Hellmuth Lange
Lars Meier
Editors

The New Middle Classes

Globalizing Lifestyles, Consumerism and Environmental Concern

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Edited by

Hellmuth Lange
Research Center for Sustainability Studies (artec), University of Bremen, Germany

Lars Meier
Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Nürnberg, Germany

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Editors
Hellmuth Lange
Research Center
for Sustainability Studies (artec)
University of Bremen
Enrique-Schmidt-Straße 7
28359 Bremen
Germany
lange@artec.uni-bremen.de

Lars Meier
Institute for Employment
Research (IAB)
Regensburger Straße 104
90478 Nürnberg
Germany
larsmx@gmx.de

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"Orchard Road" in Singapore taken by Lars Meier in August 2004
"Iguatemi Shopping Mall" in Campinas, SP - Brazil taken by Leonardo Freire in January 2009

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Preface

With respect to the developing and threshold economies, it is no longer the poor who are the only focus of media attention. Today, the new middle classes are about to take centre stage, too. With their lifestyles and attitudes, the new middle classes are considered to be both the products as well as the promoters of globalization. They are a highly heterogeneous group in socio-economic terms as well as in habits and preferences, including their societal role as consumers and citizens.[1]

The first wave of scholarly and political attention can be traced back to the mid-nineties. The focal point was surprise and unease about indubitable symptoms of consumerism which, until then had been seen as a characteristic of the richest western societies. However, since the nineties, consumerism has run rampant in developing countries too. This has particularly been noted with respect to the emerging middle classes in South East Asia. The "will to consume seemed inexhaustible, and appetites insatiable. This rage to consume [. . .] was both celebrated and feared by political leaders and other social/moral gatekeepers, who began to condemn the process as 'Westernization' and even 'westoxification"' (Chua 2000: xii). Ever since, the debate about the lifestyles of the new middle classes and their role in society has gained momentum.

Today, concern about the ecological impact of these lifestyles has become a second matter of debate, particularly in the media. In terms of The Los Angeles Times: "Can the World Afford a Middle Class?" (Feb 8, 2008). But while a lot of data on consumption levels are available which show the problematic environmental impact of increasing private vehicular traffic, expanding meat consumption, rising energy use due to the spread of electronic devices etc., research into the environmental sensitivity of the new middle classes is still in its infancy. In this regard, the popularity of the topic and the finality of the concerns that are being expressed in the media are disproportionate to the empirical knowledge that is currently available. Thus, the new middle classes, regardless of the public attention that they enjoy, are still a relatively unexplored group. This book aims at shedding some more light on this issue. However, the attention that the new middle classes are given in public debate, and particularly in the media, also mirrors the fact that the rise of the issue serves as

[1] In view of the heterogeneity of the group, we speak here of the new middle classes in the plural.

a catalyst for more general hopes and anxieties. This is especially true for the question of how much globalization results in a comprehensive homogenization in the sense of westernization to the detriment of existing cultural diversity and economic independence. In this context, the topic of the new middle classes and their lifestyles is closely connected to the debate about "modernity" and "modernities". A second overarching concern is how we can make headway towards a more sustainable future as defined by Agenda 21 of the UNCED Conference in 1992. In this context, the new middle classes, by adopting and expanding resource intensive western lifestyles, are seen as undermining the limited efforts that have been made in the highly industrialized countries so far. Hence, in respect of the debate on both globalization and Agenda 21, the new middle classes form an extensively nested issue.

Understandably, all the topics addressed here have led to highly controversial discussions. Thus, the new middle classes are a highly contested issue, too. This leads to the question as to which conceptual line the authors of the book are following. Considering the multidimensionality of the new middle classes as a topic and the multitude of competing theoretical perspectives and controversies in analytical approaches, the editors did not ask the authors in this volume to follow one common conceptual line. Instead, some of the most important fields of controversy regarding both the size and composition as well as attitudes and behavior of the new middle classes are delineated in the introductory chapter. The subsequent chapters fit in this framework by referring to the related debates from different angles. In their relation to one another the chapters of the volume thus reproduce elements of the diverse concerns and conclusions that characterize the whole debate.

The chapters of Part I advance different positions on globalization, cultural homogenization and diversification and its resulting consequences with respect to the new middle classes. In Parts II and III case studies are presented. Part II comprises studies on different parts of the new middle classes in a variety of countries from China, through Brazil and Israel, to Ecuador. This part aims primarily at giving an idea of the plurality of the new middle classes in terms of levels of consumption and different patterns of social and cultural embeddedness in the wider society of their countries. The focus of part III is India. By focusing on the new middle classes of one single country a broader variety of aspects can be considered. This applies both to different dimensions of lifestyles, including environmental concerns, as well as to the role that the new middle classes are expected to assume by political decision-makers and the government respectively.

Accordingly, environmental attitudes and lifestyles of a sample of sub-groups of the new middle classes are being analyzed as compromises between often contradictory contexts of personal ambitions and preferences, cultural traditions, social norms, socio-economic assets and limitations, and governmental policies.

Bremen, Germany Hellmuth Lange
Nürnberg, Germany Lars Meier

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About the Authors

N.S. Anuradha, Dr., is Assistant Professor in the Department of Management Studies in the Indian Institute of Sciences in Bangalore, India.
Contact: nsanu@mgmt.iisc.ernet.in

Beng Huat Chua is currently Professor in Department of Sociology, and Leader, Cultural Studies in Asia Research Cluster, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He is founding co-executive editor of the journal, Inter-Asia Cultural Studies. He has published *Life is Not Complete without Shopping* (2003) and as editor, *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities* (2000). His research focus for the past five years has been on the emergent field of East Asian Pop Culture, and has edited with Koichi Iwabuchi, The Korean Wave in Asian Pop Culture (2007).
Contact: aricbh@nus.edu.sg

Jinyang Deng, Ph.D. is assistant professor with Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Resources Program at West Virginia University. His research interests focus on tourism destination evaluation, ecotourism, and GIS application into tourism planning and management.

Christoph Dittrich, PD Dr., is Senior lecturer at the Institute of Cultural Geography, University of Freiburg. His main research focus is on development studies; urban geography and planning in the globalisation context; urban food system research; development studies; South Asia; India.
Contact: christoph.dittrich@geographie.uni-freiburg.de

Leela Fernandes is Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. She is the author of India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform (University of Minnesota Press, 2006), Producing Workers: The Politics of Gender, Class and Culture in the Calcutta Jute Mills (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997) and Transforming Feminist Practice (A. Lute Books, 2003). She is currently Co-Editor of Critical Asian Studies and Associate Editor of Signs: A Journal of Women, Culture and Society.
Contact: lfernand@rci.rutgers.edu

André Isensee, MA, studied sociology, environmental sciences and modern history at the Potsdam University. His master thesis 'The real great leap forward?' dealt with the past and possible future development of society, economy and the environment in China. Currently, he is writing his PhD thesis at the Humboldt University in Berlin, and works with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK).

Tally Katz-Gerro is a senior lecturer in Sociology at the University of Haifa, Israel. Her work focuses on comparative consumption research, material consumption, and environmental concern and behavior. For more information on her research please see: http://soc.haifa.ac.il/∼tkatz.
Contact: tkatz@soc.haifa.ac.il

C.S.A. (Kris) van Koppen is Associate Professor at the Environmental Policy Group of Wageningen University, and Professor of Environmental Education by special appointment at the Freudenthal Institute of Utrecht University (the Netherlands). His area of research and education is sustainable production and consumption, with a special interest in individual and organizational learning processes. Kris van Koppen is chair of the Environment and Society Research Network of the European Sociological Association.
Contact: Kris.vanKoppen@wur.nl

Katina Kuhn (Masters Degree in Applied Cultural Science and Doctoral Candidate in Sociology) is research assistant at the Institute for Environmental and Sustainability Communication at the Leuphana University Lüneburg. Her primary research interests concern culture and sustainable development, theories of development and development politics, questions of cultural globalisation and cultural identity. In her doctoral thesis she examines perceptions of global cultural and environmental change in the context of international development corporation.
Contact: kuhn@uni-lueneburg.de

Hellmuth Lange, PhD in Political Sociology, Professor emeritus at the University of Bremen, Germany. His more recent research focus is on problems of transition management with respect to more sustainable lifestyles and regional development. Another focus is on risk-management and adaptation to climate change. Besides articles in international journals such as Natures Sciences Sociétés and Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning, he is the editor of a number of relevant books such as Nachhaltigkeit als radikaler Wandel: Die Quadratur des Kreises? (VS Verlag, 2007); Kultur im Veränderungsprozess (Nomos, 2004) and Ökologisches Handeln als sozialer Konflikt, Umwelt im Alltag (Leske und Budrich, 2000).
Contact: lange@artec.uni-bremen.de

Steffen Mau is Professor of Political Sociology and Comparative Social Research at the University of Bremen and Dean of the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS). He received his PhD from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. His main research interests are transnationalism, social policy, comparative welfare state research, Europeanization, migration and social inequality.
Contact: smau@gsss.uni-bremen.de

Suman Majumdar is a Ph.D. student in Applied/Forest Economics at the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University, USA. His main research interest is in the economics of natural resources and the environment.

Emma Mawdsley, Dr., Lecturer in Geography and Fellow of Newnham College, Cambridge University. Her PhD focussed on regionalism, federalism and the demand for a separate State of Uttarakhand. Since then she has also worked on NGO relations with states and international donors; and on urban environmental politics. She is also currently running a collaborative research project between the British Association of South Asian Studies and the British Institute in Eastern Africa on contemporary economic, cultural and geopolitical relations between India and East Africa. She is also interested in development politics more broadly, and has published on the World Bank's World Development Reports and on the Millennium Challenge Account.
Contact: eem10@cam.ac.uk

Lars Meier, Dr., is sociologist and geographer. Since 2008 he is researcher at the Institute of Employment Research (IAB) in Nuremberg and lecturer for Sociology at the Darmstadt University of Technology (Germany). He was researcher at the University of Bremen. He is the author of a book on the everyday life and identity formations of German expatriates in London and Singapore (in German: "Das Einpassen in den Ort", Transcript 2009). Lars is co-editor of Encountering Urban Places (Ashgate, 2007) and of Negotiating Urban Conflicts (Transcript, 2006). His main research focus is on urban studies, cultural studies, qualitative methods, migration studies and on globalization theory.
Contact: larsmx@gmx.de

Leonardo Freire de Mello, Ph.D. in Demography, M.Sc. in Environmental Management and Planning, B.Sc. in Agronomic Engineering. Assistant Professor at the Urban and Regional Planning Program of the University of Vale do Paraíba – UNIVAP, Brazil and Researcher at the Centre for Environmental Research – NEPAM of the University of Campinas – UNICAMP, Brazil. Main research interests: population-environment-consumption interface, space and place consumption, knowledge workers' lifestyles and consumption patterns, place attachment and quality of place.
Contact: leo.mello@gmail.com

Jason Pribilsky, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies at Whitman College in Washington State (USA). His research has focused on issues of transnational migration, infectious disease, consumption, and social change in the rural Ecuadorian Andes and New York City. He is currently working on a historical study of the applied anthropology in Cold War-era Peru.
Contact: pribiljc@whitman.edu

Fritz Reusswig, Dr., studied sociology and philosophy at Frankfurt University. He graduated with a diploma thesis on Adorno's 'Negative Dialectic', wrote his PhD thesis on Hegel's concept of subjectivity, and his habilitation thesis on the environmental consequences of modern consumption patterns and lifestyles. Since 1995 he

is working as a senior scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK). His major research areas are lifestyle changes to protect the climate, socio-technological changes, and urban developments.
Contact: fritz.reusswig@pik-potsdam.de

Volker H. Schmidt teaches Sociology at the National University of Singapore. Before joining NUS, he held teaching and research positions at the Universities of Mannheim and Bremen, respectively, and in 1997/98 he was a J.F. Kennedy Memorial Fellow at Harvard University. Schmidt is the author or co-author of five books and editor or co-editor of another four volumes. His main areas of specialization are the sociology of justice, social policy, social theory, and global modernization (with a special focus on East Asia).
Contact: socvhs@nus.edu.sg

Gert Spaargaren is professor in Environmental Policy for Sustainable Lifestyles and Consumption at the Environmental Policy group of Wageningen University, The Netherlands. His main research interests and publications are in the field of environmental sociology, sustainable consumption and behaviour, and the globalisation of environmental reform. He is chair of the Dutch national network on social sciences and the environment (SWOME).
Contact: Gert.Spaargaren@wur.nl

Carol Upadhya is a Fellow at the School of Social Sciences, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, India. She is a social anthropologist whose recent research has focused on globalisation and contemporary social and cultural transformations in India, economic anthropology, and the history and politics of anthropology. She is the author of several articles on Indian software professionals and the middle class and has co-edited, with A.R. Vasavi, In an Outpost of the Global Economy: Work and Workers in India's Information Technology Industry (Routledge, New Delhi, 2008).
Contact: carol.upadhya@gmail.com

Yaoqi Zhang, Associate Professor, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University. He received his Ph.D. from University of Helsinki. His interests include natural resource and environmental economics, ecological economics, environmental history, international forestry.
Contact: Yaoqi.Zhang@auburn.edu

Bin Zheng, MS, Forest Economics. He is a Graduate Research Assistant/Teaching Assistant at the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University.

Chapter 1
Who are the New Middle Classes and why are they Given so Much Public Attention?

Hellmuth Lange and Lars Meier

Abstract Although still a relatively unexplored group, the new middle classes are enjoying a great deal of public attention. The first section discusses the question of why, then, the new middle classes have become a favored topic in the media and the broader political public. Section 1.2 looks at who the new middle classes are and how they can be examined empirically. Section 1.3 links the issue to the overarching debate on cultural globalization between McDonaldization, modernities and cultural hybrids. The focus of Section 1.4 is on the emergence of "civic environmentalism" between individual concern, social protest and political decision making.

Keywords New middle classes · Globalization · Sustainability · Modernization · Civic and environmental concern

1.1 The New Middle Classes – A Contested Issue in Public Debate

When the new middle classes[1] are addressed in public debate the focus is mostly on their western lifestyles. These lifestyles, however, are not really spectacular. They represent the standard in many parts of the world both in normative and practical respects. Why then, do they merit such attention? The concern behind many reports derives from the fact that the spreading of western lifestyles clearly is no longer confined to the realm of the highly industrialized countries. Instead it is becoming an ever more regular feature of developing countries, too.

Why is this seen as a problem rather than a confirmation of the promise of prosperity and even affluence, which was associated with the term *Industrial Society*? Against the background of this term, "developing countries" meant that the future of

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H. Lange (✉)
Artec Institute, Research Center for Sustainability Studies, University of Bremen,
Bremen, Germany
e-mail: lange@artec.uni-bremen.de

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these nations lay in their efforts to be like the industrialized countries in their political as well as their economic structures, in the realm of education, professional qualifications and last but not least in terms of values, habits and lifestyles. The accumulation of durable consumer goods was considered an impelling force from the beginning and a measure for the corresponding modernization of everyday life. The term *Industrial Society* summarizes these moments as both an analytical as well as a developmental concept (Bell, 1974).

In practice, in developing countries, sharing key consumption standards of the most industrialized countries, for decades, this has remained a hope rather than a reality. By now however, at least in part, such doubts are losing ground, as new middle classes have emerged all over the world that both can afford and are willing to adopt elements of a "western" lifestyle. This process is evident in the widespread purchase of industrial products that are more or less expensive. Without doubt the private car enjoys pride of place in this context. While this is an indubitable success story with respect to the promises of the "industrial society" concept, two reasons can be identified that might explain why the rise of the new middle classes and their lifestyles fuels not only a high level of media attention but political concern too.

The first reason derives from the fact that the rise of the new middle classes is seen as a symbol of a comprehensive shift in economic and national power relations. In fact, the large number of countries that have been grouped together under the collective heading of "developing nations" differ in many respects. Notwithstanding these differences, they all have two features in common: Firstly, for a long time, even in the higher classes of these countries, only a small fraction adopted "western" lifestyles. Secondly, until recently, these nations were hardly capable of playing an independent role in the global economy. Both factors have changed considerably and, indeed, are closely interconnected. The growing potential of the new middle classes to consume expensive, "western" products was possible in this magnitude only where nations were able to create economies that were increasingly independent (World Bank, 2007). Terms used by the OECD such as "catching up economies" or "emerging economies" try to account for this change. Against this background it is quite consistent to understand the rise of the new middle classes as an indicator of a shift that relativizes the economic power of the classically industrial nations. This goes along with shifts in political influence in favor of some of the "catching up economies". China and India embody this change most prominently (Humphrey & Messner, 2006; Flavin & Gardner, 2006; Bussolo et al., 2007).

Understandably, such changes are evaluated differently, depending on whether the perspective is that of the winning countries or of those who need to make sacrifices: either in terms of lost business opportunities or of jobs being relocated from OECD countries to developing countries. In sum, the rise of the "new economies" countries, however, does not lead to a proportional decline of the industrialized countries. Also in this respect, the promise of ever-increasing welfare, which is at the heart of the Industrial Society concept, proves valid.

On the other hand, it is obvious that, even today, the new prosperity in "catching up economies" remains very uneven, both between the countries as well as within many of them. China was able to reduce the number of undernourished citizens by about 60 million between 1990 and 2000. Other countries have been less successful; India falls into this category (Sanchez et al., 2005: 39). The development goals of the UN Millennium Project, therefore, remain pressing (World Bank, 2007).

A second focus of concern that contributes to the high level of media attention given to the new middle classes, ironically, does not relate to a lack of development. On the contrary, the concern is motivated by the lifestyles of the new middle classes and their role as the vanguard of the most dynamic development that the respective countries have experienced during the last one or two decades. Here, the focus is on the rapidly growing ecological footprint in terms of sharp increases in resource consumption, pollution and damages to ecosystem functions and services. In this respect too, India and China are at the centre of media attention and concern.

Some commentators subscribe to a more balanced view with respect to developing and threshold countries. In this spirit, the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program highlights the fact that the carbon footprint of China is still far smaller than that of the USA, Canada and a host of other developed countries, and that the ecological footprint of other threshold countries, including India, is even smaller (HDR, 2007 and 2008: 7). Other observers, particularly from the classically industrialized nations, opt for a more dramatic tone, not least with the aim of recommending themselves as business partners in the realm of environmentally sound products and policies. Thus, the development department of a large German bank comments: “Of the 20 cities featuring the worst air quality in the world, 16 alone are in China. According to a World Bank study, the majority of cities in China exhibit maximum-category dust pollution. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that the poor urban air quality is responsible for around 250,000 deaths each year in China” (Heymann, 2006). They conclude that, “[E]conomic growth in China is anything but sustainable. China’s economy is booming at the expense of its environment” (ibid.). The World Energy Outlook 2007 of the International Energy Agency predicts that China, without any substantial change in its politics, will reach a similar level of CO^2 emissions in the year 2015 as all EU-Countries combined (IEA, 2007). For the IEA, “. . .the effect on climate change would simply be catastrophic” (OECD Observer, 2007 and 2008: 13). As in many other commentaries, this perspective is built on stressing the coincidence of economic growth on the one hand and changing lifestyles on the other hand. “The emergence of China and India on the world economy unfolds. Lifestyles are evolving fast, and that means more demand, more energy consumption and more greenhouse gas emissions” (ibid.). Since the middle classes are essentially the most significant social group behind the lifestyles in question, they appear, as a consequence, to be the pivotal drivers of the much-feared catastrophic developments.

This criticism is, however, not without irony. The lifestyles that are being criticized are nothing other than those which in industrialized countries have been considered for decades to be the general standard and which, incidentally, embody the core elements of the welfare society in industrialized nations: ownership of at least one automobile per family, high levels of household use of energy and a diet which includes large quantities of meat. Against this background the critique of the lifestyle of the emerging new middle classes outside the classically industrialized nations appears rather sanctimonious, leading to the question: Why is it that some are permitted a certain lifestyle while others are not?

However, even if one accepts this plea there remains one problem. This can be illustrated with the example of the automobile as the focal point of the questionable western lifestyle. The acquisition of private automobiles in the industrialized nations has achieved a high degree of saturation. In contrast to this, although in the "catching up economies" the ownership of private cars has just begun, it is increasing rapidly. The World Bank estimated the total number of the new middle classes in developing countries at 400 million people in 2004. Their number is expected to rise to 1.2 billion people in 2030 which equals a share of 15% of the total world population (cf. World Bank, 2007: xvi).

Thus, even if the density of car ownership in these countries remains lower than that in the USA or Western Europe, the large number of new consumers (and the predicted further growth of this group) gives rise to a large potential growth in private car ownership all over the world – and a corresponding dramatic growth in CO^2 emissions. The same problem arises as a consequence of increases in meat and energy consumption (FAO, 2003).

In the realm of public debate this "purely objective" concern is frequently linked to a moral rebuke vis-a-vis the new middle classes. Put briefly: the global North has raised the ecologically questionable lifestyle and is still predominantly responsible for most of the associated problems in terms of resource depletion, global warming and infestation of eco-systems. But after all, the problems have at least been recognized and there is a will to solve them. However, the undisputable truth is that even in the global North the results of these efforts are still limited. This applies particularly to the realm of personal behavior of the citizens with the ecological footprint still much larger than the geographical territory of the countries (Earth Trends, 2008; Footprint, 2007).

In contrast, the new middle classes are accused of lacking any sense of responsibility regarding both societal and environmental needs. Interestingly, this perspective is also shared by experts from developing and threshold countries. Accordingly, the members of the new middle classes, for example in India, are labeled "consumerist predators" marked by "complete insensitivity to any social concern" (Varma, 1998; cf. Gupta, 2000). This kind of criticism is not altogether new. They are reproached for being passive, short-sighted and naïve consumers attracted by simple messages of consumption and unable to reflect critically on their shortcomings. This revives the colonial picture of India and other countries as the unenlightened "Orient" (Said, 1978).

