiple locations and time horizons, subjecting the research to both inter- as well as intragenerational analysis. Based on longstanding ethnographic research, Spronk focuses on the evasive quality of "being recognized as middle class" in order to show how her interlocutors "made distinctions between elite or higher middle class families, that is, groups who started from a wealthy position, and people or groups who climbed up the social ladder within their life course. The meaning of the term middle class is obviously in flux." Her contribution provides convincing arguments for both researchers and policy-makers to look more carefully into the intersectional interplay of middle class labelling and social categories such as kinship, religion, regional affiliation and ethnicity. In particular, it raises questions regarding trends in middle class formation and their social impact in the long run.

This is taken up by Patrick Mbataru in his analysis of recent shifts and trends regarding Nairobi's socio-economic expansion. Mbataru's contribution on 'settling yuppies' explores the of the growth of the middle class on housing and land markets in and around the city since the 2000s. According to him, middle class sectors in the semi-urban periphery are often informal (lacking permits, disrespecting zoning laws and regulations), and lack proper connection to a state-regulated water or sewage infrastructure. Frequently, middle class interests and land claims clash with those of the urban poor who recently migrated to the city. In such a context, it is quintessential that urban planning fulfils its obligation of pursuing the public good and being an institutional arbitrator. Mbataru's chapter draws attention to the private sector, to the heated housing market and to the development of speculative bubbles. Real estate interests, the author shows, are especially focused on flagship projects, such as the so-called 'Silicon Savannah.' For Mbataru, the middle class emerges under circumstances of absence of policy and planning. This void is filled by various private interest groups that exploit institutional uncertainties to create new textures, more chaotic than organic, out of the urban fabric. Sharing Spronk´s preoccupation with the effects of the middle class' expansion, Mbataru points at the need for a new land reform, calling on analysts to delve deeper into how questions of land, rights, and space all come together in shaping the face of the Kenyan urban middle classes.

As the notion of the middle class is, in itself, fluid, it is interesting to note how the choice of its conceptualization mirrors in scholars' orientations. This is demonstrated by the next contribution, in which Lena Kroeker looks at the significance of informal social structures within the Kenyan middle class' search for coping with life challenges and maintaining stable living standards. Considering the middle class through the prism of people's ability to maintain "the same accommodation, modes of

transport and every day practices" (p.33) over long periods of time, Kroeker is conscious of the significance of informal social support network, and especially those linked to kinship. In her contribution, Kroeker combines a survey of available social security mechanisms – of which the state provides little – with an extensive fieldwork in Kisumu, Western Kenya.

Benard Sorre's self-reflexive chapter draws a lively picture of the lifestyles, beliefs, aspirations and self-representations of Nairobi's middle class. Yet, underlying his contribution is a critical concern with the middle class' growth and the impact of its unsustainable lifestyles on environmental degradation. This dialectic process of socio-environmental metabolisms highlights the need to overcome typical economic portrayals of the middle class to include the analysis of 'external costs' such as water pollution, inadequate settlements, sewage problems, etc. According to Sorre, it is particularly with regard to both, the formal and informal (or Jua Kali the people working under the burning sun) sector, where more research efforts are needed in order to inform better future public policies.

The report's two last chapters, by Florian Stoll and Dieter Neubert and by Yonatan N. Gez, both demonstrate how deeper research questions on the middle class can be approached in a methodological way. We introduce to the readers the 'milieu approach' as applied by Stoll and Neubert from the University of Bayreuth. This analytical framework was tested and applied to Kenya. Departing from an interrogation of the validity of the notion of 'class' within African contexts, the authors propose a more flexible socio-economic category – 'milieu' – that can be charged with so-called 'meaning blocks'. Therefore, the milieu analysis can enable capturing subtle dimensions of being and perception, such as lifestyles, that may otherwise remain undetected. While it is very likely that such an approach will contribute to a more comprehensive image of the socio-cultural diversity of the middle class(es), it remains to be seen to which extent can such research accommodate, according to the author's own claim, speaking to such broad audiences as markets, service providers, policy-makers and academia. Therefore, the question arises, if the dimensions of individual socio-cultural making, personal achievement and recognition can be integrated into the model.

Yonatan N. Gez' chapter concludes our report by adding another layer of ethnographic engagement with regard to status, identity and religious mobility in the city of Nairobi. Socio-economic aspirations are relevant for churches and believers, who, to a great extent, shape the ways in which the middle class is lived, felt and recognized in the city. Questions of integration and segregation become pertinent with regard to shared, limited city spaces for both rich and poor. Access to aspired circles requires more than social, economic and cultural capital, and may relate to shared beliefs, spirituality and symbolic values. Thus, questions of religious mobility and integration within new religio-economic

environments blend together material-pragmatic and non-material aspects, such as aspirations, performance and belonging. This, in turn, points to "fuzzier matters of mindsets, agency, and sense of empowered entitlement" (p.9), whose entanglements with the shaping of the Kenyan middle class seeks detailed analysis.

The collection of these contributions illustrates the complex and multifaceted reality of the middle class and the great challenges that research in this direction is facing.

REFERENCES

Arvanitis, Y. (2013). African Housing Dynamics: Lessons from Nairobi. Nairobi: African Development Bank.

Balbo, M. (2014). Beyond the city of developing countries; the new urban order of the 'emerging city'. sage, 269-287.

Boley, T., Belford, A. & B. Heijne (2011). Chutes and Ladders. World Policy Journal, 21-33.

Easterly, W. (2001). The middle class concensus and economic development. Journal of economic growth , 317-335.

FAO. (2000). Livestock sector Briefs. ROME: FAO.

Githinji, M. & S. Gullenberg (2003). De-construction the peasantly: class and development in rural Kenya. Critical Development, 67-88.

Grigg, D. (1995). An Introduction to Agricultural Geography. London: Routledge.

Grimaldi, V., & P. Sulis (2009). Inbetween spaces for social interation, new public realms and the new network society. the 4th International Conference of the International Forum (pp. 1-10). Amsterdam: IFOU.

Guguyu, O. (2015). Global Hotel brands fight for piece of Nairobi pie. Daily Nation . Nairobi: NMG, October 5.

Hales, N. (2015). Algeria: Grain and feed annual. Washington: GAIN.

IFAD. (2015). Rural Poverty Portal. Last Accessed May 12. 2015, www.ruralpovertypotal

IFPRI. (2014). Atlas of African Agriculture, research and development: Revealing Agriculture's Place in Africa. Washington: IFPRI.

Indexmundi. (2011). World Data. Index Mundi. Last Accessed April 13, 2011: www.Index Mundi.com.

Irungu, G. (2014). March 2014. Kenya Ranked High in the insurance uptake. Nairobi: NMD.

Kali, J. (2006). The Importance of Agriculture. Orbis, 50-80.

Karinge, S. (2013). The Elite factor in Sub-saharan Africa's development: the urgency in bridging disparity. Sage, 435-455.

Kharass, H. (2010). The emerging middle class in developing countries . Paris : OECD.

Laytimi, A. (2010). Market and Trade policies for Mediterranean Agriculture. New York: MEPFROL.

Leys, C. (1978). Capital accumulation, class formation and dependency . Socialist Register, 241-266.

Lu, C. (2005). Middle Class and Democracy: structural linkages. International Review of Modern Sociology, 157-175.

Mbataru, P. (2012). Plots for sale: Transformation of urban and peri-urban land in Nairobi. IFRA, Nairobi (pp. 5-10). Nairobi: IFRA.

Miller, D. (1992). The young and restless in Trindad . In Silverstone, & Hirch, Consuming technology. London: Routledge. (pp. 163-182).

Morison, K. (2011). Revenue, social cleavages, authoritarian stability in Mexico and Kenya: internatinalization institutions, and political change revisited. Comparative Political Studies.

Mutanu, B. (2015). Upperhill most constly as Nairobi land prices ris 535%. Business Daily February 25. Nairobi: NMG.

Mwathane, I. (2013). Disbanding land control boards would be a big mistake; Just improve on them.". Daily Nation November 26. Nairobi: NMG.

Nassim, M., & R. Patrick (2013). Nutrition and food production. Food and nutrition (pp. 20-30). Brussels : Brussels Fund.

Ncube, M., Lufumpa, C., & S. Kayizzi (2010). The middle of the pyramid: Dynmics of the middle class in Africa. Nairobi: African Development Bank.

Phadi, M., & C. Ceruti (2016). Multiple meanings of the middle class in soweto, South Africa. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg .

Pressman, S. (2007). Journal of Economic Issues, 181-200.

RIM. (1990). Resource Inventory and Management. Livestock resource survey. Lagos: RIM.

Savaria, S., Acs, S. & S. Gomez (2010). Subsistence Agricultural Systems in Sierra Leone . Brussels: European Commission.

SOS. (2014). SOS Children. Save Our Soul UK. Last Accessed April 8, 2014: www.our-africa.org.

Spronk, R. (2014). Exploring the middle classes in Nairobi: From modes of production to modes of sophistication. African Studies review, 93-114.

Spronk, R. (2014). Exploring the middle classes in Nairobi: From modes of production to modes of sophistication. African Studies review, 93-114.

Thornto, P. (2012). Livestock and Mixed Crop-livestock Systems. Washington: IFPRI.

Tibbo, M. (2012). Livestock and Dairy sector;challenges and opportunities fo investment in Egypt . Safety,quality and investment in Egypt Livestock sector. Cairo: UI. pp. 23-70.

Turner, B. (1979). The middle class and entrepreneurship in capitalist development. Pluto journals, 113-134.

UN. (2010). Urban environment heritage conservation. New York: UN-Habitat.

US Library Congress. (2015). Country Funds, Last Accessed November 12, 2015: www.contryfund.

WFP. (2011). Food Security in Libya: an Overview . New York: WFP.

Wikipedia. (2014). Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia Wikipedia Website. Last Accessed February 11, 2014: www.wikipedia.org

World Bank. (2015). Cereal Production Data. Last Accessed August 13, 2015: www.worldbank.org,

World Grain. (2014). Focus on Libya. Last Accessed March 3, 2014: www.world-grain.com

The making of the middle classes: From *Kula Raha* to Sophistication in Nairobi

By Rachel Spronk

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; Contact: R.Spronk@uva.nl

The debate about the middle classes in Africa has fully started, and it presents professionals and scholars with a unique opportunity: a true chance to engage in multi-disciplinary research where social geographers, architects, economists, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and policy-makers can complement one another in investigating this more or less new field.

As an anthropologist, I see my role as complementary to the economic and quantitative analyses that focus on particular indicators to tease out patterns of what makes up the middle classes. In addition, anthropological work on people's ideas and practices and in particular my work on young urban professionals' self-perceptions and everyday lives, is insightful to understand the engagements of what is now being labelled as the "emerging" middle classes. In other words, I would like to use people's experiences to speak back to our scholarly concept of the middle class. In this essay I briefly outline how such a contribution may look like.

Introduction

During 2001 and 2002, I started a study on the lives of young urban professionals in Nairobi, which is, fifteen years later, still ongoing. My interlocutors were then in their twenties, unmarried, ambitious, and they did not come from wealthy or elite backgrounds, though there were significant differences between families' capital and resources. Generally, they have had to make their way up by working hard, by securing a scholarship here or there, and by strategically navigating educational and professional opportunities. They were born and raised in urban areas, which may not sound important nowadays but was quite unique throughout the 20th century, as Nairobi used to be a destination of labour migration; people used to say they had a "house" in Nairobi and a "home upcountry". Between the 1980s, when this group of yuppies was born, and now, new generations have been born and raised in Nairobi, and the distinction between a house and a home remains for some groups while for

others it has lost its meaning. Between the turn of the century, when I started my study, and current days, Nairobi has changed dramatically and the Kenyan society continued to transform. Against this canvas of social reconfigurations, I am interested in the pursuit of social mobility in Kenya over time and across generations. This means that my take on the debate about the middle classes in Africa is one focusing on the middle class as a classification-in-the-making, arising from people's perceptions and practices.

It is important to engage with the current clamour concerning the 'rising' of a 'new' middle classes in Africa in the global media, by historicising what we now call the middle classes. In the 1960s, the concept of class inspired many scholars to deal with a variety of economic and political concerns in African countries. A phenomenal quantity of work on class analysis had been published, which continued into the 1980s before ending abruptly in the early 1990s. The rise and fall of this debate occurred concurrently with the debate about elites in Africa. As Andrea Behrends and Carola Lentz (2012) have shown, these former elites have largely transformed into what we today recognize, in line with their own self-identification, as the African middle classes. The currently deepening inequalities within African societies, as well as the increasing complexities of global economic capitalism and the opportunities and misfortunes they engender on the local scale, are forcing back the analytical concept of class in Africa. It is therefore imperative to (re)think what is meant by the notion of the middle class across time, for whom (scholars, professionals, people themselves), and how it is put to use.

First of all, the term needs to be used with great care as it is difficult to speak of social classes in a country like Kenya. Very often it seems that 'vertical' links across apparent class boundaries impede the formation of 'horizontal' linkages between those sharing the same 'objective' economic situation. Links of kinship, religion, regional affiliation or ethnicity have all tended and sometimes continue to be more powerful than links within the same socio-economic position (Berman & Lonsdale 1992, see also Kroeker in this volume). There can be significant socio-economic differences not only within groups but also within families and even among siblings. Second, as upward mobility is a relatively flexible and instable process, downward mobility is an ever-present possibility. We therefore need to find ways of studying the middle classes that recognizes flexibility and instability over one's life course and even across generations. Third, despite the continuing importance of theorizing the role of the political economy in the analyses of the middle classes, we cannot rely on economic definitions alone and study class solely based on such indicators as income level, education, and consumption patterns. For instance, in Kenya the income of the middle classes depends not only on their salaried positions, as many people engage in secondary, income-generating projects such as real estate, taxis, and trade (for

a more detailed discussion on the problematic analyses of the ADB see further down below). Fourth, as the renewed debates on the middle class show, discussion about the middle classes serve a variety of themes. The current global interconnections between people, goods and ideas force a variety of topics onto the research agenda, such as elites and political economy, growing inequalities, democracy, poverty, and consumption. In these debates, the term middle class is used in widely different ways.

In short, the middle class is not a coherent category, depending on the discipline or profession it is employed differently. Therefore, the notion needs to be formulated in such a manner so as to study the dialectical and mutually constitutive forces and processes of the economy, political systems, cultural configurations and social responses.

In order to tease out the successful pursuit of social mobility by my interlocutors, I employ the notion of middle class as an aspirational category (Heimann et al. 2012). My contribution to the current debate is to look at the notion of the middle class as the (imagined) goal and result of people's ambition to climb the social ladder. In other words, I do not study middle class as something that we can find 'out there' and measure within the population of Kenya, but as a classification-in-the-making. The focus then shifts to changing opportunities of social mobility as historic processes. Heimann et al. (2012) have written a compelling collection of articles exploring global economic changes through the lens of the middle class, concentrating on what constitutes a 'middle class' in different moments in time. They address, particularly, the theoretical implications of rethinking traditional tools of class analysis. For an anthropologist, people's preoccupation with middle-class lifestyles, ideas and practices is crucial:" middle classness [has] become an increasingly powerful category for aspiration, longing, and anxiety in many parts of the world" (Heiman et al 2013: 7).

In climbing up the social ladder, people's self-perceptions and ideas tend to shift as they feel that they are taking a different route compared to others in their social network or families. For example, in colonial Kenya, missionary education became a route for social mobility. With it, the question of polygyny (commonly referred to as polygamy) has always been discussed as something that does not befit 'modern' individuals, and under colonial and Christian influences, couples have taken up monogamous marriage in order to distinguish themselves as 'modern'. Social stratification thus connotes broader processes that have different impacts on communities, families and individuals: while it creates opportunities for some, it severely disadvantages others, sometimes even within the same family. Societal transformations have always caused shifts in the social organization of society, and have always enabled the emergence of new forms of consciousness and new modes of living.

In this essay I aim to explore the notion of middle class and to analyze how the material dimension, and in particular political and economic elements, is dialectically intertwined with the immaterial or ideational dimension, that is the generation of middle class subjectivities, including people's perceptions, feelings, and relations. Essentially, I propose to analyze *how* people live, rather than *what* they do for a living and how that is related to social status. I explore how the process of social stratification, by which people are grouped into a set of hierarchical social types, can be explained in terms of access to resources, education, networks and the way that these all come together to command personal prestige. The dense transfer point is aspiration; the ambition to work hard, endure, while imagining a better future. I will argue for the study of the middle class as a process in which personal circumstances and social background are negotiated through imagination and action, through desires and practices.

Class, What Class?

In 2011, the term middle class gained popularity in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa after the African Development Bank published a report titled "The Middle of the Pyramid: Dynamics of the Middle Class in Africa". The idea of the middle class was eagerly picked up by the Kenyan media. When asking Nairobians what, according to them, the middle classes in Kenya comprise of. By adding their responses together, a picture of a group emerged that has the following characteristics: Many times, my interlocutors mentioned salaried positions as a characteristic of the middle classes. They had certain professional groups in mind that worked in the private as well as in the public sector, such as doctors or university professors. When elaborating, they also added other professional groups such as successful entrepreneurs. By inclusion of these groups, the focus shifted towards practices of expenditure such as owing a housing or a car and spending on various lifestyle practices, but also to having certain mind-sets, and in particular being cosmopolitan (Spronk 2014). Having higher education or continuing the pursuit of education was considered pivotal for the middle classes. The middle classes were also seen as an urban socio-economic group. In other words, what people considered middle class was often a way to measure success and therefore status. Moreover, the middle classes could not be located as a distinctive and stable group within society, as people shifted the characteristics in their explanations. The elderly that I spoke to always mentioned the importance of higher education first, while younger generations emphasized wealth. From their explanations it became clear how my interlocutors made distinctions between elite or higher middle class families, that is, groups who started from a wealthy position, and people or groups who climbed up the social

ladder within their life course. The meaning of the term middle class is obviously in flux. For example, the difference between pointing out education (older people) and riches (younger people) demonstrates not only a historical shift, but also a pluralistic understanding of the relative success of middle groups. As an anthropologist, I argue that the narratives that people use to (re)present themselves are important empirical variables to 'measure' class and to understand the middle class in the making.

