African Middle Classness, Politics and Protest

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Biographical note

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Explorations into Middle Class Urbanites, Social Movements and Political Dynamics
- Impressions from Namibia's Capital Windhoek

Biographical note

Henning Melber has been the Director of the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU) in Windhoek (1992-2000), Research Director of the Nordic Africa Institute (2000-2006) and Director of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (2006-2021), both in Uppsala/Sweden. He remains affiliated as Senior Research Associate and Director emeritus/Senior Advisor respectively to both institutions, is Extraordinary Professor at the Department of Political Sciences/University of Pretoria (since 2012) and the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies/University of the Free State in Bloemfontein (since 2013), Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Commonwealth Studies/Centre for Advanced Study at the University of London (since 2015) and President of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) since 2017.

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Does urbanization change the political order in Africa? A study on cities, middle-classes & political processes in Kenya

Biographical note

Florian Stoll is a postdoc at the Research Center Global Dynamics/Leipzig University and a Faculty Fellow of the Center for Cultural Sociology/Yale University. He was a senior Fellow at the Merian Institute of Advanced African Studies/University of Ghana (04-08/2021). Florian is a cultural sociologist with research experience in the Global South (extensive fieldwork in Kenya, Ghana & Brazil) and Global North (Germany & UK). His main interest is ways of life and working conditions of social milieus in the Global South. In his current main project, he studies reasons for labour turnover in Ghana.

Abstract

Middle classes in the Global South have become a topical interest. They were considered mainly by economists in development oriented institutions and praised as a factor contributing to economic development and democratic forces. We recapitulate some of the trends and remind the reader of earlier debates. We take stock of the variety of contributions and point to the efforts to have a more nuanced look at the composition and orientations of 'middle classes' and their political engagements. We maintain that the initial economistic reduction, measuring monetary income as the main criteria for middle classness, is insufficient and offers no reliable set of indicators as to the social and political as well as cultural positioning of members of such income groups. An appropriate analysis of the nature and role of African middle classes must consider four aspects: the specific class formations of African societies; the link between socio-economic stratification and socio-political orientations; the limited knowledge and theorization of African societies; and the need to apply a multi-dimensional and new research including diverse socio-cultural elements and their contextual embeddedness. We argue that an intersectional lens can break up the classical competition of the one-dimensional paradigms and suggest decolonizing research on protest and middle classes by integrating a perspective and theorization from Africa. More attention should be paid to analytical concepts such as intersectionality and social milieu for the understanding of African societies and their potential for transformation through protest. This requires overcoming stereotypical and truncated assumptions about the middle classes

Keywords: middle class, protest, politics, Africa

For some years, scholars, media, development agencies and activists have been debating about middle classes in Africa. The debate followed economic data that showed dozens of millions of individuals had improved their socio-economic position. The observed emergence of a broader social stratum dubbed as middle class, fostered increasing hopes for development and democratization. Their better-off situation was frequently associated with distinctive lifestyles, political attitudes, and other social and cultural characteristics. The discourse on the middle classes was, however, in its initial phase to a large extent ahistorical. It was detached from earlier analyses on the formation of new social strata in independent African states (Lentz 2015; Melber 2022). The new middle class hype was triggered, shaped and influenced by reductionist, economistic interpretations. These studies were mainly confined to a definition based on a low threshold of monetary income/expenditure and were increasingly questioned for their fuzziness (Melber 2013; Darbon/Toulabor 2013). Since then, there has been a gradual shift of the debate towards more nuanced analyses that take into consideration more significant components such as the diversity of African contexts, class related status and political awareness (Daniel et. al. 2016; Melber 2016; Kroeker et al. 2018, Southall 2016; Sumich 2018). Other studies examine factors related to culture, lifestyle, ethnicity and/or "race," religion, gender and other socio-cultural positioning (Neubert 2019; Spronk 2012; Stoll 2018). By opening up the narrow class concept, this line of research included new criteria that matched the contextual requirements of African settings better. New approaches were required for a proper assessment of the diversity of positions and behavior inside the middle classes[1]. This wider approach follows a similar understanding to that suggested for analyses of the "black" middle class in the USA (Marsh et al. 2007; Pattilo 2013).

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[1] The plural form "middle classes" recognizing the diversity – although it would be more precise to say "lower to higher middle-income strata".