Another criticism classifies the new middle classes as "The New Rich". This is the title of the first series of studies devoted to the new middle classes, which was launched in 1996 (Robison & Goodman, 1996; Rodan, 1996; Sen & Stivens, 1998; Pinches, 1999; Chua, 2000; Hutchinson & Brown, 2001). The term "new rich", on the one hand, alludes to a matter of fact. A major proportion of the new middle classes actually attained prosperity relatively recently. At the same time, the term expresses a value judgment, voiced in terms such as "the nouveau riche", "the upstarts" and "the parvenu". This is the perspective of the social establishment who claims that the newcomers do not yet know how to behave and who lack taste and style as a means of social distinction beyond mere wealth. In sociological terms, following Bourdieu (1985): they have financial capital but not cultural capital. However, if earlier the concern was restricted to a lack of refinement only, the allegation of insensitivity to any social and environmental concern, as expressed in the term "consumerist predator", implies that, through its unsuitable ways of thinking and acting, the new middle classes are endangering the foundations of our civilization and our future (including the efforts that have begun in the West to ensure a sustainable future). The new middle classes are positioned as gravediggers of our common and sustainable future, in terms of the OECD-Observer: "a catastrophe" (OECD Observer, 2007 and 2008).

This critical perspective is everything but undisputed. From the converse perspective, the new middle classes are seen as the principle drivers of hope in the developing countries. They are considered to be those who, above all other groups of the population, represent innovation and management potential. The ability of a nation to prosper in a competitive world is, therefore, said to be dependent first and foremost on its new middle classes. The existence of a strong middle class is also seen as an essential condition for being able to help the land's economic as well as social progress from within. Understandably, this perspective is encouraged, both by the politicians and by representatives of the middle classes of these countries, including those in China and India. It is however, just as true for other countries in Asia and Latin America that are considered to be catching up economies or that are striving to join that group.

In other words, the contrast in opinions with respect to the new middle classes could not be more substantial. It is just this liveliness of the controversies that shows how much the new middle classes are at the heart of conflicting expectations, both in terms of the economics, politics and culture of the countries they represent.

The actor group that was first to recognize the new reality were those involved in product advertising. Social science research is located more at the other end of an imagined scale. In spite of promising beginnings (see in particular the most topical series "The New Rich in Asia", edited by Robison and Goodman, 1996) both in the industrialized countries of the global North as well as in the countries where the new middle classes live, there is still a dearth of systematic research into the questions that are addressed here. The public debates about the role of the new middle classes have so far been carried out, at best, with very limited social science research input. Instead, research that concerns populations below the poverty line has dominated the social science research agenda. There are very obvious and pressing reasons for this, which will lose very little of their weight in the near future. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to the new middle classes and there are at least two reasons for doing this. Firstly, the role that the new middle classes will play both as decision-makers and consumers in the developing and "catching up economies" is significant. Secondly, this group essentially contributes to the fact that social modernization in all its dimensions: economic, social, cultural, political and technological, no longer emerges only in the classical metropolises of the industrialized world.

The new middle classes have become a particular focus of social modernization on a global scale and they will play this role even more intensely in the future.

It remains to be seen how and how much the new middle classes will develop specific social patterns, including lifestyles, and what their impact on the use of natural resources and the protection of nature will be. That the new middle classes will play a significant role in this respect is, however, an undisputed fact even today. This book aims to present current social science wisdom that exists on the topics discussed and to link these to one another.

The following section considers three questions: How new are the new middle classes? Are they different from their counterparts in the industrialized world? And, what are the criteria that can be used for a meaningful classification of the group?

1.2 Who are the "New" Middle Classes?

The new middle classes are not as new as the term indicates. The beginnings of political interest in new middle classes can already be traced back more than a hundred years. Its roots are not in the developing and the threshold countries but in Europe and the USA. In order to trace the historical background of the ongoing debate its early core topics will be highlighted briefly. The following section will outline specifics of the rise and the self-understanding of the new middle classes in developing countries. The last section deals with how the new middle classes can be empirically assessed.

1.2.1 The New Middle Classes – A Classical Issue

The term middle class, as a first approximation, serves the purpose of purely formal categorization in relational respect. It indicates a class of society that belongs neither to the upper nor the lower strata of a given society but situated in between. The term still carries this inherent meaning when used in the context of differences in wealth and social status. However, the term was, from the beginning, also associated with a value judgment: the middle class as intermediary social stratum of secondary importance situated between the main classes: the rich and powerful and the poor and powerless. In this interpretation, the term highlighted the element of socio-cultural changes that evolved as a core feature of the transition from feudal societal structures with their large number of social classes, towards the modern – industrialized and capitalist – societies, including increasingly sharp polarizations between the working class poor and the wealthy company owners. This picture always contained an element of political stylization, especially when put forward by the socialist working class movement following Marxist theory. The empirical reality, however, was always considerably more varied. Nonetheless, the political debates since the early 19th century have been characterized by an increasing polarization in terms of the "Social Question".

The emergence of the new middle classes is closely related and, at the same time, opposed to this interpretation of the “Social Question”. The problem revolves around the employees who represented a new social group that emerged during the second half of the 19th century. As white collar workers they were employed in more or less operational functions and as technical experts in technical and scientific departments. The breeding ground of their evolution lies in the then new world of industry (Jacquin, 1955; Hartfiel, 1961; Blackburn, 1967). In contrast, the old middle classes – mainly small traders and craftsmen – already existed in medieval times. As the petit-bourgeoisie they formed a significant part of the urban social structure. Graduates from the universities played a bridging role in different professions, as lawyers and physicians, lecturers and administrative experts.

Skilled work requiring formal training and education, a superior status and corresponding incomes in the framework of waged work are seen as characteristics of the new middle classes (cf. Humblet, 1966: 41 ff.). The development of this group was commented upon critically from the perspective of the labor movement. In fact, despite their dependence on waged employment, and regardless of the fact that most of them had no major influence on corporate decision-making, major parts of them felt closer to the management than to the workers. From the point of view of the labor movement, they were perceived as those with “false consciousness”. Sociology did not go that far. However, studies gave clear evidence that these groups distinguished themselves from the majority of the workers through a specific set of social self-images and behavior referred to as “white collar mentality” or “Angestelltenmentalität” (Braun & Fuhrmann, 1970).

Since the 1920s the size of the new middle classes started increasing considerably; so did the heterogeneity of the group, both in socio-cultural terms as well as in specializations. This marked the beginning of a development that was described after the Second World War as the “tertiarization” of society (Fourastié, 1960). The term denotes not only the genesis of a third sector beyond agricultural production and industrial processing, but also the continuous increase in the significance of varied services within the industrial realm. Thus, over a period of decades, the new middle classes grew from being a new social group and a minority to being the proportionally largest group of wage earners. The sociologist C.W. Mills was one of the first to conduct a large investigation of this group. His book “The White Collar. The American Middle Classes” (1951) is justifiably considered to be a classic. This book is particularly remarkable because it analyzed a process in its early days, during the course of which an ever-growing portion of American society, and gradually also European societies, no longer perceived the new middle classes as new. Instead, as is indicated by the title, an ever-growing part of the social structure was both rated and addressed as just *the* middle classes, irrespective of whether it specifically referred to workers or employees, civil servants or self-employed, craftsmen, professionals or traders.

For many observers this was linked to the additional belief that the capitalist class society of the 19th and 20th century would finally transform itself into a type of middle class society, thus overcoming the social divide that constituted the substance of the Social Question of the 19th century. The main criterion here was the coincidence of mass production and rising income levels which permitted even workers to access a larger share of the products of more luxurious consumerism. This included, above all, ownership of radios, televisions, refrigerators, washing machines and eventually, cars and an apartment or house (see Bell, 1974).

In other words, the emergence of the term "new middle class" is very closely linked to changes in the social structures and the enterprise structures, which in Europe and the U.S. were part of the transition from feudalism to capitalism via the Industrial Revolution, and the related shift from rural areas to the cities, the latter becoming the most relevant and dynamic centers of social development including new ways of life and cultural identities. The new middle classes are both a result and drivers of this new urban based dynamics. In this context the new middle classes could be classified by a high level of disposable income. Social factors such as education, professional and, last but not least, cultural features and mentalities are also key characteristics. However, it must be noted that, from the beginning, the group showed a strong internal differentiation, both in socio-structural terms as well as with respect to values, cultural preferences and lifestyles. Therefore scholars soon stated that it was better to talk of the new middle classes as a compound of different groups rather than of a single class or stratum (Laroque, 1968: 59).

1.2.2 The Emerging New Middle Classes in Developing Countries

This is applicable in equal measure in the developing countries. Here too, the unfolding of the new social grouping has been part of larger social change which made the cities become the focus of social dynamics, both in economic and cultural terms. This was accompanied, in the main, by a loss of significance of rural subsistence production in favor of the increased significance of industrial production. But in contrast to Europe and North America, where this process was spread over two centuries, in the developing and catching up economies it is taking place much more rapidly, due to pressure from economic and technological standards that could be set by the most developed countries and companies in the world, due to their earlier start. In this context, it is not only the small farmers who came under and still come under severe pressure but also the erstwhile urban middle classes in the form of craftsmen and traders.

In some other respects the evolution of the new middle classes in the developing countries has also been markedly different from that of the classically industrialized countries. In contrast to the industrialized countries where modern industrial concerns were the incubators for the new middle classes, the genesis of the industrial sector in the developing countries came about in a limited and delayed manner – not least because of their colonial history and related forms of transnational division of labor. Where a middle class managed to develop it was characteristically promoted by the state. Here, it was initially the colonial powers that systematically encouraged the growth of a new service class. Its members occupied the lower and middle ranks of the administration and other service sectors, including the different vocational professions (such as lawyers, doctors, scientists). As part of the agenda of nation-building and social development, the post-colonial states continued to support this process. As Kessler puts it, "the post-colonial state. . .as part of its agenda of nation-building and social development, launched itself into the project of creating a local indigenous middle class" (Kessler, 2001: 39). Such a process took place in one form or the other in all the countries of South Asia and Africa that won independence from their colonial rulers. The industrial sector also developed in many of these countries in close relation to the state's concept of development, including various elements of a planned economy.

In the first decades after attaining independence these state related sectors ranked among the flagships of self-determined development. In the context of the recent debate about the new middle classes they have widely lost this rank. Moreover, they have acquired the status of a negative example. Today, the most promising and prestigious sector is seen as companies with an international orientation that are exempt from any government control. Only these are considered to form the sector that has the conditions that can give rise to the new middle classes, above all, IT-Sector companies and the associated service sectors (Kapur, 2007).

Accordingly, the widely shared self-understanding of this sector, including major parts of its employees, is that of promoters and representatives of a long-awaited modernization process of their own countries. In parallel, the policies of the governments accord them a central role as agents of modernization and, last but not the least, as consumers. This is independent of whether the government is an authoritarian regime, such as China or Singapore, or democratically elected, such as India. Other actors – politicians as well as journalists – are more skeptical, seeing the new middle classes driven by "a rage to consume" and betraying the values that are said to have characterized the middle classes of the countries at their early stages (cf. Chua, 2000: 3).

This latter view is particularly true of India. Thus, Varma asserts that the old middle class "had played a pivotal role in the making of modern India". The program of Gandhi and Nehru had formed a "composite ideological framework" that, for the middle class in its early stage, served as a guideline in the respective areas of activity. In particular, the idea of modernizing the country through industrialization was irrevocably bound to a "social sensitivity towards the poor" and "a reticence towards ostentatious display of wealth" (Varma, 1998: 32). Varma concludes, there is hardly any trace of this left today. Instead, naked egoism along with a "withdrawal of the most influential segment of the nation from any commitment to community und social welfare" (Ibid., XII) is the dominant constellation (see also Alam, 2005: 355). Similar diagnoses can be found in almost every country where, before and after independence, a large number of the erstwhile middle class, in the framework of the process of decolonization on the one hand, and because of their professional activities in the interstice between the state and society on the other hand, saw themselves especially bound to the ideology cited above. Other prominent examples are Indonesia and Malaysia (Embong, 2001a) and China.

The state was very important for this group precisely because it guaranteed employment and social influence as well as being a point of orientation for one's own political and professional self-image. However, it served not only as an Archimedean point of altruistic disposition and corresponding action. Kessler defines the other side of this coin as a phenomenon that is relevant for quite a number of Asian countries: "this new class emerged and began to crystallize under state sponsorship, its inclination and those of its members reflected its origins: as the creation, a dependent, even a client of the state structure and dominant regime" (Kessler, 2001: 39). Corruption and clientelism are the highly visible companions of this development, and this too appears to be relatively independent of whether the governmental system is authoritarian or democratic.

There is no indication that the flux between those parts of the new middle classes that are still bound to the state because of the focus of their work and those who are involved in private companies (either of one's own country or from other countries) that operate in an international context and are increasingly independent of the state, has reached its end. Thus, it is important to assess thoroughly the size and structure of the new middle classes both now and for the future. However, this is proving more difficult than it might at first appear, against the background of lively public debate on the subject.

1.2.3 How to Assess Empirically Size and Structure of the New Middle Classes?

Given the fact that there is no consensus on how to define the new middle classes, we abstain from offering an account of our own or opting for one of the competing approaches. Instead we try to display the heterogeneity of approaches in the field. Unsurprisingly, the spectrum is enormous.

The simplest definition looks only at differences in *purchasing power*. From this perspective, Myers and Kent even avoid the term "new middle classes". Instead they talk of "new consumers". Using World Bank data, they consider four-member households that in the year 2000 had an income that, in their own countries, exceeded the purchasing power of more than \$10.000 per annum. This sum is seen as "marking a degree of affluence that enables wide-ranging purchases such as household appliances and televisions, air conditioners, personal computers, and other electronics, among other prerequisites of an affluent lifestyle" (Myers & Kent, 2003). In this manner they come to a total of 1.1 billion "new consumers". These are distributed over 20 countries, of which 17 are developing countries and three are transition countries in Eastern Europe. According to this indicator more than half a billion "new consumers" live in just three countries: China, India and Brazil. The proportion of the total population of a country that is seen as part of the global class of "new consumers" depends on the affluence of each country. In this respect, the differences among the developing countries are considerable. In Malaysia and Thailand the group amounts to a respectable 53% of the population, in Brazil 44%, Indonesia 30%, China 24% and in India only 13%. Further, the growth rates are also very different.

There are other approaches to measuring the size and the structure of the new middle classes which lead to different outcomes. This can be illustrated using the example of India. While Myers and Kent identify a group of 132 million new consumers (33 million households) other more optimistic estimates assume a consumer market potential, and related attractiveness for global retailers, twice that size (Kearney, 2006). In contrast to these figures, a study by the Indian National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) identifies 10.7 million households, with an annual income between 200,000 and 1 million Indian Rupees (~4700–23.000$), as the Indian middle class. Another study regards this particular group as representing only the comparatively small upper segment of "rich consumers" (6 million households). Here, the main criterion for belonging to this group is that they can afford own cars, PCs and luxury items. The study defines 75 million households as belonging to the less wealthy "main group" of consumers who can afford branded consumer goods, two-wheelers and refrigerators (cf. KPMG, 2005). This indicates that even when using the simple concept of purchasing power the criteria vary greatly.

Other studies seem to adopt a *sociological* criterion by differentiating between the "upper" and "lower middle class" on the one hand and the "poor" on the other. In substance, they also allude exclusively to the available purchasing power (MGI, 2006) which might be sufficient for market analysis. But this perspective is definitely too narrow to allow meaningful answers to further questions pertaining to the social and cultural embedding of consumption patterns and the values, attitudes and habits connected with it. Yet, this embedding is most important for understanding the prospects of upgrading the incomes in question and how they are disposed of. However, it is not easy to analyze these factors based on the limited possibilities offered by official statistics.

A first approximation can be achieved using diverse *professional categories,* as is done in the official employment statistics. In this context Embong includes the "professional and technical occupations" and the "administrative and managerial occupations" in the group "new middle class". He excludes two neighboring groups: the "clerical, sales and a portion of services categories", defining them as "lower middle class" occupations, and the "small proprietors and self-employed" defining them as "old middle class" occupations. In this way one obtains a clear picture of how much the social structure has changed in the last 20 years despite the fuzziness of these categories. Following this basis for calculation, the numbers of the new middle class grew in Malaysia from 6% in 1970 to 15% in 2000, and in Singapore from 11% in 1950 to above 40% in 1999 (Embong, 2001: 87; Chan, 2000 with relation to Hong Kong; Reusswig and Isensee in this volume with relation to China).

Admittedly, even this type of calculation does not permit anything more than a preliminary approximation of the dynamics and complexity of the social changes that have been brought about by the new middle classes. Beyond the differentiation based on profession, cultural differentiations are of considerable significance. Thus, in many countries, to a large extent, religious traditions condition the social self-image and the everyday activities of social groups. This is evident for example in Malaysia, Indonesia and India. The same holds true for ethnic differences (for example for the Chinese population outside China in South East Asian countries), for gender structures (different fields and space of activities and expectations from men and women), for patterns of social mobility and biographical structures (social climbing, often related to moving from the country side to urban centers). All these factors require careful consideration in the context of examining consumption patterns and the environmental concerns of the new middle classes, both in general and with regard to the specific situations in each of the countries being studied (cf. Robison & Goodman, 1996; Chua, 2000; Embong, 2001; Rappa, 2002; Gerke, 1999; Fernandes, 2006; Nijman, 2006).

Cultural differences related to lifestyles are of equal importance. Based on personal decisions they are not so closely related to social and cultural traditions. Hence, within the framework of the given economic margins, they can be modified according to personal opinions and preferences. Research into lifestyles catenates market research and phenomenological sociology. The analysis done in China by SinusSociovision is one such example (SinusSociovision, 2005).

By now there are studies on all the aspects mentioned here. Nevertheless, a systematic coverage of the whole topic and the search for consensus amongst those reviewing the results is still in very early stages. The kind of data available through the official statistics does not allow us to comprehend relevant social characteristics in the necessary detail. At the same time the financial resources for more complex and focused sociological studies are not always easy to mobilize. However, even a significant increase in funding would contribute only in small measure to convergent assessments of the social role of the new middle classes regarding both size and internal composition as well as attitudes and behavior. It can be assumed that this is especially true for the question that is addressed in this book: to what extent and in what ways do the new middle classes accept elements of civic and environmental responsibility?

This is even more so since the issue is related to the more comprehensive but equally controversial debate on how globalization is acting as a specific driver of social modernization. Is it creating a progressive homogenization or moving us towards a greater heterogeneity of cultures, ways of life and lifestyles? The rise of the new middle classes also functions, to an important extent, as a projection screen for the hopes and anxieties, as well as convictions and doubts, that exist with regard to the overarching topic of globalization. In this sense, the issue of the new middle classes serves as a proxy.

1.3 The New Middle Classes – A Proxy for Controversial Assessments of Globalization

In fact, not only the emergence of the new middle classes, but also globalization is everything else but a new topic (Hopper, 2007: 13). For a long time the meaning of "globalization" was centered on economic and political dominance with respect to countries of quite different levels of wealth and cultural identity. Only recently has globalization been discussed as a mechanism of cultural homogenization, with the new middle classes as a main driver. As a consequence the more general debate on cultural homogenization, diversification and hybridization comes into play (for a detailed overview see Albrow, 1996; Guillén, 2001; Martinelli, 2005).

The establishment of the colonial system following the Spanish and Portuguese conquests in the pre-industrial period marked the start of the rapid spread of political and economic dependence relationships on a global scale. The integration of this system into the enfolding industrial system further developed the fabric of global economic, political and cultural dominance. Marx and Engels observed as early as 1848: "The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. The bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation of the world market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country" (Communist Manifesto). A less distinctive occurrence, but one no less consequential, was the reorganization of the global system of economic, political and military structures during the period of decolonization and the cold war. Nonetheless globalization became a widely shared concern only at the end of this phase and this not only in a few nations but also globally.

The following dimensions are at the heart of ranking systems that aim at distinguishing different levels of globalization: economic investments, exports and imports of goods and services, migration and technological innovations and flows. Nevertheless the ranking orders differ considerably depending on the indicators used (KOF Index; Kearney, 2007).

In view of the creation and development of the world market as a central process of globalization and the close link of this whole historical process with the rise and fall of the colonial system, it is not surprising that there are two topics that dominate the debates around this issue. Firstly, the distributional effects of globalization: which countries and population segments profit more and which ones less? This includes the question of how the former colonies use and can use their formal independence to play an increasingly autonomous economic and political role. Secondly, the cultural dimension: there are obvious processes of cultural homogenization following the Western and American Way of Life. But diversity of lifestyles is increasing, too, including the development of intercultural hybrids. In both respects the new middle classes are seen a most relevant social actor group, making a strong impact on the process of economic, technological and cultural change within their countries.

The term McDonaldization has established itself as shorthand for an especially comprehensive form of cultural *homogenization*. Ritzer introduced this term into the social science debate about globalization (Ritzer, 1993, 2004). He understands McDonaldization to be a particular form of company management. In this definition, the main management concern is to strive for efficiency, measurability, predictability and control of the company processes, a strategy that is deliberately made a matter of the company culture to be sustained by the employees. It is seen as having encompassed, in a short time and on a large scale, concepts that have grown far beyond the fast food sector. McDonaldization is thus, "the process by which principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American Society as well as the rest of the world" (Ritzer, 2004: 1).

Since Frederick W. Taylor's efforts at developing the most effective forms of organizing production processes and the pre- and post processes form a core topic of modern company management. The success of Ritzer's McDonaldization thesis is due to the fact that he linked the concept of company management to globalization. In this context, McDonaldization acquires a new meaning as a strategy, through which the "American Way of Life" universally subsumes other forms of national, regional and local culture and, just as unstoppably, causes them to disappear. This inherent tendency to a literal cultural impoverishment and new economic dependence of global magnitude is aided by those citizens who voluntarily support the process, both as consumers and within the framework of corresponding self-concepts.