So, people's narratives are an important starting point to paint the larger perspective of social transformations. As we cannot speak of more or less clearly demarcated social classes in Kenya, I decided to study the pursuit of social mobility in order to see what enables persons to climb the social ladder. Everybody of course aspires to a good life but not all people have the ambition in combination with abilities and opportunities to enact their ambitions. From my study, it appears that three elements play an important role.

Material characteristics

First, an important factor in the pursuit of social mobility (and hence the making of the middle class) has been, and still is, education. Already in the early colonial times, lower positions in the colonial administration became accessible for local Kenyans. In 1924, the first Education Ordinance was passed but it was left to the missionaries to develop schools. For a long time, missionary education was the only education available for (a selected few) Kenyans (Mwiria 1991). But it was not until the massive expansion of the postcolonial administration that an enormous workforce was needed, and the postcolonial administration invested heavily in schools that gave Kenyans from different origins access to formal education. Up to today, higher education is a critical condition for finding a job in the professional sector. The historical formation of a professional class that allowed relative financial independence for young adults has been a crucial factor for people to take a different route than their parents had taken. White collar jobs were and continue to be illustrative of social mobility. Salaried positions give people a sense of stability that they need in order to plan their lives, while simultaneously education has become a symbol of prestige.

Second, having access to some resources, at different moments in one's life, is important. A typical, but not exclusively, resource is family wealth. Whether it concerns relatives' financial assistance for pursuing education or for providing initial capital for a business investment - being able to fall back on the extended family at some point in life can be crucial for successful social mobility. In the absence of

family capital, scholarships were often a means to make a favourable career start. A typical route to climb the social ladder, which existed since the colonial times and is still valid today, is to attend a Teacher Training College (TTC). In order to have enough teachers for the many primary and secondary schools in the country, access to TTCs has always been relatively uncostly, in contrast to polytechnics and universities that charge ever-increasing fees and which continue to increase dramatically. A typical narrative I found across generations is that people aim at attending TTC as part of a larger strategy: after graduating, they work for the Ministry of Education until they are eligible for a study leave to obtain a bachelor degree. Afterwards, they work to compensate for the study leave. This is then repeated up to PhD level.

Another form of capital involves loans that are based on non-family but trustworthy connections such as distant relatives or good friends. It is striking how many people preferred to rely not on family capital but rather on loans from non-kin. They explained that these loans had less expectations attached and were more clear-cut. Since the liberalization of the economy, banks have expanded their lending policies. Many people that I know have taken various bank loans for different projects, which are deducted from their monthly salaries, such as school fees and initial capital for starting a business. The third important mode of having access to resources is networks. Social networks are based on a wide variety of milieus and can be formed on the basis of kinship, regional affiliation, ethnicity, having attended the same school, religion, and occupation. People are keenly aware of the importance of networks and persons lacking an extensive network invest heavily in them. For example, in my research I have focused on the Lions Club that, although identified as an elite club, has many members who are far from being part of the elite. In fact, it is remarkable how the club functions as a place for people to become connected. Networks have material and symbolic value: besides having access to finances and other resources, being well-connected reflects positively on a person. It implies social recognition because it reflects a good reputation, social skills and financial ability. Networks provide respect and, in turn, access to resources and opportunities: being well-connected is helpful in advancing one's career and doing business.

In short, access to education, resources and networks are all productive possibilities that are interdependent and co-produce conditions permitting to climb up the social ladder or to improve one's socio-economic position.

Ideational Characteristics

Third, there is more to middle class than the material importance and economic comfort of social mobility. It is also about prestige, about social status. These are the more immaterial qualities that nevertheless remain closely related to material ones. Weber's (1946) distinction between class position (economic power) and social status (honour or prestige) helps to bring the role of culture in class practice to the foreground, as do also other forms of capital that are not, strictly speaking, economic in nature (Bourdieu 1984). By focusing on the way people forge their lives, we can see how the idea of middle class operates as a middle ground where aspiration and praxis come together. This can be done through various registers that are crucial cultural mediators: lifestyle choices such as housing, family planning, religious affiliation, and practices of redistribution are all interesting lenses through which to study how prestige is cultivated. In my work I focus on sexuality as an analytical lens through which to study social change, or in this case the making of the middle classes, as people distinguish themselves from their poorer, wealthier, 'traditional', or established fellow Kenyans.

Cultural institutions such as marriage, bride-wealth, female circumcision, and polygyny are interesting vantage points to tease out how social transformations impact communities, families and individuals. Since the colonial era, matters of sexuality have always been fiercely discussed, as older generations felt their authority fading away and as the younger generations seized opportunities to forge a different life. My proposal is that one way to study how social mobility translates into the formation of the middle classes is by looking at how people balance their mostly progressive ideals with more conservative social expectations. The focus on sexuality unearths other elements of middle class formation, namely ambiguity and conflict. Middle classness may be desired, but it is also many times contested. Furthermore, its course and outcome are often unclear.

In February 2015, I visited one couple that got married in 2001, I named them Tayiani and Kinyua (Spronk 2012). I can safely state that they embody the middle class, as they are often pictured in the global media: cosmopolitan, well-paid professionals with a young family of three children. I have written on how the family struggled with their wish not to practice the custom of bride-wealth, which was very much against the wish of Kinyua's family, who felt terribly offended. For Tayiani and Kinyua, such a custom was not in line with their life perspective on marriage as a commitment between equals, on a loving relationship in which the couple is central regardless of family expectations. Eventually, Tayiani and Kinyua found a compromise, but not without much tension and anxiety. When married, the contentious issue was always how to deal with the expectations of the extended family, in terms of housing and financing them, or participating in family meetings. At some point, the couple

moved to Zambia for Kinyua's work and both explained what great years these have been. The move consolidated their marriage and, in their words, made them strong to face the never-ending demands of their relatives. They were criticized for pooling their incomes (indeed a radical decision), or for investing in 'nonsensical' matters such as family holidays. In short, they were rebuked by relatives for not complying with expectations of how marriage life should be. Being with them in their lush garden in their house in Kilimani, it did not take long before another issue they have been struggling with arose. Kinyua is his father's first born, and his relatives expect him to take part in the clan's council of elders. To Kinyua, this is out of the question, as it goes against his constitution to partake in an organization that he called "backward" and "un-Christian".

What is interesting in Kinyua's explanations about the way to deal with such expectations is the shift that seems to have occurred over the last fifteen years. This time, he positioned himself as a Christian who does not want to engage in traditional practices he does not believe in. Whereas before he would explain his different approach to life as being modern. Christianity has always played an important role in taking a different, many times understood as "modern" route in Kenya: from missionary education for women to criticizing female circumcision. Religion has been a register through which to distinguish oneself. What I see now is that my interlocutors, apart from a small minority, have generally become more religious compared to fifteen years ago. Here, a new interesting question about the making of the middle class appears: whereas as young adults they were quite clear about gender equality, a topic that I have investigated through the theme of female sexual pleasure (2005), now being in a different phase of their lives, one of raising young families, a subtle shift has occurred. With adulthood, marriage, and starting a family, new responsibilities appeared. My interlocutors found in their churches like-minded people as well as a place to discuss demanding life questions. Through their increased participation in religious institutions, a more conservative way of life became meaningful. Many times, the religious discourse gave rise to a different gender perspective than they had as young adults. The interesting question is whether the middle classes tend to become more conservative when it comes to gender and sexuality, as their participation in religious communities becomes more important.

For instance, many women told me how they struggle to fit the image of a subservient wife, expressed in attitude, comportment, or dress code while the relationship with their spouse started from a very different position. Whereas some of them were struggling with this paradox, for others their role as wife and mother meant that they had had to change their former ideas. They then happily lived the life of the ideal respectable womanhood: middle-class, married and mother. Some of my female friends were struggling with what to me seemed like a new ideal in Nairobi: the stay home wife. One

of my friends, who had a good career in media, was actually thinking of leaving her job, whereas fifteen years ago, as a modern woman financial independence was very important to her.

What can we learn from such cases? Gender and sexuality in middle class formation are often moralized and re-moralized, and while often progressive ideals are promoted, such as on female circumcision, polygyny or bride-wealth, at other instances more restrictive expectations arise, for instance with regard to gender roles. In other words, middle-class respectability can also (re)introduce normative ideas and practices. This raises the question about the role of the middle classes in the establishment of civil society, as well as the role of religion in dominant middle-class moralities.

In Conclusion: From Kula Raha to Sophistication

Tayiani and Kinyua are engaged in what I would call the process of the making of the middle class. It shows us how material and ideational qualities come together: the couple are both hardworking social climbers. They received a scholarship here, a training there, and advanced their career through commitment and hard work. Their social status is clear: they are admired as being "sophisticated", in other words, they gained prestige. Their new life path does not go unchallenged, as they embody shifting cultural practices, which are expressed through diverging lifestyle choices.

They follow up on the taxi drivers of Nairobi in colonial and newly Independent Kenya that were the hip and ambitious of their era. The prestige of these new 'big' men was expressed in the phrase *kula raha*, translated as 'to make pleasure', and it connotes symbolic meanings of accomplishment (Furedi 1973).The expression *kula raha* has shifted, in co-production with social change that provided new opportunities, from these taxi drivers to new avenues. The taxi drivers of today may well be part of the (floating) middle class (see Neubert and Stoll in this report) but they are not the symbol of its success. In short, middle class formation is a historical process that occurs globally but unfolds within particular local contexts and results in different outcomes.

Further, my focus is on the (young) urban professionals who are likely to become the relatively wealthy middle class. The question is, whether the same process concerning sexuality works out similarly or differently in other socio-economic groups (see Neubert and Stoll). Lena Kroeker (in this report) focuses on a slightly different group for whom relation with relatives is very different. That suggests that different groups use different registers to engage with the making of their middle class status. A comparative perspective might provide complementary insights into the process of middle class formation and thus bring us closer to defining the notion of the middle classes in Kenya.

I would like to make one final note about the broad interest in the middle classes in Africa. There seems to be a tendency in the discussion on the 'new' middle classes to expose them by pointing at their supposedly mindless consumption patterns while implying that they should direct their attention and efforts to improving their own countries. I am not sure whether this argument tells us something about the people being discussed or about the researchers themselves and their expectations. As Jones (2012) argues with regard to Indonesia, many such understandings of conspicuous consumption echo early European conceptions wherein consumption was considered wasteful and socially corrosive, rather than, for example, expressive and creative.

My contribution therefore is, in addition to more economic analyses, to focus on the culture of the middle classes. People have to choose between competing everyday practices regarding careers, housing, family, leisure, etc.; in other words, they have to make lifestyle choices which form and content differ according to each cultural context. The emergence of middle-class culture(s) is about ideas and practices, about aspirations and desires. The material and the ideational should be taken together as productive forces.

References

Berman, B. & J. Lonsdale. (1992). Unhappy valley: conflict in Kenya & Africa (Vol. 1 & 2). Ohio University Press.

Behrends, A. & C. Lentz. (2012). " Education, Careers, and Home Ties: The Ethnography of an Emerging Middle Class from Northern Ghana " Zeitschrift Für Ethnologie 137 (2): 139-164.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. London: Routledge.

Furedi, F. (1973). "The African Crowd in Nairobi: Popular Movements and Elite Politics." The Journal of African History 14 (2): 275-290.

Heiman, R., Freeman C. & M. Liechty, eds. (2012). The Global Middle Classes: Theorizing through Ethnography. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

Jones, C. (2012). "Women in the Middle: Femininity, Virtue, and Excess in Indonesian Discourses of Middle Classness." In: The Global Middle Classes. Theorizing through Ethnography, edited by R. Heiman, C. Freeman and M. Liechty. Santa Fe: SAR Press.

Mwiria, K. (1991). "Education for Subordination: African Education in Colonial Kenya." History of Education 20 (3): 261-273.

Spronk, R. (2012). Ambiguous Pleasures. Sexuality and Middle Class Self-Perceptions in Nairobi. New York: Berghahn Books.

Spronk, R. (2014). I am African, iko nini. African Diaspora, 7(2), 205-233.

Weber, M. (1946). From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology, edited by Gerth, Hans and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press.

Settling Yuppies: Policy Failure and Middle Class-Led Transformation in Peri-Urban Nairobi

By Patrick Mbataru

Kenyatta University, Kenya; Contact: Mbataru.patrick@ku.ac.ke

Introduction

The rapid mutation of prime agricultural land around Nairobi has triggered a debate, in which are embedded questions of policy, protection of agricultural land and the constant transformation of Kenya's capital city which lacks planning. Researchers hardly address the causes of this transformation. The objective of this article is not only to analyse the dynamics behind the spatial transformation of the city but also to unpack the push factors thereabout in an attempt to paint a more coherent picture. Much of the peri-urban land around Nairobi and in many other urban centres in Kenya is being turned from agricultural use to real estate. The complexity of this process is obviously diverse and convoluted so that it is difficult to do justice to the analysis if one attempts to capture all dimensions (Mbataru 2012).

This chapter focuses on the socio-economic factors underlying the intense land subdivision around Nairobi. Other related militating factors will be regarded tangentially. Broadly speaking, the article begins by looking at the theoretical groundings of the burgeoning middle class in Kenya, then discusses push factors, before delineating a profile of land transformation around the city.

Global economic forces transmuted many cities from concentrated and identifiable towns into shapeless urban centres in the second part of the 20th century (UN-HABITAT 2008). The process, largely catalysing modern human civilization, is marked by the magnitude of urbanization around the world. Studying "the city" is relevant because in an increasingly urban civilization, the urban setting will become the space of everyday life for the majority. The city is a crucial arena of cultural and material production, of political engagement and citizenship, of transnational migration and diaspora (UN 2010), of creative imagination and experimentation, and of social interaction across lines of race,

class, language, gender, and sexuality.

In addition, in the current global neoliberal era, cities are increasingly important to study as sites of the "devolution" of political governance from the national to the local scale, as nodes in interurban networks of capital, media, and migration, as epicentres of financial and environmental "crises," as well as of sites of experimentation in resolving these multiple crises. They are 'network cities' (Grimaldi and Sulis 2009). As for devolution, the process is in the early stages of implementation in Kenya. In short, no social realm and no 'non-urban' space are untouched by the expanding cities. From political economy to popular culture, from natural to built environments, urbanization shapes the landscape of daily life. Studying the connection between the city and social change is crucial because it reveals the themes and processes that characterize the city as it transforms itself to accommodate internal and external pressure (Sieverts 2002).

Land subdivision is one of these processes whose aim is to release land to the market. It allows for development of infrastructure in an area. Formal processing of land subdivision also acts as a deterrent to emerging informal land markets that lead to urban sprawls and blights. However, the process is informed by many conflicting factors, resulting to either efficient or dysfunctional land markets, either neat urban forms or unplanned towns.

The Elusive Middle Class

The 'middle class' notion is immediately problematic because there is no clear definition. It depends on whether one takes a historical perspective, which allow for an analysis of Karl Marx's idea of class, Max Weber's notion of status or Pierre Bourdieu's 'social capital'. Confounding the issue is the fact that what would be considered middle class in Africa may not be so in Europe, America or Asia. Citing Botteo (2005:240-242), Phadi and Ceruti note that, in the US and Britain, 'middle class' is taken to mean 'ordinary' or 'normal' (Phadi and Ceruti 2016). The range of lived realities of the middle class in Africa is between educated people earning USD 250 per month in Liberia to a woman in Nairobi earning USD 1.500 per month, driving a second-hand Japanese Sedan, with life insurance and even a house mortgage (Boley, Belford and Heijne 2011).

Working from a purely economic angle, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has defined the middle class in absolute and relative terms. In relative terms, the middle class comprises of individuals or households that fall between the 20th and 80th percentile of the consumption distribution or between 0,75 and 1,25 times median per capita income respectively (Ncube, Lufumpa and Kayizzi 2010). In

absolute terms, these are individuals with an annual income exceeding USD 3.900 in PPP[4] or with a daily per capita expenditure of USD 2-10 (Spronk, 2014). This gives room for embedding some middle class substrata: the floating middle class (USD 2-4). This group live on the edge and can fall back into poverty. There is the lower middle class (USD 4-10). This group can afford to live beyond the subsistence and even save some money. Then there is the upper middle class (USD 10-20), whose members can afford not only to save but also to consume non-essentials and recreational comforts such as cars or better houses and even holiday tours. According to the AfDB, Kenya's middle class ranks tenth in Africa with a 16,8% of its population in the upper middle class and 44,9% in the floating middle class. Its spread and impact can be discerned in the on-going transformation of Nairobi's landscape. What is happening in Kenya is similar to what happened in other countries where financial innovations and economic liberalization unlocked the middle class income potential, like in Oceania and Japan in mid last century (Kharass 2010).

This economic approach logically leads to the question: what are the indicators? Middle class individuals tend to own or reside in permanent houses. They may own modern goods such as refrigerators, cell-phones and cars with most of the incomes sourced from off-farm activities. Another indicator is a rising use of insurances, estimated to grow at about 25% annually in Kenya (Irungu 2014). The rising number of middle and high end service providers in Nairobi is also indicative of the economic potential of the expanding middle class. In the last ten years, Kempinsky ™, Carlson Rezido™, Park inn™, Movenpick™, Mariot™, Heminways™ have all opened branches in Nairobi (Guguyu 2015). Other 'middle class businesses' that have entered the Kenyan market include the fast food outlets KFC™ and Subway™ as well as clothing and personal item shops Mark and Spencer™.

It is not only economics that defines the middle class. There is also the sociological understanding of the notion, concerning attitudes and behavioural patterns, either individually or collectively (Pressman 2007). The middle class is characterized by the ability to convert one form of capital to another, and the Bourdieusian perspective, the differentiated ability to access and use material, social and cultural capital are hallmarks of the middle class (Spronk, 2014). Indeed, the generation born to coffee- and tea-farming peasant families, determinedly acquired cultural capital, and now defines the 'judgement of taste' in Kenya, and Nairobi in particular. This definition is no longer done by those who inherited 'old money'. In Nairobi, there is a third generation, which though remaining bound to kinship expectations, is also disconnected from its rural origins (Spronk, 2014).

