Does the emerging middle class support democracy?

A comparative analysis of China, countries with authoritarian political regimes and recent post-socialist democracies

Artjoms Ivlevs

Bristol Business School (UWE Bristol) and IZA (Bonn)

June 2019

Preliminary and incomplete, please do not quote

Abstract

Does the emerging middle class support democracy? This study provides a comparative analysis of political attitudes, actions and preferences of the middle class in China, other countries characterised by authoritarian political regimes/tendencies (Russia, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan) and post-socialist countries that have recently established democratic regimes (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova). Conceptually, the study draws on the *modernisation* and *critical junctures* theories of economic growth and political development. The empirical analysis, based on data from the World Values Survey, reveals a positive association between the middle class status and preference for democratic governance in China; this link tends to be stronger than in other countries with authoritarian tendencies, but weaker than in the post-socialist democracies, especially those that are members of the EU. Compared to other country groups, the middle class in China are most likely to support strong leaders and least likely to take part in demonstrations and strikes. The emerging middle class in China is, thus, unlikely to be an agent of democratisation.

Keywords: global middle class, democracy, transition economies, emerging economies, political economy, modernisation theory, critical junctures theory

1. INTRODUCTION

The global middle class is growing fast. It is expected to increase from 1.9 billion people in 2009 to 4.9 billion in 2030, with most of the increase coming from the emerging economies in Asia (Kharaz and Gertz, 2010). This rise in the global middle class is unprecedented, as is the speed of economic transformation of these countries. Despite strong economic growth and the expansion of their middle classes, many emerging economies – China and Russia being prime examples – have not experienced a parallel political and institutional growth, and remain largely authoritarian. Without the emergence of democratic institutions, however, economic growth – however strong and attractive in the short term – may not be sustained in the long term (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2011). There may exist an expectation, encouraged by regular media reports, that challenges to existing political power structures and pushes for political reforms in emerging economies will come from the middle classes (The Telegraph, 2013; The Economist, 2011; Schenker, 2011; Bloomberg Business Week, 2014). However, evidence based on individual-level data paints a more mixed picture. For example, Lopez-Calva et al. (2012) find that, in Latin America, middle class people are more likely to vote in elections and find political violence unjustifiable, but are also less likely to support individual rights. Lazic and Cvejic (2011) show that, in Serbia, middle class people are supportive of political but not economic liberalism. In Iran, the self-identified social class has no relationship with the support for democracy (Tezcur et al., 2012). Evidence from China suggests that middle class people, and especially those depending on the state for their livelihoods, are less likely to support democracy and democratic change (Chen and Lu, 2011; Xin, 2013). These findings suggest that the relationship between income and preferences for democracy in emerging economies is far from clear-cut and may be country and context-specific.

This paper aims to assess the political attitudes, actions and preferences of the middle class people in China, as well as in other countries characterised by authoritarian political regimes/ tendencies (Russia, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan) and post-socialist countries that have recently established democratic regimes (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova),

with a broader objective of identifying the role that the middle class might play in contributing to and sustaining democratic and institutional change. The theoretical underpinnings of the study draw on two frameworks: 1) the *modernisation* hypothesis (Lipset, 1959; Moore, 1966), which posits that, in authoritarian societies experiencing rapid economic growth, the emerging middle class will push for democratic reform, and 2) the *critical junctures* hypothesis (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2011), which argues that specific historical events give rise to two types of institutions (*inclusive* and *extractive*) which are associated with different long-term economic and political outcomes.