In parallel, Ritzer connects his concept with the sociological tradition (Ritzer, 2004: 24 ff.). The particular rationality and effectiveness of industrial company organization have long been topics of sociological interest. Attention was originally focused not only on organizational, technical and economical principles but also on the subjective dimensions of values, beliefs and mentalities. Max Weber's work on the meaning of the protestant work ethic for the unfolding of capitalism and on the principle of rational management as a characteristic thought and action paradigm of modern society, and modern administration in particular, is but one prominent example. In this respect the understanding of globalization as a process of forced homogenization and "Westernization" is part of a long and well-established sociological tradition of analysis and interpretation of modern societies (see also Reusswig & Isensee Chapter 7 in this volume).

Interpreting globalization as a process of ever-increasing and comprehensive homogenization is, nonetheless, anything but indisputable, both politically as well as sociologically. The most debated sociological antipole is probably Eisenstadts thesis of "multiple modernities" which puts emphasis on *differentiation*. Following Eisenstadt (2000), modernity can be interpreted as a new civilization marked by particular cultural and institutional characteristics. Modernity is seen as a comprehensive counter-example to the earlier "Axial Age", which was characterized by the centrality of religious revelation and faith as key factors in framing social order and governance. Modern societies, in contrast, according to Eisenstadt, are founded on the basis of secular reason and social optionality (Eisenstadt, 2000). Although all modern societies share these basic characteristics of the modern program, institutional and cultural patterns took different forms in different social contexts. This led to the emergence of multiple modernities taking shape in terms of different cultures Eisenstadt's concept explicitly aims at relativizing the idea of a continued cultural homogenization in the sense of "westernization".

A problem with this diagnosis lies in the fact that, while Eisenstadt's basic framework (modernity versus the "Axial Age") relates to a historical period of several hundreds of years, the evidence for his diversification-thesis comes from short time periods of recent history. In this context, comparing different countries and different economic, political and cultural subsystems, one can actually find many examples of heterogeneity. However, this is true not only of today but also of pre-modern times provided that the focus of the analysis is on shorter time periods and particular social dimensions and subsystems. In other words, the closer one is to the object under observation, the clearer and the more diverse are the details and peculiarities. Nonetheless, Eisenstadt holds that there are institutional settings, new types of hegemony and large cultural aggregates (above all in the context of Islamic, Hindu and Confucian traditions) that are significantly different from the "western models" and therefore justify the assumption of different modernities.

This view is countered by the argument (see Schmidt Chapter 2 & Kuhn Chapter 3 in this volume) that comparisons between different countries do shed light on manifold differences in terms of institutions, political regulatory structures, policies and cultures. But since each sector is developing and functioning according to particular logics and temporal rhythms it proves difficult to describe these as homogeneous parts of relatively uniform cultures of nation states such as India, Indonesia, Brazil and China to be regarded as substantially different from "the Western" culture. This objection also applies to the analyses of Hofstede (Hofstede, 1997; Hofstede, 2001) and the GLOBE study (House, 2004) on country specific cultures, although these studies base their conclusions on comparatively more explicit and sophisticated schemes and methods of analysis. The "varieties of capitalism" approach, put forward by Streeck and others, avoids macro-diagnoses by restricting the analytical focus to international comparisons of policies with respect to identical policy fields, such as welfare-state regulations (Streeck & Yamamura, 2004).

In view of the fact that lifestyles and consumption patterns represent combinations in which heterogeneous lines of tradition and rationalities are connected to one another, a third analytical perspective has been put forward. It concentrates specifically on processes where historically different cultures make contact and become interrelated with each other, thus leading to the rise of new, hybrid, patterns. *Hybridity* is the product of the comingling and fusion of identities and cultures through contact with the outside (cf. Hall, 1993; Hall & du Gay, 1996). In this context it is not only a mixture but also something new that emerges from the contact. Thus Bhabha (1996, 2007) argues that a Third Place evolves from globalization and migration, giving rise to hybridized identities located in borderlands (cf. Anzaldúa, 1999). This is more specific in the term "Creolization" that originally referred to Caribbean identities and their comingling. Now, this term is used, however, in a more general sense for the comingling of identities and cultures. The term melange is also used (cf. Pieterse, 2004).

In this context, globalizing identities or even "varieties of cosmopolitism" (Delanty & He, 2008) are increasingly analyzed (Szanton Blanc, Basch, & Glick-Schiller, 1995; Hannerz, 1996; Pries, 2002). A special focus is on the effect of travel and migration. A second dimension of the evolution of hybridized identities and cultures is the emerging network of professional relationship in transnational firms (Dürrschmidt & Taylor, 2007: 57 pp.; see also Mau Chapter 4 in this volume). The concept of fluxes and flows, as defined by the Wageningen Environmental

Policy Group following Castells (Spaargaren, Mol, & Buttel, 2006) can be seen as a more radical version of this perspective.

The new middle classes can undoubtedly be described as a social field where there is an above average intensive and frequent contact with the outside, through the mass media as well as through professional contacts, through economic migration or through tourism. In this respect, there are above-average conditions for the formation of hybridized identities. In such a perspective, the new middle classes represent a focal point of cultural globalization. Compared to other social groups, the new middle classes are more exposed to cultural globalization and are particular agents of cultural globalization, thus adapting to external cultural influences as well as contributing to reshaping the own culture.

Considering the heterogeneity of the new middle classes in terms of both socio-economic differences as outlined in the previous Section 1.2 as well as differences deriving from the interplay of interacting cultural influences as displayed here, there cannot be such a thing as *the* cultural and social self-understanding and *the* political concerns of *the* new middle class. Instead, heterogeneity and inconsistency are constituted with respect to particular social sub-groups (socio-economic, professional, occupational), different cultural frameworks (religious, country specific, political culture), a wide range of political impacts deriving from institutional settings and policies and, last but not least, personal preferences – none of which are stable over time. Hence, different groups of the new middle classes deserve to be analyzed in detail. The chapters of this book on China (Reusswig; Zhang et al.), Brazil (Freire de Mello), Ecuador (Pribilsky) Israel (Katz-Gerro) and India (Fernandes, Mawdsley, Upadhya, Dittrich, Lange et al.) should be read against this background.

This is not to say that there are no features that stretch across different groups, countries and cultures. One of the most striking and most cited is the four-step-ladder of consumer goods that people aspire to possess. It starts with cheap gadgets and moves to cars, houses and tourism as core features of the uppermost level (see Beng Huat Chua Chapter 6 in this volume). But some people and groups are more eager than others to use their resources in this way. Hence, who buys which product at a given time and who is open for which policies, including those policies that target changes in consumption patterns and everyday routines associated with these, is an open question, at least in parts. Thus far, the debate on globalization and modernization has barely addressed this question systematically. This applies particularly to the debate on the new middle classes as symbols and promoters of modernization on both a national and global scale. Regarding the topical focus of this volume it is striking that the results of three decades of debate on environmental awareness as a means of reorienting consumption patterns and lifestyles have not yet been registered or even accepted for consideration as a pool that might provide useful contributions to the ongoing debate on different options of modernization. The rise of the new middle classes as new consumers underscores the need to overcome this situation by bringing both strands of the discussion closer together.

1.4 Connecting Individual Environmental Awareness and Society

Much of the debate about globalization highlights the impact of structural settings such as economic investments, exports and imports of goods and services, migration and technological innovations and flows on possibilities and boundaries of action with respect to both institutional actors and individuals. The debate on the potential effects of environmental awareness, in contrast, revolves around the question how individuals can contribute to changing given structural settings such as ecologically harmful and resource consuming standards of production and lifestyles. The focal point is formed by the idea that environmental concern is based on altruistic attitudes that, like an internal compass, direct the individual about how to use the environment. This idea of altruistic attitudes and action is embedded in the wider concept of civic responsibility which is one of the core elements of the debate about civil society as a normative framework of reference for both political decision-making and responsible personal action. Furthermore, how, and how far, these assumptions can be corroborated by empirical evidence is highly contested. This applies particularly to the question whether these ideas that have evolved as credentials of parliamentary democracies of the global West can take root in the developing countries with their different cultural traditions and socio-economic and political circumstances. For the hopes and anxieties that the new middle classes have as new consumers both of these issues are of great relevance.

1.4.1 Northern Environmental Awareness vs. Southern Environmentalism of the Poor?

The objections to the idea of environmental awareness as a kind of moral regulator of action can be summarized in two points. The first, and simultaneously the most drastic, objection is that the whole idea of environmental awareness has its socio-economic and cultural focus in the white middle class of the old industrialized nations (Buttel, 1987; Dobson, 1998; Schlossberg, 1999). There it concentrates on contributions to the protection of nature through individual restrictions and readjusting of personal consumption patterns. Partial abstinence from the car as personal transport with the aim of reducing CO^2 emissions, economical use of water and energy, and separation and recycling of garbage are the most widely addressed goals. This type of mitigation-oriented options can be found in all the sustainability concepts of the nations in question. In the countries of the global south, however, a large part of the population, due to poverty, is not even in a position to participate in the disputed consumption patterns. When the environment becomes a relevant topic for them, it is not with the aim of protecting nature, but rather in terms of protecting oneself against nature, whether in the context of natural disasters or in the context of the degradation of natural resources. This type of environmental reference is not typically expressed in terms of individual sacrifices but as a collective protest and it does not concentrate on improving the environment as a whole but on overcoming concrete instances, such as pollution. As "environmentalism of the poor" (Martinez-Alier, 2004) this type of protest has been juxtaposed against the "bourgeois environmental concern" of the middle classes.

However, it is evident that the new middle classes in the developing countries are changing the traditional picture in so far as they do have the purchasing power to adopt western lifestyles. As a consequence, in these countries too the western focus on mitigating the environmental impact of middle class based lifestyles is gaining in significance. This applies to the dimension of personal behavior as well as to political decision-making und public debate. It is clear that this strand of environmentalism does not necessarily match with the concerns and objectives which are characteristic of the "environmentalism of the poor". Following Chatterjee, "environmental concern [. . .] remains to some extent an elitist issue as better educated, well-heeled upper-caste urban people show greater concern for the quality of environment" (Chatterjee, 2008: 24). This concern can even result in goals that lead to a worsening of conditions for particular groups of the poor where, for example, they could be evicted from their homes as a result of "green" urban projects (see Fernandes Chapter 12, Mawdsley Chapter 13 and Upadhya Chapter 14 in this volume).

This leads to a second objection against the hope of implementing environment consciousness as a form of moral obligation. In public debate, environmental consciousness is often seen as a quantitative problem: the level of environmental consciousness can be high, middle or low and some people are just disregarding the issue. The new middle classes are suspected of falling into the latter group. However, academic debate on the topic since the 1970s has repeatedly questioned this kind of quantitative understanding again and again (Hines, Hungerford, & Tomera, 1987; Gardner & Stern 1996: Gatersleben, Steg, & Vlek, 2002). Against this background most of the attention has been placed on the following questions: To which specific field of action (e.g. energy consumption, water consumption, food, motoring) does environmental consciousness refer in a particular case? What is the relevance to practical, everyday behavior? And last but not least, can environmental consciousness be generated and used strategically?

The good news in terms of this last question is, "yes"; but the caveat, "only within relatively narrow confines." Using accurate information, awareness of the negative environmental effects of particular behavior patterns can be strengthened. Linking such information with existing values and attitudes, and accepted norms can help to strengthen environmental concern (Schwartz, 1977). Values und attitudes, however, can be changed from outside only to a very small extent and at a slow pace. Even worse, there is no obvious mechanism with which to translate environmental concern into practical action. In terms of statistics, the variance in behavior which can be explained by the current level of information, existing values and attitudes is disappointingly limited.

How can this gap be explained? One reason is that action takes place only under particular circumstances and these circumstances vary depending on the practical field in which the problem is located. Decisions on the mode of transport, for example, are based on different considerations than decisions regarding the use of water or purchases of food. This applies to subjective factors such as information, values, attitudes and preferences as well as to external possibilities and limitations in terms of given social, economic and technical options (Diekmann & Preisendörfer, 2003). Therefore it makes little sense to ask about environmental concerns in general rather than assessing awareness and concern with respect to the particular field of action under consideration. This applies to the new middle classes too.

Moreover, actions do not depend solely on the individual level of people's environmental concern. External restrictions may significantly limit the scope of individual activity. They comprise quite a number of heterogeneous drivers: firstly, social expectations and the practical arrangements of the division of labor in the context of the immediate family as well as in the work place and last but not least the wider circle of friends and neighbors; secondly, economic realities such as attainable income and governmental measures such as taxes; finally, the scope of environmentally friendly behavior depends significantly on the availability of material-technical facilities such as, for example, efficient, reasonably priced and socially acceptable public transport that could serve as a less CO^2-generating alternative to individual motoring (e.g. ifen, 2007). The problem is that all of these limiting factors can hardly be altered by the individual citizen, or at least not in a short time span. This leads to two further consequences which need to be considered with respect to the new middle classes.

Firstly, each individual has to continuously consider a variety of heterogeneous factors, all of which limit the possible scope of action and are affected by personal decision-making (Ajzen, 1991). The final decisions can be nothing other than compromises between environmental and other goals or even between different environmental goals (Kaiser, Fuhrer, Weber, Ofner, & Bühler-Ilieva, 2001; Poortinga, Steg, & Vlek, 2004). Hence, no master-mindset can be created that will "automatically" lead to environmentally-friendly behavior, irrespective of the particular field of potential action.

Secondly, whether and, if so, to what degree people can and will behave in an environmentally friendly way does not solely depend on their personal environmental awareness and subsequent concern, but also on the societal framework, particularly on decisions that can be taken only by governments and administrations, and by actors in the realm of business. Some scholars even hold that environmental concern is often less important with respect to the everyday behavior of individuals than creating acceptance of policies that set frameworks and incentives that aim at saving resources and protecting the environment (Diekmann & Preisendörfer, 2003). In other words, the academic debate on environmental consciousness and behavior provides evidence that environmentally friendly behavior can be expected only to a limited extent as a consequence of attitudinal altruism of the individual citizen. It is just as much a matter of decisions to be taken by policy makers and economic actors, and of the political power relations and dominant discourses in the public arena. This is why the debate on environmental awareness and behavior of the new middle classes needs to be linked to a further strand of debate. It revolves around the meaning and the relevance of the more general political concept which is implied by the terms "civil society" and "reflexive modernization".

1.4.2 Civil Society and Reflexive Modernization

The idea of civic responsibility assumes the existence and the relevance of a res publica, and that caring for it is not necessarily identical with being in search of immediate personal benefits. The idea of civic responsibility can be seen as a general framework of concern of which environmental concern is one element that can motivate less resource consuming behavior. To what extent such a sense of civic responsibility is being accepted within a broader societal circle and how much it can become a significant element of the political culture of a country is at the heart of the debate about “civil society” (Bhargava & Reifield, 2005). Thus, the idea of “civil society” links the dimension of individual political concern and responsibility to the meta-individual dimension of societal culture and political decision-making.

The new middle classes, while accused of widely lacking both environmental and civic concern, come to the fore as an expression, as well as the creators, of a void in, or even a permanent threat to, the unfolding of a functioning civil society culture in the developing countries. In contrast, the industrialized nations are considered the historical breeding ground where a political public sphere (“bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit” according to Habermas, 1991) took shape and a particular political culture which builds on broad acceptance of civic responsibility for the res publica originated. From such a perspective, the developing countries need to catch up by generating similar forms of political culture. But this perspective is far from uncontested.

From an opposing point of view the concept of civil society is under suspicion of being just a further western export which ignores, or even overlooks, the specifics of the structures and the political demands of the developing countries. The core problem is expressed in the thesis that, in developing countries, it is not individual citizens but social groups (religious, ethnic regional and socio-economic) that represent the relevant level of developing political will as well as of explicit political self-understanding of the major parts of the citizens (Bhargava & Reifield, 2005). Against this background the goal of overcoming these structures in favor of a western-like individualized form of civic concern is viewed, depending on the point of view, to either as an assault on the capabilities of the citizen to implement their interests as an effective part of a larger and assertive social group, or on the contrary, as a condition for the formation of a politically relevant public forum.

From an empirical point of view, these competing assumptions are less dichotomous than they appear. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the balance sheet of industrialized nations still leaves a lot to be desired. Even today, ignoring historical periods of dictatorship, e.g. in Germany, Spain and the former socialist countries, which overrode almost any a freedom of public debate and civic action, the level and features of political culture differ substantially among different western countries. In his famous book on “The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere” (1991), which focuses on 19th century Germany, Habermas, already describes a process of progressive limitations to the citizen’s public role: after a relatively short period of lively public debate among citizens, the spread of mass-circulation newspapers and of political parties started formatting and even replacing significant parts of such debate.

Secondly, where, since the 19th century, forms of civil society and civic concern have truly developed as independent frameworks and modes of political self-image of the citizens, they have not occurred as an expression of inborn values and attitudes of western individuals but as a result of social and political conflict between major parts of the urban classes and the aristocracy (Frevert, 2007). The acknowledgement of common rules of political engagement, and embedded within this the avoidance of considering only the interests of one's own group, was mainly a result of these political struggles rather than a result of a preexisting normative framework. In the struggle between the increasingly influential bourgeoisie and the workers movement, this process has repeated itself since the late 19th century in every classical industrialized nation as a learning process in respect of the often enormous costs of confrontational forms of social conflicts, including extremely violent forms, to the point of civil war and revolution. The emergence of civic responsibility in the West, as a normative concept as well as, apparently to a much lesser degree, a guideline of practical political relevance, is mainly a result of this kind of social clash.

Why then should this not also be possible in developing countries? To return to an example that has already been addressed: undoubtedly, in countries such as India or China government repeatedly supported policies of "green gentrification" of urban and peri-urban areas, mainly as a response to the demands of the better off members of the new middle classes. These policies often produced new hardship for the poor that previously inhabited these areas. They had to leave familiar locations, many of them even lost shelter and had to cope with worse sanitary and environmental conditions. But why shouldn't just such an experience and the related action, starting as a combination of public protest, social resistance and "environmentalism of the poor", when benefitting from support of middle class based NGOs and the media, become a trigger for political debate about exactly this type of narrow group interest centered decision-making? And isn't this kind of public controversy a most relevant precondition of and an equally relevant contribution to the unfolding of the normative framework of political action that is at the heart of what is meant by the terms "civil society" and "civic environmentalism" respectively (De Witt, 2004)?

From such a perspective the rising concern about the environment and resource depletion and the rise of the idea of civic responsibility as a field of political concern beyond the realm of formal parliamentary decision-making have two features in common. Firstly, the most relevant driving factors behind either issue are not normative convictions and attitudes. Instead, they are, first and foremost, answers to irrefutable challenges which evolved from intended and unintended effects of previous policies, which aimed at rapid industrialization and urban development, while implying social disregard for the poor. The imperative to react to this kind of challenge is exactly the meaning of "reflexive modernization" as Beck and others put it (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994). "Ecological modernization" in terms of technological innovation (Huber, 2004) and environmental governance (Jänicke & Jakob, 2007) proved to be main fields of reaction. Secondly, although evolving initially in the West the political relevance of either issue extends continuously to other parts of the world (Martinelli, 2005: 135). Hence, reflexive modernization is also becoming a political imperative in developing countries. This is particularly apparent in China. Today, the government feels impelled to react to environmental damages and pollution that have been caused by the policies which routed the economic growth of the country during the last decades (Ho-Ching Lee, 2005: 145; Yu-Shi Mao, 1997; OECD, 2006; Sternfeld, 2006).

This is not to say that developing countries face exactly the same problems as those faced by the classically industrialized countries. On the contrary, the magnitude of the environmental and resource related problems today is largely a result of the particular path of historical industrialization of the West, including the questionable resource intensive western consumption patterns that today are spread all over the world. At the same time, there can be no doubt that the social problems of the developing countries cannot be mastered without intensifying their economic development, which is unthinkable without an increased use of resources (Najam, 2005). Hence, the developing countries are in an awkward situation. How can they avoid repeating the mistakes made by the classically industrialized countries despite their reduced economic resources while being forced into accelerated economic growth as a prerequisite of overcoming the poverty problem?

How this question can be and will be answered remains to be seen. One point, however, is clear even today: the new middle classes of the developing countries will be and are still playing a very important role when it comes to deciding upon the trajectories of further industrial, ecological and social development of their countries. Many of them are qualified specialists with superior skills, knowledge and responsibilities; they are citizens who are capable of articulating themselves both professionally and politically in an above average manner which will ensure they manage to get a hearing; and they are people who are seen by many others as role models in terms of consumption patterns, lifestyles and, last but not least, civic behavior.

Hence, the new middle classes form a group that is worthwhile concentrating on in many respects. This book puts emphasis on lifestyles, consumption patterns and civic behavior. This introductory chapter aimed at delineating a framework of rather different strands of scholarship and controversy. Most of the following chapters touch on more than one of these strands. But they do it in their own way according to empirical specifics of each domain of research and the theoretical assumptions and conclusions of each author. As a consequence, the controversies that have been sketched above are being reproduced in part, and with differing emphases by the authors in this volume. Precisely this aspect, so the editors hope, will provide food for thought and a continuation of the debate.

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Part I
Modernities, Globalization and Consumption

Chapter 2
Convergence and Divergence in Societal Modernization: Global trends, Regional Variations, and Some Implications for Sustainability

Volker H. Schmidt

Abstract Taking the debate about convergent versus divergent crystallations of modernity as its point of departure, the chapter argues that the question as to whether modernization results in similar forms of societal organization anywhere or instead manifests itself in rather heterogeneous social systems cannot be answered by purely empirical means, because the weight accorded particular kinds of diversity depends on the vantage point from which they are viewed. Viewed from the vantage point of a differentiation theoretical conception of modernity, the differences highlighted by the multiple modernities school, while doubtless real, appear relatively unimportant. At the same time, equally real differences that are highly relevant from a differentiation theoretical perspective, are largely ignored in the multiple modernities literature. Reconstructing global modernization effects during the past half century, a comparison between East Asian and Western modernity, the currently most advanced exemplars of modernity, yields little noteworthy difference. The chapter ends with e few speculative remarks about the implications of ongoing global modernization for sustainability.