---

[4] PPP = Purchasing Power Parity.

The middle class is seen as a powerful agent of socio-political transition towards democracy. In this sense, those in the middle class are the 'switchmen of history' (Karinge 2013). Those in the middle class need stability of institutions in order to protect what they own (Lu 2005). Other variables include better education, professional qualification, aspirations, and lifestyles distinct from those of the lower class. Some writers posit that the rise of middle class is associated not only with a higher share of income but also with a low degree of ethic division and less political instability, less civil war and more democracy (Easterly 2001). This should be surprising if applied to Kenya, whose middle class is seen as embedded in ethnic divisions. Easterly's 'middle class consensus', a situation where there is neither class nor ethic differences, would be baffling unless we counter that ethnicity is a political ideology, which would be a problem for many political scientists.

Being middle class means having the ability to afford basic goods. It denotes self-sufficiency, responsibility, social mobility and identity, in the sense of how people see themselves. Phadi and Ceruti (2016) suggest this is contextualized. To them, there is need to contend with the "middle class" as identities generated by continuous process of 'up and down' comparison.

Socio-Economic Factors

The debate on the bourgeoning middle class in Kenya and its consequent influence on the shape and form of Nairobi is coloured by the larger 'Africa is rising' narrative, wherein, in Nairobi like elsewhere, vectors such as progressive attitudes and choices in lifestyle articulate social-cultural identity and agency through consumption (Miller 1992). There is no shortage of literature that economically explains this 'rediscovery' of Africa (Spronk, Exploring the middle classes in Nairobi: From modes of production to modes of sophistication, 2014), but the social geography of the narrative lags behind. This is what I hope to contribute, pivoting my case on the connexion between development and social conditions (Turner 1979).

The formation of the middle class is a consequence of 'the productive interconnections such as access to education, salaried occupation, consumption patterns and lifestyle choices as well as modern self-perceptions" (Spronk, Exploring the middle classes in Nairobi: From modes of production to modes of sophistication, 2014). The 'yuppies of Nairobi' respond well in consuming the city as a product of globalization. These forces push the focus away from natural resources to the city as a consumable resource (Balbo 2014).

The question whether the burgeoning middle class in Kenya is a colonial or post-colonial phenomenon is moot (Karinge 2013). However, since its independence, Kenya has been a crucible of class formation (Lonsdale 2010). This is mainly due to its near seamless adoption of the colonial capitalist mode of production (Githinji and Gullenberg 2003). For a long time, the country has featured in the raging debate regarding the local application of international development theories (Leys 1978) and fast-changing class formation (Githinji and Gullenberg 2003). There is concrete evidence that economic disparity in the continent is closing and that unrolling from underneath is a vibrant middle class.

Kenya's middle class is estimated to be about 44,9% of the total population (of about 44 million people in 2014) (GOK 2015). The class is characterized by rapid urbanization and strong growth in consumption expenditure and demand for certain types of goods (Arvanitis 2013). It is said that the Kenya middle class youth to spend about KSh 65 billion (USD 6,5 billion) on cloths annually. The implementation of favourable macroeconomic and fiscal policies in the last 15 years has accelerated this development. The increasing social spending after Mwai Kibaki took over the presidency, contrasted with Daniel Moi's minimal spending in infrastructure and fiscal liberalism (Morison 2011).

The influx into the city of young, educated Kenyans should also be attributed to the coming of age of a generation brought up in the cash crop society of the 80s and 90s. This generation grew up scheming how to escape the drudgery of coffee cultivation. Their parents encouraged them. With parents gone and siblings out of the villages, shrinking land size, this generation is settling in the cities. There is anecdotal evidence of weakening ties with the rural homeland as many city dwellers, unlike in the 1980s and 90s, prefer to stay in the city and spend their holidays in leisure destinations rather than travelling to their rural homes. The city 'house' is becoming the new 'home'.

With increasing incomes, demand for 'plots' in Nairobi rose sharply in the 2000s. Prices have been rising and hitherto desolate peri-urban zones in the East and South of the city are now spotted with bungalow and maisonette constructions. The peri-urban areas are often an 'institutional deserts' (Sharma 2014) where the poor, recently arrived from rural parts of the county, initially settled. However, the Nairobi peri-urban is emerging as a destination for the middle- and upper-middle classes (Gachiri 2013).

As the city's suburbs are a ready source of cheap resources, they attract more middle class people. Such aggregate resources as sand and gravel, water sources and developable land, when located near a city are crucial to its expansion, and their exploitation has impact on the environment (UNEP 2012). This is certainly the case in Nairobi's suburbs of Juja (quarry stones, land), Kiambu (wood, land) and Athi River (land, sand, gypsum, lime, Portland cement). However, it is not the availability that makes

these resources particularly precious, but rather that the land and the resources therein are subject to competing and conflicting claims, unlike in the rural areas (UNCHS, 2001). This can be seen as a transitional condition characterizing the expanding middle class.

The middle class turns these suburban spaces into frontiers of creativity and innovation. These frontiers are concretized in planned 'private cities' and gated residential communities. New concept cities like Tatu, Migaa and Thika Greens, all former large coffee estates, depict the emerging recomposition of peri-urban spaces.

Because of inadequate regulation, the land market in Kenya is inefficient, which has led to land speculation (Mwathane, 2013). As a result, most middle class settlements are informal, meaning they lack proper amenities like water, roads, and sewerage systems. The market faces large demand and chronic undersupply (Arvanitis 2013). These have negative impact on efficient urban development patterns, resulting in high cost of doing business in the city.

The recent extension of the Nairobi metropolitan perimeter has taken over the neighbouring municipalities, leading to rapid conversion of agricultural land into real estate. According to the Coffee Board of Kenya, the total area under estates is 14.525 acres (5.878 ha), of which 1380 acres (558 ha) have been converted into real estate over a period of five years, translating into a conversion rate of 9,5% (see table 2 below).

The Middle Class Rise of Peri-Urban Nairobi

Barely 20 kilometres from the city centre, the land in the north of the city been used for constructing the high-end estate of Runda, Gigiri. The areas stretching into Kiambu have seen massive investment in high-end and middle-range residential houses. Within 20 years, developers have transformed coffee plantations near Nairobi into modern city suburbs with maisonettes and apartments, 'gated communities' and some of the biggest malls in sub-Saharan Africa. House prices range from USD 200.000 to USD 500.000, well beyond the affordability limit of the floating middle class, which is about 45% of Kenya's population.

Nevertheless, prices keep rising. There is also a wide housing deficit in the city. These factors combined with poor land market regulation result in a chaotic sub-urban sprawl within Nairobi´s peri-urban spaces. In 2011, the market needed about 150.000 units but only 30.000 houses were provided (UN-Habitat, 2008). Mortgage intake is low, as estimated by UN-Habitat. There is low public investment in housing owing to inadequate budget provisions. The dominant trend in the segment is

private sector involvement. With commercial interest rates at about 24%, some members of the middle class find mortgage difficult to obtain and repay. In 2004/05, budgeting allocation for public housing decreased by 10 %, from KSh 542 million (USD 542.000) to KSh 487 million (USD 487.000)[5]. This lack of adequate funding has exposed the sector to market forces that are not sensitive to the needs of the middle and low-income population. Given these constraints, the middle class leans towards self-built houses (Arvanitis 2013), which explains the mushrooming of informal settlements and haphazard expansion of housing developments. Indeed, the low mortgage intake belies the real dynamism of the sector. In 2013, the Kenya Bureau of Statistics rebased the country's GDP from USD 46,6 billion to USD 53,4 billion. Economists and analysts at the World Bank attributed this expansion to the vibrant construction, manufacturing, insurance activities, and therefore stable indicators of burgeoning middle class.

With near absence of vacant government-owned land in Kenyan cities, alternative land supply sources have emerged, including subdivisions of titled land, public development projects, and transactions involving untitled land. According to the UN-Habitat, subdivision of titled lands often renders the ownership informal, as most resulting subdivision plots are not titled. Many middle class individuals in Nairobi belong to a *chama*, social groups that often morph or dabble into land buying or small scale real estate investments. Each member is issued with a share certificate, or alternatively, the land may be properly registered, with members getting title deeds (Mwathane 2013). More often than not, the land is subdivided and occupied without the mandatory subdivision approval. Such approval requires proper plan layouts, cadastral surveying and provision of infrastructure and conforming to costly local municipal council technical standards. Unregistered selling of share certificates continues unabated, only witnessed by the group's officials. Thus, like squatter settlements (illegally occupied and subdivided lands), many estates (like the Zimmerman Estate in Nairobi) are not titled only because they fail to meet the criteria required. As a result, local authorities classify formally titled land as informal due to the lack of physical developments therein.

There are, however, some official housing projects, though few. Examples in Nairobi include the National Housing Corporation 20-year tenant-purchase scheme at Nyayo high-rise estate, or the numerous site-and-service projects that have not been titled to date. These site-and-services plots nevertheless continue to change hands without registration.

---

[5] 2016 August exchange rate at 100 Kenya shillings to one Dollar.

Emerging Trends in Nairobi

The high prices of property in the city suburbs mirrors the great demand for land in Nairobi. Some of the posted prices rival those of some Asian and European cities. Prices in Nairobi rose by 535% between 2005 and 2015 (Mutanu 2015). Various factors have led to escalating land prices and consequent dip in rental yields. In most high-end markets, speculators are out-pricing themselves out of the apartment markets. Analysts say that the continuing dip in rental yields is reaching a point where they will discourage new landlords from entering the market (Arvanitis 2013). The following are samples of property prices in upper-class areas:

Table 1: Property prices in upper-class areas

Area	Prices per hectare
Upper Hill	USD 4.210.000
Kilimani	USD 3.620.000
Westlands	USD 3.500.000
Kileleshwa	USD 2.400.000
Lavington	USD 2.000.000
Spring Valley	USD 39.000
Runda	USD 58.000

Source: Mutanu 2015

Of course, the transformation of greater Nairobi area is informed by both economic and socio-political factors. Other factors include the rapid development of infrastructure and institutions like colleges and universities, possible money laundering, and the general increase in the number of speculators following an influx of institutional investors like banks in the sector. Socio-political factors include the growth of a middle class with a strong urban identity, rural-urban migration, influx of migrants from Somalia and Southern Sudan, rapid rise of educational institutions in the peri-urban areas, and fears about land ceiling, land banking, and taxation on vacant and excess land.

The growth of middle class has been boosted by the migration of rural middle class to Nairobi. Between the late 1990s and 2002, this was pushed partly by the threat posed by militia groups, such Mungiki, mainly in central Kenya. The influx of people running away from political hotspots in the

Great Rift Valley also contributed to the high demand for land in peri-urban areas. These factors are often intertwined.

The increasing size of the middle class has put pressure on the linear growth of the city, creating urban corridors that geographically spread the capital's economic, spatial and infrastructural synergies over an area exceeding the current municipal boundaries. Any indication of impeding development of an infrastructure, for example a road triggers an influx of middle class land buyers and speculators into the area. This is the case with the stated intention to open up the Greater Nairobi Metropolitan area by creating by-passes. To ease this pressure, many coffee farms adjacent to Nairobi have been subdivided and developers are putting up apartments and maisonettes. The following table shows the large-scale coffee estates converted into residential estates by 2011.

Table 2: Coffee estates already converted into residential areas

Estate	Size In Hectares
Muthithi	58,0
Gakunju	32,6
Mugumoini	260,0
Thindigua	250,0
Mumwe	117,0
Mukinduri	121,5
Kugeria	29,7
Evergreen	32,0
Fairview	209,3
Weavery	270,0
TOTAL	**1.380,2**

Source: The coffee board of Kenya. 2010

However, the spatial expansion also has its impediments. On the southern side of the city, urban development is restricted by the topography of the Great Rift Valley and the Nairobi National Park, a wildlife sanctuary. Significant stretches of land are available in the southeast direction along the Nairobi-Mombasa Highway towards the emerging satellite towns of Mavoko and Machakos. The

planned techno-city situated in this direction, nicknamed the 'Silicon Savannah', has already created a stampede of land buyers and speculators.

There is rising evidence, albeit implicit, of official policy recognition of the expansion of the middle class. In 2008, the Government of Kenya took the first step towards an area-wide approach to urban planning with the introduction of a Ministry of Nairobi for Metropolitan Development, that included the ambitious Nairobi Metro 2030 Vision, a medium-term development proposal for the Greater Nairobi Metropolitan Area (GNMA). The Vision has been criticized for its inward-, rather than outward-looking nature, failing to view Greater Nairobi in its national context (UN-HABITAT 2008). The implementation of the GNMA plan in a holistic context of forward-looking economic, social, industrial, and spatial policy in a way allows for more space for the middle class. This policy direction is notable in the region as the East-African economy expands (Cohen 2006).

The Nairobi Metropolitan Region (NMR) offers a prime opportunity for well-designed interventions, aimed at the middle class, including a proposed tramway, dual carriage ways and various malls. According to UN-Habitat, the Metropolitan Region could also offer prospects for directing economic activity to a circle of satellite settlements between 60 and 100 km away, but linked to the core through high-speed infrastructure connections such as intra-urban highways. However, to start addressing the increasing traffic congestion, stakeholders like the UN_HABITAT and scholars that light rail connections should be built to connect Nairobi central business district and rapidly expanding middle class dormitory settlements in Machakos, Thika, Rongai and Limuru.

Summary and Conclusions

The main objective of this contribution was to analyze the influence of policy failure and the emerging middle class on the reconfiguration of the Nairobi peri-urban. The rapid expansion of the real estate sector in Nairobi indicates the economic expansion and the rising number of citizens with disposal incomes channelled into real property development.

Several factors have put great pressure on the peri-urban. These include population growth, upsurge of tertiary institutions, and influx of people displaced by political violence. In addition, there is Infrastructural development in the city's suburban, migration of rural middle class into Nairobi owing to insecurity in rural areas.

The processes of peri-urban reconfiguration are informed by intertwining social, political and economic factors. These have shaped the agitation for constitutional changes that Kenya has been

undergoing over the last twenty years. The way forward, I suggest, would be to fast track the remaining suggestions on land reforms, notably the implementation of the National Land Policy.

Policy may include the relocation of a number of governmental departments to satellite towns. Some government departments may be physically located in the capital. With recent developments in communication technologies, there is little justification for physical centralization of government functions in the capital. Decentralization could alleviate current traffic congestion. Relocation of large numbers of civil servants to satellite towns would directly and indirectly relieve pressure on the Nairobi land and housing markets while stimulating the economies of the secondary cities in the Greater Nairobi Metropolitan.

References

Arvanitis, Y. (2013). African Housing Dynamics: Lessons from Nairobi. Nairobi: AFDB.

Balbo, M. (2014). Beyond the city of developing countries; the new urban order of the 'emerging city'. sage, 269-287.

Boley, T., Belford, A., & B. Heijne, (2011). Chutes and ladders . World Policy Journal, 21-33.

Easterly, W. (2001). The middle class concensus and economic development. Journal of economic growth , 317-335.

FAO. (2000). Livestock sector Briefs. ROME: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Githinji, M., & S. Gullenberg (2003). Deconstruction the peasantly: class and development in rural Kenya. Critical Development , 67-88.

Grigg, D. (1995). An Introduction to Agricultural Geography. London: Routledge.

Grimaldi, V. & P. Sulis (2009). Inbetween spaces for social interation, new public realms and the new network society. the 4th International Conference of the International Forum (pp. 1-10). Amsterdam: IFOU.

Guguyu, O. (2015, October 5). Global Hotel brands fight for piece of Nairobi pie. Daily Nation . Nairobi: NMG.

Hales, N. (2015). Algeria: Grain and feed annual. Washington: GAIN.

IFAD. (2015). Rural Poverty Portal. Last Accessed May 12. 2015, www.ruralpovertypotal

IFPRI. (2014). Atlas of African Agriculture, research and development: Revealing Agriculture's Place in Africa. Washington: IFPRI.

Indexmundi. (2011). World Data. Last Accessed April 13, 2011: www.Index Mundi.com

Irungu, G. (2014) Kenya Ranked High in the insurance uptake. Nairobi: NMD, March 26.

Kali, J. (2006). The importance of agriculture . Orbis, 50-80.

Karinge, S. (2013). The the elite factor in sub-saharan Africa's development: the urgency in bridging disparity. Sage, 435-455.

Kharass, H. (2010). The emerging middle class in developing countries . Paris : OECD.

Laytimi, A. (2010). Market and Trade policies for mediterranean Agriculture. New York: MEPFROL.

Leys, C. (1978). Capital accumulation, class formation and dependency . Socialist Register, 241-266.

Lu, C. (2005). Middle Class and Democracy: structural linkages. International review of modern socilogy, 157-175.

Mbataru, P. (2012). Plots for sale: Transformation of urban and peri-urban land in Nairobi. IFRA, Nairobi (pp. 5-10). Nairobi: Ifra.

Miller, D. (1992). The young and restless in Trindad . In Silverstone, & Hirch, Consuming technology (pp. 163-182). London: Routledge.

Morison, K. (2011). Revenue, social cleavages, authoritarian stability in Mexico and Kenya: internatinalization institutions, and political change revisited. Comparative Political Studies.

Mutanu, B. (2015). Upperhill most constly as Nairobi land prices ris 535%. Business Daily. February 25. Nairobi: NMG.

Mwathane, I. (2013). Disbanding land control boards would be a big mistake; Just improve on them." Daily Nation November 26. Nairobi: NMG.

Nassim, M. & R. Patrick, (2013). Nutrition and food production. Food and Nutrition Brussels : Brussels Fund: (pp. 20-30).

Ncube, M., Lufumpa, C., & Kayizzi, S. (2010). The middle of the pyramid: Dynmics of the middle class in Africa. Nairobi: AFDB.