One of the most important but nevertheless so far much understudied aspects in this debate is the complex relationship between middle-income strata, protest, and social change in societies of the Global South. This view is well captured in the answer given by Homi Kharas in a recent interview. As a leading member of the Washington-based Brookings Institution he was actively participating in the initial debates offering an economistic narrowed focus on the middle class. Asked what defines the middle classes, he answered:

> Unlike poor people who face day-to-day subsistence and have few options and unlike rich people who can generally buy whatever they want, middle-class people make economically based choices. They aim not just for material consumption, but also for enjoying life, appreciating leisure and art and beauty (Homi Kharas interviewed by Aviva Freudmann 2021).

Politics did not feature in any significant way in the whole conversation, as if it is not relevant for an assessment of middle class. We beg to differ, hence this guest edited journal issue. It was planned when organizing a Conference on "Middle Classes, Protest and Social Change in Africa and Beyond" from 17 to 21 March 2017 at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) with the aim to a follow up published in this journal.[2] The conference explored new territory by combining social-movement studies and middle-class approaches, focusing on aspects of the relationship between middle classes, protest, and social change.[3]

For a nuanced understanding of the connection between class and protest, the Marxist argument of class consciousness offers an important starting point: Karl Marx argued if the proletariat would develop an awareness of their collective experience as exploited workers, they would rise up. According to Marx, every class is based on their means of production and in relation to each other, while the structure as a whole is exploitative for the working class. The working class was supposed to turn from a class in itself of isolated individuals to a class for itself with a shared consciousness of their members and their situation. This awareness was supposed to trigger resistance resulting in workers' protests and social revolution. However, Marx remained vague about the reasons why working-class consciousness would emerge (Crossley 2013). In addition, political activism might be an expression of suppressed classes, but socio-economic inequality alone cannot explain why workers turn towards protest. Thus, socio-economic position and working classes consciousness do not sufficiently explain the rise of class movements (Eder 2013).

While the Marxist argument associated working class consciousness with protest, the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s have been frequently perceived as an outcome of the mobilization of the middle classes. Other theories at that time highlighted that not only classes shape protests. Rather, social movements must be understood in relation to socio-cultural dimensions of protest such as values, norms, attitudes and lifestyle. Many of these new social movements perceive themselves as lifestyle movements that not only demand change, but enact the future in everyday practices (de Moor et al. 2017). The lifestyle of members of social movement often deviates from dominant ways of living and behaving: middle class activists often look at their conduct of life as desirable and as a solution to social problems. Lifestyle can confront established orders (Yates 2015). Lifestyle movements also differ from other movements because there is a special relation between the individual and the social movement: In lifestyle movements activists do not only demand change but claim to walk the

talk by adopting everyday practices in the private sphere. For them political activism is expressed in the private and personal (Haefner et al. 2012, 6; Mansbridge 2013).

In the shadow of the Arab Spring around the year 2011, middle-income actors in North African and Arab countries but also elsewhere were portrayed as activists who shared their socio-economic position and/or socio-cultural values, norms, attitudes, or lifestyle (Werbner et al. 2014). As Behr (2012, 15) points out, actors from a middle-class segment played a leading role only in Tunisia and Egypt. However, empirical work is crucial to understand each context. Ascribing a politically progressive role to middle classes *sui generis*, borders on a romanticizing mystification. History offers numerous examples where members of middle classes played an influential role in reactionary politics, opposing liberal-progressive governance. As the Oxfam strategist Duncan Green clarified in an interview:

> "There clearly is no automatism by which economic growth would lead to the emergence of a progressive middle-class. The fundamental issue is who the middle-class builds coalitions with" (Duncan Green interviewed by Hans Dembowski 2021).

Data from the South African Social Attitudes Survey, Schotte (2021, 477) confirms that the "standard of living" alone is no reliable indicator for political attitudes:

> "rising incomes and falling poverty rates cannot easily be equated with the emergence of a politically conscious middle class that supports democracy and good governance, and the link frequently made between an expanding middle class and pro-democratic political reforms remains fragile."

Finally, middle classes can play different socio-political positions. Being socio-economically part of the "middle class" does not pre-determine individual choices in lifestyle preferences or politically motivated decisions. Members of the very same "middle class category" can opt in favour of very different and even antagonistic roles in society.