Keywords Categorical and gradual inequalities · Differentiation theory · East Asian Modernity · Global modernization · Multiple modernities

2.1 Introduction

Much social science literature claims the world is becoming more similar as a result of globally linked modernization processes. At the same time, the notion of "convergence" is hotly contested, especially by those favoring culturalist approaches of social analysis, who tend to highlight profound diversities that they say persist in different parts of the world despite modernization.

V.H. Schmidt (✉)
Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, Kent Ridge, Singapore
e-mail: socvhs@nus.edu.sg

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But does the juxtaposition of convergence and divergence in the form of a mutually exclusive, binary opposition really make sense? Might it be that there is convergence in some respect, while diversity exists in other respects; that there are dimensions of social change that exhibit common trends across regions and cultural zones, while other spheres of life show remarkable resilience against homogenization? The premise underlying the present chapter is that these questions, rather than matters of truth or falsity, should better be treated as methodological artifacts. Thus, if we engage in cross-country or -regional comparison, then we will doubtless detect differences between the units of comparison (which need not be states, but can also be provinces, towns or cities, public or private organizations, etc.), for to unravel them is precisely the purpose of our analysis. If, on the other hand, we are interested in long-term, fundamental transformations of entire societal formations (e.g., from pre-modern to modern societies), then we must compare historically and hence see many commonalities in otherwise quite diverse regions. In short, the relative weight placed on convergence and/or divergence appears to be due partly to the research questions pursued, so that the respective findings need not contradict each other, but may simply address different reference problems.

The concept of modernity refers to a subject matter that defies pluralization. For reasons detailed below, it should therefore only be used in the singular. But that does not rule out the possibility that important differences exist within and between modern societies. It does suggest, however, that we should aim for greater clarity in the categorization of whichever differences we observe, because not all existing differences carry the same conceptual weight. Nor are they all reflections of genuinely modern conditions; pre-modern legacies can be witnessed around the world, albeit to varying degrees in different world regions.

As modern social structures and institutions continue to spread globally, so does socio-economic development. Since the 1970s, a growing number of scientists and intellectuals has voiced concern about the environmental consequences of this development, suggesting it might not be sustainable. The only chance to prevent the collapse of our ecosystems, they argue, is a radical change in economic policies, one that shifts the emphasis from promoting growth at any cost to qualitative concerns such as those outlined in utopias of a "zero option" (Offe, 1987) and similar doctrines. But while such a shift might appear ecologically desirable, it is not likely to happen in the foreseeable future. For even if all understood the dangers, it would still seem to be unlikely that the major world powers will exit the market economy, i.e. an economic system premised on perpetual growth, anytime soon. On the contrary, given the remarkable socio-economic developments that followed the introduction of market mechanisms in several newly industrializing nations, especially in China and India, capitalism has gained, rather than lost in global appeal during the past few decades. With its establishment came the spread of mass wealth and of the ecologically detrimental consumption patterns that have long been the privilege of the West to sizeable parts of the non-Western world. The fear of many scientists and intellectuals that the planet might not survive such a spread has received a new urgency since the spread itself is no longer a distant potentiality. Instead, it is now a firm reality, and it is becoming more real every day.

This issue, while important in its own right, is beyond the scope of the present chapter and hence cannot be addressed at adequate length here; a few, rather speculative remarks at the end of the chapter will have to suffice. Instead, the focus is as follows: in the next section, I will briefly outline the conceptual frame within which I think we should discuss the relevance of cross-country similarities and differences. This frame is inspired primarily by the differentiation theoretical school of thought, especially by Niklas Luhmann's systems theory which I take to be the presently most advanced exemplar of this approach (Section 2.2). Enriching the theory with a dose of institutionalism will set the stage for a critical appraisal of the multiple modernities approach that has been gaining ground in sociology during the past decade and that proposes to distinguish several types of modernity (Section 2.3). Following the rejection of this approach, I will present a number of data illustrating recent trends of global change. Given the very uneven development of world regions despite common global trends, I argue that modernity, rather than a shared experience of all contemporary societies, has thus far genuinely established itself only in Europe, North America and, more recently, East Asia, with much of the rest of the world better qualified as semi-modern. Comparing the societies comprising full modernity brings to the fore many shared characteristics that arguably separate them more from other, less developed societies and regions than from each other (Section 2.4). I conclude with a brief statement concerning the likely trends of further modernization and their implications for environmental sustainability (Section 2.5).

2.2 Modern Society in a Differentiation Theoretical Perspective

Any attempt to make sense of the contemporary world must delimit its subject matter along the dimensions of space and time. In terms of space, we can either restrict ourselves to studying particular world regions or strive to cover the whole world, and temporally we may opt to analyze either very long trends of societal evolution or focus on shorter time spans. Most empirical work in sociology concerns itself with developments observed within, or affecting the populations of, single nation states, typically the ones the authors themselves reside in. Sometimes, the scope of analysis is extended beyond national boundaries to involve other countries as well. The countries selected for cross-national comparisons are usually from the same geographical or socio-culturally/politically defined region, although there are also (rare) examples of studies that aim to cover larger regions, sometimes the entire globe. The time horizon of this body of work mostly spans a few decades, from some point in the relatively recent past to the present. Substantively, it tends to be driven by a concern to capture and explain country-specific peculiarities and/or cross-national differences. The authors want to know what is unique to a given (mostly, their) country, or explore alternative (political) solutions to given social problems, and both requires comparison.

Much of the knowledge yielded by this research is informative and useful. It rarely has an immediate bearing on social theory though, especially on the theory of modernity. To be relevant for such a theory, one needs a different kind of knowledge, knowledge that spans longer time horizons and whose geographic scope is limited only by the boundaries of the globe itself. Such knowledge is what much of the classical body of sociological thought strives to produce. Luhmann's theory of society, which like any grand sociological theory ultimately focuses on modern society, is no exception. It purports (or aims) to cover all of humanity's history and all forms of social life our species has thus far developed. Consequently, it adopts a time horizon that spans millennia and a geographical horizon that spans the globe. Viewed from such a perspective, modernity appears as the outcome of probably no more than just two major transformations that human social organization has thus far undergone (Kumar, 1999). Any student of societal evolution is familiar with the threefold typology distinguishing tribal or *archaic* societies of hunters and gatherers from *traditional* societies that emerged after the Neolithic Revolution and culminated in the so-called high civilizations. Following this account, it took several thousand years for these predominantly agrarian civilizations to work themselves out. The earliest signs of yet another epochal shift in the making appear around the late 15th century in Europe, where early forms of modern capitalism and the self-rule of an increasingly confident bourgeoisie in some of the continent's economically leading cities begin to challenge the feudal order of the Middle Ages (without necessarily being aware of the ultimate consequences). Simultaneously, the scientific revolution and the enlightenment that set in and gain momentum during the next two centuries erode the (Catholic) church's monopoly of world interpretation (which is further subverted by the Protestant Reformation). As a result of these developments, politics, the economy and science, to a certain extent also the law, become more independent, gradually separate and emancipate themselves, from religion, and begin to form their own institutional (or, as Weber calls them, "life" orders and "value spheres"; Weber, 1978), with religion itself being reduced to one such sphere among others, rather then reigning over all of them. It is only with the 18th century revolutions – the industrial-capitalist revolution in England, the political revolutions in America and France, and the educational revolution introducing mass education in parts of Europe and North America (Parsons, 1971) – that the point of no return to the old order is reached. Thereafter, the new order quickly unfolds, although its final consolidation is still a matter of centuries, arguably accomplished only in the 20th century. At the same time, it slowly extends beyond the narrow boundaries of its northwest European birthplace; first through colonization, later in subtler, but no less penetrating ways, and eventually reaching out to the whole world, reflecting modernity's inherent globalism.

Luhmann's theory (see Luhmann, 1997, chap. 4) posits a similar sequence in the evolution of society, but rather than considering earlier forms of societal organization primarily in negative terms, in terms of modernity's discontinuities with the past, it characterizes each stage positively, namely by the mode of differentiation that dominates the social order at the respective stage. Thus, a differentiation of society into equal and relatively independent segments marks the first stage of societal evolution; an idea well known since the publication of Durkheim's *Division of Labour* (Durkheim, 1949). This stage is superseded when vertical stratification becomes the dominant mode of societal differentiation. Under this regime, society is differentiated into unequal, but interdependent strata, with ascribed and inherited status determining everyone's place, function and (recognized) worth in society. Finally, under modern conditions, stratificatory differentiation gives way to *functional* differentiation as the primary mode of societal differentiation. Functional differentiation means that a multitude of subsystems in charge of separate functions – such as making collectively binding decisions, the peaceful and rule-bound resolution of conflicts, the production of true knowledge, and so forth – emerge, all of which are necessary for society's reproduction, but not easily prioritized in terms of their relative importance. At the level of their operational rules the various systems are structurally autonomous from one another, meaning that each follows its own peculiar sub-rationality or function logic and that each employs its own criteria for determining successful conduct within its domain. At the same time, all – or at least most – of these systems are mutually dependent on each other: no rational law, no modern capitalism, as Max Weber (1984) put it in the *Protestant Ethic*, and Luhmann adds several further dimensions of subsystem interdependence.

Luhmann does not believe that stratification disappears under the regime of functional differentiation. He does suggest, however, that it loses in relative significance, that it is reduced to a *secondary* mode of societal differentiation, rather than reflecting the *very order* of society itself as it does under pre-modern conditions. One of the key indicators evidencing this shift in Luhmann's view is the decreasing legitimacy that purely status-based claims to privileged treatment, which are taken for granted across spheres in pre-modern societies, are accorded within the new order (see Luhmann, 2000). This de-emphasizing of stratification sets his theory apart from Marxist and Neo-Marxist scholarship that focuses on the reproduction of seemingly unchanging class relations – but whose critique of persisting class structures arguably rests on the same normative and theoretical premise, namely that modern society has no legitimate place for ossified, unchanging patterns of hierarchy and inequality.

It is obvious that functional differentiation cannot be measured directly. Therefore, to operationalize the theory for empirical analyses, one has to target lower levels of abstraction and to translate the language of societal *subsystems* into a language of differentiated institutions. This is not without problems because, from the viewpoint of the theory, the modernization of society (and hence also institutional development) is an ongoing, open-ended process. Therefore, we cannot simply *equate* present institutions, even the seemingly most advanced ones, with modernity. Rather, we must leave open the possibility that "the modern condition" is compatible with a variety of institutional forms (Therborn, 2003) because functional equivalents may exist or emerge at later points in time that perform the same functions by different means and possibly equally well or even better. Moreover, since modern society puts a premium on continuous change, modernity, understood in institutional terms, is like a moving target, never fully accomplished anywhere, and always transforming, reinventing itself, hence unstable to the point of "liquidity" (Bauman, 2000).

At the same time, once a structural innovation that enhances society's productive and/or adaptive capacity has occurred somewhere, this fact alone alters the environment of all other societies, pressuring them to react (Bendix, 1977) and to follow suit, lest they be left behind and severely disadvantaged in their positioning in the "world system" (Wallerstein, 1974) of global power relations. This, in turn, gives rise to further change. And so on ad infinitum.

However, even though our knowledge of past social, technological, and institutional change (and their continuous acceleration during the past two centuries) makes it easy to predict that the future will in all likelihood differ significantly from the present, any empirical analysis is bound by the limitations to which the past and the present subject our "sociological imagination" (C. Wright Mills). Being shaped by the past, we are inclined to extrapolate contemporary trends and thus to conceive the near future as an extension of the present. In other words, for us modernity cannot but have some definite forms, because *we* cannot transcend the horizon they delimit. Only the evolution of society itself can.

Acknowledging our intellectual parochialism, and recognizing that our analyses are inevitably based on temporally, spatially and perhaps also culturally *specific* notions of modernity, the following institutions can be suggested to best epitomize our *current* (ideal typical) understanding of the structure of modern society: a rationalized (preferably democratic and representative) polity with accountable governments; a market (or capitalist) economy; the rule of law and a legal system guaranteeing a core set of human rights; bureaucratic administration based on "meritocratic" (skill-oriented) recruitment and insulated from "special" interests; a public (collectively run or regulated) welfare system covering the whole population and securing its basic needs; a system of formal mass schooling and education; research and development in large science organizations, etc. These are the kinds of institutions that nowadays come to mind when we speak of modernity. Most of them can take on fairly different forms: As is well known, various types of democracy (and forms of "good governance" more generally) co-exist in the contemporary world; capitalism comes in more than one variety; the conception of right is inquisitorial in some countries and accusatory in others; diverse social policy regimes create unique patterns of welfare provision, etc. Yet, despite the multiplicity of forms in which they manifest themselves, these are the kinds of institutions that one (presently) expects to find in modern societies. We do, of course, know that we will not find them everywhere, and that enormous differences exist in their performance where variants of them are at least formally in place, but underperformance or total absence of (more than one of) the above institutions are widely viewed as signs of deficient and underdeveloped, not just as "different" forms of modernity.

2.3 The Multiple Modernities Paradigm

It is against this background that I will now discuss the fruitfulness of a conception of modernity that seemingly contradicts the above view, namely the multiple modernities approach of Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and his followers. In contrast to the differentiation theoretical school, it posits that there is not one modernity, but a multitude of modernities. The different modernities whose existence is postulated for the contemporary world are rooted in different civilizations (such as European – or Western or Judeo-Christian – civilization, Sinic – or Confucian – civilization, Indian – or Hindu – civilization, Arabic – or Islamic – civilization, and so forth), and they crystallize in nation states, each of which ultimately constitutes a modernity of its own. The state is treated as the centre of any particular modernity, and given that each society, due to different historical trajectories, socio-cultural legacies and other contextual parameters defining its identity, translates the "cultural core" of modernity, its "programme", differently into reality, no two societies/countries are exactly alike. Hence the notion of "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt, 2000a, Wittrock, 2000).

That all countries are somehow unique is obviously true. Less evident is what social theoretic significance we should accord this fact. To determine its significance for a theory of modernity, one needs to know how the concept of modernity itself is understood within that theory. Regrettably though, a clear definition of this concept is conspicuously absent from the literature on multiple modernities, as even sympathetic observers have had occasion to note (see for example, Allardt, 2005). In particular, the *social structural* and *institutional* peculiarities of modern societies are largely ignored. The *cultural* foundations of modernity, on which the multiple modernity approach primarily focuses, are traced back as far as the Axial Age some 2,500 years ago when, to quote Björn Wittrock (2005: 103), "deep-seated intellectual and cosmological shifts that occurred in different forms with striking (. . .) simultaneity across the Eurasian hemisphere" for the first time in human history gave rise to a sense of the "malleability of human existence" and to reflexivity, understood as "the ability to use reason to transcend the immediately given" (ibid: 106). The common core of this change in the societal perception of human existence – comprising the three aspects of reflexivity, historicity, and agentiality – is said to be deeply culturally impregnated and hence to exhibit great variations across world regions. These variations, says Wittrock, importantly shape the modernities that he claims have emerged during the past few centuries following yet another major shift in human thought, that triggered by the European enlightenment.

Modernity, as conceived of by the proponents of the multiple modernities school, is therefore first and foremost a cultural formation. The institutions of modernity are treated as products of the above "promises" and of other cultural elements, manifestations of never ending efforts to put the ideas driving modernizing agents to practice. Given the context-specificity of such efforts, their "fruits" should be expected to assume different forms in different places too, so that even nations belonging to the same civilization or culture can differ tremendously from each other. So fundamental are the differences between existing modernities, says Wittrock, that no social analyst can credibly argue any longer "that different cultural, religious and historical traditions will become increasingly irrelevant and eventually fade away in favor of one all-encompassing form of modernity and modernization" (ibid: 99).

The target of the latter claim is the modernization theory of the 1950s and 1960s. Modernization theory, which is conceptually anchored in the work of Talcott

Parsons and best understood as a process theory of modernity, argues that modernization is a homogenizing process, “a process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies”, as Daniel Lerner (1968: 386) put it. Societies undergoing modernization should therefore become more similar over time. Like numerous other critics before them, the multiple modernists reject this view – on the grounds of both its (presumed) empirical falsity and normative dubiousness, given its reliance on “the” Western model as a yardstick for measuring developmental achievements around the world.

The normative criticism of modernization theory is but a variation of an older claim that the theory serves to legitimize Western imperialism and hence is largely ideological. As such, it reflects the spirit of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism that left a deep imprint on the generation of social scientists which was educated from the mid- 1960s to 1980s and which defined the agenda of social thought for decades to come. And while it doubtless has its merits as a self-critique of Western triumphalism, this alone would not suffice to undermine modernization theory’s *empirical* validity. Does successful modernization result in similar societal outlooks, in “convergence”, then, or does it not?

The question may seem more straightforward than it is, for to answer it, one first needs to know what exactly convergence or difference “mean”. In particular, one needs to know what kinds of difference render modernization theoretical convergence claims invalid from the viewpoint of multiple modernists (or other critics). That question, however, has thus far been largely left unanswered. As in the case of “modernity”, the meaning of “difference” is shrouded in darkness in the multiple modernities literature, and the social theoretic significance of whichever differences its authors might have in mind is simply taken for granted. Yet, while the existence of (some form of) difference is undeniable, not all observable differences carry the same conceptual weight, especially for a theory of modernity. So we need criteria for distinguishing more from less important differences.

Eisenstadt (2005), in a rare instance of concreteness, has recently given one example of the kinds of differences he considers important enough to justify the language of multiple modernities, of modernity in the plural rather than in the singular. Thus, while the nation state has become a worldwide model of socio-political organization, the conceptions of citizenship and collective identity that go hand in hand with its diffusion vary, with some countries opting for more “totalistic” versions and others contending themselves with more “multifaceted” ones that tolerate greater ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity of the citizenry. Such differences are indeed important, so important, as Eisenstadt reminds us, that they can become matters of life and death, for at least the “totalistic” versions of nationhood and national identity have repeatedly served as seedbeds for war, genocide and other atrocities committed around the world.

However, that a difference is important in *some* respects does not automatically render it (equally) important for (all) other concerns. Differences become *social theoretically* significant only if it can be shown that they occupy a strategic place in the respective theory, which in the present case is a theory of modernity. Since the multiple modernities approach does not really specify what it means by modernity, it would be difficult to determine unequivocally whether the differences in question qualify for such a role even within its own conception. But be this as it may, what can be safely said is that the language of multiple modernities itself is justified only if the differences alluded to affect the foundations of modernity as a *societal formation*. Are the differences mentioned by Eisenstadt of this theoretic magnitude? And would it be impossible for alternative social theoretic conceptions, such as that of differentiation theory and modernization theory, to accommodate them?

I doubt it. To illustrate my skepticism with the example given by Eisenstadt himself, I think it would make more sense to treat the two versions of national identity and citizenship as instances of different *degrees*, rather than different *types*, of modernity/modernization, with the totalistic variety, because of its strong reliance on primordial notions of communal membership, less in line with the empirical realities and normative expectations of modernity than the “multifaceted” one. This argument presupposes that meaningful differences can be made between pre-modern and modern conditions, as well as between degrees of modernity or modernization realized and achieved by different societies. Surprisingly though, the multiple modernities school, while very keen to expose *other* differences, denies, or at least is unwilling to consider the possibility, that *such* differences (might) persist in the present age. For from the perspective of this school, the whole world is equally modern. All contemporary societies are modern, only differently modern.

A differentiation theoretical perspective raises doubts as to the soundness of this view. Take the example of India. India has been a political democracy since its independence in 1947, and thus, politically speaking, arguably more modern than, say, China, despite many shortcomings of its democracy. At the same time, the caste system, and hence a social structure that is incompatible with (full) modernity, persists in India despite its legal abolishment several decades ago, and continues to exclude many million citizens from even minimal education, basic health care, social mobility, (real) political influence, legal protection etc. (see Shah, Harsh, Sukhadeo, Satish, & Baviskar, 2006); indeed, in some of the least developed northern states, arguably from any kind of “agentiality” (Wittrock) that deserves its name. Such a social structure is incompatible with modernity because it is based on *categorical* inequalities that subvert the principle of functional differentiation by erecting virtually insurmountable barriers between the underprivileged and the privileged. It also subverts the proper functioning of many formally modern institutions, which it effectively turns into instruments for advancing elite interests – through the allocation of both public positions (that are often filled on the basis of status rather than qualification) and funds (whose distribution tends to be highly regressive). In other words, for large segments, if not the majority of India’s population, stratification continues to be the primary mode of differentiation because they are locked into their low position of the status hierarchy. To the extent that this is the case, India is not a modern, but a pre-modern or, more plausibly, a *semi*-modern country that blends modern elements with non-modern ones.

In China, on the other hand, we also find enormous social inequalities, especially income disparities, which have in fact exploded since the country's transition to capitalism from 1978 onwards. But while these inequalities may be deplorable, they are first and foremost gradual inequalities, permitting much greater social mobility than in India. One indicator of this mobility is that many of the millions of new small and medium-sized businesses that have sprung up throughout the country since the late 1970s were founded by former peasants who thus improved their livelihood enormously. Another is the emergence of a sizable middle class whose members often come from very poor families and whose ranks are constantly swelling (see Schmidt, 2008a). Socio-economically, China would therefore seem to be more modern than India, while India would be ahead of China's modernity in terms of the political and legal systems, as well as possibly in other dimensions.