Phadi, M. & C. Ceruti (2016). Multiple meanings of the middle class in Soweto, South Africa. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg .

Pressman, S. (2007). 2007. Journal of Economic issues, 181-200.

RIM. (1990). Resource Inventory and Management. Livestock resource Survey. Lagos: RIM.

Savaria, S., Acs, S. & S. Gomez (2010). Subsistence Agricultural Systems in Sierra Leone . Brussels: European Commission.

SOS. (2014). SOS Children. Save Our Soul UK: Last Accessed April 8, 2014: www.our-africa.org.

Spronk, R. (2014). Exploring the middle classes in Nairobi: From modes of production to modes of sophistication. African Studies review, 93-114.

Spronk, R. (2014). Exploring the middle classes in Nairobi: From modes of production to modes of sophistication. African Studies Review, 93-114.

Thornto, P. (2012). Livestock and Mixed Crop-livestock Systems. washington: IFPRI.

Tibbo, M. (2012). Livestock and Dairy sector; Challenges and opportunities fo investment in Egypt. Safety, Quality and investment in Egypt Livestock sector (pp. 23-70). Cairo: UI.

Turner, B. (1979). The middle class and entrepreneurship in capitalist development. Pluto journals, 113-134.

UN. (2010). Urban environment heritage conservation. New York: UN-Habitat.

US Library Congress. (2015). Country Funds, Last Accessed November 12, 2015: www.contryfund.

WFP. (2011). Food Security in Libya: an Overview . New York: WFP.

Wikipedia. (2014). Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia: www.wikipedia.org

World Bank. (2015). Cereal Production Data. Last Accessed August 13, 2015: www.worldbank.org

World Grain. (2014). Focus on Libya. Last Accessed March 3, 2014: www.world-grain.com.

The Kenyan Middle Class and Responses to Social Security

By Lena Kroeker

Faculty of Cultural Studies (Social Anthropology), Academy of Advanced African Studies, Bayreuth University; Contact: Lena.Kroeker@uni-bayreuth.de

Defining the Kenyan Middle Class[6]

Differently from many other African countries, Kenya has a significant middle class – and according to the African Development Bank (2011), it is rising fast. According to their publication, about 40% of the Kenyan population has escaped poverty and finds itself in what the authors call 'the middle income group' with advanced economic status. In its definition of the middle class, the bank relies solely on income range, a position contested by social scientists. Still, scientists struggle to find concrete alternative definitions that would flesh out the unique characteristics of the middle class and distinguish it from other classes.

Interestingly, when I asked my interviewees, throughout my anthropological study in the Kenyan city of Kisumu, about their understanding of the concept of the middle class, the answers never consisted of purely economic definitions. My neighbour MaLeon[7], an economist of the district government and responsible for planning and development, argued for instance that a middle class can actually be defined as those people who will be able to maintain their live in the same accommodation, modes of transport and every day practices for six months, if the income fails to come. A middle class household will have either resources such as savings or other sources of income next to the main source which

---

[6] This article draws on material collected through work on the project 'Middle Classes on the Rise,' based at the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. The project, which draws together anthropological and sociological research, studies visions of the future by members of the middle class in Kenya and other African countries. With the improvement of the socio-economic situation for parts of the African population we observe a growth of a "middle class", aside from the still existing poverty of the larger part of the population. The people of the middle class are in a position to choose how they will use or spend parts of their income beyond basic needs. This opportunity allows them to set priorities concerning their lifestyle according to their plans for the future.

[7] Names have been changed.

will help to balance the lack for a period of time. Having resources at hand can help those to maintain their standard of living for a certain period of time when adversity strikes, whereas people with less resources will live in unstable conditions. As we know, contingencies in life such as loss of employment, sickness or death of a family breadwinner, loss of property or falling victim to crime can cause deprivation. Inability to cushion these and other contingencies may lead to social downward mobility and eventually drag people (back) into poverty. Agreeing with my neighbour MaLeon, I hypothesize that the Kenyan middle class manifests its resilience in a higher ability to mitigate uncertainties and to prevent adversity from leading to quick social downward mobility and, thus, impoverishment. I take this as a starting point to look at the social security arrangements of the middle class in Kenya. In contrast, the recent debate on middle class has rather focused on social upward mobility and has not been linked with anthropological works on social security, which I would like to propose.

Social Security in Developing Countries

Social security is a human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[8]. The International Social Security Association, which acts under the umbrella of the International Labour Organization (ILO), uses the term social security to refer to any programme that provides cash or in kind for family benefits, assistance for old age, disability and survivors, protection in times of sickness and maternity, or protection against unemployment and work injuries (see: International Social Security Association, www.issa.int). In many cases, these incidents lead to a break or disruption of work life or prevent admission into formal employment. Institutionalised support of this kind was established to prevent life hardships from leading to poverty and to protect those in need. Governments are obliged to provide a minimum standard of such schemes to its needy population.

Aid societies which sprouted in the nineteenth century during the industrialization in Europe laid the foundation to state-based social welfare. These societies covered the risks of workers, who were employed in factories under unsanitized and often hasardous conditions. Social insurance programs were thus established to provide members of the working class with a "modest degree of income

---

[8] Art. 22: "Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality".

protection" (Midgley & Sherraden 1997:4). The law entitled families of (usually male) factory workers to some income and thereby prevented them from sliding into poverty in the likely event of loss of work capacity.

The idea of social security was not new in the 19th century. Payments of alms, tithes or *zakat* have long been common among Christians and Muslims. Similarly, charity is central to Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, as well as many other faith-based communities who draw no distinction between religious obligations, customary law and common practice (Midgley & Sherraden 1997: 3). As early as 1601, legislation transformed the care for the needy from a religious realm of charity into a political topic of poverty reduction, when French municipalities started to register the poor, who had earlier been supported by churches, as part of a poor relief program. Tax payment, still collected by the parishes, was earmarked for social assistance (Midgley & Sherraden 1997: 4). Today, many churches and various community-based religious organisations still provide assistance to fellow believers, thereby complementing statutory welfare systems.

After the Second World War, state-based welfare systems were rolled out in the European colonies, as part of the intention of development into "modern societies" (Midgeley 1984: 1; Gethaiga & Williams 1987: 100). Twopurposes were underlying the global expansion of state-based social security: While in western countries the main purpose of introducing social welfare was maintenance, in developing countries emphasis was put on development (Midgeley & Sherraden 1997: 128). In the heydays of the modernisation theory "the global expansion of social security was accompanied by widespread optimism that the problems of poverty and deprivation would finally be eradicated. Social security programs offered the prospect of providing effective social protection against the risks that reduced, interrupted, or terminated income. In the context of societies where the mass of the population was engaged in wage employment, the contingencies of sickness, old age, death, disability, and unemployment were major causes of poverty" (Midgley and Sherraden 1997: 1).

In Kenya, following the British model, provident funds for old age, invalidity and survivors had been established in 1965. An employment injury payment as a lump sum has been in place already in 1946, which was deducted from an employee's salary or wage (Mouton 1975: 5). After independence, in 1966, Kenya installed a national hospital insurance fund covering sickness and maternity. Registered family members of the insured person - the employee, one spouse and their children - were entitled to free hospital treatment since 1972.

It needs to be noted, however, that in developing countries the formal employment market was not as developed as in Europe during the period of industrialisation. In Kenya in the 1950s and 60s, only

those on a salaried income contributed towards these funds and were therefore eligible to receive statutory assistance in return. For example, only employees in white collar jobs received a lump sum after retirement of what had been accrued over the work life. Thus, statutory welfare covered predominantly White and Asian employees during the colonial period, as well as civil servants, and only supported very few Africans who had the opportunity to be integrated in this sector. This was due to the fact that during colonial time, only a black elite had access to welfare provided by the state, most of whom had enjoyed western (-style) education, and were, like their White and Asian counterparts, provided with access to housing and medical care in privileged quarters of a segregated society. The larger part of the Kenyan population, however, did not have access to such services and continued to rely on the social responsibility of the extended family and the communal spirit along ethnic lines (Gethaiga & Williams 1987; 105). This divide continues up to the present day, as only a fifth of Kenyans today is formally employed and thus contributes to social welfare (Institute of Economic Affairs 2010: 32). Since self-employed persons, casual workers or family laborers do not pay income tax, they are excluded from state-based pension schemes (Kwena & Turner 2013: 104), health care and other welfare services (ISSA 2015: 122-3). This stands in stark contrast to the earlier idea of social security as a system that serves the poor with the intention of replacing the obligation of kinship networks to care for needy family members (Mouton 1975: 112).

Only recently, in 2010, a commitment to social security was enshrined in Kenya's new constitution. It reads that the right to social security "binds the State to provide appropriate social security to persons who are unable to support themselves and their dependants". However, it remains to be seen how such a statement may translate into practice.

The Family-based Solidarity System

In 2008, Kenya's leading telecommunication company, Safaricom, introduced a system of credit transfer via the mobile phone (M-Pesa). With the slogan "send money home," Safaricom offered the opportunity to remit money without having to actually travel to far off rural places. The success of Kenya's mobile banking sector shows the great need for private money transfers for the support of dependants. A 2009 TV advert picked up this communal orientation and flow of capital from those who earn cash towards those who do not. In the spot, a clerical worker dressed in suit and tie sits at his office desk when his eyes wander to a photo of his parents in a picture frame. The elderly couple on the photo is no less smartly dressed but with rural insignia such as a wide-brimmed hat on the man's side and a *kanga* clothing and head scarf on the woman's side as they stand in front of a banana

plantation. The clerk instantly picks his mobile phone and bank notes fly from his phone into the phone of a woman who ploughs in the banana grove. Then she and an elderly man, most likely the same persons as on the picture, happily walk off from the field[9]. This advert appeals to the responsibility of those who generate income to remit it to those who do not. As scholars show, remittances make a large share of cash flows, connect industrialised centres with the hinterland and contribute to social differentiation in home communities (Walker 1990, Benda-Beckmann et al. 1988, 2000).

As the advert shows, remittances from relatives were, and are still, part of an informal economy that addresses the needs of the poor and needy. Studies on social security systems from the disciplinary background of sociology and development studies have by and large focused on 'formal' and 'modern' institutions such as those mentioned in the previous section (see: ISSA 2015, ISSA 2015a, Midgley 1984, Dixon 1987). Anthropological studies on (in-)security, by contrast, have addressed arrangements which largely fall into the category of 'informal' and 'traditional'[10]. These works show that family networks were in the past, and are still today, the most crucial providers of solidarity and care worldwide (Benda-Beckmann et al. 1988; 2000). The advert illustrates how M-Pesa facilitates private money transfers via phone in absence of banking agencies in rural areas, thus allowing to connect the urban with the rural hinterland, as well as the middle class with the poor. In the dearth of banking facilities and a lack of trust in the minimal support provided through governmental welfare institutions, private communal solidarity supports those in need, including the aged, the sick, children and those without sufficient resources. It needs to be noted that in 2008, less than 15% of Kenyans above the statutory pensionable age of 60 years received pensions through the Retirement Benefits Authority (ISSA 2015). Moreover, these pensions were as small as 6% or the pensionable earnings (ISSA 2015a, HelpAge International 2012). Hence, private arrangements are needed even for those in employment in order to keep a reasonable standard of living. To date, it is very common that remittances, for instance from adult children to their aged parents, complement the parents' own resources. In summary, in African countries, neither the introduction of governmental social security systems nor industrialisation and urbanisation resulted in the eradication of kin-based support. Rather, the introduction of social welfare blurred the boundaries between formal and informal welfare systems as well as between traditional and modern modes of support, as all are needed in the

---

[9] M-PESA TV-advertisement 2009 "Send money home", available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEZ30K5dBWU, last accessed June 28, 2016.
[10] For a critique of these overly dichotomous notions of 'formal' / 'informal', 'traditional' / 'modern', see Benda-Beckmann et al 1988, Benda-Beckmann et al 2000.

weaving together of social security safety nets: kinship-based support, private savings and wealth accumulation, commercial schemes by insurance companies, and help from networks based on professional, spiritual or geographical ties.

Unlike modernization theorists who intended to replace kinship-based solidarity, in Kenya and Tanzania such solidarity was made part of the national policy. Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of the independet Republic of Kenya, made self-reliance ('Harambee'[11]) a national policy, admitting that statutory social welfare cannot cover the social needs of the entire population (Gethaiga &Williams 1987: 101). Likewise, in Tanzania, public administrations argued that a mentality of reliance on the state was undesirable and that the willingness of communal support of households and kinship networks must not be limited by statutory provision (Bossert 1985: 194). Bossert showed that, in Tanzania, migrants who remitted money were also welcome once they returned home for good or when they were in need of care. Those, in contrast, who had to accept care by institutions, who had to beg on the streets, or who lived in dismal conditions were often stigmatised as not having catered for their kin (Bossert 1985: 169). Cash remittances are therefore a give and take, as they secure social embeddedness, long-term relations and care when need arises. Yet, it needs to be added that personal relations along kinship lines must not be seen through a purely functionalist prism of financial support, but as part of a wider context of social relations (Benda-Beckmann et al. 2000). As Roth, for instance, shows, cash transfer is the currency of love and, thus, the sign of belonging (Roth 1994, cf. Häberlein 2016). The English phrase "sharing is caring" has its local parallels in many African contexts.

In the long run, remittances carry values of care which cannot be replaced by institutions providing for beneficiaries. A state may provide cash but not emotions, care and love, which are a crucial part of societal well-being. Any social protection system is, thus, a balance "between kinship and the state" as Benda-Beckmann and colleagues titled in 1988. Social protection is not only a "very important cultural, social, economic, legal and political issue; it is an integral aspect of social and economic life and central to the understanding of social organization and change". Furthermore, "whether or not security is provided depends on actual social and psychological processes" (both quotes: Benda-Beckmann et al. 2000: 8) and not solely on material conditions.

---

[11] 'Harambee' literally means 'let's pull together' and was coined by harbour workers at the coastal towns of Kenya. However, after independence, Kenyatta made 'harambee' his social policy. The term is since understood as self-reliance and communal solidarity in a bootom-up approach. Today, a 'harambee' stands for donations of money for private or social issues, e.g. covering school fees or a hospital bill or mobilising the community to build a school, or clearing the bushland (Mbithi & Rasmusson 1977: 13-14).

Socio-Economic Upward and Downward Mobility

I propose to think about the middle class as those members of the society who have some kind of wage income which provides them with more than the basic needs of housing, clothing, and consumables. Moreover, middle class people are usually well embedded into social networks, which can provide some protection against falling into poverty. While I consider a certain degree of social mobility to be part and parcel of any biography, the middle class is expected to be able to make arrangements to hedge against fluctuations. For that, access to a good combination of capital in a Bourdieuian sense (social, economic and cultural capital) is key.

My study on the middle class took biographic interviews as a starting point. In the course of the study, about forty households in the urban settings of Kisumu were interviewed using qualitative methods, including guideline interviews, participant observation and biographical narratives. Special focus was laid on social upward- and downward mobility and the incidence that made individuals or families slide into poverty. Moreover, I was interested in the social security mechanisms that prevented my interlocutors from suffering severe consequences to adverse situations, which are, as a matter of fact, part of every person's life. MaMichelle, 29 years old, married and a mother of two, told me her story:

> By the age of 4 years MaMichelle was an orphan. Her uncle took her into his polygamous household where MaMichelle grew up with more than twenty siblings. It was easy to hide because no one took close care, she says. She fell pregnant at an early age but luckily the man proved responsible. They got married and he found a stable and well-paying job. Since then life improved for her and her husband even encouraged her to complete her high school degree and teacher's training so that now, for the first time in her life, she gets a stable salary and can contribute to the family income. Despite having income of her own, she insists that she has to balance it with her expenses to make ends meet. A share of her income is used to support her uncle. Since her extended family is poor, she cannot rely on them in times of shortages but expects assistance from her church community. Hence, paying her monthly tithe to the church is crucial to her.

From her story I conclude that MaMichelle benefited from the assistance that her extended family network provided when she became an orphan at early age. Growing up in a polygynous household with many children kept the family in poverty, with too many mouths to feed and little income. Falling pregnant could have added to this situation, however, getting married turned the tide for her. She succeeded in gaining social ascension and was encouraged by her husband to pursue a career. Her situation is not yet stable (the African Development Bank would classify her as belonging to the 'floating class' with USD 2-4 per person and day), but the couple can make ends meet as long as demands from dependants do not drain their income. On the flip side, the couple makes additional

arrangements in order not to become dependent on the extended family network. Being dependant on it might mean a slide back into poverty.

Another example of social mobility is provided by the case of Alicia. Despite coming from an affluent family, today she would be labelled as poor by all standards. Her father, she told me, was a manager in the Kenyan Breweries, and her elder brothers and sisters attended the best private schools in Uganda and Kenya. One day, however, a disaster struck and her father, the family's only breadwinner, died. Alicia and her brother were left with nothing and dropped out of high school due to a lack of funds for school fees. She started doing petty jobs to support her mother's little income as a tailor, a job she has never worked in before. Differently from MaMichelle, who managed a social climb from poverty into the floating or the lower middle class, Alicia experienced social downward mobility from the upper middle class into poverty.