The empirical analysis of the paper is based on the two rounds (2005-09 and 2010-14) of the Worlds Values Survey, administered in a range of countries across the world. The survey contains information on the political values, attitudes and experiences of the respondents, and the geographical breadth of the survey allows for a comparison of the political stance of middle class people in various countries with authoritarian tendencies, including China. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first attempt to analyse the political preferences of the middle class at such a geographical scale, making a contribution to the existing literature on the relationship between economic growth and political change. The survey also includes samples of respondents from Taiwan and Hong Kong – countries with similar cultural background to China but different trajectories of political and economic development, allowing to explore the effects of cultural norms on the relationship between higher income levels and support for democracy.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section two reviews theoretical channels linking the growth of the middle class and political change. Section three discusses conceptual and measurement issues related to the identification of the middle class. Section four presents data and variables, and outlines estimation strategy. Section five presents the results, followed by discussion in section six.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, MIDDLE CLASS AND DEMOCRACY: WHAT TO EXPECT?

The classical *modernisation* theory (Lipset, 1959; Moore, 1966) contends that economic development should lead to democracy. According to this approach, the processes of modernisation and urbanisation promote entrepreneurship, innovation, savings, education and socio-economic mobility, increasing the number of relatively wealthy people – the middle class. As the economic prospects of the middle class depend on their professional skills rather than political connections and economic resources, middle class people increasingly value freedom, individual and property rights. Democratic and moderate parties guarantee these rights, and a large middle class is able to reward democratic parties. As a result, authoritarian societies experiencing high economic growth become democratic.

This unilinear effect of economic growth (and the associated rise of the middle class) on democracy has been criticised on both theoretical and empirical grounds. For example, Przeworski and Limongi (1997) distinguish between endogenous and exogenous modernisation theory. The endogenous version of the theory, like its classical counterpart, predicts that higher levels of GDP per capita make democratisation more likely. In the exogenous version, democracy emerges for idiosyncratic reasons which are not related to GDP per capita levels. According to this perspective, the middle class may not necessarily want to challenge an authoritarian regime - given that they have actually done quite well economically. They may favour the status quo, at least as long as it generates good economic performance.

Using advanced econometric techniques, Acemoglu et al. (2008, 2009) show that economic growth has no causal effect on either democracy or transitions to and from democracy. They argue that the positive and significant correlations between the two phenomena, observed in cross-sectional studies, are driven by specific historical events, *critical junctures*, such as the Black Death and the Industrial Revolution.[1] These events place countries onto divergent paths of development, characterised by two types of political and economic institutions: *inclusive* (broad social participation in the process of

[1] The critical junctures approach echoes the exogenous modernisation theory (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997), where democratic change is driven by idiosyncratic factors.

governing (pluralism), accompanied by the rule of law, incentives for investment and innovation, competition and creative destruction) and *extractive* (powerful political elites extract resources from the rest of population, insecure property rights, widespread monopolies). Countries with inclusive institutions become democratic and rich, while countries with extractive institutions become authoritarian and poor.

Acemoglu and Robinson (2011) note that strong economic growth can occur under extractive institutions. Such growth is likely to be based on 'catching up' with the rest of the world and not on true competition, innovation and creative destruction; examples are the USSR after World War II, and contemporary China. Acemoglu and Robinson (2011) argue that growth under extractive institutions cannot be sustained in the long term unless there is a transition to inclusive institutions. Such transitions, however, are difficult to achieve because of the institutional path dependency: even if there is a regime change, one set of extractive institutions is likely to be replaced with another set of extractive institutions.

What, then, would be the political stance of the middle classes in emerging economies experiencing strong (but, possibly, unsustainable) economic growth? Would the middle class push for democracy if there is a realisation that a new regime may inherit the features of the old one? Kennedy (2010) states that transitions to democracy depend on the ability of specific groups to overturn the current regime and their motivation to support a democratic outcome. Miller (2012) argues that transitions to democracy are possible when the regime is vulnerable, yet economic growth makes such periods of vulnerability less common. Focusing on the political preferences of the middle class, Leventoglu (2014) develops a theoretical model showing that, regardless of whether the prevailing regime is authoritarian or democratic, a regime change occurs when the middle class feels insecure and vulnerable about keeping its socio-economic status; there will be no pressure on the regime when the middle class feels secure about the future.