Regardless of whether one agrees with this assessment, treating all countries and world regions on a par with regard to their modernness does not seem very plausible. However, if one grants the possibility of differential degrees of modernization, then one needs criteria by which to judge particular cases. Differentiation theory proposes one such criterion, the extent to which functional differentiation has been realized, and modernization theory adds others, e.g., the level of socio-economic development and the spread of modern institutions, as outlined in section two. Further criteria could be added. And while any proposal is debatable, the latter two schools at least venture to make ones. The multiple modernities school, by contrast, appears unwilling to concern itself with *truly fundamental* differences, while making much of relatively minor differences in the expressive cultures of contemporary nation states and in the dispositions of intellectual elites.

Contrary to a wide-spread perception, modernization theory and differentiation theory can easily accommodate differences in the institutional designs and collective identities of nation states, because their concept of modernity is sufficiently abstract to permit a great deal of diversity at this level of societal aggregation (see Parsons, 1964, 1971; Smelser, 1968), where reality is far more variable than at the level of the macro-structure determined by society's (predominant) mode of differentiation. Neither school of thought emphasizes such variation very much, but since it does not affect modern society's *fundamental building blocks*, that which distinguishes modernity from *other* societal formations, they *rightly* ignore it, because (unless and until proven otherwise) it has no bearing on their subject matter. Only differences that make a difference for this reference problem ought to be taken into account by a *theory of modernity*. Sociology is not bereft of conceptual tools permitting us to consider *other* (e.g. cross-country) differences within a suitable research framework, but confusing the study of modernity with the comparative analysis of developmental policy paths pursued, of institutional regime types enacted, of collective identities created, and of allegedly unchanging cultural traditions upheld, by (the elites of) particular modern countries simply conflates levels of analysis and hence does not further our understanding of either. To conceptualize varieties of this sort, one had better resort to various "middle range" theories, as famously proposed (but unduly privileged over "grand theories") by Robert Merton.

2.4 Global Modernization, Regional Variety

I will now take a brief look at several post-World War II developments that I believe lend support to some of modernization theory's main propositions regarding the consequences of development (see Huntington, 1971). My point of departure is the historian Eric Hobsbawm's (1994: 288; emphasis in original) observation that the period from the 1950s onwards saw "the greatest and most dramatic, rapid and universal transformation in human history (. . .). For 80% of humanity the Middle Ages suddenly ended in the 1950s; or perhaps better still, they were *felt* to end in the 1960s".

That is a bold claim, not only in terms of its substantive content, but also in terms of its conceptual meaning. For what Hobsbawm says can be read as suggesting that modernity, far from being superseded by an entirely different type of society (as the literature on "late" or "post" modernity implies), is, in a sense, *only just beginning*. Do we have evidence supporting such a sweeping claim?

I think we do. Hobsbawm himself reports several major changes, "the most dramatic and far-reaching" of which he considers to be "the death of the peasantry" (ibid: 289). This is indeed a dramatic change because it means nothing less than the *global* end of the Neolithic era during which the overwhelming majority of humankind had been securing its livelihood through (mostly subsistence) agricultural economic pursuits. And before agrarian society disappears, *modernity* cannot really unfold. It all began with the Industrial Revolution, whose impact initially remained small even in Britain though, where it affected only a relatively confined sector of the economy until far into the 19th century. As late as the 1930s and 1940s, the agricultural population still comprised up to 40% in the world's socio-economically most advanced countries, down from 60 to 90% in the centuries preceding the Industrial Revolution (Crone, 1989). By the 1980s, it had been reduced to levels as low as three to five per cent. Thus, in a matter of roughly two hundred years, what had determined the living conditions of humanity's overwhelming majority for millennia had virtually vanished from this part of the planet. In other regions, where it set in much later, the decline of the peasantry was even more rapid. As late as the early 1980s, only three world regions/countries remained dominated by agriculture: sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and China. In China, this is now also a matter of the past, with over 50% of the workforce employed in manufacturing and services since the early years of the new millennium (Schmidt, 2008a). Given these regions' population share, it took until 1990 before the peasantry became a *global minority* (Firebaugh, 2003). Today, it is estimated to comprise roughly 43% of the world's workforce (ILO, 2006).

A change that typically accompanies the decline of the peasantry is the rise of the city. Modern life, it is widely agreed, is urban life. It was in the city that humans were first liberated from the tyranny of the soil; that they could develop more specialized skills, learn from others, study, nurture their creative potentials, etc. But until recently, most of the world's population lived in rural areas. That is changing now. Since 2008, half the world's population has been urban for the first time. The trend is expected to continue with the rapid economic transformation of newly industrializing countries, especially of China, where by 2020 roughly 60% of the population is expected to live in cities. Two hundred years earlier, just 2.5% of the world's population lived in cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants (Kumar, 1999). By 1900, that figure had risen to 13% (Economist, 3 May 2007) – a fivefold increase in just eighty years, but in terms of its effects on humanity at large still a far cry from the latest leap. And whatever else may be said about this change, life in the city undoubtedly differs radically from that in the countryside.

Another important change concerns levels of education and literacy. Between the late 18th and 19th centuries, several northwest European countries and North America began to institute compulsory education in state-run or state-controlled schools. By 1870, 30 countries reported enrolment figures of over 10% for the 5–14 year age group (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992). Looking at some of the effects, Britain had reduced the illiteracy level of its population to three per cent as early as 1900 (Landes, 1998); other leading countries, while mostly lagging behind, were quickly catching up. Elsewhere however, mass education took off only after 1945, but as soon as 1985, it was compulsory in 80% of the world's countries. As a result, between 1970 and 1990, global literacy levels rose from 48 to 75%; today that figure is 82% (UNDP, 2006). In other words, it was only during the past quarter century that educational modernity broke through globally. That much, however, has now been accomplished.

One of the effects of industrialization has been historically unprecedented levels of wealth. Income per capita for the world as a whole increased eightfold between 1820 and 1990. However, as much as half of this increase occurred during the last 40 of these altogether 170 years (Firebaugh, 2003). Initially, the growing wealth was very unevenly spread. "Popular affluence" did not become general even in much of Western Europe until the 1960s. Given that the era of "modern economic growth" (Kutznets, 1973), whose onset Angus Maddison (1995) dates back to roughly 1820, reached the rest of the world other than Japan only after 1950, this wealth was also initially highly concentrated in the West. Thereafter, it began to spread to other parts of the globe. In the so-called golden age from 1950 to 1973, per capita incomes rose significantly in all world regions, thereafter continuing to rise only in the West and in Asia, primarily East Asia. However, since 1973, Asia grew more than double the rate of the West. One result is a massive poverty reduction both in the region itself and (due to its population share) globally; a trend that has continued since 1990 and is expected to do so in the decades ahead (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2006; Gill & Kharas, 2007).

Using the one dollar per day consumption standard of the World Bank, poverty was the "norm" for humankind for millennia. Globally speaking, three quarters of our ancestors fell below that poverty line two centuries ago, and with an estimated per capita income of $651 annually, "the" average world "citizen" was in fact quite close to it in 1820 (Firebaugh, 2003: 13). 130 years later, the share of the (thus defined) poor had been reduced to one half of the world's people, today it is down to one sixth (UNDP, 2006) – even though rapid population growth means the absolute number of poor people is now probably higher than ever before. Mirroring the reduction of poverty since 1820, a middle-income group slowly emerged. Presently, with annual incomes of over $7,000 of purchasing power parity, roughly one fourth of the world's population has reached levels of prosperity that qualify it for membership in the so-called "consumer class" (Worldwatch Institute, 2004); a class that comprised a negligible minority just half a century earlier. In the view of economists, the living levels enjoyed by this presently 1.7 billion people strong group, and in fact by several hundred million people more that have escaped the most extreme forms of poverty, reflect "the greatest advance in the condition of the world's population ever achieved in such a brief span of time" (Easterlin, 2000: 7).

Industrialization, urbanization, mass education and rising incomes virtually everywhere result in higher life expectancy and declining fertility. As for the latter trend, fertility levels have been falling globally during the past four to five decades, but most dramatically in socio-economically advanced regions, where they are now universally below the replacement level. For women in particular, this development "represents nothing less than a revolutionary enlargement of freedom" (Titmuss, 1966: 91) as it liberates them from the wheel of childbearing and childrearing that had dominated their lives for thousands of years. The reduction in Asian fertility levels alone, which accounts for four-fifths of the global fertility decline, has been labeled a "revolutionary" change (Caldwell, 1993), "one of the most significant events of modern times" (McNicoll, 1991: 1).

A "revolution in the status of women" (Nazir, 2005) has also occurred in other respects during the past couple of decades, namely through their formal recognition as persons and citizens, their constantly rising levels of education, labor market participation, etc. This development set in roughly a century ago in Europe and North America, but even there it gained momentum only after World War II, arguably even as late as the 1960s, following the rise of a powerful feminist movement. Since then, it has become a global trend (Berkovitch, 1999), leaving no world region unaffected, although the degrees of penetration obviously differ enormously (see Unicef, 2006).

The list of changes does not end here. It could be extended by several important developments in the fields of technology (e.g., the rapid expansion of high-speed mass transportation systems and of mass communication systems that have extended the geographic mobility and world awareness of billions of people enormously within a few decades), in the global economy (i.e., the reversal of a situation in which only a minority of the world's population lived under capitalist institutions to the present situation, where this is true of the large majority, in just two decades), in the political sphere (since 1992, for the first time more than half of all states have been governed democratically), in the areas of science and medicine, etc.

Considered individually, all of these developments mark dramatic changes in the domain(s) of life and sphere(s) of society they affect. Taken together, they mean little less than a social revolution (as Hobsbawm rightly deems them in his seminal work), resulting in a fundamental transformation of the entire society, which, once it has undergone this transformation, bears little resemblance to anything known, or at least experienced on a mass basis, before. They also suggest that modernity has finally become a *global* phenomenon, for the first time since its early manifestations in Renaissance Europe touching and shaping the lives of large parts, if not the majority, of the world's population.

But note that the degree to which modernity has penetrated the globe differs enormously between world regions. “Full modernity”, as we understand it today, has so far probably arrived only in two world regions, namely the (recently enlarged) West and East Asia (Tu, 2000), the latter being represented by Japan and the four “tigers” South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as (growing) parts of their neighborhood.[1] Given the world’s uneven levels of socio-economic, cultural, institutional and social structural development, these two regions should therefore prove the best testing grounds for claims concerning the consequences of modernization, including those pertaining to the problem of “convergence” and/or “diversity” (see also Eisenstadt, 2000b: 110). Needless to say, neither claim can be validated or invalidated by *purely* empirical means, as much depends on how the terms are used in the pertinent literature. Empirical observations nevertheless provide some tentative hints.

A first element that East Asian and Western modernity share, and that arguably differentiates both of them more from most *other* world regions than from *each* other, is the “systemic” quality of the modernization processes they underwent and continue to undergo, meaning that “changes in one factor are related to and affect changes in other factors” (Huntington, 1971: 288). Modernization in these two regions, rather than being confined to particular sectors of society and to certain segments of the population, has been and continues to be an all-inclusive phenomenon, transforming every aspect of societal organization and the lives of all members of society in a very short time span. A second, related aspect that the respective modernization processes share is the direction of change. With minor variations, comparable political, administrative, legal, economic, scientific, educational, medical, welfare etc. systems are in place that pursue largely similar goals, run similar institutional programs, and are more or less equally effective. All countries in question are rich, some a little more than others. They all face similar problems (e.g., rapid tertiarization of the economy; population ageing due to high longevity and low fertility; etc.), and they all respond to them in roughly similar fashion. All observe each other in the quest for models or “best practices” to be emulated, or pitfalls to be avoided, at home. Major policy reforms pioneered and successfully implemented by one country are sooner or later copied, with some local variation and adaptation, by the others, and the laggards of the past may well be the leaders of the future. The populations share many characteristics: levels of education, hopes and aspirations, life styles, consumption patterns, and, as global surveys show, increasingly even value systems (with “self-expression” values becoming more prevalent over time and “traditional” values slowly subsiding, though nowhere fully disappearing; see Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

[1]The next most developed countries in (South-)East Asia are Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia, followed by Thailand and, increasingly China. Other countries that might qualify as candidates for full modernity already or that appear to be making steady progress toward reaching it soon would be Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Costa Rica in Latin America, the United Arab Emirates and several of its neighbours in the gulf region of the Middle East, South Africa and Botwana in sub-Saharan Africa, perhaps Russia, and various other countries elsewhere in the world.

Of course, differences are also to be found between and within the two regions. Not all members of the modernity club do equally well in all respects; East Asia, for instance, has markedly lower crimes rates than have the United States and most European countries, while Scandinavia has the lowest levels of inequality, which both reflect and support high levels of social cohesion. In terms of their impact on the performance of public institutions and private organizations, the existing differences are relatively insignificant though, and they pale, once again, in comparison to the differences that distinguish the *group as a whole* from the rest of the world that has not yet reached similar levels of modernization/degrees of modernity. There are certainly differences in the political systems, and in terms of the political, legal and social conditions facing (different groups of) citizens, these differences can matter a great deal. At the same time, virtually all of the polities in question are known for generally "good governance", serving the people better than their (often highly corrupt, if not outright "predatory") counterparts in other parts of the world (see Kaufmann, Kray, & Mastruzzi, 2007). Different varieties of capitalism are practiced in (different parts of) North America, Europe and East Asia, and the respective business cultures also vary to greater or lesser degrees. But while each variety's performance differs somewhat, the economies of "full modernity" clearly outperform the rest of the world. They top any list of global competitiveness, productivity, efficiency, innovativeness, leaving most other regions far behind (World Economic Forum, 2007; World Trade Organization, 2007; Gill & Kharas, 2007). Their welfare systems differ markedly, but in contrast to much of the rest of the world, where such systems barely exist, all of them have functioning mechanisms for protecting the most vulnerable and for aiding the poor in place (Schmidt, 2008b). The two regions also dominate the world's research and development, and while the West was much ahead until recently, East Asia has rapidly caught up and now is the only region outside the West that has a sizeable number of world-class universities/research institutes (Shanghai Jiao Tong University, 2007). Not surprisingly, the science produced there addresses the same global community, uses the same methodologies and follows the same standards of excellence. Taken together, the two regions also boast the best educational (OECD, 2007) and medical (World Health Organization, 2000) systems in the world, and while both systems vary somewhat from country to country, they share key premises, technologies and organizational characteristics. One could easily go on like this.

We also find some differences in the ordinary lives led by the various populations: in the rites they perform, in the deities (if any) they worship, in the (religious and secular) festivals they celebrate, in the diets they prefer, etc. Yet, the lived experience of a typical ethnic Chinese physician/business woman/office clerk/industrial worker in Singapore probably resembles that of her Anglo-Saxon (or Italian or Swedish, etc.) counterpart living anywhere in the world more than that of a typical Chinese peasant living in one of China's poorest western provinces or that of her own ancestors who migrated to Singapore three generations earlier. If the multiple modernists were right, then common cultural roots should separate the ethnic Chinese more from their Western counterparts than from each other; if modernization theory were correct, then we would expect greater homogeneity within socio-economically similar categories than among people of similar ethnic and civilizational origin, but subject to vastly different levels of development. The available evidence, of which I have discussed only a small fraction in this section, clearly favors the second proposition.

2.5 Conclusion

Let us now briefly return to the question of sustainability touched upon in the introduction and also lying at the heart of the present volume. What does a broadly modernization theoretical perspective, coupled with the available knowledge on development outside the Western hemisphere, suggest for this problem?

If the assessment that there are definite, soon-to-be-reached limits to industrialization, economic growth and the spread of material wealth is correct, then the planet's ecosystems may well be doomed. Here, I focus only on one aspect of this problem, namely the implications of people's living levels, aspirations, lifestyle preferences, consumption behavior, etc. Around the world, poverty has been reduced enormously during the past few decades, and wherever incomes have increased, the affected populations have enthusiastically embraced their newly gained consumption freedoms. Earlier developments in Western countries suggest that material comforts may lose in relative significance for people's subjective sense of well-being once they reach a certain level of prosperity and economic security, opening the door to greater eco-mindedness and the adoption of (slightly) more environmentally friendly lifestyles, but to the overwhelming majority of the world's population such prosperity is still an unfulfilled dream. Indeed, much of the world has only just begun to join the global "march to modernity" (Mahbubani, 2008) that brought unprecedented (popular) affluence first to the West, then to parts of the East and now, increasingly, to other parts of the world as well. As affluence spreads, so do consumerist lifestyles, and even though cultural differences may temper (or shape) consumer preferences to a certain extent, the overall pattern is nevertheless the same everywhere. East Asia, the first non-Western world region to become fully modern (Tu, 2000), confirms this assessment; if anything, the populations of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, but also of other rapidly developing countries in the region (especially Malaysia, Thailand, China and Vietnam), are lured more strongly by the temptations and comforts of consumerist capitalism than their Western counterparts, not less. Other world regions exhibit similar developments – where (fundamentally) different lifestyles prevail, the main reason is not a deliberate choice of modesty, but a lack of means for opulence.

In the decades ahead, we should therefore expect to see a global trend towards increasing similarities not only in social structures and socio-economic performance, but also in lifestyles, which will become more consumerist wherever poverty is diminished and mass wealth becomes a reality. This may pose enormous ecological challenges, and it is presently not clear whether humanity will be able to tackle them. But this much is clear: self-restraint will almost certainly not be practiced anywhere. Since the imposition of forced restraint through eco-dictatorships seems neither a feasible nor a legitimate alternative, the best hope we have probably lies in technological innovation: in the development of technologies that render consumerist lifestyles sustainable. That may seem a Herculanean task. It would, however, not be the first such problem that humanity has had to solve to reach its current level of development.

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Chapter 3
Consumerist Lifestyles in the Context of Globalization: Investigating Scenarios of Homogenization, Diversification and Hybridization

Katina Kuhn

Abstract The unsustainability of contemporary consumerist lifestyles is inextricably linked with debates on culture and globalization. The emergence of the new middle classes within newly industrializing countries displays paradigmatically such complex interrelations. The article argues that debates on the globalization of lifestyle arise along three opposing perspectives epitomized under the notions of homogenization, diversification and hybridization. Each account defines different processes, objects and structures as paramount for the comprehension of socio-cultural globalization. Inasmuch as sustainable development together with resource-intensive lifestyles refers to a multi-level problem the article seeks to review the strengths and shortcomings of each perspective in this regard. The conclusion is drawn, that differences concerning the trajectory of globalization result from different concepts of culture underlying each argument. The conclusion is drawn, that a complex understanding of cultural globalization processes requires an integrative view that captures the dialectical character of globalization, which likewise comprises structural as well as actor-and agency-oriented processes.

Keywords Culture · Diversification · Globalization · Homogenization · Hybridization

3.1 Complex Connectivities

Discussions on the unsustainability of contemporary lifestyles are inevitably embedded into debates on culture and globalization. The rise of the new middle classes in economically developing countries such as China, India, Russia or Brazil represents a paramount example of the global interrelatedness of social relationships

K. Kuhn (✉)
Institut für Umwelt- und Nachhaltigkeitskommunikation, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Scharnhorststr. 1, 21335 Lüneburg, Germany
e-mail: kuhn@uni-lueneburg.de

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and cultural interactions. Resource-intensive and consumerist lifestyles increasingly characterize ways of living on the part of the affluent share of the population of these countries. What seems to take place is the globalization of a lifestyle that characterizes industrialized societies in the West since the 1960s. In consideration of environmental degradation and the awareness of the consequences of excessive exploitation and depletion of natural resources such expectations are extremely challenging.

From an analytical perspective, the assumption that the "imitation" or "appropriation" of a homogenous lifestyle emanating from the West occurs stands in several aspects in the tradition of modernization theory approaches. Here it is assumed that increasing prosperity and the implementation of institutional modernization processes in threshold countries will generate identical social structures like those predominating the already modernized ones. Consequently, patterns of consumption etc. on the part of the new middle classes develop according to those of industrial societies. In the face of the emergence of a global *transnationalist* capitalist class (Sklair, 1991) basic assumptions of modernization theory have been rethought and sometimes given up. The reformulation of modernization theory in the light of global transformations is since then accompanied by oppositional theoretical angles. Proponents of cultural essentialism instead of problematizing the homogenization of socio-cultural practices, point to the *diversification* of socio-cultural practices due to globalization or, as a variant of cultural theory positions, advert to the intensification of cultural differences and diversity. In addition, a third stance established in opposition towards homogenization and diversification that operates under the name of *hybridization*. It focuses on phenomena of cultural blending and the emergence of new cultural forms and practices due to globalization.

These three paradigms of globalization – homogenization, diversification and hybridization – basically constitute the academic debate on globalization. In fact, they initiated and structure what is embraced by the term "globalization theory". During the 1980s this new field of study became engaged with the examination of dynamics and mechanisms of socio-cultural change, reproduction and practices on a global level.

Inasmuch lifestyles become addressed the dialectical character of globalization is made allowance for. Structural, institutional and organizational macro-processes of globalization become explicitly tied to actor-oriented micro-processes both of which are equally constitutive of globalization. The reconstruction and understanding of the multi-level interrelations in which matters of lifestyles must be conceived of today is transferred into a threefold analysis in the sections below. The explanatory strengths and shortcomings of each paradigm will be highlighted and put into productive coalition to each other.

Furthermore, the notion of *culture* is regarded as a key concept for the analysis of different accounts on globalization. The decision to follow a culture-oriented understanding of globalization results from three points. First, lifestyles represent specific sets of individual and collective agency and attitudes. Since all social agency is inscribed into socially shared systems of meaning, culture comes into play. Tomlinson describes concisely the relation of culture and agency that can be assigned to globalization contexts:

> It is certainly so that in the processes of meaning construction inform, inspire and direct individual and collective actions which are themselves consequential. Culture is thus not only 'a context in which [events] may be meaningfully interpreted' (Geertz, 1973, p. 14) it is the context in which agency arises and takes place. Cultural signification and interpretation constantly orients people, individually and collectively, towards particular actions. Actions seem to be fairly instrumental ones, following a logic of practical or economic necessity, are nonetheless always undertaken within that set of self-understandings, plans, hopes or aspirations which we can think of as the constitutive elements of the individual's lifeworld (Tomlinson, 2007: 151, original emphasis).