Responses to Social Security

Middle class respondents in my study invested a lot in social upward mobility and ways to maintain their standard of living in the wake of life challenges. They were well aware that adverse situations may cause rapid social downward mobility. On the flip side, working hard in school and in one's professional life was mentioned as a cardinal virtue and the secret of success for social upward mobility. In fact, many of those in employment invested in improving their professional prospects, and recounted their intentions of pursuing further training and additional certificates. In recent years, Kenyan part-time study programmes have been in great demand, and university parking lots are packed after working hours, filled with employees who further their education. Several respondents stated that they expect their children to aspire for socio-economic upwards mobility, and even "to be aggressive" in achieving that. In this respect, the term 'aggressive' has had a very positive connotation of being a go-getter. My informant Pamela, a widow in her lare forties, caters for three own and two orphaned children of her late brother. Despite the income of a High School Principle her income hardly suffice to pay tuition fees for three in university, secondary school fees for one child. The youngest daughter is still in primary school which is free of charge. Reflecting on her situation as only bread winner Pamela states that her children need to be aggressive to archive a better life than hers:

> "Of course, they should live a better life than myself. They should progress. Education is an empowerment. I want them to be aggressive. Then they should have a better car than mine, a better house than mine, and a better job (…) I want them to aggressively grab the opportunities that build up before them (…) they should also have less dependency and each

> will have a more successful life. (…) Dependency can overburden people. There should be few people depending on my kids in their future life"

I asked whether she would not want her children to assist relatives in need, to which Pamela responded:

> "You see, there should not be the need that they support many relatives. That is what I am saying. The will [chip in] in emergencies, but they need to be empowered and should also empower their dependants, because if they are not successfully empowered, they become a problem".

Pamela, thus, summarised two elements that are often seen as crucial for a smooth upward mobile trajectory: firstly, good education, and secondly, empowerment of dependants in order to reduce reliance on those who generate income.

Besides education, a good match was in many cases considered a source of stability, support and emotional well-being, as was in the case of MaMichelle. In my research, marriage was presented as driven by personal choice rather than familial arrangement, and in all cases but two was monogamous and based on affection. To my surprise, polygamy was mentioned as source of poverty since children would not receive individual encouragement according to their interests and needs. It would be easy to hide between many brothers and sisters and go astray. Moreover, in large households, poverty was often presented as stemming from the ratio between a small number of few breadwinners and a larger number of dependant kin.

One of the polygamous interviewees argued, however, in favour of polygamy as it is part of the traditional social security system: Paddy was the manager of a Coca-Cola plant when he lost his wife due to sickness, leaving him with a baby of only one year of age. Family elders convinced him to marry the younger sister of his late wife. Paddy cherished this arrangement since the child accepted her easily as a foster mother. He built a house for his new wife and did not beget children with the new wife. After some years, however, he entered an additional marriage with a woman with whom he has had children.

So called levirate or sororat marriages in which a late spouse is being replaced by a close family member, are common in Western Kenya and elsewhere. Geißler and Prince (2010) assume that in their village of research in Western Kenya, about 20% of the adult women were widowed - many due to AIDS - and about two thirds of them accepted to be inherited, usually by a brother-in-law. Those who did not enter a levirate marriage, like my informant Pamela, were those able to economically fend for themselves. Women who have no personal income would not have much options but to accept such an arrangement. Alicia's mother in the above-mentioned example may have had access to

a decent lifestyle if there would have been a brother of the late husband to marry in his stead as part of traditional social protection and in continuation of kinship ties.

In summary, the three stories show how social mobility and familial solidarity is an integral part of life regardless of what social class a person belongs to.

The Social Security Mix of the Middle Class

This takes us back to MaLeon's initial statement: Once income fails, there is only so long that one can maintain the standard of living. In the wake of a loss of regular income, a middle class person may be able to cope for a little while. However, if the crisis persists, the person would eventually fall into poverty and lose access to a variety of resources. As outlined above, pensions based on statutory welfare, registration with the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) are only possible if one has a sufficient cash income and thus, beneficiaries most likely belong to the middle class. If these are no longer accessible, alternative resources need to be accessed, however, these are usually upon private arrangement.

In most Western countries, where citizens can to some extend rely on governmental social welfare, alternative arrangements are less prominent. Kenya, by contrast, spends merely 0.8% of its GDP on Social Security, a figure not only lower than in Western countries but even lower than in most countries in the African continent (Banerji 2014: 58) despite a larger middle class population. Thus, my respondents did not consider statutory welfare as a reliable source of security but merely called the Kenyan welfare system "laughable" or returned my question with "Social welfare system? Do we have one?". Employees in the end relied on private savings, occupational pension schemes and topped up their meagre statutory pensions from their earnings. Besides, middle class respondents invested in private medical polices from insurance companies to achieve extra medical coverage on top of the mandatory National Health Fund. For informally- or self-employed people, the rates of the NHIF may be too high and pooling money for paying a bill is still the better option, especially since health services in rural health centres are fairly affordable. However, those who are able to diversify, looked for additional arrangements with insurances, banks, self-help groups and cooperative saving communities

Notwithstanding, security cannot be defined in solely economic terms but also must take into account emotional well-being and attachment to social networks. Needs of all kinds, such as financial or emotional types of help, care and support are all considered in anthropological works on social

security. In many African societies, 'sharing is caring,' and those who are better off are expected to support less fortunate family members. Financial and material assistance to relatives, friends, neighbours, co-believers and colleagues has for long been an additional part of the fail-safe arrangements for investment and support. Hence, it is crucial to extend own arrangements and to diverse access to networks to those of geographical, professional, spiritual, and kinship-based nature. Due to their financial as well as educational, professional, social and cultural abilities, the middle class has a wider range of means through which to access alternative resources and to secure their life.

On a more theoretical note, one may employ Bourdieu's (1983) types of capital. Family networks are part of the social capital, statutory welfare insurances request financial capital for subscription, and cultural capital assures that skills needed are in place for job placements and the like. Unlike the poor, the middle class usually has access to all these kinds of capital and can thus enjoy a combined social security 'package'. For social protection in developing countries, a combination of these three types of capital seem to offer the best protection against socio-economic downward mobility.

References

AfDB (2011). The Middle of the Pyramid: Dynamics of the Midde Class in Africa. Market Brief April 20.

Banerji, A. (2014). The State of Social Safety Nets 2014. New York: The World Bank.

v. Benda-Beckmann, F. (1997). Indigenous Support and Social Security. Lessons from Kenya. In: Midgley, J. & M. Sherradon Alternatives to Social Security. An International Inquiry. Westport: Auburn House.

v. Benda-Beckmann, F. (1988). Between kinship and the state. Social security and law in developing countries. Dordrecht: Foris Publ.

v. Benda-Beckmann, F. (2000). Coping with insecurity. An "underall" perspective on social security in the Third World. Celeban Timur: Pustaka Pelajar.

Bossert, A. (1985) Traditionelle und moderne Formen sozialer Sicherung in Tanzania. Eine Untersuchung ihrer Entwicklungsbedingungen. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.

Bourdieu, P. (1983). Ökonomisches Kapital,

kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital. In: Kreckel, R. Soziale Ungleichheiten. Göttingen.

Dixon, J. (1984). Social Welfare in Africa. Croom Helm: London.

Geissler, P.W. & Prince R. J. (2010). The Land is Dying. Contingency, Creativity and Conflict in Western Kenya. New York: Berghahn Books.

Gethaiga, W.W. & L.P. Williams (1987). Kenya. In: Dixon, J. Social Welfare in Africa, London: Croom Helm.

Häberlein, T. (2016). Generationen-Bande. Münster: LIT-Verlag.

HelpAge International (2012). Social Protection for older Kenyans. Options for Implementing the National Social Protection Policy. Briefings on social protection in older age. No. 10. London.

Institute of Economic Affairs (2010). The Dynamics and Trends of Employment in Kenya, IEA Research Paper Series No. 1.

ISSA (2015). Social Security Country Profile: Kenya. https://www.issa.int/country-details?countryId=KE&regionId=AFR&filtered=false.

ISSA (2015). Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa 2015. SSA Publication No. 13-11802, Social Security Administration: Washington.

Kwena, Rose M. & J.A. Turner (2012). Ausweitung der Deckung von Renten- und Sparplänen auf den informellen Sektor: Der Mbao Pension Plan in Kenia. Internationale Revue für Soziale Sicherheit, 66 (2): 91–114.

Mbithi, P..M. & R. Rasmusson (1977). Self Reliance in Kenya: The Case of Harambee, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies: Uppsala.

Midgley, J. (1984). Social security, inequality, and the Third World, Chichester: Wiley.

Midgley, J. & M. Sherradon (1997). Alternatives to social security. An international inquiry. Westport: Auburn House.

Mouton (1975). Social security in Africa. Trends, problems and prospects. Geneva: Internat. Labour Office.

Roth, C. (1994). Und sie sind stolz. Zur Ökonomie der Liebe; die Geschlechtertrennung bei den Zara in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. Frankfurt a. M.: Brandes & Apsel.

Safaricom. M-PESA „Send money home" URL https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEZ30K5dBWU.

Walker, C. (1990). Women and gender in Southern Africa to 1945. Cape Town: Philip.

Nairobi's Middle Class as Ecological Frontier

By Benard Mwori Sorre

Cultural and Development Anthropology, Moi University, Kenya; Email: bsorre@yahoo.com

Introduction

Kenya offers an ideal test case of a society in which to observe the application of theories about the African middle class. The country has a self-confident middle class that is easily identifiable. From regional hubs in the former Central, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Coast provinces to the European-style coffee shops of Nairobi, wealthy Kenyans exhibit many of the characteristics that are said to make the middle class distinctive. This middle class, conspicuous due to the showy display of their affluence, have a taste for the best things in life: food, drink, cars, residences and even dress. They literally stand out. To provide just a few, admittedly, cursory and general examples: A few years ago, coffee houses such as Java were for a select middle class clientele. But today, at 8am, Java will usually be teeming with customers. For a long time, the middle class in Kenya was anybody who could afford the average lifestyle, but today, the middle class drives fuel-guzzlers, wines and dines in expensive restaurants and lived in upmarket estates. They furnish their houses with luxurious furniture. The floors have wooden finishing; they have Italian kitchens and enjoy premium pay TV channels. In addition, they have leaner families and attend virtually all sporting events out of Nairobi. They are also to be found in elitist events like Blankets and Wine sporting fashionable clothes with picnic baskets with their pet dogs in tow. The African Development Bank 2011 puts Kenya's middle class at 17%.

In this contribution, I will address five major issues:

- Who are the middle class in Nairobi?
- How does the middle class direct and control the economic ecology?
- Ecological challenges and dangers of the sprawling middle class in Nairobi City
- (Re)researching the middle class crisis in Nairobi City
- The middle class and urban planning policy implications in Nairobi City

Who are the Middle Class in Nairobi?

The concept of middle class has taken various definitions, depending on one's academic and policy orientation. Consequently, the best way to define the middle class group in any society has been through the use of its universally shared attributes, which also present differently in various societies. Borrowing from the "substantivist" versus "formalist" theoretical debate within the field of Economic Anthropology, I belief that the definition of the middle class group is simply *relative* to each respective society. What this means is that the standard of measure of what will constitute the middle class in Europe may be too high for the middle class group in Africa or some parts of Asia and vice versa. Similarly, the local context and concepts in Euro-American societies cannot be transferred to Africa without adaptation (Neubert 2014).

Historically, the use of the term middle class has its roots in the classical work of Karl Marx. Marx's explanation of the socio-cultural divisions were based on ownership of means of production and historical arrangements that sustained conflicts between the nobles and their dependent segment of the population. Basically, haves and have-nots depended on ownership and means of production. Common class interests resulted from belonging to a certain group (Marx 1975). However, it was Max Weber who firstly presented socio-cultural distinctions along varying patterns of livelihood and values as well as solid social classes and ranks. Social mobility was possible, albeit to a very limited degree and within the historic context of privileges and ownership (Neubert 2014). Similarly, Bourdieu (1991) argued that members of a particular class have a certain way of behaving, a specific habitus and a particular taste, which distinguishes them from other social groups. From an economic point of view, Wilson defined the middle class group as people earning between USD 10 and 100 per day. This could be considered a "global middle class" by the standards of any country (William 2013). This definition, however, disrespects purchase parity differences. Needless to say, there is a large difference between USD 10 and ten times that amount, which allows very different patterns of consumerism (William 2013). Other definitions use be same kind of indicator but vary between USD 2- 10 (Banerjee etal 2008), to USD 2-13 (Ravallion 2010) and USD 2-20 (Ncube 2015) daily income per person.

In Kenya, the National Bureau of Statistics defined the middle class as consisting of households that spend between Ksh 24.000 (USD 24) and 120.000 (USD 120) per month, while the rich class comprises of those who spend more than Ksh 200.000 (USD 200) a month (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2009). The definition of a middle class is therefore, relative. It would take social, political, economic, psychological and even cultural dimensions that also vary in degree from one society to another (Kharas 2010).

How does the Middle Class Direct and Control the Economic Ecology?

A growing middle class population has been an important driver for economic growth in Kenya. In 2011, 2012, and 2013, Kenya's GDP increased by 4,3%, 4,1%, and 4,7%, respectively. Currently, Kenya's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is USD 1.160 against the World Bank's "middle income" threshold of USD 1.036. People working in Nairobi generate a large part of this impressive output. However, it is paramount to highlight the significant role of one major segment our Kenyan population: Nairobi's middle class. This group directs and controls the economic ecology in the following various ways:

1. Consumerism Behaviour

First and foremost, the new middle class group represents Nairobi as a consumer society. Its purchase power brings cars, durable electric and electronic equipment, (inter)national tourism, larger houses and a meat-based diet within reach of the masses. This has made Nairobians the largest car buyers and energy consumers in East Africa (Njuguna, 2016).

In its broadest sense, the middle class have high affinity for the consumption of food, travel, use and reliance on technology, information and communication technology, energy and natural resources, and fashion, among others. High need for financial products like loans and insurance, customized hospitals and hotels are characteristics associated with the middle class consumerism.

Kenyans' increasing taste for trendy fashion is attracting global luxury brands to Nairobi, who seek to cash in on an expanding middle class with higher disposable incomes. For instance, between 2013 and 2015 alone:

- Spanish clothing retailer Zara™ entered Nairobi through the local dealers Deacons™, which has also already launched the Massinmo Dutti™ clothing line.
- Samsung Electronics™ launched the new Samsung 85" ultra-high definition HD TV at Mayfair Suits™ in Nairobi. The television set costs KSh 3,7 million.
- British shoe retailer, Clarks™, has opened three stores in Nairobi targeting the middle class consumers.
- The 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Summit was hosted by Kenya and the USA attracted many global entrepreneurs who promised to invest and tap in to the Kenya's middle class' appetite. These global icons included Microsoft™, Apple™, and General Electronics™, among others.
- In 2014, South African-based retail chains Foschini™ and Edgers™ started to invest at Garden

City Mall™ in Thika road.

▪ The growth of Equity Bank™, Co-operative Bank™, Nakumatt™ and other Supermarkets chains, East Africa Breweries™, CIC Insurance™ and Safaricom™ have been targeting the middle class. Many companies have learnt the hard way that you ignore this segment of the population at your peril.

Picture: Shopping Malls Trending in Nairobi

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk

2. Trending Lifestyles

The middle class have a taste for quality of life. This may be the result of a psychological compensatory mechanism among those who escaped poverty. In an informal discussion with some of the middle class members, a discussant said that "that their children should not go through what they went through as hustlers." This would partly explain why the lifestyle of the middle class includes living arrangements and housing in palatial and gated estates. They also dominate shopping malls and trending one-stop shops in Nairobi. This has accounted for over 95% of the geographical and economic growth of Nairobi (Njuguna, 2016).

All these new lifestyle trends come with demands for specialized jobs, environmental aesthetics,

infrastructure, public utilities and supplies, and new forms of social organization. A major contribution and characteristic of the middle class group in Nairobi is the level of access and use of information and communication technologies. We note the trending use of high-end technological gadgets for communication, information and networking including leading phone technologies (by Apple™, Samsung™, Huawei™, Techno™, Nokia™, etc); use of cashless technologies like credit cards; security systems like CCTV camera; the use of internet and World Wide Web applications. All these have significantly transformed Nairobi into a global digital hub that has attracted global firms' desire to establish their regional offices in Nairobi and be part of the ambitious Konza Techno City. The Konza Techno City will be a sustainable, world class technology hub and a major economic driver for the nation, with vibrant mix of business, workers, residents, and urban amenities

Picture: Two-Rivers Gated Malls

Source: http://www.apartments.com/two-rivers-georgetown-tx/541rtbm

Picture: Emerging Fashion and Designs in Nairobi's Middle Class

Source: The Author, 2015

3. Market-Tailored Education and Professional Institutions and Systems

The middle-class seeks quality education and healthcare. Often, middle-income families are better educated, double-income earners, with both parents in gainful employment. This coupled with fewer children, means that they are able to spend more on quality education and healthcare. Where those services are not available from the government, the upper middle class is willing to invest in private services.

It is also the upper middle class that have the financial ability to home ownership and hence has the potential to drive the mortgage industry. Oftentimes, members of this class go on holiday and form a strong base of local support for tourism (Njuguna, 2016).

Notably, most members of the middle class are well-trained professionals in their respective fields. These professionals have created a huge appetite for education to acquire qualification into the various job cadres and training for enhancement of their performance competencies. Nairobi is a host to hundreds of customized basic and higher learning institutions operating both in the daytime and in the evenings. This has been supported by the middle class as the entrepreneurs, the beneficiaries/consumers, and the service providers behind such initiatives. The education sector in

Nairobi is a massive industry that provides significant direct and indirect employment and business opportunities that have seen Nairobi host some of the finest international schools and universities in the East African Region. For instance the Braeburn, Banda, Hillcrest, Duestche group of schools; and the United States International University, Daystar University and Strathmore university, among others.

Picture: Quality Education and Private Service

Source: www.qpglearning.com/

4. Entrepreneurs

Critical to the middle class group in Nairobi is their innovative and creative approach to life situations that converts challenges into life-transforming opportunities. This has increasingly placed Kenya and Nairobi in particular on the world map of entrepreneurs. The apex of this development was the decision to host the 2015 Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, from July 25 to 26. The summit was the sixth annual gathering of entrepreneurs including leaders, mentors, and high-level government officials; demonstrating the U.S. Government's continued commitment to fostering entrepreneurship around the world. The middle class entrepreneurs are turning Nairobi and Kenya into a 'silicon savannah,' a hub of excellence and innovation in technology.