Leventoglu's finding is consistent with the *contingent* approach, which contends that the support of the middle class for democratisation hinges on, among other things, their dependence on the state, perception of their own well-being, fear of socio-political instability, alliance with other classes, and class cohesiveness (see Chen and Lu (2011)

for a review). In this framework, the middle class does not necessarily support democratisation, but this attitude can change with the social, economic and political conditions.

It is also important to note that in most emerging economies the middle class is a relatively recent phenomenon. This is why the attitudes and values of the middle class undergo transformation as the class matures. For example, Hattori et al. (2003) report that the first-generation middle class in Asia shared the values of their classes of origin (peasants and farmers); similarly, middle class people issued from rural-to-urban migration strongly retained their rural values.

In sum, there is no clear expectation that the emerging economies' middle classes are embracing democratic values and striving for democratic reforms. As in many other parts of the developing world, the middle class in post-socialist countries is a relatively recent phenomenon. The political preferences of the middle class, as well as the contours of the class itself, may still be taking shape. At the same time, since the breakdown of the Socialist bloc, countries in the post-socialist space have followed divergent paths of political and economic development, forming distinct geo-political blocs. It may be expected that the attitude of the middle classes towards democracy will depend on their countries' recent history of democratisation and satisfaction with prevailing regimes.

Drawing on this discussion, the empirical part of the paper will test the following hypotheses:

> *H1: People with relatively high income levels (middle class) are more supportive of democracy than people with relatively low income levels.*
>
> *H2: People with relatively high income levels (middle class) are more politically active than people with relatively low income levels.*

3. IDENTIFYING THE MIDDLE CLASS: CONCEPTUAL AND MEASUREMENT ISSUES

‘Middle class’ is an elusive concept, and there appears to be no single way to define or measure it. The existing definitions are often based on researchers’ or policymakers’ beliefs of who should be included in the middle class. Definitions used by economists and business analysts have traditionally revolved around income (or expenditure), while sociologists and other social scientists have also relied on occupation, education and subjectively identified class.

Both absolute and relative income measures have been used to define the middle class. Absolute measures have often incorporated particular countries’ poverty lines and mean incomes. For example, Banerjee and Duflo (2008) identified the developing world’s middle class as those with daily per capita expenditure between $2 (the international poverty line) and $10. Kharaz and Gertz (2010) used much higher thresholds of $10 and $100. Milanovic and Yitzaki (2002) suggested the mean incomes of Brazil and Italy to capture the lower and upper bounds of the global middle class. Ravallion (2010) observed that the Banerjee-Duflo and Milanovic-Yitzaki definitions are mutually exclusive (the mean daily income in Brazil is $12), and proposed a different measure with a lower bound corresponding to the international poverty line ($2) and an upper bound corresponding to the poverty line in the US ($13). In their *vulnerability* approach to identifying the middle class, López-Calva and Ortiz-Juarez (2014) argued that the lower bound of the existing absolute-income-based definitions is too close to the poverty line, and suggested that households with expenditures above the poverty line but at risk of falling back into poverty should not be considered middle class. Wietzke (in print) distinguishes between the ‘struggling/ vulnerable/lower-income’ middle class ($2-4 and $4-10 per day), middle class income levels approaching the living conditions of developed of developed countries ($10-20 and $20-30), and the highest middle-class income bracket of $30-100 characterising middles classes in developed countries.

One disadvantage of the absolute income/expenditure measures is that they may leave entire country populations either below the lower threshold (everyone is poor) or above the upper threshold (everyone is rich). If there is a belief that the middle class exists in every country, relative income measures can be used. A popular proposition has been to classify as ‘middle class’ people with income ranging from 75% to 125% of the median

country income (Pressman, 2007). A fixed-proportion-of-population option would be to assume that the middle class is composed of the 60% of a country's population who are richer than the poorest 20% and poorer than the richest 20% (Atkinson and Brandolini, 2011). While these metrics have a greater chance, relative to the absolute-income-based measures, of finding middle class people in every country, the thresholds chosen to identify the class are again arbitrary.