The significance of culture for the process of globalization according to Tomlinson is *constitutive*. What becomes clear is that globalization does not only refer to macro-processes of the integration of social institutions, but refers at the same time to "the integration of individual agency into the workings of institutions" (ibid., *italics added*). That is, paradigms on globalization will have to be scrutinized according to their strengths in comprehending both macro- and micro-processes of globalization. The second argument on the significance of culture for the analysis of globalization discourse is given to the fact that it is throughout a discourse on cultural difference. Whether the dissolution or the intensification of cultural differences is examined and how cultural differences are conceptualized within each account varies profoundly. From this it depends decisively how the course of globalization is conceived. This simultaneously leads to the third argument inter alia deriving from the assumption that the terms "culture" and "difference" are inexorably linked with each other.[1] It is about the fact that not only different assumptions on cultural *differences* pervade the discourse on globalization, but also different concepts of *culture* itself determinate each paradigm in question. Often implicit understandings of culture affect what is regarded as the actual object of globalization processes and hence affect diagnoses on globalization's trajectory.

In sum, the examination of the phenomenon of globalizing lifestyles will have to deal with a threefold analysis of cultural globalization processes that gives important insights into the dynamics and effects of complex processes of exchange and interaction, new configurations and constellations concerning the structure and content of contemporary lifestyles on behalf of the (new) middle classes.

3.2 Framing the Cultural Dimension of Globalization

> There is a gulf between those who emphasize the increasing grobal[2] influence of capitalistic, Americanized, and the McDonaldized interests and those who see the world growing increasingly pluralistic and indeterminate (Ritzer, 2004: 79).

[1]For a brief but interesting annotation on the interlinking of culture and difference see Reckwitz 2005: 92.

[2]Ritzer's concept of "grobalization" is discussed more in detail in Section 3.3.1. In brief, the term "grobal" is associated with the homogenization thesis in contrast to the concept of "glocalization", which is connected to the theses on diversification and hybridization.

Definitions concerning the "cultural" of globalization result rather diverse. If culture is regarded as a driving force for or rather as an epiphenomenon of globalization partly depends on the discipline that is at matter; partly it is affected by the phenomena that are examined in the name of globalization. Not least the significance and impact of culture for globalization processes depends on how "culture" is actually defined.[3] From this it follows, that attempts in exposing and comparing systematically major conceptual approaches in this field of study will have to refer to some scheme of common reference points. Held et al. develop such a scheme on the subject of historio-empirical processes of cultural globalization, which can easily be translated into the purpose of a meta-theoretical reflection of the main theoretical approaches epitomized in the notions of homogenization, diversification and hybridization.[4] The section seeks to delineate such a framework taking into account possible implications that follow from the globalization of (un-)sustainable life-styles.

Starting point for the debate on cultural globalization is the perception of a qualitative and quantitative shift of the complexity of cultural interactions on a global level. The development of transport infrastructures and communication technologies during the late 20th century enabled an enormous growth of cultural flows of images, symbols, objects, persons, ideas and modes of thought. In consideration of these transformations Held et al. define the general notion of "cultural globalization" as processes of a stretching and deepening of cultural relationships and practices across time and space. This definition indicates what is at heart of globalization theory: profound transformations of societal time-space relations and of organizational structures.

Main attributes of these transformations will be sketched in the following. They are embedded in some overall meta-features that set up the framework by means of which the structure and specifities of contemporary cultural globalization debate can be mapped. It seems important to point out once again, that the framework developed subsequently, exceeds the purpose of a mere depiction of cultural globalization; first and foremost it will provide a basis for a meta-theoretical analysis of main accounts on the globalization of culture.

3.2.1 Time-Space Relations – A Pivot of Cultural Globalization Debate

The dominant pattern of change in modern societies, as Giddens argues, can be specified as "time-space distanciation", as a separation of time and space that is

[3] For a detailed overview on the discourse of culture and globalization see Pieterse 2004.

[4] Held et al. nonetheless bear in mind contemporary debates on the globalization of culture. Yet their main interest applies to historical and contemporary processes of cultural globalization. Whether these lead to homogenization, hybridization or diversification is treated as a discourse sui generis.

caused by the development of transport and communication technologies. Due to technological developments, people are able to communicate with absent others. By means of telephone, television and computer networks, persons can be present without moving their bodies. Thus presence in time is decoupled from presence in space. The dissociation of physical places from social interaction, the increasingly rapid circulation of objects, signs and persons, generates what Giddens calls the "emptying out" of space. The disappearance of bodies and things in space creates a "single world" and therefore represents a pivotal point for discourses on the globalization of (world-)societal relations. To which extend lifestyles remain locally bounded and how the extension of the scope of socio-cultural reproduction is changing contents and structures of specific lifestyles represent core questions.

The movement of signs, people and objects across time and space engenders phenomena of time-space-compression (Harvey, 1989), which take place and are experienced unevenly around the globe. Differences in geographical *extensity, intensity* or volume and *velocity* of movements of those elements that constitute particular cultural flows characterize different modes of cultural globalization (Held et al., 329–30). Between homogenization, heterogenization and hybridization models cultural flows of the centre (strong, institutionalized) and of the periphery (less visible, not institutionalized) are extremely unequally assessed. Given this variability, the question becomes significant to what extent reflexivity (i.e. public debate), change and even innovation originate or become produced from time-space globalizations.[5] Characteristics of time-space transformations will be implicitly incorporated into the design of the organizational features of cultural globalization debates.

3.2.2 Organizational Features and Concepts of Culture

Processes of cultural globalization, which have the ability to induce debates, change and innovation, only emerge, Held et al. argue, when infrastructures and institutions of cultural transmission, reproduction and reception on a global level become established. In the current era *infrastructures* (I) of cultural globalization are particularly provided by telecommunications, cable, satellite, computing, the Internet, radio, television or jet airlines. They broaden and in part substitute "modern" infrastructures of cultural globalization, including railways, telegraphy or steam-powered

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[5]The concern with present-day unsustainability is closely linked with contemporary and future spatio-temporal transformations. Does sustainable development go together with undamped procedures of acceleration? The meanwhile bemoaned loss of local knowledge with respect to medical and health issues for instance – raises the question how can local knowledge that is bounded to place assert itself in the face of the predominance of unbounded space? Intra- and intergenerational consciousness, a core objective of sustainable development, is more than ever challenged by disembedding processes (Giddens, 1990: 21–29). At the same time it remains open-ended in what way the emergence of a "global consciousness" (Robertson, 1992) and the experi-ence of "world risk society" (Beck, 2007) will influence the exposure to environmental issues and questions of lifestyle.

shipping. *Institutions* (II) that coordinate cultural interactions and infrastructures on a global level constitute a second feature of the organizational dimension of cultural globalization. Held et al. allude primarily to international political institutions (such as UNESCO) and to corporate and trade law increasingly regulating cultural industries and cultural economy (366–67). For the purpose of the subsequent argument a more comprehensive definition of the term under consideration is required. Institutions will include all kinds of sites, organizations and places that are globally present and characterized by the dominance of a specific rationality. Shopping malls represent a prominent example as paradigmatic institutions of cultural globalization that follows the criteria of efficiency, predictability, calculability and control (Ritzer, 2004). Another case of relevant institutional forms within debates on cultural globalization represents institutional structures in the context of fundamentalist religious movements. These encompass educational, spiritual and communal establishments that are based on rationalities of tradition and "wertrationalen" patterns of action (e.g. Huntington, 1993).

The third criterion for analyzing cultural globalization debate is entitled *modes of interaction* (III). With regard to the question if a consumerist lifestyle rooted in the West is actually globalizing, this criterion seems to be the most significant. The underlying assumption that guides the selection of this criterion is that cultural differences play a decisive role in the process of globalization. Three key modes of interaction are defined: imposition, emulation, and diffusion. Although Held et al. do not explicitly explain at this point how culture and cultural differences are perceived this threefold categorization implies a certain affinity towards a culture concept that reifies boundaries of meaning between separate entities even though these can be overcome by assimilation. Such concepts of culture and cultural difference are criticized by proponents of the hybridization model of cultural globalization as will be delineated in Section 3.3.3. Precisely the drastic variations in the conceptualization of cultural differences and cultural interaction modes are significant for reconstructing and comprehending cultural globalization debate and its different forecasts concerning future world-societal development courses. As will be outlined subsequently besides to imposition, diffusion and emulation several other forms of *inter*cultural interaction determine cultural globalization.

Emanating from modes of interaction and the institutionalization of cultural infrastructures a fourth and last aspect becomes relevant: it refers to evolving patterns of *stratification* (IV) as an effect of cultural globalization. Hierarchy and unevenness in the process of cultural globalization not only determine fundamentally the debate on global homogenization/diversification. They also play a decisive role in very concrete formations of new cleavages of social-cultural stratification undermining the conventional sociological category of analysis, the nation-state society (e.g. phenomena as the digital divide or the transnational capitalist class). Global stratification patterns of the present comprise: A mass audience for popular culture that is highly uneven within societies especially by generation; the mass consumption of tourism mainly restricted to wealthy societies and wealthy social classes; the maintenance of elite intellectual, cultural power networks; and the dominance of Western cultural flows which is increasingly marked by a diversification of flows (Held et al., 367). The patterns of global stratification gain different weight within each major paradigm on cultural globalization. With reference to the objective of sustainable development stratification patterns are significant to understand the consistency of present unsustainabilities.

3.2.2.1 Concepts of Culture

At last, a clarification of the presuppositions underlying each account with respect of the concept of culture is considered as of utmost importance. Different approaches of cultural globalization define the object and constitution of culture in different ways. Whether beliefs and value patterns, shared knowledge, collective norms, institutions and forms of organization, meaning and communication systems, texts and discourses, social practices or objects and material artifacts constitute the object of "culture" varies according to each approach. If culture is defined as means of social integration, if it is seen as means to mark and perceive difference (the Other) or as an indicator of civilizational development depends on the approach under consideration. Recalling our interest in the interface that brings together globalization processes with specific lifestyle orientations, it will not suffice to expose assertions concerning culture on a macro-level (structure, ideology, modes of thought etc.). Rather attention must be simultaneously paid towards actor-oriented definitions on culture. Taking into account the role of individual actors reveals if globalization is seen as a determinate process that is (relatively) closed towards individual and collective intervention and societal reflexivity or if it is conceived as open towards active involvement.

Three features complementing the analytical framework outlined above result from this. The analytical reading of cultural globalization accounts must imply definitions on the *concept of culture* (a) that comes into play with each position, a description of the significance that is given the *individual* (b) and the notion of *identity* (c) as an important category for the constitution of difference that in turn is constitutive for the comparability of different lifestyles. This additional categorization is based on the hypothesis that opposing diagnoses on the globalization of culture – epitomized in the terms of homogenization, diversification and hybridization – can in turn be ascribed to different conceptualizations of culture itself.

3.3 Paradigms of Cultural Globalization

Globalization and talk thereof have spawned three theses on the courses of global sociocultural change. The first vision is expressed in the notion of the "McDonaldization" of societies (Ritzer, 1993), which refers to the apprehension of a cultural homogenization of consumer patterns and lifestyles through processes of rationalization. The second assumption is summarized in the formula of the "Clash of Civilizations" (Huntington & Ajami, 1993), which hypothesizes that the fundamental source of conflict in the world will not be primarily ideological or economic, but cultural. While the argument of an extensive cultural homogenization focuses primarily on the global diffusion of (occidental) modernity, the second assumption engages with the forms of resistance against western cultural dissemination. A third approach that encounters these forecasts has been articulated in the term of "hybridity". Hence, from this perspective global cultural change is perceived as an ongoing mixing and blending of diverse cultural elements – producing hybrid cultural forms and practices (Hannerz, 1992, 1990).

The purity in which these approaches are described follows the claim to put on view the main idea underlying each proposition. In fact, each account – albeit in different degrees – takes note of the actual simultaneity of and intersections between all of the diagnosed shifts.

3.3.1 Homogenization

One of the most widespread interpretations of cultural globalization is the idea that the world is becoming more uniform and standardized, through a technological, commercial and cultural synchronization emanating from the West (Pieterse, 1993: 265). Homogenization brings about a world that is becoming besieged by forces making for sameness that is the global standardization of culture and institutional structures (Robertson & White, 2003: 15). The central supposition here often is that of cultural imperialism: A few of societies of the West or the single society of the United States impose their culture upon the rest of the world (Ritzer, 2004: 75).

There are many varieties of cultural imperialism. One of the most influential has been epitomized in the thesis of the McDonaldization of societies (Ritzer: 1998). This refers to the tendency by which the principles of the American fast food restaurant – efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control – dominate more and more social life of the American society and, above all, tend increasingly to determine other societies all over the world (Ritzer, 1993, 1998, 2004).

The cultural dimension of this process is characterized by the transnational expansion of common codes and practices (Ritzer, 2004: 75) mainly related to the concept of consumer culture, i.e. consumption practices become globally more similar by adopting the American example. According to Ritzer, the *infrastructure* and *institutions* (I+II) facilitating the expansion of American consumer culture are established by the "new means of consumption" (as an allusion to Marx "means of production") that are delivered with the commercialization of globally available products. The "new means of consumption" that concurrently provide the infrastructure of consumption include *inter alia* home-shopping television, shopping malls, cybermalls, fast food restaurants, theme parks, and cruise-ships (Ritzer, 1999: 2). These institutional compilations enable the consumption of all sorts of things. Ritzer emphasizes that the significance of the new means of consumption are effective beyond their function in globalizing consumption processes. McDonald's, Wal-Mart, Disney World, just to name a few, have become some of America's most powerful popular icons (7). Furthermore they represent places where people connect with each other, where they eat and gain a sense of community (8). A recent second wave of homogenization concerns – besides the "classical" sites of consumption – universities, hospitals, museums, athletic stadiums and churches. These spheres of society emulate the new means of consumption in one or the other way (20). They provide information, knowledge, meaning, athletic services, health care etc. in more and more standardized and efficient ways.

Intercultural interaction, i.e. the *modes of interaction* (III), is dominated by the worldwide diffusion of American culture. Although local appropriations are acknowledged, the main principle of cultural interactions reside within the idea of one-directional cultural homogenization coming from American culture enriched with some European ingredients (2004: 82–87).

The issue of global *stratification* (IV) due to McDonaldized culture remains vastly neglected in Ritzer's work. By contrast, Baudrillard points out, although manufactured goods and services are offered on mass scale, distortion and inequality are not reduced. Instead they are transferred to fields such as health, beauty, space, holidays, knowledge and culture. In the recent debate on "the right to clean air" it becomes visible what Baudrillard's alludes to: "The 'right to clean air' signifies the loss of clean air as a natural good, its transition to commodity status and its inegalitarian social redistribution" (1998: 58). Further criticism concerning the neglect of stratification patterns in Ritzer's approach is implicitly carried out in studies that examine the exclusion of societal underdogs from malls, museums, city centers etc. (by the means of digital surveillance, security staff or the play-back of classical music) (e.g. Davis, 1990).

As Holton indicates, the creation of the "global consumer" as often depicted in homogenization approaches, consists not only in the "utilitarian convenience of global products" but is also accompanied by the "sale of affluence, personal and erotic gratification evoked through advertising and the culture industry of Hollywood". When movies such as Rocky or series as *Dallas* are broadcasted all over the world, the apprehension is nourished, "[. . .] that patterns of American or western sensibility are transferred, too, along with the other cultural baggage" (Holton, 2000: 142). This remark provides information on the *concept of culture* (a) and its relation to the *individual* (b) and adherent *identity constructions* (c). Even though the individual and cultural identity are not at heart of the McDonaldization thesis, the individual consumer as recipient of the blessings of McDonaldized rationality plays a crucial role. But his or her capacities of acting upon McDonaldized structures is reduced to the high if not inexorably probability to become part and a devotee of the system. From this perspective identity operates as an integrative function. The focus on American/Western culture obstructs the view on cultural differences and intercultural exchange that exceeds modernist-capitalist rationality.

In his later work on globalization Ritzer pays to a greater extend attention to the significance of localization processes (2004). He asserts, that the focus on homogeneity is analytically located within the economic centers, whereas heterogeneity is rather associated with the periphery of the global economy. This leads Ritzer to a notional differentiation. McDonaldization in the global framework is related to the notion of "grobalization" as opposed to Robertson's concept of "glocalization" (Ritzer, 2004: 74–8; Robertson, 1992: 173–74). The latter was introduced by

Robertson to come to terms with the cleavages between homogenization vs. diversification thesis. It aims at encompassing the local and the global and hence represents the idea of "difference-within-sameness" (Robertson, 2001: 462). Ritzer establishes against and in extension of this concept – which he perceives as too much focused on the "interaction of many global and local cultural inputs to create a kind of pastiche" – the concept of "grobalization". Grobalization represents a reversal of the meaning of glocalization, focusing on "the imperialistic ambitions of nations, organizations, and the like and their desire, indeed need, to impose themselves on various geographic areas" (Ritzer, 2004: 73). The letter "r" in grobalization is thus derived from the principle of growth concerning the pursuit of power, influence and profits. In the sphere of culture, grobalization is understood as a form of transnational expansion of common codes and practices (homogeneity) that foster the principles of McDonaldization (75). Prospects concerning the new middle classes are fairly bleak confronted with Ritzer's forecast. As long as McDonaldized culture commands there seems to be little space for alternatives.

3.3.2 Diversification

Both neologisms, glocalization and grobalization, lead to the second thesis in question, which is epitomized in the terms "heterogenization" or "diversification". Taking into account the concept of "glocalization" the thesis on global heterogeneity is summarized as follows: First, the notion of heterogenization assumes that the world is becoming more pluralistic. It focuses on diversification within and between world regions; between different sites and places. Second, individuals and groups have great impact on globalization. They represent creative and powerful agents. Third, socio-cultural processes are relational and contingent. That implies that globalization is faced and characterized by a great variety of reactions, ranging from nationalist movements to cosmopolitan postures that in turn transform globalization. Fourth, commodities and the media as key elements of the global arena are not regarded as totally coercive but as means that can be appropriated by individuals and groups in the process of glocalization (Ritzer, 2004: 77).

Against this overall backdrop two separate camps can be distinguished that coin the discourse on diversification. Ritzer's reading of Robertson exposes clearly that this model follows an understanding of global divergence that assumes potential openness of cultural difference and demarcation. Cultures (individually and collectively) are not closed towards change, borrowing from other cultures and the reinterpretation of "native" cultural practices.

A quite different perspective within the discourse on global divergence is represented by analysts such as Samuel Huntington and Benjamin Barber who proclaim the *Unhintergehbarkeit* of cultural differences, which can be equated with cultural relativism or strong cultural differentialism as core features of the global condition (Huntington & Ajami, 1993; Barber, 1995). Huntington's thesis of the "Clash of Civilizations" predicts a civilizational conflict between the West and an emergent Islamic-Confucian axis. Individualism, pluralism, Christendom and the rule of law characterize the western core culture. After the end of the Cold War this "core culture" is threatened by Eastern civilizations, especially Muslim culture.

From Barber's point of view, what comes to be polarized in the process of globalization is symbolized by the notions of "McWorld vs. Jihad". These represent two contemporary trends that follow different logics. McWorld represents the trend towards the globalization of world economy, world society and world culture. The consequences of this trend are global deterritorialization, the dissolution of national identities and cultural ideals, the decline of the nation-state etc. Jihad on the other hand represents the trend towards the fragmentation of all areas of life. It is a world of ethno-nationalist conflict, separatism, retreat, terrorism and the decline of state order (cf. Menzel, 1998: 38). MacWorld contains fast food, MTV and computers; whereas Jihad "represents the forces of cultural fundamentalisms and tribalism" (Holton, 2000: 146). The cultural divide develops along the pursuit of happiness by the means of capitalist consumer culture on the one hand, and moral liberation by the means of communitarian mobilization in pursuit of justice on the other hand.

Main variables that are evoked by both approaches are identity struggles, religion, social order and civilizational cosmologies. From this perspective cultural globalization is *institutionally* (I) represented by religious organizations and diasporic communities availing themselves of global communication means (II) that allow for the construction of "imagined communities" that are stretched along geographically remote places. From the perspective of McWorld, the *institutionalization* of consumer culture is comparable with that of McDonaldization but is extended from Huntington's perspective to the wide range of classical institutions of modern societies. *Modes of interaction* (III) are oriented towards the preservation of cultural difference activated by the menace of Western cultural diffusion on the one hand, and religious especially Islamic fundamentalism on the other hand. Both visions pay particular attention to those "who feel morally challenged or economically excluded by economic globalization" (Holton, 2000: 147). That is why existing worldwide *stratification* (IV) is taken as an initial motive for the future trajectory of globalization and is simultaneously produced by the illustrated resistance towards Western globalization. The individual (b) dissolves within the concept of civilizations (Huntington) and polarized macro-trends (Barber). Nonetheless identity, conceptualized as collective cultural identity (c) stands at the heart of both accounts. Culture represents the dimension along which world order is constructed (a). Particularly with regard to the "Clash of Civilizations"-thesis culture is powerfully provided with religion, history and tradition as fix systems of meaning by means of which demarcation lines are drawn towards the Other.

Against this apparently one-sided polarizing view on cultural globalization different approaches exist that attempt to draw a less pessimistic view on the current and future situation. In denial of homogenization accounts globalization is understood in fact as a decisive force in proliferating "cultural diversity" (cf. Tomlinson, 2003). Coming from that perspective Pieterse brings forward the argument that cultural differentialism "might be evoked by local groups resisting the steamroller of assorted 'developers', by ecological networks, anthropologists, and artists, as well as travel agencies and advertisers promoting local authenticity" (Pieterse, 2004: 47).