One of the challenges facing Kenyan entrepreneurs is the small-scale solutions against demand for large-scale growth. Consequently, most of the entrepreneurs in the informal or *Jua Kali sector* are the

middle class semi-skilled and skilled professionals. *Jua Kali* means hot sun. It refers to all the informal businesses trades and small scale industries performed in the open-market space directly exposed to the scorching sun. The middle class own most of these businesses but mostly employ youth and women to carry out the businesses. The middle class may voluntarily join Jua Kali sector, while others may have lost their jobs due to any number of reasons, but use the opportunity to change things around them. Many of them are now the real estate and property managers, insurance brokers, owners of small and medium consumers'-product industries, consultants, preachers, and business owners.

There is also a critical middle class group of single women who are well-travelled and informed about business opportunities around the world. They travel to countries like Dubai and Turkey seeking business ventures and new investments opportunities

Picture: President Barrack Obama at the 6th Global Summit in Nairobi

Source: http://www.ges2015.org/

Ecological Challenges and Dangers of the Sprawling Middle Class?

The sprawling growth of the middle class group has its own dangers, especially regarding the wider social, cultural, and physical environment. Normally, because of its fairly high level of education and access to information, the middle class in Nairobi is not just the initiator, but also the main agent of social changes.

Consequently, a middle class sub-culture that seem to deviate from mainstream culture has emerged with all its associated vices that include pornography, prostitution and promiscuity; organized crimes like robbery and general insecurity; drugs and substance use and abuse; human trafficking; and corruption, just to mention a few.

Environmental pollution in terms of population congestion, poor waste management systems, encroachment on delicate ecological zones like game parks, river rines, invasion of slum residence, exhaustion of basic supplies like water and sewerage services. This is partly why Nairobi has constant water and power shortages. The reason the middle class is widely associated with widespread pollution and unsustainable behaviours because of their massive consumption and generation of waste. My argument is that this group may not be sustainable especially if the government and society at large lack proper plans to balance between consumers and polluters.

(Re) researching the Middle Class crisis in Nairobi City

The question of whether the growing middle class leads to sustainability can best be answered by scholars taking critical role in addressing the menace of an emerging urban crisis. Urban crisis has severely affected the middle class crisis in most parts of the world. Challenges involving slums, crime, pollution, congestion and lack of adequate housing, lack of water, overuse of various forms of energy, unemployment, traffics jams, just to name a few, are not uncommon in Nairobi. What this also means is that the idea of a middle class crisis is not new and unique to Nairobi or to Kenya. Kenyan urban centres are in dire need for innovative ideas, for instance in order to resolve challenges of service delivery, waste management, renewable energy conversion, food security and supply, urban and peri-urban interaction, security management, behaviour and social change, stress management, and problematic lifestyle trends.

Scholars would also provide critical contributions to policy issues by engaging in research and debates on practical life situations. For instance, many in Nairobi wonder whether the life led by the middle class in Nairobi is worth the strain or not? Many residents of Nairobi lose sleep, work hard and focus their attention on impressing others. Many live on debts and become slaves to lifestyle demands. All these conversations are also pointing to the question of just how sustainable is the middle class consumerist behaviour, especially in low-income nations? What this means is that scholars should also be at the fore front of policy making, planning and implementation of economic development plans, especially on matters of consumer spending.

Picture: Contrasting Pictures of planned and unplanned sections in Nairobi

Source : The Author, 2015 and www.shutterstock.com/201102389 (below)

The Middle Class and Urban Planning Policy Implications In Nairobi

Analysis of the middle class is extremely important from a decision-making perspective. Companies and businesses that have taken time to understand the demands of the middle class like Safaricom have had the best business returns. This suggests economic development through consumer spending is a key strategic policy concern, and the middle class is the main target. As already noted earlier, the middle class group seems to have taken the lead in influencing development and social life trends in Nairobi. I wonder, therefore, whether this critical group and their role can be recognized and

harnessed by policy planners for future urban growth and planning. One of the most optimal means of addressing the sustainability of the middle class culture is through targeting it on the planning and policy level.

Focusing on the dangers and challenges that come along with the middle class, some of the critical policy focal points should include, among others, policies on food, food handling and safety; housing and residential policies; policies on security issues; policies on land issues; policies on basic supplies like water, electricity, and infrastructures; policies on public information and use of space; consumer rights issues; waste management and environment-related policies.

Conclusion

The role of the middle class in Nairobi's socio-economic and environmental development cannot be underestimated. If Nairobi is to realize sustainable socio-economic growth, it is critical for the government, policy makers, private developers, and scholars to create more interest and strengthen its resolution to work with the city's middle class.

References

AfDB. (2011). "The Middle of the Pyramid: Dynamics of the Middle Class in Africa." Market Brief, 20 April: 11-29.

Banerjee, A.V., & E. Duflo (2008). "What is middle class about the middle classes around the world?" Journal of Economic Perspectives 22 (2): 3–28.

Bourdieu, P. (1991) Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Kenya Statistics. (2009). Nairobi: Government Printers.

Kharas, H. (2010). "The Emerging Middle Class in developing Countries." Paris: OECD. Development Centre Working Paper (285): 1-23.

Marx, K. (1975). Lohnarbeit und Kapital. Berlin: Dietz.

Ncube, M. (2010). "The Middle of the Pyramid. Dynamics of the Middle Class in Africa." African Development Bank: Market Brief (April).

Neubert, D. (2014). "What is Middle Class?" Middle East - Topics & Arguments (2): 23–35.

Njuguna M. (2016). "That begs the question, who is the middleclass?" April.

Ravallion, M. (2010). "The Developing World's Bulging (but Vulnerable) Middle Class." World Development 38: 445–454.

Wilson, W.T. (2013). "Hitting the sweet spot: The growth of the middle class in emerging markets." Skolkovo Institute for Emerging Market Studies (IEMS), Ernst & Young: 1-10.

Socio-cultural Diversity of the African Middle Class

By Dieter Neubert and Florian Stoll

Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, Bayreuth University; Contact: florian.stoll@uni-bayreuth.de

Full text has been published as Bayreuth African Studies Paper, No. 14, "Socio-Cultural Diversity of the African Middle Class: The Case of Urban Kenya". Pages 1-10 are re-published here with the permission of its authors who participated in the Kompreno workshop of 2015.

Introduction[12]

In recent years there has been an increase of interest in the middle class in the Global South, as witnessed by media reports, economic forecasts and academic research. In the present discussion, the term "middle class" is used to refer to a middle-income group, whose income is above the poverty threshold. There is an extensive debate concerning what threshold values to use in defining the middle class. On the one hand, it is defined from a comparative global perspective, including the OECD countries; on the other hand, it is defined in respect of specific regions or countries in the Global South, which leads to lower threshold values. The middle class is usually defined as people with a daily per capita income of between two and ten USD at the lower end, and between ten and 100 USD at the upper end (based on purchasing power parity).[13] This debate will not be carried on here (for an overview, see Neubert 2014: 24f). For a discussion of socio- cultural differentiation, the categories proposed by the African Development Bank (AfDB 2011) are helpful as a rough guide and can be applied to the case of Kenya, which is presented in this article. The African Development Bank uses the

---

[12] The text is a slightly revised and expanded version of a paper presented at the Congress of the German Sociological Association in Trier on 6-10.10.2014. It was translated by Ruth Schubert. Many thanks to Eberhard Rothfuß for his constructive comments.

[13] 2–10 USD Banerjee, Duflo 2008; 2–13 USD Ravallion 2010, 446; 2–20 USD AfDB 2011: 2; or even 10–100 USD Kharas 2010: 9.

following categories: 2–4 USD as "floating class", which lives above the poverty line but is threatened by poverty; 4–10 USD as lower middle class and 10–20 USD as upper middle class.

While the existence of a middle class has long been acknowledged in Asia, North Africa and Latin America, the development of a large middle class in Africa south of the Sahara is a relatively new phenomenon which has attracted special attention. In a number of studies, the growing middle class is seen as representing an important economic potential for the development of Africa, since it also stands paradigmatically for a more positive economic image of Africa (AfDB 2011; McKin- sey Global Institute 2010; Ncube, Lufumpa 2015). In all studies of the middle class in the Global South, it is remarkable that everyone talks of "the" middle class (Easterly 2001; Kharas 2010; Mi- lanovic, Yitzhaki 2002). Apart from the difficulties of agreeing on a socio-economic definition, the implication is that this middle class has many common features. This also applies to Africa. At first glance, there are good reasons to speak of "the African middle class". From an economic perspective, this is a group with greater consumption opportunities. The studies also underline the importance of education and careers. But especially in Africa, regional and ethnic identities continue to be important, even for the middle class.[14] Moreover, this is often bound up with a marked rural orientation. At least since the wave of democratization at the beginning of the 1990s, widespread pro-democratic views can be observed in parts of the middle class. Our own research shows that great importance is still attached to family and wider kin groups, as well as religion. In addition, the middle class has intensive international contacts. The money sent home by family members is important for financing education and other investments. A remarkable number of members of the middle class have migration or diaspora experience. Taken together these features seem to reflect the socio-cultural homogeneity of the African middle class as the socio-economic definition implies.

But on a closer look, this is not so clear. The normative assumptions we have mentioned are not restricted to the middle class, but also apply to large parts of the lower class. The desire for education and social advancement, family values, religion, regional identities, democratic views and the importance of having contact with family members who live abroad are not limited to a specific socio-economic class. Features which at first might appear to be typical of the African middle class are in fact typical of large parts of African societies. The main difference between the middle class and the other groups is a socio-economic one based on the better position of the middle class with regard to

---

[14] Despite many differences between the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the aspects described here also apply in differing degrees to many of these countries. It is therefore justified to speak here of "Africa" without further distinction.

consumption opportunities. The members of the middle class are financially better off than members of the lower class and this is their most distinctive attribute in comparison to the lower class. An important consequence of their higher income is that they are in a better position to buy consumer goods. But this is only a very broad way of describing the special realities of the middle class, which is defined by this socio-economic position. There is plenty to suggest that it would be a gross simplification to regard Africa's middle class as a uniform, socio-culturally homogeneous group with largely similar or identical attitudes and orientations. Thus, the question is not whether the desire for education and social advancement, family, ethnicity, religion, diaspora relations and other characteristics are positive values for members of the middle class, but how these elements influence their everyday practices and their hopes and plans for the future. Very different orientations can be seen in connection with Africa's political development, as an example will show. In Africa there is a significant group which cultivates liberal, cosmopolitan and democratic values and forms the core of the civil society. But there is an- other significant group which has a neo-traditional orientation. These groups have different views regarding so-called "traditional authorities", the political role of ethnicity, ethnic micro-national- ism and the issue of abortion (see also Daniel/Neubert 2014).

From the existence of a middle class in the socio-economic sense we cannot conclude that this class is socio-culturally homogeneous as is implied by classical concepts of class. On the contrary, we observe in Kenya a remarkable socio-cultural differentiation. With this article we want to show how socio-cultural differentiation within the African middle class can be grasped conceptually and empirically. This analysis of socio-cultural difference adds a further dimension to the analysis of social structure beyond socio-economic stratification and/or class. There is no existing analysis of socio-cultural differentiation in Africa and large parts of the Global South. To date, social structure analyses relating to the Global South have been limited to the analysis of socio-economic strata, or class in the (neo-) Marxist or Weberian sense, or they use class in an unspecified way. In most cases, socio-cultural differentiation has been perceived and studied only in terms of ethnic or religious identities. For the purpose of analyzing socio-cultural differences, we refer to approaches that have been used for the analysis of socio-cultural differentiation in European societies, especially for Germany: "socio-cultural milieus" and "small lifeworlds". These approaches are hardly known in the Anglophone scholarly debate. One reason for this is that these approaches to the study of socio-cultural differentiation were developed in Germany and these texts have only recently been published in English (for example Zifonun 2015). The main idea behind these concepts is that the differentiation of social groups cannot be described only in terms of socio-economic differences, although these are still important. Moreover we have to consider that people in the same socio-economic position do not share necessarily the same values

and lifestyles. Sub- groups that do share the same values and lifestyles are categorized as socio-cultural "milieus". The social settings where people meet in a particular sphere of their everyday life are conceptualized as "small lifewords". In the first part of this paper we will present and discuss these approaches (1 Conceptualization of socio-cultural diversity: social macro-milieus and small lifeworlds). In the second part of the paper we will adapt the milieu approach to urban Kenya (with an empirical focus on Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, supplemented by information from Mombasa, Kisumu and Eldoret) (2 Milieu analysis for Kenya). In a further step we present two examples of (urban) Kenyan milieus (3 Two examples: neo-traditional and religious Christian milieus). In the final part we discuss the scope and the limits of this analysis (4 Conceptual conclusions and further challenges). To be clear, we do not ignore the existence of socio-economic differences, nor do we claim that this inequality is not important. In this paper we simply want to show that for the understanding of social differentiation we have to consider socio-cultural differentiation too.

The discussion is based on the first results of a current research project entitled "Middle Classes on the Rise – Concepts of the future between freedom, consumption, tradition, and morality", which is part of a broader project entitled "Future Africa – Visions in Time", conducted at the Bayreuth Academy for Advanced African Studies and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Edu- cation and Research. The authors of this article are responsible for the sociological part of the project, and Erdmute Alber, Lena Kroeker and Maike Voigt for the anthropological aspects. The empirical dataset is based mainly on participant observation and 82 biographical interviews carried out by Florian Stoll in Mombasa and Nairobi in 2013 and 2014, in the course of three periods of fieldwork totaling six months. Other important sources of information are observations and interviews conducted by Lena Kroeker, Erdmute Alber, Maike Voigt and Dieter Neubert. In 2014 eight Master's students each spent at least six weeks doing field research in Nairobi, Eldoret and Kisumu on the topic "middle classes", in preparation for their Master's theses, which are not yet completed.

Conceptualization of Socio-Cultural Diversity: Social Macro-Milieus and Small Lifeworlds

At least since the 1980s, socio-cultural differentiation – in addition to class and class differences – have been an important topic in German social structure analysis. Social differentiation is described

not only in terms of socio-economic positioning, but also in terms of (sub-) cultural differences.15 One point of reference is the internationally acknowledged theory developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1982) which links socio-cultural differentiation to specific class positions. In Germany this idea was extended and developed by Vester et al. (2001). Vester's approach combines the analysis of milieus with a class analysis, by examining the connections between position in the division of work and cultural features. The debate in Germany rejected the analysis of classes in favor of a more descriptive approach. The study of socio-cultural differentiation was based either on the concept of "milieus", without Bourdieu's reference to classes, or on what were called different "lifestyles". The concept developed by the Sinus Institute, which will be discussed below, links socio-economic positionings, on the basis of a descriptive model, with different socio- cultural orientations or "milieus" (see Sinus Sociovision 2009; on the background to this conception, see Flaig et al. 1993). Hradil (1987) goes a step further and conceptualizes not classes but social positions, where in addition to the typical criteria for distinguishing different social strata, such as occupation, income, education, other criteria are also considered, such as job security, place of residence, or access to infrastructure and social services. The milieu construction basically corresponds to the Sinus model. In his attempt to distinguish different lifestyles, Schulze (1992) attaches more importance to identifying socio-cultural differences. In addition to contrasting value preferences, he places leisure behaviour in the foreground and links this up with theoretical considerations in respect of the "thrill seeking society" (Erlebnisgesellschaft). This discussion was mainly restricted to the German-speaking countries. For an overview, see Isenböck et al. (2014) on milieus, Rössel and Otte (2012) on lifestyles. In the US there were only scattered echoes, such as Mitchell (1983), who suggested an implicit hierarchy of different lifestyles.

These approaches all concentrate on the analysis of milieus in Germany and are applicable to the African context only to a certain extent and with adaptations (Neubert 2005). But there are a few studies which offer some reference points for milieus, on the basis of Bourdieu's approach, in non-European countries such as Brazil (Stoll 2012) or Laos (Rehbein 2004; 2007).

The Sinus concept of milieus (Sinus Sociovision 2009; Flaig et al. 1993), which was developed in Germany but is now used in a number of OECD and emerging countries, has gained importance as a descriptive model in applied (market) research. The special feature of this approach is the way it is able to take into account socio-cultural orientations that transcend class boundaries, as well as

---

[15] For a good overview of classic and new approaches to social structure analysis and the analysis of social differentiation, see the edited volume by Solga et al. (2009).

different socio-cultural orientations within the same socio-economic class. This descriptive concept of class as a socio-economic stratum is easier to operationalize and apply empirically than the more complex concept of "social positions". Because of its flexible approach to the positioning of milieus and its simpler concept of class, the basic idea of the Sinus model can be adapted to African societies south of the Sahara (or the whole of the Global South). This model does not presuppose a more or less fixed class structure, the existence of which may be doubtful or disputed. The descriptive division into strata is usually possible on the basis of available data, and the milieu definition of this concept is open enough to be able to apply it to non-European contexts with appropriate adaptations.[16]

The Sinus concept reconstructs "[…] subcultural units within a society which group together people with a similar view of life and way of life" (Flaig et al. 1993: 55; italics in original, translated R.S.). These units are called "milieus". This is clearly a social structure analysis which considers more than just limited social units. Rather, it claims that society as a whole can be described in the form of distinct (macro-) milieus.[17] This macro-milieu concept works with two dimensions. In addition to the socio-economic division into lower class, lower middle class, middle middle class, upper middle class and upper class, a second dimension is created on the basis of differing cultural orientations. These range from preservation of tradition to modernization, individualization and re-orientation. This structure is visualized by means of "fields", which may overlap, located within a coordinate system. A milieu is defined in terms of a particular combination of so-called "milieu building blocks" (Flaig et al. 1993: 71). These relate to social position, aims in life, work/performance, image of society, family/partnership, leisure, ideals or role models, and lifestyle. Depending on an individual's values and orientation in relation to these building blocks, he or she will be assigned to a milieu, in the sense of social macro-milieus.[18] The Sinus Institute now offers milieus for emerging markets in countries of the Global South (see Fig. 1).