Middle classes in Africa: A critical reflection
A fundamental question in the debate about "middle-classes" in Africa is the Euro-Centric heritage of the concept and how we can avoid it. This question is important for social movement research and likewise for the debate on middle-classes. The concept of middle-classes surrounds an aura of economic prosperity, pro-democratic attitudes, and a stable life with the means for decent living. In particular, "middle-classes" in Europe and North America are implicitly linked with "modernization". Our everyday understanding of "middle-classes" is loaded with a similar understanding such as Barrington Moore's (1966) link between bourgeoisie and democracy. Even modernization theories of the 1960s and 1970s considered middle-classes as carriers of change. We want to outline four major difficulties in the transfer of these arguments to Africa:

First, African societies were never to a similar degree class societies like European and their somewhat different North American counterparts. The Global North followed distinctive paths in the processes of accumulation and industrialization. The according type of social stratification were class societies. Yet, the rise of merchants and self-employed craftsmen in the 19th century in the shadow of exploited masses prepared the improvement of large parts of the population. The large number of jobs for well-educated employees and skilled workers in the 20th century were also the result of the paths of development in the Global North. The emergence of middle-classes in Europe and North America echoed to some degree the participation of better-educated workers in the socio-economic distribution of certain benefits

and the improvement of social upward mobility by children of proletarian families. Similarly, the emergence of the welfare state in continental Europe contributed to a better situation and a social safety net for most parts of the population. However, the talk about the "middle-classes" leaves out the dark sides of European history, such as the domestic benefits of colonial expansion and exploitation and other forms of imperialism, the two World Wars, the multiple fascist regimes, and the complicity of significant parts of German middle-classes in the mass killing of Jews and other (politically and ethnically defined) groups under the Nazi rule. Yet, there is some justification for European societies as middle-class societies if we take a long-term view and do not put too much weight on the socio-economic crises of the last decades. But it is difficult if not impossible to find similar trends or trajectories in African societies, which were for long at the receiving end of Western expansion and domination.

Second, the link between socio-economic stratification and socio-political orientations is crucial for the argument that "middle-classes" are pro-democratic and carriers of economic development. It is not certain that middle-income strata in Africa position themselves in similar ways as their European and North American counterparts. The assumed affinity of Euro-American middle-classes to progressive orientations is built on a specific historic setting with particular social and economic structures and at times also guided by assumptions bordering on wishful thinking. It is a fragile construction to transfer the streamlined argument about middle-classes as progressive actors to the diverse settings on the African continent. It is also possible that we find new motives and actions of middle-income groups in Africa that make them pursue equality and social justice. We may also find alliances between poor parts of the population or arrangements with political elites. We think there are more comprehensive studies necessary for a nuanced understanding of "middle-classes" and their political activities in Africa.

Third, the limited knowledge and theorization of African societies stand in the way of a thorough analysis of our research question. Knowledge production in the international academic community happens with few exceptions with a focus on Europe and North America (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). The postcolonial critique applies on at least two levels: On the level of research, academic studies have been ignoring Africa for a long time. Consequently, on the level of theory building in international disciplines like Political Science and Sociology, comparatively little is known about the living conditions in African societies (Nwabueze 2019). Economic structures, mechanisms of stratification, ways of life, and many other characteristics remain white spots on the map of social sciences. Other aspects such as types of social solidarity and political organization in certain contexts are rather unknown. Likewise, differences between countries, regions, and cities are undertheorized as well. For the question of middle-classes and protest in Africa, understanding the complex interplay between contextual conditions and relevant dimensions is highly significant.