While the income-based measures have been important to demarcate classes for economists, occupational status has played a more prominent role for other social scientists. For example, Goldthorpe and McKnight (2006) classify routine non-manual employees, lower-grade technicians, supervisors of manual workers, small employers and self-employed workers as the 'intermediate class'; Häusermann et al. (2015) use five occupational categories – capital accumulators, socio-cultural professionals, blue-collar workers, low service functionaries and mixed service functionaries – to identify class; Lazic and Cvejic (2011) define middle class as professionals, lower and middle managers and small entrepreneurs. Education, closely related to occupational status, is another metric of the middle class. In the context of transition economies, education – rather than income – played a major role in differentiating classes in socialist times (Lazic and Cvejic, 2011). However, education obtained under socialist rule is not a guarantor of either high income or high social status today (Remington, 2011).

Subjectively identified social class has been another popular measure of social stratification (Amorante et al., 2010; Pew Research Centre, 2009). Although the size of the subjectively identified middle class may differ dramatically from the one defined by actual income or expenditure, the mismatch may result from the fact that people associate social class not only with income, but also with personal capabilities, interpersonal relations, financial and material assets, and perceptions of economic insecurity (Fajardo and Lora, 2010).

The choice between the subjective/objective and absolute/relative measures of the middle class may depend both on the academic discipline and data availability. In practical terms, subjective and relative measures may be preferable when the quality of objective and absolute measures is poor. For example, income and expenditure – the natural

starting points for identifying middle class respondents in surveys and opinion polls – are often underreported, not reported at all[2] or not asked about. This may be due to respondents' concerns about data anonymity and the problem of recollection, as well as extra costs that researchers incur when they include detailed income and expenditure questions into surveys. Whatever the reasons for missing data, excluding non-respondents from empirical analyses may result in selection bias if people who do not report their income are not randomly selected from the underlying population.

4. DATA AND VARIABLES

4.1. Data

Data come from the World Values Survey (WVS), a publicly available dataset on political, social and cultural values in different parts of the world. The first wave of the WVS (1981-1984) covered 10 countries, with more countries participating in subsequent waves: 18 in 1989-93; 54 in 1994-98; 40 in 1999-2004; 57 in 2005-09; and 60 in 2010-14. Given that the countries I am interested in were not surveyed/did not exist in the earlier waves of the survey, I concentrate on the two last waves of the WVS, covering time period 2005–2014. The minimum sample size for each country-wave is 1,000 (with larger countries tending to have larger sample sizes). Multistage stratified random sampling was employed to obtain nationally representative samples. In the initial stages, the primary sampling units were selected using information from population and electoral registers, national statistics and population censuses. In the subsequent stages, households and respondents within households were selected using random sampling

[2] For example, one quarter of respondents did not report their income in the Latin American sub-sample of the Gallup World Poll (Fajardo and Lora, 2010).

methods (random route, nearest birthday) or random drawing from population registers. In many cases, gender, education and age-group quotas were applied to respondent selection within households. In all cases, the data were collected through face-to-face interviews with adult individuals in their native language.[3]

4.2. Variables

4.2.1. Outcome variables: political attitudes, preferences and activism

The questions capturing attitudes towards different political regimes and political activism include:

1) "How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?" (from 1 "not at all important" to 10 "absolutely important")
2) "How would you assess the following ways of governing a country ("very good", "fairly good", "bad", "very bad"):
    - Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections;
    - Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country;
    - Having the army rule;
    - Having a democratic political system"
3) Political action: "Have you:
    - Signed a petition?
    - Joined a boycott?
    - Attended a peaceful protest/demonstration?

[3] Detailed information of survey design and implementation is available on the World Values Survey website www.worldvaluessurvey.org

- Joined a strike?" ("have done", "might do", "would never do")

I use this information to construct categorical (ordered or multinomial variables). For ordered categorical variables, higher values always correspond to a greater importance or better assessment.