Assignment to a milieu thus depends on people's values, normative orientations and everyday practices. This way of analyzing social differentiation is closely connected with people's visions of the future and shows that such visions can vary greatly within a society. They are reflected in ideals and

---

[16] The question whether "class" is an appropriate concept to describe social inequality precisely, especially in Africa, is not the topic of this paper. And we will neither discuss the term of "elites" that has been used especially in the 1960 and 1970s (for the discussion see Lentz 2015; Neubert 2005, 181ff, 2014, 23) Therefore, we follow – despite our doubts – the general practice and use the term class.

[17] We speak here of ("macro"-) milieus because this term can be used to refer to large social macro-groups which should not be confused with scenes, small subcultures or socio-culturally homogeneous face-to-face groups.

[18] A chart showing re Sinus milieus can be seen on the website of the Sinus Institute: http://www.sinus-institut.de/en/solutions/sinus-meta-milieus.html, last accessed April 2, 2015.

role models, people's image of society, and, more concretely, their aims in life. Milieus thus not only show existing socio-cultural orientations and practices, but are also linked to aspirations which mean that actions are directed towards attaining future goals.

Figure 1: Sinus-Meta-Millieus in Emerging Markets

Source: http://www.sinus-institut.de/en/solutions/sinus-meta-milieus.html
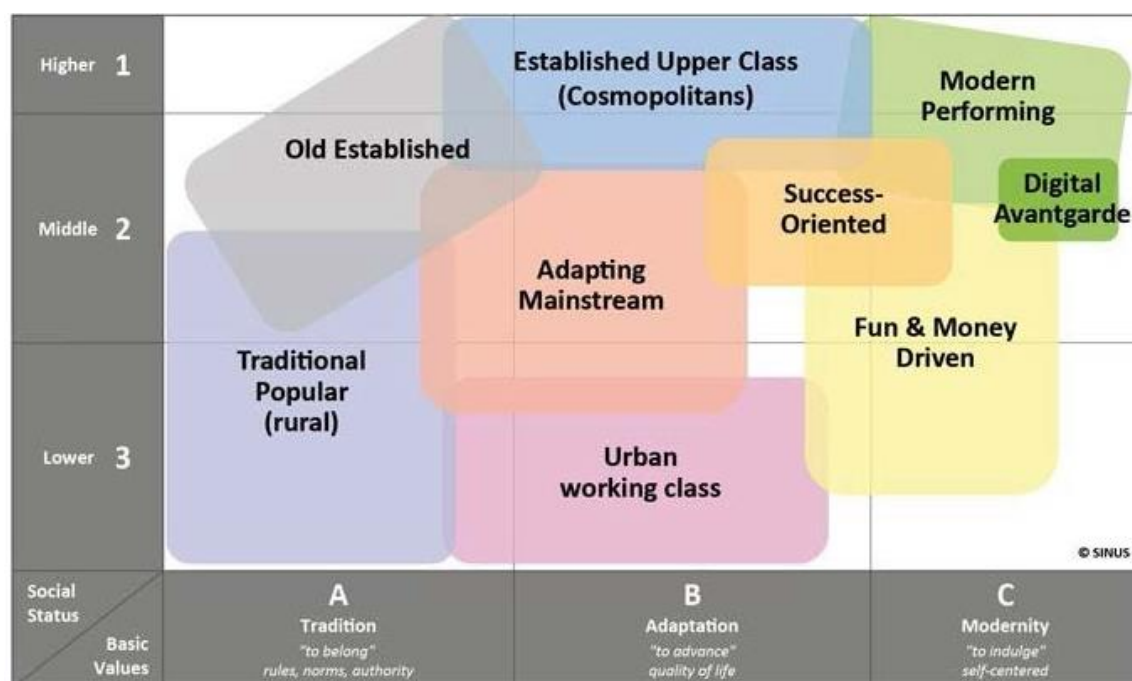
The milieu concept, and the whole Sinus approach, like the lifestyle approach, has been subject to various criticisms (see for example Otte 2005; Geißler 2006: 116–119; Hitzler, Honer 1984). It is said that the concept lacks a theoretical framework, and consists only of a descriptive division into milieus based on the distribution of orientations in relation to the milieu building blocks. Moreover, milieu and lifestyle studies that follow this approach tend to use different definitions and delimitations of the various milieus. This means that their results in respect of one and the same society are not necessarily comparable. They are also sometimes accused of being arbitrary. It is not always clear how the values named by respondents relate to concrete practice. It is claimed that there is no great difference between values and practice within milieus, meaning it can be assumed that the milieus are relatively homogeneous. Milieu approaches and empirical studies both give the impression that families or households belong as a rule to the same milieu. With its concentration on the macro level, the milieu approach ignores individual deviations, and phases in which individuals are unsettled. In addition, there is no place for individualized realities, so that single individuals may fit into the pattern only to a limited degree. This is bound up with a fundamental critique of the macro orientation of milieu approaches,

similar to the critique of class concepts, since the description of general features cannot explain the logic of social practices on the micro level.

Different approaches to the study of socio-cultural differentiation include, for instance, the analysis of specific subcultures as "scenes" (Hitzler et al. 2001), or the use of concepts such as "small lifeworlds" or "micro-milieus". These are based on the work of Anne Honer and Ronald Hitzler in the 1980s (Honer 1985; Hitzler/Honer 1988), who began by using the term lifeworlds with reference to Berger/Luckmann (1966). In order to distinguish these more clearly from macro-milieus, we use the term "small lifeworld" (Rebstein/Schnettler 2014). Small lifeworlds are voluntarily chosen part-time lifeworlds or communal spheres that share common interests, meanings and behaviours (such as sports clubs, fitness studios, rabbit breeders' associations, migrant organizations, political groups) (Soeffner/Zifonun 2008; Zifonun/Cindark 2004; Zifonun 2010). In contrast to macro-milieus, membership in a small lifeworld is limited to a specific time and space. Thus, people may belong to different small lifeworlds at the same time. A member of a fitness studio can also be a member of a migrant organization or a political group. The other members of the same fitness studio may belong to other small lifeworlds, such as a sports club or a particular subcultural scene. The special feature of this approach is that the different socio- cultural orientations of individuals can be observed and analysed together. The fact that a person belongs to one small lifeworld says nothing about his or her other small lifeworlds. Different combinations of small lifeworlds are an expression of individuality, of people's independence from bigger group structures in which all spheres of life are shared. The small lifeworlds approach thus differs from those milieu concepts which assume that all spheres of life are similar for the members of a particular milieu – or which do not consider this issue at all. Defenders of the small lifeworlds approach doubt whether it is useful or reasonable to divide a society into distinct and homogeneous milieus. In contrast to the macro-milieu method, this approach adopts the perspective of the subjects (subject-oriented approach). These small lifeworlds can be studied empirically using qualitative ethnographic methods, with a relatively high level of ethnographic "accuracy". Subjective views of the self can also play a role here. But this approach is not suitable for social structure analysis. Those researchers who use the concept of small lifeworlds sometimes also doubt whether social structure analysis along socio- cultural differentiations is possible at all in view of the great variety of subjective orientations (e.g. Hitzler/Honer 1984; Rebstein/Schnettler 2014, 55).

Despite all criticism, the description of social macro-milieus continues to be used as a method in market research. Its strength lies in its relatively high statistical accuracy and it offers a rough estimation of socio-cultural differentiation on a macro-level. In addition, the milieu categories are similar to everyday categories of socio-cultural differentiation, since they often clearly bring out

typical features of lifestyles, even without a sociological analysis. A particular advantage of this macro-milieu approach is the avoidance of predetermined normative assumptions. It allows an open and unprejudiced, empirically based analysis of the socio-cultural differentiation of societies and it can add new milieus to do justice to changes that take place within societies. With all due caution, we will now ask to what extent the concept of macro-milieus can be used to examine socio-cultural differentiation in middle strata in the Global South. We will do this using the example of middle class in urban Kenya, especially in Nairobi.

Milieu Analysis for Kenya

The question whether specific small lifeworlds exist in Kenya, or whether it is possible to analyse macro-milieus, can only be answered by empirical studies. During our fieldwork in Nairobi and other towns, we discovered a large number of small lifeworlds. These include, for example, sports studios (fitness or bodybuilding studios), nightclubs and discotheques, and human rights and women's rights groups, but also religious groups – mainly involving women – and various self- help groups for income-generating activities or rotating savings and credit groups. All these small lifeworlds are tied to concrete times and places. Within each small lifeworld, certain values and activities relating to the common purpose are shared.

On the basis of the available data it is also possible to identify potential macro-milieus. These include a specific "young professionals" milieu, which has already been described in an impressive ethnography by Rachel Spronk (2012). In addition, we have found a group of conservative and religious milieus with various Christian backgrounds, and possibly also with Muslim or Hindu backgrounds, although this cannot be clearly decided on the basis of our research so far. We have also identified a neo-traditional milieu that is equally conservative but with different orientations. Other milieus are liberal cosmopolitans, to which the above-mentioned human rights groups and other non-governmental organizations belong, an apolitical stability oriented pragmatic milieu, and a milieu of apolitical social climbers without any particular religious or neo-traditional affiliation.

This tentative list of milieus was created by using the milieu "building blocks" discussed in Flaig et al. (1993, 71). The criteria for the building blocks were adapted on the basis of our empirical findings to make them applicable to Kenya, and specific points were added that were relevant to Kenya or to other African countries south of the Sahara, including the category "space and places". This resulted in

the following criteria for the milieu building blocks:[19]

- Demography/social position: age, marital status, socialization (rural, urban), place of residence (rural, urban), education, occupation, languages used, social networks (ethnic, socio-economically homogeneous/heterogeneous).

- Space and places: important places and meeting places, current mobility profile (more in the home, more outside the home), spatial dimension of social networks including long- distance contacts (internet, telephone), urban-rural contacts, diaspora contacts, personal experience of migration and travel.

- Aims in life: basic values, identity, home (rural/urban), savings, investments, consumption, what is a "good life", perspectives for old age, burial place.

- Work/performance: role of occupation (just a job or constitutive of identity), career orientation, work ethos, socio-economic mobility, attitude to education.

- Ideals and role models: elements of a "good life", wishes, fantasies, role models, visions or plans for the future, fundamental value orientations, consumption and savings behavior.

- Image of society: basic social principles, political and civil society engagement, satisfaction with political and social system, perception of social problems, bases/sources of trust.

- Family/partnership, gender roles: family values, gender roles, partnership, sexual morality.

- Leisure/communication: Leisure activities: family, nightclubs/dancing, events, reading, DVDs, sports (active, passive), general hedonism, Communication: role of the internet, IT social networks, newspapers, TV, radio.

- Everyday aesthetics: clothing, home, furnishings, equipment, hairstyle, body image, art, demonstrative consumption, status symbols.

The additions made can be illustrated by few examples. For Kenya and other African countries, which as a rule are multilingual, the languages used by people in their everyday lives are important, as well as the question of ethnically homogeneous or heterogeneous networks. The degree of a person's attachment to their home village, together with the desire to grow old and be buried there, also proved to be important criteria for differentiating between milieus. This also applies to the question of the sources of trust, which may be anchored in the family, the ethnic group, a region or an institution. There are clear differences in people's conceptions of gender roles and sexual morality. In the area of leisure and communication, the important activities and forms of communication are often not the same as in Europe. For instance, an important marker is the consumption or rejection of

---

[19] These milieu building blocks are the first result of our research. They are very broad and not yet clearly distinguished. The creation of significant categories is possible only on the basis of extensive empirical data. However, these building blocks serve to indicate the features of milieus that can be labelled empirically, and they offer a first empirical approach to a description of differentiations.

alcohol, while typical European markers such as going to the theatre or choosing particular television programs are not important.

References

AfDB (2011). "The middle of the pyramid. dynamics of the middle class in Africa." African Development Bank. Market Brief. April 20.

Banerjee, A.V. & E. Duflo (2008). "What is Middle Class about the Middle Classes around the World?" Journal of Economic Perspectives. 22 (2): 3–28.

Berger, P.L. & T. Luckmann (1966). The social construction of reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Bourdieu, P. (1982). Die feinen Unterschiede. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Daniel, A. & D. Neubert, (2014). "Middle classes and political instability in Kenya. Civil society organizations during the post-election violence of 2007/8." in: Darbon, D. & C. Toulabor (eds.). L'invention des classes moyennes africaines. Enjeu politique d'un catégorie incertaine. Paris: Édition Karthala, 155-184.

Easterly, W. (2001). "The Middle Class Consensus and Economic Development." Journal of Economic Growth. 6 (4): 317–335.

Flaig, B., Meyer, T. & J. Ueltzhöffer (1993). Alltagsästhetik und politische Kultur . Zur ästhetischen Dimension politischer Bildung und politischer Kommunikation. Bonn: Dietz.

Freeman, A.H., Ellis, F. & E. Allison (2004). "Livelihoods and rural poverty reduction in Kenya." Development Policy Review. 22 (2):147-171.

Geißler, R. (2006). Soziale Klassen und Schichten – Soziale Lagen – Soziale Milieus. Modelle und Kontroversen. In: Die Sozialstruktur Deutschlands. Zur gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung mit einer Bilanz zur Vereinigung. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 93–120.

Githinji, M.W. (2000). Ten millionaires and ten million beggars. A study of income distribution and development in Kenya. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Hitzler, R. & A. Honer (1984). "Lebenswelt - Milieu - Situation . terminologische Vorschläge zur theoretischen Verständigung." Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 36 (1): 56-74.

Hitzler, R. & A. Honer (1988). "Der lebensweltliche Forschungsansatz." Neue Praxis. 18 (6): 496–501.

Honer, A. (1985). "Beschreibung einer Lebens-Welt. Zur Empirie des Bodybuilding." Zeitschrift für Soziologie. 14 (2): 131–139.

Hradil, S. (1987). Sozialstrukturanalyse in einer fortgeschrittenen Gesellschaft. Von Klassen und Schichten zu Lagen und Milieus. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

Isenböck, P. (2014). Die Form des Milieus. Zum Verhältnis von gesellschaftlicher Differenzierung und Formen der Vergemeinschaftung. Zeitschrift für theoretische Soziologie / Sonderband, 1.

Kharas, H.(2010). The Emerging Middle Class in Developing Countries. OECD Development Centre, Working Paper 285.

Lentz, C. (2015). "Elites or middle classes? Lessons from transnational research for the study of social stratification in Africa." Working Paper of the Department of Anthropology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University (draft) of Mainz, 161.

McKinsey Global Institute (2010). Lions on the move. The progress and potential of African economies. Seoul, San Francisco, London, Washington, D.C.. McKinsey & Company. Accessed April 2, 2015, www.mckinsey.com/ insights/africa/lions_on_the_move.

Milanovic, B. & S. Yitzhaki, (2002). "Decomposing World Income Distribution. Does the World have a Middle Class?" Review of Income and Wealth. 48 (2): 155–178.

Mitchell, A. (1983). The nine American lifestyles. Who we are and where we're going. New YorK: Macmillan.

Ncube, M., Lufumpa, C.L. (eds.) (2015). The Emerging Middle Class in Africa. London, New York: Routledge.

Neubert, D. (2005). Kulturelle Differenz und soziale Strukturierung in Afrika. In. Gesellschaftstheorie und Provokationen der Moderne. In: Kößler, R., Kumitz, D. & U. Schultz, (eds.). Gerhart Hauck zum 65 Geburtstag, Peripherie-Sonderband 1. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 178-192.

Neubert, D. (2014). "What is 'Middle Class'?" In. Search for an Appropriate Concept. Middle East – Topics & Arguments. 2: 23–35

Ouma, S. O. (2006). Bridging the urban-rural divide. Multi-spatial livelihoods in Nakuru Town, Kenya. Research Report No. 81, . Leiden: African Studies Centre

Otte, G. (2005). "Hat die Lebensstilforschung eine Zukunft? Eine Auseinandersetzung mit aktuellen Bilanzierungsversuchen." Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie. 57 (1): 1–31.

Ravallion, M. (2010). "The developing world's bulging (but vulnerable) 'Middle Class'." World Development, 38 (4): 445–454.

Rebstein, B. & B. Schnettler, (2014). Sozialstrukturanalyse 'feiner Körnung' oder subjektzentrierte Lebensweltanalyse? Ungleichheitsbezogene und wissenssoziologische Ansätze der Milieuanalyse. In. Die Form des Milieus. Zum Verhältnis von gesellschaftlicher Differenzierung und Formen der Vergemeinschaftung. Isenböck, P., Nell, L., Renn, J. (eds.). 1. Sonderband der Zeitschrift für Theoretische Soziologie. Weinheim, Basel: Beltz Juventa, 46–68.

Rehbein, B. (2004). Globalisierung in Laos. Transformation des ökonomischen Feldes. Münster.

Rehbein, B. (2007). "Globalisierung, Sozialkulturen und Sozialstruktur. Einige Konsequenzen aus der Anwendung von Bourdieus Sozialtheorie in Südostasien." Soziale Welt. 58 (2): 187–202.

Rössel, J. & Otte, G. (2012). Lebensstilforschung. Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie. Sonderheft, 51. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften

Schulze, G. (1992). Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart. Frankfurt/ Main, New York. Campus.

Sinus Sociovision (2009). Informationen zu den Sinus-Milieus 2009. Heidelberg. Sinus Sociovision GmbH. Accessed April 2, 2015, http.//www.sinusinstitut.de/uploads/tx_mpdo wnloadcenter/informationen_2009_01.pdf.

Soeffner, H.-G., Zifonun, D. (2008). Integration und soziale Welten. In. Mittendrin im Abseits. Ethnische Gruppenbeziehungen im lokalen Kontext. Soeffner, Hans-Georg / Neckel, Sighard (eds.). Wiesbaden. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 115–132.

Solga, H., Powell, J. & Berger, P.A. (eds.) (2009). Soziale Ungleichheit. Klassische Texte zur Sozialstrukturanalyse. Frankfurt, M., New York, NY. Campus-Verl. (Campus-Reader). Spronk, R. (2012). Ambiguous Pleasures. Sexuality and Middle Class Self-Perceptions in Nairobi. New York, Oxford. Berghahn Books.