Fourth, we suggest a research perspective that considers diverse socio-cultural elements and their contextual embeddedness. This is an approach that is also increasingly used for explaining the emergence of protest, its mobilization and its characteristics (Haunss/Zajak 2020). By socio-cultural elements, we mean, for example, specific family structures, basic orientations, and typical networks. In many parts of Africa, the family includes relatives beyond the nuclear unit of wife, husband, and children. The family is a social, economic, and welfare institution. Beyond social interactions in everyday life, family members expect support from relatives with higher incomes for food, funerals, and school fees. Similarly, many other

influences are significant that do not add up in a vertical class scheme. Ethnicity, religion, and ways of life are relevant dimensions. Social and economic change, urbanization, and ongoing urban-rural ties are elements that have an impact on middle-income strata. These and other socio-cultural elements must be considered in their specific national, regional, and local contexts. Middle-income strata, their socio-cultural differentiation, and political interests differ in each context. As a background for theorization, we find some orientation in the debates about intersectionality and ways of lifestyles/social milieus. The debate on intersectionality has its starting point in the reflection on feminism and class analysis in Europe and North America. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991) considered the ethnic background and the socio-economic position of "black" women in order to explain their disprivileged situation in the job market. More than an isolated study of class and gender, a comprehensive view of different intersections produced an improved understanding of inequality. An intersectional lens (on society in general and on social movements in particular) provides knowledge on the meaning and role of social categories and likewise the extent to which each social category is related to privileges and thereby the (re)produces inequalities. The intersectional lens has not yet arrived in mainstream social sciences (Chun et al. 2013).[4] The intersectional lens can break up the classical competition of the one-dimensional paradigms. However, most intersectional studies in the Global North rest mainly on the three dimensions class, "race" and gender. In particular, it must include the aforementioned contextual particularities of each setting and go beyond its focus on inequality.

In addition, we suggest to add analyses of lifestyle milieus as an empirical and contextually embedded background. The study of social milieus emerged as a new field in German sociology and market research because class concepts could not fully grasp the more differentiated ways of life and dimensions of inequality (Hradil 1987). Since the 1970s, de-industrialization, post-materialist influences, and ruptures in employment biographies devaluated class analyses. The dissolution of class-specific working conditions, increasing migration and cultural opening made new concepts necessary. Therefore, a study of research was established as a socio-cultural alternative. The milieu approach builds on empirical research and constructs social units and dimensions by empirical findings. In the context of African societies, the milieu research could be used as an approach that includes contextual particularities of each setting. A study of middle-income milieus in Nairobi (Neubert/Stoll 2015; 2018) could be an orientation for the analysis in other countries.

This short theoretical discussion shows already how essential it is to deal with middle classes and protest: A first desideratum is to decolonize research on protest and middle-classes that have been focused on the Global North. Thus it is crucial to integrate a perspective and theorization from Africa. A second gap is to make analytical considerations like intersectionality and milieu fruitful for the understanding of societies in different African contexts and their potential for transformation (through protest). This requires overcoming stereotypical and truncated assumptions about the middle-classes in Africa.

Let us give you some examples how prominent voices combine middle-classes and politics. The famous report of the African Development Bank (Ncube et al. 2011) sees a specific normative disposition of middle-classes in Africa: "In particular, the middle class are (sic) more likely to have values aligned with greater market competition and better governance,

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[4] For instance, intersectionality is not mentioned in the *Wiley Encyclopaedia of Social and Political Movements*, which has about 400 keywords and is one of the most comprehensive handbooks.

greater gender equality (…).” Nic Cheeseman (2014, 647)[5] refers to “Barrington Moore’s famous line ‘no bourgeoisie, no democracy’” to examine if middle-income strata in Kenya’s 2013 elections were more inclined to democratic orientations than lower-income strata. While he sees some proof for such an assumption, he concludes ethnicity is a highly significant intervening variable (see also Daniel/Neubert 2014). The most important insight into the question of middle-classes and protest is that a transfer of Barrington Moore’s historical analysis of Europe’s socio-economic development must consider new aspects in Africa. Notwithstanding, the heterogeneity of African contexts and the new influences in the 21ˢᵗ century make an analysis of “middle-classes” and protest a highly empirical enterprise.

About the special issue
At the STIAS Conference, scholars from several disciplines and continents addressed this nexus of middle classness and social protest jointly with activists. South Africa was the main focus, while other countries in Africa and elsewhere served as comparative reference points. South Africa is according to the UNDP’s Human Development Report the world’s most unequal society. Social disparities often provoke massive social protests, considered to be among the most frequent of any country worldwide. Notably amongst them were the Marikana protest of striking miners and the notorious demonstrations by the service-delivery sector in several townships, which became known as the rebellion of the poor (Alexander 2010). Also, student protests and campaigns under the slogan of “Fees must fall” (Mpofu-Walsh 2021) and “Rhodes must fall” (Daniel 2021; Nyamnjoh 2016) underline the diversity of protests. Some of these are class-based, and members of the middle classes are often perceived as part of such initiatives, or even at their core. However, neither in South Africa nor in other cases is it clear how stratification – and the position of middle classes in particular – relates to and translates into protest and political goals for social change.