4.2.1. Main explanatory variable: middle class

Based on the conceptual discussion in Section 3, will use three alternate measures to capture middle class: 1) subjective/self-perceived social class (upper, upper middle, lower middle, lower, working); 2) self-perceived position on a 1-to-10 income ladder, based on a question, "On this card is an income scale on which 1 indicates the lowest income group and 10 the highest income group in your country. We would like to know in what group your household is. Please, specify the appropriate number, counting all wages, salaries, pensions and other incomes that come in", and 3) education level. In addition, using information on these three measures I construct, using principal components, a within-country social class index.

4.2.3. Control variables

The following control variables, potentially affecting both political attitudes/activism and the middle class status, are included in all regressions: gender, age and its square, marital status (married/living together; single; other), and employment status (employed full time, employed part-time, self-employed, retired, housewife, student, unemployed, other).

To control for all possible country-level influences and time effects, I include dummy variables for each country (country-fixed effects) in multi-country regressions. This ensures that the estimated coefficients reflect within- and not between-country associations between the variables of interest. To capture temporal effects, I include survey-wave-fixed-effects.

4.3. Estimation strategy

The general model explaining the political preferences and behaviour of individual *i* living in country *j* can be expressed as follows:

$$Y_{ijw} = \beta_1(middle\ class)_{ijw} + \beta_2 X_{ijw} + u_j + \gamma_w + \varepsilon_{ijw}, \qquad (1)$$

where *Y*, the dependent variable, stands for the outcomes to be explained (political attitudes and activism), *X* is a set of individual-level control variables, *u* is a set of country dummies (in multi-country regressions), γ is survey-wave fixed effects, and ε is the unobserved error term.

Depending of the nature of the dependent variable (categorical ordered or multinomial), the models will be estimated with either ordered or multinomial logit. All four models are estimated for China, the sample of countries with authoritarian regimes, post-socialist countries with democratic regimes that are not part of the EU, and the post-socialist countries with democratic regimes that are part of the EU.

5. RESULTS

Discussion of results to follow.

Table 1. Middle class and importance of being democratically governed, ordered logit coefficients, by country/country group

	Dependent variable: How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?" (from 1 "Not at all important" to 10 "Absolutely important")							
	China	China	China	China	China	Authoritarian	Democratic non-EU	Democratic EU
Subjective social class								
Lower	-0.145*	-	-	-0.187	-	-	-	-
Working	-0.102	-	-	-0.117	-	-	-	-
Lower middle	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-	-	-
Upper middle	0.054	-	-	0.141	-	-	-	-
Upper	0.848	-	-	0.622	-	-	-	-
Income ladder								
Income ladder 1	-	0.155	-	0.316*	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 2	-	-0.262**	-	-0.122	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 3	-	-0.110	-	-0.016	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 4	-	-0.208*	-	-0.162	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 5	-	Ref.	-	Ref.	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 6	-	-0.176	-	-0.199*	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 7	-	-0.192	-	-0.280**	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 8	-	-0.119	-	-0.202	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 9	-	-0.185	-	-0.320	-	-	-	-
Income ladder 10	-	1.662**	-	1.521*	-	-	-	-
Education								
No education	-	-	-0.228*	-0.284**	-	-	-	-
Primary education	-	-	-0.174*	-0.207**	-	-	-	-
Secondary vocational	-	-	Ref.	Ref.	-	-	-	-
Secondary education	-	-	0.051	0.044	-	-	-	-
Tertiary education	-	-	0.164	0.156	-	-	-	-
Social class index	-	-	-	-	0.072***	-0.001	0.084***	0.222***
Individual controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country and survey year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3,471	3,240	3,471	3,240	2,979	12,795	5,863	9,544

Notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, significance level based on robust standard errors. Individual controls include: gender, age and its square, marital and employment status. Authoritarian countries: Russia, Turkey, Iran, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan; democratic non-EU countries: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova; democratic EU countries: Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia.