Stoll, F. (2012). Leben im Moment. Soziale Milieus und ihr Umgang mit Zeit in Recife, Brasilien. Frankfurt am Main. Campus.

Vester, M., Geiling, H., Hermann, T., Müller, D. & P. von Oertzen (eds.) (2001). Soziale Milieus im gesellschaftlichen Strukturwandel. Zwischen Integration und Ausgrenzung. Frankfurt am Main. Suhrkamp.

Weber, M. (2001 [1920]). The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. New York. Routledge

Zifonun, D. (2010). Ein ‚gallisches Dorf'? Integration, Stadtteilbildung und Prestigeordnung in einem ‚Armenviertel'. In. Ethnowissen. Soziologische Beiträge zu ethnischer Differenzierung und Migration. Zifonun, D. & M. Müller (eds.). Wiesbaden. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 311–328.

Zifonun, D. (2015). Milieu as Structures of Interaction. In. Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies. Vertovec, S. (ed.). New York. Routledge, 102-105.

Zifonun, D. & I. Cindark (2004). Segregation oder Integration? Die soziale Welt eines ?türkischen' Fußballvereins in Mannheim. Deutsche Sprache. 2 (3): 270–298.

Religious and Socio-Economic Mobility in Nairobi: Appeal and Barriers

By Yonatan N. Gez

The Martin Buber Society of Fellows in the Humanities and Social Sciences, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Contact: Yonatan.gez@graduateinstitute.ch

> Interviewee: "you know, in Kenya I say that we have two tribes: […] the poor and the rich, only two."
> Me: "what about the kind and the unkind?"
> Interviewee: "yes, they are inside that, the poor and the rich."

Introduction

Carl, a lower middle class cab driver and owner from Nairobi, shared with me a dilemma he was presently facing: having been brought up in a Catholic household, he started dating a Pentecostal girl and was persuaded to move to her church. Some months later, he broke up with his girlfriend and started dating another, who happened to be Catholic. Should he now go back to his old church, or should he remain Pentecostal? On the one hand, he still felt an affinity towards Catholicism, but on the other hand, he felt that in the Pentecostal church "I am growing faster". The new church offered him useful connections which "always give me business", as well as teachings which "preach a way of life, the day to day living […], things like investment, how to grow yourself, move on to grow your business".

Carl's dilemma is not uncommon. Kenya's deep disparity between the haves and have-nots manifests in the city's religious landscape. Nairobi's churches vary from tiny slum shacks to impressive-looking mega churches and historical mainline churches that enjoy significant financial resources and overseas support. Well-to-do churches can offer services with which the less affluent ones simply cannot compete. These may include attractive comforts, such as an agreeable setting and high quality music, as well as other points of appeal such as a stable organizational structure, paid and well-trained clergy, and professional courses on various subjects. What's more, prosperous communities can function as a status symbol and as an opportunity to network with influential people. This is even truer when taking

into consideration that religion in Kenya does not tend to be a personal, once-a-week activity, but rather a choice of community and values, and a potential support network in times of need.

Moreover, in terms of social image, religious affiliations can be thought of as tightly associated with particular social status. Implied in this close connection is the idea whereby one can anticipate that upwards or downwards social mobility is likely to manifest in corresponding religious mobility. Such correspondence has been hypothesized at least since the 1960s, as Sherkat and Wilson (1995, 995) explain:

> …status theories of cultural choice and consumption mirror an older tradition in the sociology of religion, wherein individuals are believed to affiliate with religious groups populated by members of their own status group, or higher-status groups, because of the prestige and esteem affirmations such affiliations bring (cf. Newport 1979, Stark and Glock 1968). People switch to high- status religious affiliations to signal their social mobility and to facilitate interaction with those of similar status, and because high-status religious consumption augments cultural capital.

This interconnection between religious identity and status, which indeed seems to be true in many cases in Kenya, raises various questions, not least with regard to causal relations between the two: while socio-economic ascension might be among the triggers for religious mobility, it is also a rare and much-coveted achievement. By contrast, and to those for whom prosperity is still out of reach, mobility to more prosperous congregations might serve as one strategy among others for triggering socio-economic ascension. Such a strategy may not be conscious and fully rationalized, but may serve, as Sherkat and Wilson imply, as one way of attracting socio-economic ascension, if through some degree of performance.

Looking at the choice by some Kenyans to join churches of a higher socio-economic status, in this paper I wish to show the limits of such attraction. Indeed, I will show that, while churches are intended as inclusive institutions which welcome and encourage newcomers, in reality, moving to more prosperous religious communities is often fraught with hurdles of segregation and informal barriers.

Between inclusion and segregation

Churches in Nairobi are aware of the socio-economic aspirations of their congregants. Many of them incorporate teachings associated with the so-called prosperity gospel, which invites members to "come and grow" both spiritually and materially. At times, churches would go as far as incorporating business and financial teachings into their formal services. A quick visit to Nairobi's religious bookshops and bookstands would show the ease with which religious and financial preoccupations are

brought together. It is perhaps not a coincidence that neo-Pentecostal churches, which are the strongest proponents of such teachings, also appeal most to those who are most anxious about their socio-economic mobility. Ruth Marshall (2009, 79-80), for example, proposed that the appeal of new neo-Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, with their emphasis on spiritual gifts and prosperity gospel, is especially strong among educated, upwardly mobile youth. This appeal had even led to the ironic dubbing of some as "yuppie churches".

And yet, when examining the presence of low income members in affluent communities in Nairobi, one notices a tension between official church rhetoric and de facto practice. Christianity, as an expansionist religion, offers a decisively inclusivist theology. This inclusivism is also egalitarian in the sense that, on paper, the path to salvation is open to all true believers in equal measure, regardless of class. Indeed, formal Christian discourse in Kenya presents the gates of church membership as wide open to whoever may wish to join. Indeed, churches can go out of their way to attract potential members, at times resorting to aggressive evangelization. Financial status is considered irrelevant in light of the religious imperative to cater for every believer's salvation as well as the institutional drive for growth. In reality, however, while affluent churches might not decline membership to low income believers, conditions within the church would often leave them feeling marginalized and unwanted.

My own fieldwork data (see Gez 2014) – both interviews and participant observations – supports the claim by which socio-economic mixing is not completely foreign to churches in Nairobi. Thus, for instance, affluent congregations may offer alternative donation schemes specially tailored for their low income members,[20] while poor churches may rely on several affluent congregants to function as principle benefactors. But this is not the whole story. Even as one meets with certain congregational heterogeneity, this does not necessarily translate into integration between members of different classes. In my interviews, this was captured by utterances such as "rich people don't like mixing with the poor" and "birds of the same feather flock together". Such attitudes cannot be detached from the wider behavioural tendencies within Kenya's highly stratified society, in which high and low classes do not normally integrate.

This distinction between inclusive rhetoric, congregational mixing and lack of real integration can be illustrated through the following story, which is edifying in that it teaches us of the challenges faced with by low income believers attempting to switch to a more affluent church. Catherine, a young

---

[20] For instance, in a fundraising project initiated by the Nairobi Pentecostal Church, an alternative donation scheme was introduced for the low income members, who would sell church booklets and return the revenues, thus donating their time, effort and social connections rather than making a direct financial contribution.

interviewee from Kibera, recounted the following episode within her religious itinerary. A few years back, having been persuaded by a friend, she left her small Pentecostal Kibera church and switched to the prosperous and popular Nairobi Pentecostal Church. While she enjoyed services in the new church, she also became increasingly aware of her marginalization and stigmatization due to her poverty. As she explained, "it is a big church and they highlight people that they want to recognize. Like, you are low class person and it is very hard for someone to recognize you. You can be in that church for like three years, but you will not be recognized." As this went on for a few months, Catherine decided to go back to her former local church, where the economic standards were more similar to hers, and where she felt at ease. Complaining that her marginalization partially had to do with her limited capacity in offering church donations, she concluded: "sometimes I feel it is better for me to give an offering going where they would not write it down, but God knows I have given". Beyond the purely economic division, Catherine's discourse thus also contrasted large congregation with small ones: while the former tend to be more economically mixed, it misses some of the intimacy and warmth to be found in small independent congregations.

The feeling of discomfort within an affluent congregation is a common experience among many of my low income interviewees. As is often the case when it comes to religion, here too I notice tension between official prescription and discourse on the one hand and de facto practice on the other hand. Even some religious leaders admit that, in the words of one Pentecostal pastor, "unfortunately [...sometimes,] the rich are given better, more prominent places and spaces in church than the poor". Marginalized congregants can easily turn into 'backbenchers', showing less attachment to the congregation, and are more prone to leave, as was in the case of Catherine.

Informal barriers

Lack of social integration is only one of the hurdles met by low income individuals who move to affluent congregations as part of their quest for socio-economic mobility. Scarcity of means may also lead to what I would term 'informal barriers'. Some of these might appear overly pragmatic to those endowed with economic means, but to my low income interviewees they were often determining factors influencing their choice of church affiliation.

First among these factors are the requirements made with regard to direct financial contributions. Tithing, being the most central church donation and a marker of church affiliation, normally refers to a fixed 10% of members' income. Although not a progressive tax, tithe is thus relative to one's earnings,

which some might argue does justice to financial disparity. In reality, however, church donations are diverse and multiple, and can prove to be hugely strenuous for the have-nots. This can be illustrated through the following testimony given by Geoffrey, one of my low income interviewees in Nairobi:

> [If you are poor and you go to a rich congregation], nobody is going to stop you. But when you enter inside, your heart, your feelings would tell you, know you don't belong here […] When it comes to contribution, like I told you, church business is very good and they know how to convince followers to bring some kind of money. So when you are poor and you carry maybe only 100 shillings, and the 100 shillings, the church has so many projects […] So how will you divide your 100 shillings? […] And remember, that 100 shilling has to get your bus fare back home from there. […] The feelings you will go out there with is the feeling that you don't belong to that class of people. So a person may want to go to somewhere where he is comfortable, you see? If you go to Kawangware, Kibera, Kangemi, if you have twenty shilling that is enough. Because [in those neighbourhoods] there are so many people [who] would come with an offering of five shillings, ten shillings, you see, you would feel that you belong there. Okay, we have got a project and somebody is saying just start contributing. You would see around, ten people have contributed and a lot of people haven't, so you would feel you're not the only one. […] You belong to that group and that kind of thing you know.

Financial strain on the poor manifests both directly through church contributions but also indirectly, for instance through the frequently evoked concern regarding transport to and from the church, which Geoffrey has alluded to in the above quote. Nairobi's affluent churches are for the most part located in and around the city centre, while the slums and low income neighbourhoods tend to be located in the outskirts. For those living in these parts of town, travelling to the city centre at least once a week in order to attend a service can be a heavy financial burden. Opting to affiliate oneself with a distant church might also prove counterproductive in that it could alienate the believer from his or her immediate surrounding and neighbours, on whose support they will depend in times of need. To this I add other indirect financial requisites such as the implicit social pressure to integrate into the higher class environment, for instance through investing in expensive clothes. It should be added that some, due to the acuteness of their financial needs and lack of professional alternatives, are obliged to work over the weekend, and are thus prevented from even attending church services on a regular basis.

Alongside such financial barriers, educational and cultural disparities may also deter prospective lower class congregants. These include, for one thing, the use of language. Prosperous congregations have a tendency to privilege the use of English over Kiswahili and local ethnic languages. This is not a new phenomenon, and the use of the English language within a Christian context as an identity marker and a status symbol dates back to the early days of British colonialism and Christian mission in Kenya (Peterson 2004). While large churches normally offer multiple services in both English and Kiswahili, the dominance of the English language can make poorer and less educated congregants, who tend to

be less proficient in English, feel excluded.

Another cultural barrier has to do with the type and emphases of church teachings associated with different target audiences. Mary, a lower middle class member at Nairobi's Anglican flagship church of St. Andrew's, recounted the following to me as we were sitting in her church's canteen:

> In [churches in] Kibera you cannot go and tell them "let's go to the cafeteria". It is not possible. So you have to look at the needs of a particular place. The Kibera people want to be encouraged, that there is hope tomorrow, even if today you do not have a pair of shoes [...] they also want to be told "no, we can do a women's group, and in the women's group we can have a Bible study, and in that Bible study we shall first read the Bible, then we shall do, we shall teach you how to do craft which you can sell." [...] Like St. Andrew's, I don't brag to you but the kind of people who come here are doctors, that kind of people. So your preaching has got to be of that level. Like you are a PhD, so my preaching is, if I had like twenty PhDs here, whatever I was going to tell them has got to be to their level.

Mary argued that churches and preachers identify particular target audiences to the exclusion of others. Ways of approaching different audiences vary according to their expected orientations, preoccupations and educational level.

Nowhere does the social segregation within a congregation manifest more strongly than in the question of matchmaking. It appears that, especially for the youth, churchgoing is sometimes fueled by a quest for a suitable (either short term or long term) partner. This point is especially relevant to our present inquiry, since choice of partners is inextricably interlaced with the issue of socio-economic status and mobility. In an interview with an ex-Pentecostal, my interlocutor told me of a predicament he was in some years back, when he was searching for a wife. His Pentecostal church at the time was large and mixed in terms of social classes, and yet highly segregated. Coming from a humble background and earning little income as an independent artist, he felt stigmatized and rejected by women of higher classes within the congregation. Being discouraged by the leadership against looking for a partner outside of the church, he eventually left the congregation and found his life partner outside of the religious setting.

Conclusion

In this contribution I offered an explorative investigation into the question of links between religious and socio-economic mobility in Nairobi. I have first shown that, within the church setting, inter-class mixing does exist, but it is not synonymous with integration. Secondly, I elaborated on some of the deterring factors which may prevent low income believers from switching to prosperous

congregations. Even as the church gates are formally wide open, lack of integration and de facto barriers conspire against the prospect for low income members to profit from the better services, facilities and contacts offered by affluent churches.

The question therefore arises, why is it that, despite these hurdles, some lower-income Kenyans do move to more affluent churches while others do not? Perhaps some lesson can be drawn from a practice that we may dub 'church begging,' in which needy non-members visit affluent churches in town to be given basic support. One of my interviewees, a welfare officer in one such large church, told me that for the most part, "that class of people [who come for support] do not also feel very comfortable with the status of people here, so they would rather come for support rather than attend service here […] their level of education is a bit low. So they don't come here for networking purposes." My interviewee went on to contrast that group with those whom she called "the enlightened ones." Members of that latter group, she explained, are better educated than the church beggars, and consist mainly of low income youth who are intent on socio-economic ascension. It is to them, she suggested, that we can indeed attribute the practice of attending more affluent congregations in the hope of improving one's social status and attracting better prospects.

This tentative exploration leads me to agree with this view and to hypothesize that the tying of religious mobility with socio-economic aspirations prerequisites the crossing of a certain threshold in terms of socio-economic status and education. While more in-depth study is required, it appears to us that, more often than not, the upwards mobility-minded individuals do not belong to the low income category as much as to the "floating class", located midway between the middle class and the poor. It is perhaps to them, who desire to assert and to consolidate their middle class status, and who have at least the basic means to overcome, or at least to minimize, the hurdles of class mismatch, that such prospects are most attractive. Their religious mobility can be either planned or a by-product of socio-economic mobility, such as in the case of the threefold link between socio-economic improvements, geographic dislocation to a better neighborhood, and religious mobility. Conversely, for the utterly poor, economic and cultural barriers might be so extreme and costly that they render performing a higher class status unreliable and too strenuous. To those in the extreme end of the poverty scale, begging remains the only viable mode of interaction with affluent churches.

As a last note, we should recognize that, beyond the tangible manifestations of socio-economic gaps there are fuzzier matters of mindsets, agency, and sense of empowered entitlement. Thinkers dedicated to the uncovering of power relations in society, such as Marx, Foucault and Bourdieu, have explored social mechanisms that not only allow for the strong to impose their control over the

marginalized, but also make the marginalized internalize, embrace and justify their lowly status. It is such an internalization of the social divide that, in the words of the above quoted Geoffrey, make "your heart tell you that you don't belong" in a prosperous church. In order for this way of thinking to change and for the low income to feel comfortable in a higher class setting, a mental shift must first occur, by which the low income individual sees him- or herself as a valid candidate for claiming social mobility.

References

Gez, Y.N. (2014). "Religious Identity and Mobility in Nairobi: a 'Religious Repertoire' Approach." PhD, Development Studies, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva.

Marshall, R. (2009). Political Spiritualities: the Pentecostal revolution in Nigeria. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Newport, F. (1979). "The Religious Switcher in the United States." American Sociological Review 44: 528-552.

Peterson, D.R. (2004). Creative writing: translation, bookkeeping, and the work of imagination in colonial Kenya, Social history of Africa. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sherkat, D.E., & J. Wilson. (1995). "Preferences, Constraints, and Choices in Religious Markets: An Examination of Religious Switching and Apostasy." Social Forces 73 (3):993-1026.

Stark, R. & C. Glock (1968). American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment. Berkeley: University of California Press.

(RE) SEARCHING the MIDDLE CLASS in NAIROBI

Statistical data suggests that, throughout the African continent and within urban centers in particular, the middle class is on the rise. This apparent growth, while in itself encouraging, is far from straightforward. In the present volume, we demonstrate and unpack some of this complexity, by showing how, far from being a purely economic affair, the African middle class is a socially embedded category that bears significant implications for all aspects of life. Building on a participatory mapping workshop held in Nairobi – a city often regarded as epitomizing the new African middle class – this volume brings together essays by both Kenyan and foreign social scientists of multiple disciplinary orientations. Their essays explore the adjustments that Nairobi's growing middle class undergoes and their implications with regard to such themes as cultural and lifestyle preferences, changing living standards and urban infrastructure, the role of social security networks, and the question of environmental sustainability.

KOMPRENO is a Swiss non-for-profit organization drawing on a global network of experts of human development, human rights and sustainability. Commissioned and self-initiated research follows the program of (Re)Search - Understand - Share.

Contact: office(at)kompreno.org

kompreno.org

KRR 0001