Underlying perceptions of the world by means of cultural globalization become represented in metaphors such as "human mosaic", "cultural islands" or the very notion of "cultural diversity". Nonetheless, in accordance with the more aggressive conceptions of cultural heterogeneity endorsed by Huntington and Barber, the outlook on cultural globalization is shaped by lasting cultural differences. Identity politics in the process of globalization play likewise a crucial role but are less projected on civilizations than on ethnic minorities, indigenous and diasporic communities. Growing global relativizations by mediated and experienced culture contacts tighten the perception of the world as a place shared by different cultures. From this point of view the globalization of Western lifestyles is necessarily subjected to the maintenance of cultural specifities that will not disappear as a result of assimilation.

3.3.3 Hybridization

> Coming from postmodernism it was especially these cultural conceptualizations of globalization that moved beyond the ideas of homogenization, universalism and Westernization which dominated the industrialism, capitalism and rationalism brands of modernization theories in the 60 s and 70 s. Subordination of culture under the structural developments of especially the economic-technological sphere is no longer an adequate conceptualization; rather the diversity, variety and local interpretations of global mass media messages and cosmopolitan phenomena are stressed (Mol, 2000: 129).

Mol's remark indicates the last paradigm of cultural globalization, which is discussed under the name of "hybridization" (Pieterse, 2004; Hannerz, 1992, 1996, 2003). The concept turns against both, the postulate of homogenization as well as that of diversification. Though it represents in certain ways a radicalization of the paradigm of cultural diversification. What is claimed with respect of the discourse on cultural globalization is that visions of cultural purity and cultural integration cannot grasp the "in-between", the "intermediate" or the "betwixt". The idea of cultural mixing and blending is at the heart of this perspective. Synonyms of hybridization are "syncretism", "creolization", "crossover" or "mestizaje". Hybrid cultural globalization is regarded as an open-ended, fluid, indeterminate process that even cannot be comprehended by a dialectical approach to homogenization vs. diversification. Instead "third cultures" develop, new cultural forms are created that do not fit into existing categories of cultural differences. Growing awareness of cultural difference and globalization are seen as interdependent not as contradictory (Pieterse, 2004: 57).

One of the most prominent proponents of this account, the Dutch anthropologist, Jan Nederveen Pieterse, argues for viewing globalization as a process of hybridization (2003: 265). Cultural hybridization is defined as "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (Rowe & Schelling, 1991: 231 in Pieterse 2003: 269). Pieterse extends this principle to structural forms of social organization. As a structural principle hybridization in the era of globalization occurs in almost all socio-cultural domains. It is described as the "increase in the *available modes of organization*: transnational, international, macro-regional, national, micro-regional, municipal, local [. . .] [and] is being criss-crossed by functional networks of corporations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as professionals and computer users" (271, *emphasis by author*). Besides these organizational modes, informal spaces play a crucial role in the hybridization perspective. These are spaces created by diasporas, migrants, refugees and other marginalized individuals and groups. The concept of hybridization interconnects such different domains as political economy, the experience of time, identity politics, sites and spaces. An overall argument within hybridization thesis is the parity of all modes of organization in the current phase of globalization. This claim is hold up by a strong contextualization in the investigation of global hybridity. The idea of hybridization as the core principle of globalization derives from the assumption that *differences* between categories, beliefs and forms is increasingly mixing (281). As Pieterse specifies "[. . .] the very process of hybridization shows the difference to be relative, with a slight shift of perspective, the relationship [between cultures] can also be described in terms of an affirmation of similarity" (281).

Given the concept of culture underlying hybridization, the latter is not considered as a recent phenomenon. Cultural mixing, blending and borrowing are linked with definitions of culture that oppose to those conceptualizations that equate culture with territory and localized learning processes or that envision cultures in the form of a global cultural mosaic (cf. 282). Against this backdrop Pieterse remarks, "European and Western culture are part of this global mélange. This is an obvious case if we reckon that Europe until the fourteenth century was invariably the recipient of cultural influences from 'the Orient'. The hegemony of the West dates only from very recent times, from around 1800, and, arguably, from industrialization" (274). In view of cultural hegemony, particularly the hegemony of the West, Pieterse constructs a "continuum of hybridities" (2004: 73). At the one end of the continuum an assimilationist hybridity is located, which "leans over towards the centre, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony" and at the other end, "a destabilizing hybridity [is located] that blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center" (73, see also Hannerz, 1996: 67). By means of the introduction of a hybridization continuum, global homogenization tendencies can be grasped without acknowledging their claim of totality and their imaginations of relatively pure Western culture that is contrasted with other non-Occidental cultures.

To a certain degree, hybridization eludes *infrastructures* (I) and even more *institutions* (II). With its principles of permanent movement and change, openendedness, its contextualist attitude and refusal to essentialisms it is difficult to spot hybrid cultural globalization in terms of institutions. Definitively telecommunications and the digital information revolution, migration, tourism and economic expansion contribute to the spread and increase of hybridization. But its forms are less manifest than in the former accounts on homogenization and diversification. In contrast, *modes of interaction* (III) represent the potency of the hybridization approach compared with the former accounts (cf. Holton, 2000: 151). Intercultural interaction, exchange and the incorporation of different cultural elements into cultural practices is at the heart of hybridization. Against the concepts of purity and emanation in homogeneity and diversity stands the principle of mixing and blending. Stratification (4) is included into the concept of hybridization by means of the hybridization continuum that emphasizes marginalized cultural forms and practices. As Hannerz argues, the concept of hybridity (or “creolization” as he prefers) is pervasively marked by the constraints of inequality. The relative openness of the hybridization continuum is transformed by social distinctions and the tendency to symbolize them through discontinuous cultural distribution (Hannerz, 1996: 67). Culture (a) as it has been outlined is again a key for the interpretation of globalization. From the perspective of hybridization it is connected to an *outward-looking* sense of place, in contrast to diversity and homogeneity, which follow a more *inward-looking* sense of place (cf. Pieterse, 2003: 283). Terms as “cosmopolitan” or “global ecumene” are applied; the latter names a “region of persistent cultural interaction and exchange” (Hannerz, 1992 in Holton, 2000: 148). The individual is seen as an integral part of globalization processes. As the carrier and distributor of culture he or she is a central category of cultural globalization (b). As postmodern and postcolonial discourses claim for a break-up of “the grand narrative” and hence the recognition of different subjectivities beyond the categories of modern individual, the question of identity is central to hybridization (c).

3.4 A Deliberate Integration of Views

Given the preceding portrayal of basic assumptions on cultural globalization – namely homogenization, diversification and hybridization – the elementary conclusion is drawn that the complexity of today’s cultural interconnections such as lifestyles cannot be captured by one perspective alone. Exclusively taking into consideration homogenizing tendencies will not make the grade; the same goes for merely taking into account processes of diversification. But also the concept of hybridization has not the ability to interpret or dissolve adequately the problem of manifest tendencies of homogenization or diversification. What is argued for instead is a conceptual framework that takes all three paradigms under consideration.

The metatheoretical awareness towards asymmetrical and symmetrical conceptions of cultural globalization must be incorporated in such an integrative approach of cultural globalization. In the case of the diversification model, for instance, Robertson defines a *symmetrical* version of the world that sees “societal communities as relatively equal to each other in terms of the worth of their cultural traditions, their institutions and the kinds of individual produced in them” which points to global relativism (Robertson, 1992: 78). The *asymmetrical* version of diversification “regards one or a small number of societal communities as necessarily being more important than others” as actually becomes articulated in ideas such as “the society of destiny” or “the lead society” (e.g. Huntington). The sensibility towards such (a)symmetries within all three accounts seems pivotal for an adequate analysis of cultural globalization. Otherwise sight will be lost of questions of power, normativity, the diversity of “global” phenomena and the simultaneity of divergent transformations. This is also true for research on the new middle classes in the context of lifestyle formations. The ubiquitous visibility of global consumer brands and infrastructures turns the risk of interpreting too quickly sociocultural practices from the viewpoint of the experience and orientations of Western societies.[6] Symmetrical approaches will – besides recognizing the dominance of specific trends – uncover the actual complexity and variability of specific global phenomena.

A second point will be argued briefly with reference to the concept of "global consciousness" as defined by Roland Robertson. Global consciousness, according to Robertson, refers to the bracketing of a set of "[...] images of world order (and disorder) – including interpretations of and assertions concerning the past, present and future of particular societies, civilizations, ethnic groups and regions" which Robertson defines as composing the core of "global culture" (1992: 113). By this definition the often neglected categories of *actors* and *agency* in the context of globalization theory is raised. Structural globalization manifests itself and is simultaneously produced via social agency. One of the most salient characteristics of globalization, as was shown throughout this article, represents growing convergence and increasing interdependency between different cultural forms and practices. However, what meets in concrete situations are not "cultures" or "cultural systems", but persons. They are the carriers of culture. As Luckmann argues, culture as the social structure of meaning is generated and objectified by the subject, while at the same time the individual agent is socialized within cultural relations of meaning (Luckmann, 1989). As Dreher and Stegmaier emphasize "culture", "cultural affiliation" and "difference" come to be produced in the dialectical interplay of the individual and society. Thereby the concept of identity represents a pertinent connector between the individual and society (2007: 12). In the case that the question is raised if the resource-intensive lifestyle of the West becomes globalized the relational relationship between individual practices and social structure becomes even more complex as relationality is stretched across sometimes fundamentally different systems of meaning. As Appadurai calls the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization as the central problem of today's global *interactions* (Appadurai, 2003: 251), the point that is sought to be made here becomes even clearer. The question of consumerism and sustainability in the context of globalization could hardly be answered by models based on macro-analyses alone. As homogenization and diversification models hardly capture the modes of interaction on an intercultural and small-scale level, this all the more represents a key point in further theorizing on cultural globalization. Hybridization theory gives some hints here.

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[6]For a critical disclosure of one-sided Eurocentric perspectives see Friedman 1996.

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Chapter 4
Who are the Globalizers? The Role of Education and Educational Elites

Steffen Mau

Abstract The article addresses the issue of which societal groups are involved in transnational activities like cross-border mobility and long-distance networking. It is assumed that not all social strata are equally involved in transnational activities, and that one will find striking differences between different status groups. Given differences in opportunities, competences and contexts of occupational and social activities, the more educated can be considered the pioneers of border-crossing. The article scrutinizes this assumption looking at the German population and using a representative survey which focuses on different types of transnational activities. Furthermore, it relates the involvement in transnational activities to peoples' attitudes asking whether those who are more "transnational" are also more open towards foreigners and more positive with regard to supranational political responsibility. Overall, the article sheds light on a new type of social differentiation, namely the link between social status on the one hand, and the social and geographical space people relate to on the other.

Keywords Cosmopolitanism · Mobility · Social inequality · Transnationalism · Transnational networks

4.1 Introduction

There is increasing sociological interest in new forms of "border crossing" in conjunction with processes of globalization. Sociologists often argue that the formerly solid and almost insurmountable "walls" of the nation states have become less significant. Transnational involvements in the fields of politics, business and culture lead to more and more transactions taking place across national borders. However,

S. Mau (✉)
Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS), University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany
e-mail: smau@gsss.uni-bremen.de

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globalization literature contains insufficient information relating to the role of social actors (de Swaan, 1995: 116), so that it appears as if spaces formally defined by the boundaries of the nation state were being broken down solely by the functional rationalities of societal sub-systems such as politics or the economy. Due to the dominance of research focused on macrostructural changes, the question of who the "agents" of globalization are frequently remains unanswered (Nowicka, 2006).

Addressing this question, this article investigates which societal groups are involved in forms of increased cross-border mobility and transnational networks using Germany as an example. We assume that not all social strata are equally involved in transnational activities, and that we will find striking differences between different status groups. Given differences in opportunities, competences and contexts of occupational and social activities, the more educated can be considered the pioneers of border-crossing. One can assume that it is primarily the economic and social elites who are involved in transnational activities (cf. Beaverstock, 2005; Carroll & Fennema, 2002; Sklair, 1991). Moreover, the higher status groups can be seen as important agents of cross-cultural interaction whose activities catalyze the evolvement of certain behavioral standards and social and cultural norms. In consequence, transnationalization is likely to be a highly unequal process, with transnationally oriented elites on the one hand and nationally constrained low status groups on the other.

Though there are good arguments for assuming a pioneering role of educational elites as agents of globalization, up to now the differences between different groups have hardly been investigated. In order to tackle this issue, I make use of the concept of *transnationalism*. This has several advantages over the use of standard concepts of globalization: firstly, transnationalism focuses very centrally on the everyday individual level, and secondly, it takes greater account of the generative mechanisms of individual involvement in cross-border interactions (Mau, 2007; Mau & Mewes, 2007). Moreover, the term "globalization" is unsuitable in many respects for describing the *spatial* extension of horizons of social action. Scholars have shown that the spatial extension of cross-border transactions supports a trend towards "OECD-ization" rather than *globalization* (Beisheim, Dreher, Walter, Zangl, & Zürn, 1999; Zürn, 1998). However, whereas most of the transnationalism research has focussed on migrants, this article looks at the whole population. On the basis of survey data capturing transnational networks and mobility the involvement of different educational groups in transnational activities will be investigated more closely. In other words, the chapter will look into how the educational level affects the degree of individual transnationality.

Within the scope of the debate surrounding globalization, ever increasing attention is being directed to the impact of social relations across borders and the emergence of transnational social spaces on people's attitudes. Some assume that the increasing transnationalization of social relations will foster the development of cosmopolitan attitudes. The more people become involved in cross-border activities, the more their cognitive and attitudinal stances will be affected, and they might become more cosmopolitan (e.g. Hannerz, 1990; Kwok-Bun, 2002; Tarrow, 2005). Cosmopolitan attitudes are characterized by a growing awareness of global interdependence (e.g. greater environmental concern related to the global level), the acceptance of supranational political responsibility and the appreciation of difference. However, others warn that opening the nation state container may also result in re-nationalization. In order to clarify this relationship we will look at the relationship between education, transnational involvement and cosmopolitan attitudes.

To test the hypothesis of unequal transnationalization, the empirical part of the article makes use of survey data gathered in the spring of 2006, a representative survey of German citizens funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). This representative survey of the German population was planned as part of the project "Transnationalization of Social Relationships" at the University of Bremen and carried out in cooperation with the social science research institute IPSOS (Germany: Mölln/Hamburg). A total of 2700 persons were interviewed by telephone (CATI design) on various aspects of their personal involvement in transnational interaction and activities. The universe of the study consists solely of German-speaking persons from the age of 16 holding German citizenship[1] who live in private households in the Federal Republic of Germany and could be contacted by a telephone landline.[2]

In the survey the respondents were asked questions about their involvement in trans-boundary interactions and activities. These include short-term and long-term stays in foreign countries as well as regular private contacts with persons living abroad. In order to better grasp the assumed relationship between transnationalization and cosmopolitanism we have developed an index measuring the extent to which individuals are involved in transnational activities (for construction of the index see Appendix). The survey also includes a considerable number of attitude items measuring cosmopolitan stances such as attitudes towards supranational governance, attitudes towards foreigners or attitudes with regard to globalization. In measuring the educational level we distinguish between those with low or medium education (no school degree, lower secondary school-leaving certificate; intermediate school-leaving certificate) and those with higher educational attainment (upper secondary school-leaving certificate or university entrance qualification).

4.2 Unequal Globalization?

Globalization is an out-and-out cloven and fragmented process. While its effects on the social life of all humankind can no longer be denied, the ways different groups get sucked into the globalization process or are affected by it presumably differ (Kriesi & Grande, 2004). Processes of transnationalization are closely coupled with the syndromes of globalization. Individual networks expand within them, mobility

[1] This might also include persons with dual citizenship, provided one of their citizenships is German.

[2] As sample outcomes are not equally distributed, we have used a weighting factor which adjusts the unweighted sample structure to the official statistics. To do so, a weighting was undertaken on the basis of the characteristics age, gender, *Bundesland* (federal state), community size and education.

increases, and cross-border and cross-culture interactions become common. However, it would be interesting to know whether this is a process which includes the entire population or whether it is limited to specific groups. Often it is suggested that there a deep division between the globalizers and the nationals. On a global scale Zygmunt Bauman (1998) diagnoses a polarization into those who are no longer limited in respect of their freedom of movement in space and can rake in the benefits of mobility and relocation, and those who are still tied into their local environment or can only visit other places under very precarious conditions: “Some inhabit the globe; others are chained to place” (45).

It may be assumed that the process of transnationalization is neither homogenous in itself nor includes all social groups equally. It is highly structured and as such generates new forms of disparity – with parts of the population strongly participating in social transnationalism, i.e. cross-border activities, while other parts are still oriented very locally or nationally. However, one might argue that transnationalization is a gradual process and defies binary coding. More realistic than the dualism of *globals* and *locals* is the idea of gradual differences of involvement in transnational contexts – with the extreme poles of a globalized life style on the one and spatially bound activity space on the other side.

In the vast majority of writings social elites are seen as being pioneers of cross-border activities because they can expect the best benefits from the expansion of their activities beyond the nation state borders (Sklair, 1991):

> Economic interests motivate the *global players* to invest in emotional ties even across cultural and language barriers. The technology they use to establish and maintain their social networks in postfordism also allows economic globalization (Brinkschröder, 1999: 225; my translation).

Such theses are based on the assumption that it is above all economic processes that support and affect the transnationalization of lifeworlds. With the emergence of world-spanning markets, global information and investment, and processes of international division of labour the activities of many enterprises turn international and with them the activities of their management. There are a growing number of highly qualified specialists and managers who have been internationalized over the past two or three decades to a fill them unknown extent. As a result, changes have also taken place in the qualification requirements for this class of experts. For managers in internationally operating firms intercultural competence is nowadays an expected part of their know-how. This refers to the ability to understand other codes, conventions, attitudes, and behaviors and to communicate and cooperate across cultural differences. This new profile has even triggered a wave of tutorial publications such as books with titles like *Speaking Globally* or *Global Business Behavior*. The value of such how-to manuals with their stereotyping of culturally different behaviors may be questionable, but they express a trend: Managers are expected to be able to communicate in an international context and to behave adequately (Dreher, 2005).

Although the emphasis is often on economic decision-makers, the term *transnational expert classes* reaches far beyond these and includes numerous professions and jobs in politics, in administrations and in knowledge-based organizations.Political and administrative elites are important actors as the processes of globalization are not only driven by the economy, but also materialize through political decisions and actions (Sklair, 1991). Politicians engage actively in the creation, maintenance and constitution of international regimes. Even bureaucracies, traditionally the stronghold of nation-state self-isolation, are today clamped into networks of communication and information. Many technical committees and administrations, be it in the area of telecommunication, security, pensions or taxes, have to consult with experts of other countries to be able to correctly assess legal affairs and issues resulting from this interweaving. Especially within the framework of the European Union we find countless direct interactions between representatives of national authorities and the European Commission or the representatives of other countries.

The third sector has also changed massively. Today there is an entire array of NGOs already bearing the word *international* in their title (e.g. Amnesty International) and hence indicating that they are not restricted by nation states, either with regard to their membership base or with their political ambitions. These NGOs are often pioneers of internationalization, since they address global problems and therefore also envisage an international community behaving responsibly. Parallel to this, national organizations of the third sector have expanded their fields of action, by either taking up international activities or by lobbying international or supranational organizations.

Moreover, internationalization of science and universities is now well advanced. Due to the logic of scientific knowledge production, the communication networks of science are becoming more global. The differentiation of the science system and the emergence of ever-new disciplinary specializations make the social and cognitive space of science increasingly less compatible with the nation-state container. The communicative relationships scientists (must) establish in order to stay afloat in their discipline are nowadays quite naturally internationalized (Stichweh, 2000). Indeed, the integration into network structures of knowledge production and knowledge transfer triggers scientific-technical progress. Although with the advance of new technologies knowledge diffusion is widely independent of the individual scientist's travel activity, personal contact with the *scientific community* is still desirable. Only in this way can a reputation in the field can be achieved, lasting contacts established or plans for common projects made.[3]

To this point we have substantiated the transnational integration of particular groups above all by the functional necessities of their fields of activity. However, we can also refer to competences, which are distributed quite unevenly throughout the population. Highly educated people, with their greater openness towards other cultures, their command of other languages, and reference to horizons beyond the local, are alleged to be typically less limited by nation-state borders than less

[3]David Lodge has erected fondly ironic memorials to the mobile and globally travelling scientist with his two novels *Changing Places* and *Small World*. The titles of the two books are more than just a hint: While the first is about the academic exchange of the Englishman Phillip Swallow from the University of Rummidge in England with the American Morris Zapp from the University of Euphoria in California and the resulting entanglements and intricacies of the protagonists, the second book caricatures, academic conference tourism around the globe.

educated people (Hannerz, 1996: 102 ff.). Thus, Konrad (1984: 209) outlines for instance that a transnational culture of intellectuals is emerging, as they (can) participate most in cross-border exchanges:

> They keep track of what is happening in various places. They have special ties to those countries where they have lived, they have friends all over the world, they hop across the sea to discuss something with their colleagues; they fly to visit one another as easily as their counterparts two hundred years ago rode over to the next town to exchange ideas.

Following from what has been said we can assume that high status groups, especially those with higher education, are predisposed to transnational activities (Mau & Mewes, 2008). Due to their social status and their competence they represent the segment of the population which has the best capabilities to become active agents of the process of transnationalization. A great interest in overcoming the nation-state space as well as the social and cultural know-how to act effectively across borders can be ascribed to them.

Turning to our German survey data one finds a strong association between the educational level of our respondents and different indicators of transnational involvement. The differences are significant in all categories (Fig. 4.1). Almost 70% of the people with a high educational level (upper secondary school-leaving certificate or university entrance qualification) have regular private contacts with a person living abroad, as opposed to 38% of the people with an educational level lower than that. Especially striking are the differences relating to contacts to foreigners abroad. Here it is especially the relationships by choice, in other words contacts with acquaintances, which are linked to education-specific differences. The orientation towards such network relationships among people of higher education is four times higher than among people of lower education.