Table 2. Middle class and preference for governing the country, ordered logit coefficients, by country/country group

	Dependent variable: "How would you assess the following ways of governing a country (from 1 "very bad" to 4 "very good")			
	China	Authoritarian	Democratic non-EU	Democratic EU
Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections				
Social class index	-0.000	-0.029**	-0.059***	-0.157***
Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country				
Social class index	-0.059*	-0.036**	-0.069***	-0.021
Having the army rule				
Social class index	-0.080**	0.028*	-0.004	-0.169***
Having a democratic political system				
Social class index	-0.028	0.003	0.033	0.191***

Notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, significance level based on robust standard errors. The table report the estimates of the middle class index for 16 ordered logit regression, each including the same individual controls as in Table 1, country and survey wave fixed effects. Authoritarian countries: Russia, Turkey, Iran, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan; democratic non-EU countries: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova; democratic EU countries: Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia.

Table 3. Middle class and political activism, multinomial logit coefficients, by country/country group

	Dependent variable: Have you ….? ("Have done", "Might do", "Would never do")							
	China		Authoritarian		Democratic non-EU		Democratic EU	
	Might do	Have done	Might do	Have done	Might do	Have done	Might do	Have done
A. Signed petition								
Social class index	0.133***	0.242***	0.151***	0.137**	0.124***	0.318***	0.166***	0.253***
B. Joined boycott								
Social class index	0.133***	0.242***	0.151***	0.137**	0.124***	0.318***	0.166***	0.253***
C. Attended demonstration								
Social class index	-0.014	0.052	0.146***	0.055	0.081***	0.217***	0.151***	0.351***
D. Joined strike								
Social class index	0.035	0.150	0.070**	0.131*	0.085	0.350***	0.056**	0.109**

Notes: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1, significance level based on robust standard errors. The table reports the estimates of the middle class index for 16 multinomial logit regression, each including the same individual controls as in Table 1, country and survey wave fixed effects. The reference category of the dependent variable is "would never do". Authoritarian countries: Russia, Turkey, Iran, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan; democratic non-EU countries: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova; democratic EU countries: Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., Robinson, J. A., & Yared, P. (2008). Income and democracy. *American Economic Review,* 98, 808-842.

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., Robinson, J. A., & Yared, P. (2009). Reevaluating the Modernization Hypothesis. *Journal of Monetary Economics,* 56, 1043-1058.

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. (2012). *Why Nations Fail*. *The origins of Power Prosperity and Poverty.* Profile Books, London.

Amoranto, G., Chun, N., & Deolalikar, A. (2010). Who are the Middle Class and What Values do they Hold? Evidence from the World Values Survey. *Working Paper 229, Asian Development Bank.*

Atkinson, A. B., & Brandolini, A. (2011). On the identification of the 'middle class'. In: Gornick, J. C., & Jaentti, M. (eds.) Inequality and the Status of the Middle Class. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

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

Bloomberg Business News (2014). Behind a Pattern of Global Unrest, a Middle Class in Revolt, February 20, 2014. Last accessed 4 September 2014. Available at: http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-02-20/behind-a-pattern-of-global-unrest-a-middle-class-in-revolt

Chen, J., & Lu, C. (2011). Democratization and the Middle Class in China: The Middle Class's Attitudes toward Democracy. *Political Research Quarterly*, 64(3), 705–719.

Cuervo-Cazurra, A. (2006). Who cares about corruption? *Journal of International Business Studies* 37, 803 – 822.

Cui, A., & Song, K. (2009). Understanding China's middle class. *China Business Review*, 36(1), 38–42.