The conference elaborated on analytical contradictions between the concepts of the middle classes and social movements.[6] Fragility characterizes social movements because protest events and the need to mobilize adherents are necessarily bound to a short time frame. In contrast, the concept of the middle classes refers to more permanent structures in society. Thus, the relationship between middle classes and protest continuously changes through the fluctuating dynamics of protest. One of the main takeaways from the conference was the knowledge that different academic schools and disciplines demonstrate a diversity of approaches to the topics of protest and middle classes, and each uses its own vocabulary. Cultural sociologists, researchers in the field of stratification, Marxist scholars, Gramscian scholars, political scientists, anthropologists, and activists differ in their perspective on protest and middle classes and have varying definitions. Moreover, it was very fruitful to give a prominent place to activists’ perspectives at the conference. This was particularly important with respect to the high significance of scholar-activism in South Africa. It became evident that the assumed agents of change differ depending on the theoretical premises and empirical findings of the different schools of thought. Agents of change can belong to middle classes but in many contexts they may bridge socio-economic differences. Additionally, the scope and

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[5] There are seemingly endless definitions of middle-classes and even more ascriptions. In his contribution, Nic Cheeseman combines a socio-economic definition with data on political orientations and voter behaviour. The reference to the bourgeoisie is the starting point of his analysis and does not limit middle-income stratum to an entrepreneurial group.
[6] We have supplemented selected conference contributions with an open call for papers for the special issue to deepen and enlarge the discussion on middle classes and protest.

methodological approaches in the debate on middle classes and protest are diverse. Quantitative data on stratification exist, and stand next to qualitative approaches on the definition of middle classes; other studies use "middle classes" as simply a social category and starting point for research.

In this issue

Andrea Noll and Jan Budniok look into three cases in different historical settings of Ghana to examine the connection between middle classes and social protest: Members of the middle classes laid the foundation for organized political action since the 1890s, which finally led to Ghana's independence. In 1978, members of the middle classes protested against the plans for a Union Government, by which the then military head of state Acheampong sought to install the military as government. In 2014, frequent power cuts, rising fuel prices and an economic crisis triggered protest by activists. Following their demonstrations, several new middle-class groups evolved, among them Occupy Ghana. The authors look at the protests and the role of their leadership: They address the question how the class status of the activists relates to forms and practices of protest and resistance.

New economic and consumption patterns and open forms of political participation are widely considered as key features of the rising middle-classes in Africa. Against this backdrop *Gérard Amougou and Geoffrey Pleyers* focus on another middle class feature by investigating processes of subjectivation, understood as the construction of oneself as an actor of one's own life, against the hold of political, cultural or economic domination. Cameroun is a particularly interesting case study for this, as the authoritarian regime impedes the rise of middle-classes political citizenship while maintaining the hold on politics, economy and society by a patronize system. In this adverse context, their series of life-course interviews document the emergence of new subjectivities in citizens of the generation molded by the repressed 1990 democratization protests. The subjectivation processes they experienced led them to become entrepreneurs in economic, media, cultural or social projects, developing initiatives that are not political in a strict sense but contribute to transform their society and entail criticisms toward the hold of the society by the authoritarian regime.

As indicated above, the current debate displays tendencies to present the middle classes in the Global South as a driver of democratic change and at the core of civil society. Prominently so, activities of non-government organizations and student protests are used as reference points to support this notion. However, these examples should not be overstretched. Before confirming the idea that the "middle classes" is a carrier of political protest and a driver of democratic change, at least two questions need to be answered: Are the "middle classes" really classes in the strict sociological sense, with a common class consciousness or just a kind of "middle-income group"? Are protests really an integral part and representative of the middle-income group? Taking Kenya as an example*, Dieter Neubert* cannot identify "middle classes" in the strict sense of the sociological class concept. Neither does the political commitment of the middle-income group follow or reproduce socio-economic differences. More importantly and linked to the theoretical engagement above, seem patterns of socio-cultural differentiation that can be conceptualized as socio-cultural milieus.