Easterly, W. (2001). The Middle Class Consensus and Economic Development. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 6, 317-335.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2013). *Transition Report 2013. Stuck in Transition?* European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Fajardo, J., & Lora, E. (2010). Understanding the Latin American Middle Classes: Reality and Perception. *Inter-American Development Bank.*

Goldthorpe, J. H., & McKnight, A. (2006). The economic basis of social class. In: Morgan, S., Grusky, D. B., & Fields, G. S. (eds.) *Mobility and Inequality: Frontiers of Research from Sociology and Economics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Häusermann, S., Kurer, T., & Schwander, H. (2015) High-Skilled Outsiders? Labor Market Vulnerability, Education and Welfare State Preferences. *Socio-Economic Review,* 13(2), 235-58.

Kennedy, R. (2010). The Contradiction of Modernization: A Conditional Model of Endogenous Democratization. *Journal of Politics,* 72(3), 785–98.

Kharas, H., & Gertz, G. (2010). The new global middle class: a cross-over from west to east. In: Li, C. (ed.) China's Emerging Middle Class: Beyond Economic Transformation. Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC.

Leventoglu, B. (2014). Social Mobility, Middle Class and Political Transitions. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 58(5), 825-864.

Lazic, M., & Cvejic, S. (2011). Post-Socialist Transformation and Value Changes of the Middle Class in Serbia. *European Sociological Review,* 27(6), 808-823.

Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, 53(1), 69-105.

López-Calva, L., Rigolini, J., & Torche, F. (2012). Is There Such Thing as Middle Class Values? Class Differences, Values and Political Orientations in Latin America. *IZA Discussion Papers 6292*, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA).

López-Calva, L., & Ortiz-Juarez, E. (2014). A vulnerability approach to the definition of the middle class. *Journal of Economic Inequality*, 12(1), 23-47.

Miller, M. K. (2012). Economic Development, Violent Leader Removal, and Democratization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56, 4, 1002–1020.

Moore, B. (1966). *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Pew Research Center (2009). The global middle class: views on democracy, religion, values and life satisfaction in emerging nations. Pew Research Center, Washington, DC.

Powdthavee, N. (2009). How important is rank to individual perception of economic standing? A within community analysis. *Journal of Economic Inequality*, 7(3), 225–248.

Pressman, S. (2007). The decline of the middle class: an international perspective. *Journal of Economic Issues,* 41(1): 181-199.

Przeworski, A., & Limongi, F. (1997). Modernization: Theories and Facts. *World Politics*. 49: 155-183.

Ravallion, M., & Lokshin, M. (2001). Identifying welfare effects from subjective questions. *Economica*, 68(271), 335–357.

Ravallion, M. (2010). The developing world's bulging (but vulnerable) middle class. *World Development*, 38 (4), 445-454.

Remington, T. (2011). The Russian Middle Class as Policy Objective. *Post-Soviet Affairs,* 27(2), 97-120.

Samson, I., & Krasilnikova, M. (2012). The middle class in Russia. An emerging reality or an old myth? *Sociological Research,* 51(5), 3-25.

Steves, F. (ed.) (2011). *Life in transition: After the crisis.* London: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development & World Bank.

Schenker, J. (2011). Fear barrier seems to have been broken. *Democracy now*. Available at: http://www.democracynow.org/2011/1/27/guardian_reporter_in_egypt_fear_barrier

Tezcur, G., Azadarmaki, T., Bahbar, M., & Naebi, H. (2012). Support for Democracy in Iran. *Political Research Quarterly, 65(2), 235-247.*

The Economist (2011). Protest in Russia: A Russian Awakening. Last accessed 4 September 2014. Available at http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2011/12/protest-russia-0

The Telegraph (2013). Brazil protests: how the 'squeezed middle class' rose up. Last accessed 4 September 2014. Available at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/brazil/10136739/Brazil-protests-how-the-squeezed-middle-class-rose-up.html

Weitzke, F.-B. (in print). Kicking away the ladder? Poverty reduction and public support for redistribution in emerging economies. *Socio-Economic Review* (advance access, doi: 10.1093/ser/mwv027)