Middle classness has – especially in previously also in physical and geographical dimensions highly segregated and divided societies such as South Africa – a markedly spatial component, which *Roger Southall* addresses. "Non-racial democracy" is an aspirational goal of post-apartheid society. Deracialization of public spheres, notably education and work, has led to high rates of upward social mobility among black South Africans and the increasing racial diversification of the middle classes, which under apartheid, had remained overwhelmingly white. But despite increased racial integration of public life, the majority of South Africans continue to live in mono-racial residential areas as a legacy of apartheid geography. This entrenched racially (or rather racist) defined spatial segregation under what had been euphemistically dubbed "separate development". As a result, white suburbs were the most socially advantaged and desirable places in which to live. Nowadays white suburbs continue to occupy the top rungs of the residential ladder, their privilege protected by the economic costs of entry. Nonetheless, high rates of black upward mobility and aspiration result in increased black entry into these historically white spaces, which are themselves undergoing considerable change in shape and character. As a result, white suburbia constitutes a major site where the struggle for non-racialism is taking place.

Remaining in South Africa, *Jason Musyoka* considers the social and political action of the country's black middle classes during the Jacob Zuma administration (2009-2018). During the period the governing African National Congress fragmented in a disorderly way, partly dissolving traditional class lines. Members of the growing black middle class, who initially benefitted from the democratically elected government, abandoned their loyalty with the party and shifted loyalties or identification towards other political agencies, be it the militant Economic Freedom Fighters, new smaller parties or the main opposition party Democratic Alliance. The class-based fallout was consequential for the governing party, as it was for theories of middle classes. This experience invites a critique of the dominant neoliberal tradition, which imagines an orderly and politically homogeneous middle classes. It further suggests that social and political action among the black middle classes should not be viewed as generic. It is rather shaped by dynamics unique to South Africa, including social memory. This, argues Musyoka, blurs class behavior as articulated by prevailing class theories.

Marian Burchardt follows up on and adds to the contributions by Southall and Musyoka by exploring the degree of involvement of South Africa's middle classes in popular protests. These target access to public infrastructures such as electricity, water, education, and housing. Middle classes relate to these service delivery protests ambivalent, characterized by political tensions and structural contradictions. He points out that class positionalities shape people's perceptions of their interests and their inclinations to support certain kinds of protest. At the same time, some movements transcend class-based interests. Student protests such as #Feesmustfall and #Rhodesmustfall are an indication how material interests in widening the access to tertiary education and campaigns for decolonial education can coalesce, amalgamizing new collective subjects into being and galvanising them into new forms of politics.

The Namibian capital Windhoek is the location for urban black middle classes in formation since Independence 1990. Their political positioning and partial re-alignment is the reference point for *Henning Melber* in times when election results indicate a decline in the hegemonic status of the former liberation movement SWAPO. Given new forms of protest not only at the ballot boxes but also by social movement mobilization and activities among the younger generations, the role of the capital's emerging new middle classes deserves a closer look. Local governance seems to be influenced by its decisions concerning support of political parties. The

shift towards new loyalties in favor of opposition forces seems an indication that old "struggle mentalities" equating liberation with SWAPO are fading among the "born frees".

As in the case of Windhoek, students have been an important ingredient at the forefront of political struggles elsewhere too. As middle class related actors and agencies they were often involved in triggering democratization processes. *Anna Deutschmann* looks at the relation between student protests and the political elite in Kenya. Her article discusses a general change regarding the role of education. It analyses the relation and interaction between middle classes, political elite and protest. Her empirical case study considers the development of student activists as actors in processes of political change in Kenya.

As most of the contributions suggest, there is a linkage between the formation of middle classes, urbanization, and forms of social protest. But the interaction seems neither pre-determined nor offering any firm conclusions as regards causalities. This underlines the amorphous nature of middle classness, and the variety of options and positions members of such groups decide upon based on a variety of variables beyond the monetary income and expenditure indicators. Articles in this issue offer no firm conclusions. But they highlight the need for further nuanced theoretical and empirical engagements with the matters, to enhance not only knowledge but also give recognition to a neglected dimension of contested spaces in social struggles.

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