As to the geographical spread of these contacts, the empirical network research provides some evidence for a link between education and geographical range which is also significant in our context: Here it was established that the higher the educational level of a person, the larger their networks and the wider the geographic range of the relationships (Keupp, 1988: 90). We assume that this holds not only for networks within the nation state but also for transnational networks, given that it is much easier for people with higher education to accumulate transnational social capital and to master the complexity of these networks (see Mau & Mewes, 2008).

With our data we can give a descriptive overview of the geographical range of the transnational networks of the different educational groups. For this reason we have mapped the percentage of people in the respective educational groups having regular contacts with a person living in another country (see Fig. 4.2). The map clearly illustrates that the international connectivity of those with lower and middle educational levels is concentrated on a smaller number of countries, and there is less geographical spread in comparison to the higher educated group. If we use a 1% threshold, South America, South Africa and even Asian countries such as China and Japan no longer appear on the social network map of this group. In actual fact it appears that the contacts of the groups with lower educational levels are not only sparser, but also cover a far smaller geographical area. There are far more

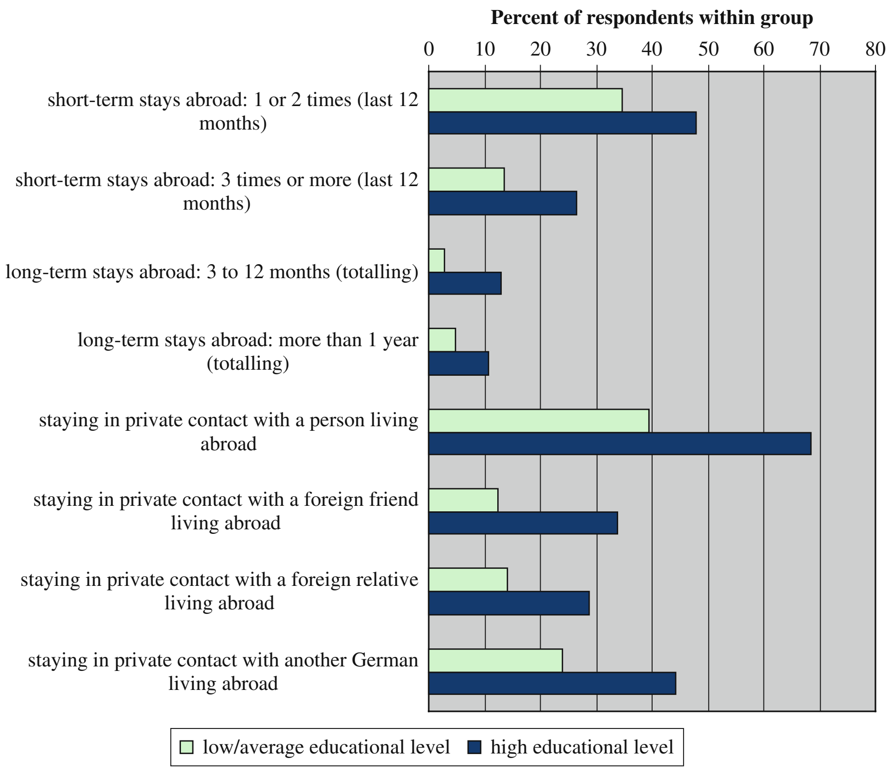

Fig. 4.1 Educational Attainment and Transnational Activities
The Figure shows the percentage of yes-responses according to educational level. Respondents still attending school have been categorized according to the envisaged school qualification. The findings are weighted.
Source: Survey Transnationalisierung 2006.

blank spots on the map to which almost no social relationships exist than among the respondents with higher education.

We can also observe differences between the two educational groups with regard to transnational mobility (Table 4.1). If the number of professional and private trips abroad undertaken by the interviewees in the past 12 months is classified according to the respondents' respective schooling level, the persons with low and average educational levels are significantly less mobile than those with a high educational level. Whereas only a quarter of persons of our group with higher educational attainment reported that they had not been abroad at all in the past 12 months, this figure is 52% among participants with a lower educational level. The social differences are even more visible in relation to longer stays abroad. Whereas 8% of respondents with low and average educational levels state that they have lived abroad for at least three months, this figure is three times as high among those with a higher education level (24%). In addition, we also asked about attitudes to mobility: Every third person with medium and low education declared that they were not at all willing

Fig. 4.2 World Maps by Education – *Top*: High Educational Level; *Bottom*: Low/Average Educational Level
The Figure shows the percentages of those respondents who have regular contact with a person abroad and a transnational relationship with the country in question. To simplify the presentation, Greenland, Alaska, the northern islands of Russia and further sparsely populated regions are not marked.
Source: Survey Transnationalisierung 2006.

to relocate from Germany for professional reasons (higher education 13%). When asked about relocating for private reasons as many as 48% took this view (higher education 19%). In contrast there are twice as many among the highly educated who express a very high level of openness to cross-border mobility, either professionally or privately.

4.3 Cosmopolitan Attitudes

The historical development of the nation state was not limited to the creation of a territorially bound political order, but encompassed the formation of a national socio-cultural identity and political loyalty. Being a citizen of a nation state meant at the same time participation in, and identification with, a distinct culture, language, tradition, a political ethos, and a community of fate (Held, 2002). The opening and cross-border connectedness of lifeworlds of many people is challenging the central position of the nation state (Mau, Mewes, & Zimmermann, 2008). According to Hannerz (1996: 88) there are "now various kinds of people, for which the nation works less as a source of cultural resonance."

Cosmopolitanism refers to the rise of a cognitive and normative potential which takes in the experience of global interdependence, and on this basis develops a new relationship with the world shaped by tolerance and openness on one hand, and by a sense of global responsibility on the other hand (Held, 2002; Vertovec & Cohen, 2002; Beck, 2004; Roudometof, 2005; Beck & Sznaider, 2006). In the encounter with otherness and difference cosmopolitanism stands for the ability and readiness to get involved with the other's culture as described by Hannerz (1990: 239):

> Cosmopolitanism in a stricter sense includes a stance toward diversity itself, toward the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience. A willingness to engage with the other. It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity.

Politically it entails a greater acceptance of political decision-making and responsibility above or beyond the political space of the nation states. It might also be related to a growing concern for global issues such as environmental issues, underdevelopment and social risks which can not be considered as national problems any longer.

If one understands cosmopolitanism not only as a normative concept, but also as measurable attitude, one can distinguish different – presumably interconnected – dimensions (Held, 2002: 58): the recognition of the increasing interconnectedness of political communities in diverse domains, including the social, economic and environmental; the development of an understanding of overlapping collective fortunes that require collective solutions locally, regionally and globally; the celebration of difference, diversity and hybridity while being able to reason from the point of view of others.

In literature the relation between transnationalism and cosmopolitanism has been extensively discussed, usually with a tendency to regard the opening of national societies and growing experiences within transnational contexts as a positive factor for the development of cosmopolitan orientations. Abundant related statements might be quoted, for example:

> Cosmopolitanism arises through the interrelated processes of increased connectivity and cultural contact (Kwok-Bun, 2002: 191).

> It is through peoples' relations to significant others that cosmopolitan attitudes are shaped. What is new in our era is the increase in the number of people and groups whose relations place them beyond their local and national settings without detaching them from locality (Tarrow, 2005: 41/42).

In our context it is of interest whether the observed differences in the degree of transnational involvement between different educational groups find repercussions on the attitudinal level. We therefore tackle the question as to whether there are indeed striking differences between the different educational groups and to what extent they are also related to different degrees of transnational involvement. We focus on two attitudinal complexes: attitudes towards supranational political responsibility and attitudes towards foreigners.

To capture attitudes toward supranational political responsibility we look at two items, namely "Today many problems can't be solved by nation states; rather, the world community needs to bear responsibility for them." and "Who do you think is most likely to solve the problems caused by globalization?" (see Table 4.1). Although not striking for the first item, some differences do exist, with those with the higher educational level being more in favor of the responsibility of the world community. More highly educated people also tend to be more in favor of international institutions when it comes to the level of perceived problem-solving capacity.

We find not only differences between the educational groups, but also differences within these groups which are linked to people's involvement in transnational activities. For tapping this relationship, we have constructed an index of transnationality on the basis of the number of regular transnational relationships, short-term travel and long-term stays abroad (for construction of the index see Appendix). This measures the individual involvement in transnational activities and networks. Columns 5 and 6 in Table 4.1 compare the mean of the degree of transnationality within the respective educational groups and response category. We find that there are significant differences in the mean of the index between those agreeing and those disagreeing. Even when controlling for the level of education, those who have higher scores on our transnationality index are more in favor of supranational responsibility.

Table 4.1 Problem Competence: National or International? vs. Education

	In percent		Transnationality-index (mean)	
Educational level	Lower/ medium	High	Lower/ medium	High
Today many problems can't be solved by nation states; rather' the world community needs to bear responsibility for them.				
Agree	85.7	91.9	1.63	3.05
Neither agree nor disagree	6.0	3.7	1.64	2.89
Disagree	8.3	4.4	1.47	2.55
Who do you think is most likely to solve problems caused by globalization?				
The German Government	12.9	6.1	1.33	2.82
International institutions	51.3	66.4	1.66	3.06
Can't be solved	26.0	22.4	1.69	3.13
Can't decide	9.8	5.1	1.39	2.37

Source: Survey Transnationalisierung 2006

Table 4.2 Attitudes Towards Foreigners vs. Education

Educational level	In percent		Transnationality-index (mean)	
	Lower/ medium	High	Lower/ medium	High
Foreigners living in Germany enrich the country with new ideas and new cultures				
Agree	54.0	68.7	1.62	3.16
Neither agree nor disagree	17.0	17.8	1.81	2.77
Disagree	28.9	13.6	1.46	2.72
I would like to have more contacts to people living in other countries				
Agree	50.8	66.8	1.88	3.14
Neither agree nor disagree	13.4	19.7	1.63	2.77
Disagree	35.8	13.5	1.18	2.68
Foreigners living in Germany should have the same rights as Germans on all levels				
Agree	59.9	71.8	1.65	3.03
Neither agree nor disagree	11.3	9.8	1.46	3.09
Disagree	28.7	18.4	1.57	2.90

Source: Survey Transnationalisierung 2006

Secondly, we compare attitudes towards foreigners using three different items (Table 4.2). Again, we find clear group differences. The item "I would like to have more contacts to people links in other countries" finds 51% agreement among those with low or medium education and 67% among those with higher educational attainment. Also, the number of those who think that "Foreigners enrich the country with new ideas and cultures" decreases with education (high education 69%, low/medium education 54%). The same is true for the statement that foreigners should enjoy equal rights, which finds greater approval among those with a higher educational level (72 vs. 60%). If, in addition, we ask whether differences in transnational involvement matters, for most items we find a clear relationship between the degree of individual transnationality and the inclination to agree with positive views on foreigners. A bi-variate analysis within one of the educational groups of the differences between those agreeing with the item and those who do not indicates that those with a more cosmopolitan stance score higher on the transnationality index. Hence, we can assume that there is a direct effect of education on attitudes and also one which works via different degrees of transnational involvement.

4.4 Conclusion

Most of the literature on transnationalism deals with migrants and their strategies to link together societies of origin and settlement. These groups form one significant part of the new movement of constant border crossing and cross-border networking. The other part is made up of people who travel, communicate, interact and socialize across borders in their private and professional life without necessarily migrating.

Visiting other countries, having friends and relatives or living abroad has become more and more widespread. However, as we have seen, this growing phenomenon is strongly linked to the level of education. Though today's transnational experience is by no means confined to the educational elites and we find a growing participation in such activities in all social strata, education correlates strongly with the involvement in transnational activities. In accordance with our assumptions we see that the higher the educational degree, the more transnational contacts people have, the wider their social networks and the more mobile they are. The more highly educated, therefore, can be viewed as the pioneers of transnationalization.

In a second step, we have asked whether we find differences not only in the degree of "objective" transnational involvement between the educational groups, but also in relation to "subjective" cosmopolitization. This means that those with higher education are more likely have positive views on foreigners and are more in favor of supranational regulation. In a similar vein, Kriesi and Grande (2004: 406/407, my translation) write: "Education has a 'liberalizing' effect, which means it leads to a general transformation of political value orientations towards 'libertarian' positions. It contributes to cultural tolerance and opening and generates language competence, which in turn opens access to other cultures." However, we also assumed that the degree of individual transnational involvement might be a determining factor for the way people view supranational political responsibility and foreigners. Indeed, we did find that the more "transnational" people are, the more cosmopolitian their attitudes are. This is a recurring pattern across the different educational groups. It seems that the experience of a "greater world" does support a more cosmopolitan worldview. This might entail greater tolerance, the acceptance of difference, the awareness of global interdependence, the acceptance of political responsibility above the nation state level and concern for global issues such as environmental questions or human rights.

The empirical basis of this chapter is data on Germany, a relatively wealthy and well-developed democracy. Here, a growing involvement in cross-border affairs seems to have positive repercussions on people's attitudes. However, one should be careful in generating this finding to other regions as the contexts of transnationalization might differ quite substantially. What might possibly be generalized is a high degree of cross-border activity such as travel and networking among the educated classes. They are those with the most frequent and most dense contact with the "outside". In many instances we are also likely to detect an interplay between how these groups experience and how they interpret the world, but it would be too sweeping to extrapolate from our case to all the others.

With regard to the overarching theme of the book it should be mentioned that a tension exists between certain behavioral and attitudinal aspects of these new ways of life. A globalized or transnationalized lifestyle is indeed one which is wasteful in using resources and producing waste and pollution. Being mobile has its ecological costs. However, while the highly educated middle classes are frequent travelers and have numerous contacts abroad, they are also those who have the greatest awareness of ecological problems and express an understanding of individual responsibility (Kuckartz & Rheingans-Heintze, 2006). This means that they are not necessarily ignorant of the repercussions of their consumption and mobility patterns, but may indeed take a critical position vis-à-vis their own actions.

4.1 Appendix: Construction of the Transnationality Index

The transnationality index is an additive index and consists of three components, private transnational relations, short-term stays abroad and long-term stays abroad.

1. Private transnational relations (30%)
   Every respondent was asked whether he communicates regularly with foreign friends and/or relatives as well as with Germans living abroad. Detailed information about at most four foreigners in each of these three dimensions was gathered. The score of the sub-index "transnational relations" refers to the number of persons that are reported in the three categories, not taking into consideration the total number of possible contact partners. Each of the three categories increases the index at a maximum of 1, adding a value of 0.25 per person. For instance, an interviewee who declared he was communicating regularly with two foreign relatives and three Germans living abroad boosts the index by 1.25 ($2 \times 0.25 + 3 \times 0.25$). Thus, the sub-dimension "transnational relations" increases the index-value by 3 at most.
2. Short-term stays abroad (30%)
   Here we refer to the question as to how often the interviewee stayed abroad for a time-span less than 3 months during the last 12 months. The majority of Germans did cross the German borders during this period: 37.8% once or twice, 20.4% three times and more. Yet 41.8% of the interviewees declared that they had not set foot on foreign soil during the last 12 months. In terms of contributing to the index, respondents who stayed abroad more than twice increase the value by "3", whereas one or two stays boost the value by "2". If the response to this question was "never", the value for this sub-index is zero. Thus, the highest value this sub-dimension can add to the index is 3.
3. Long-term stays abroad (40%)
   This sub-index takes into account all stays lasting 3 months or longer. While 5.2% of the respondents have spent 3 to 12 months of their life abroad, 6.2% had lived for one year or more outside the borders of Germany. Each interviewee could declare a maximum of five countries he had lived-in previously. For every country we collected information about the total span of time the respondent had stayed there. For example, if a person stayed twice in Brazil, once for a year and once for 4 months, the interviewer coded "Brazil, 1 year, 4 months", not taking into account that the respondent lived there at two different times (with a possible interruption of several years or even decades). For the purposes of our calculations, all of the five variables containing information about the time spent abroad were aggregated. The sub-index scores as follows: "0" for no long term stays abroad, "2" for stays of an aggregate time of 3–12 months and "4" for all stays with a total time of 13 months and more.

Table 4.3 Frequencies of the Transnationality Index

	Frequency	Percentage	Cum. Percentage
0	922	34.2	34.2
1	200	7.4	41.6
2	594	22.0	63.6
3	528	19.6	83.1
4	211	7.8	91.0
5	85	3.2	94.1
6	64	2.4	96.5
7	46	1.7	98.2
8	35	1.3	99.5
9	10	.4	99.9
10	3	.1	100.0
Total	2,700	100	

In terms of calculation of the transnationality index, we summed the three subcomponents. Finally the results were rounded up. Thus the index ranges from 0 (= no involvement in transnational interaction) to 10 (= very high level of involvement in transnational interaction). Table 4.3 gives the frequencies of the index.

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Chapter 5
Provider Strategies and the Greening of Consumption Practices: Exploring the Role of Companies in Sustainable Consumption

G. Spaargaren and C.S.A. (Kris) van Koppen

Abstract Making consumption practices more sustainable means incorporating new ideas, information and products into existing consumption routines of citizen-consumers. For a successful incorporation process it is crucial that companies, as main providers of new products and services, develop an active orientation on consumers and their practices. We argue that the core elements of a consumer orientation of companies can refer to (i) improvement of the environmental performance of the company (ii) provision of environmental information on both the direct and indirect environmental impacts and (iii) images and narratives on sustainable consumption. In practice, companies show considerable variation with respect to both the contents and the level of their consumer orientation, making it possible to distinguish between different types of company strategies. While recognizing that company-consumer interactions on sustainable consumption have developed most strongly in OECD countries, we argue that our conceptual approach is of immediate relevance to emerging economies due to the globalization of both company strategies and public audiences.

Keywords Consumer empowerment · Corporate strategies · Direct and indirect environmental impacts · New middle classes · Sustainable consumption

5.1 Introduction

With the most recent green wave, policies for the greening of global consumption can be expected to intensify worldwide over the years to come. Although national governments will have an important role to play in this process, they are no longer the exclusive environmental authority (Sassen, 2006) to build upon. The traditional monopoly on environmental governance which nation states possessed during the 1970s ended when companies in the 1980s entered the policy field, followed by

G. Spaargaren (✉)
Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University, Wageningen, The Netherlands
e-mail: Gert.Spaargaren@wur.nl

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a de-nationalization of policies under the influence of globalization in the 1990s. When reflecting on the potential roles of different policy actors and when looking for the best strategies and instruments to be used for the greening of global consumption, the nation state is no longer the most promising starting point (Spaargaren, Mol, & Bullet, 2006). The picture of consumption politics under conditions of global modernity is still far from clear, but it is certain to include a variety of actors.

A few things we have learned so far might be worth considering when trying to (re)construct consumption-oriented politics in the 21st century. First: consumption politics need commitment and engagement of citizen-consumers in order to be lasting and effective. Greening consumption "behind the back of consumers" by technological means will perhaps reduce emissions and exhaustion in the short run, but it will not result in sustainable development in the genuine meaning of this concept. Second, when addressing citizen-consumers and their lifestyle choices and considerations, we cannot and should not build upon an isolated moral strategy addressing (the lack of) environmental awareness on the side of individuals only. Such an awareness-raising strategy might help temporarily sensitizing the population for climate change or biodiversity loss, but it is unlikely to result in sustainable development on the level of everyday practices of production and consumption (Van Koppen, 2005).

With these learning experiences in mind, within environmental social sciences an approach to lifestyles and consumption behaviors has been developed which avoids the pitfalls of both the individualist and the (technological) determinist strategies. Building upon structuration theory, focusing on situated behaviors in everyday life, and outlining the influence of the socio-technical contexts in everyday behavioral routines, the social practices approach puts forward as key units for analysis and policy making the patterned, shared, site-specific behavioral routines of distinct groups of citizen-consumers (Spaargaren, 2003, 2005, 2006; Shove, 2003, 2006; Warde, 2004, 2005; Southerton, Chappells, & Van Vliet, 2004; Gram-Hanssen, 2007). For sustainable development, delineated sets of situated practices within a limited number of consumption domains are identified as important targets for environmental governance since they combine the familiarity of everyday life with considerable environmental impacts or footprints. Commuting with private cars, redecorating the house, tourist traveling abroad, dining out, heating and cooling the house, taking a bath, and shopping for clothes are some examples of situated consumption practices. They can be grouped into a small number of consumption domains, with "food", "housing", "leisure and tourism", "clothing and personal care" and "everyday mobility" as main examples presently used in research.[1]

Greening consumption when conceptualized this way is primarily conceived of in terms of a process of continuously searching for ways to reduce the environmental footprint of present day variants of consumption practices by incorporating into these practices new rules, meanings, products and technologies as they are gradually but undeniably becoming available as the result of environmental policy strategies of governments, companies and ENGO's over the past 25 years or so. For a successful

[1] See for example the CONTRAST research project, www.enp.wur.nl/uk/research

integration and incorporation of green ideas, products and technologies into social practices, it is of crucial importance that the green alternatives on offer fit well into the existing dynamics of social practices and into the lifestyle characteristics of participating groups of citizen-consumers. For that reason, the ways in which green consumption alternatives are made available by providers are worth being investigated for their level of fit or non-fit with respect to social practices and participating lifestyle groups.

Making green offers to consumers does not only mean supplying environment-friendly products, produced in clean production processes (De Leeuw, 2005). The concept of green offer or green supply has more dimensions. We can distinguish between:

- *Products and services*, produced in a more sustainable way, including their production processes and their price/quality characteristics;
- *Information flows* concerning green products, services and production processes;
- *Images and narratives* concerning green products, services and production processes.

Over these three dimensions, green provisioning can be organized in several, distinct ways, resulting in different levels of green supply in a given society, sector or consumption domain. Although the focus of this paper is on the "supply side" of production-consumption chains, the relationship with social practices and end-users is crucial for our analysis. The explicit focus on citizen-consumers and their behavioral routines makes our analysis different from prevailing studies of Corporate Social Responsibility and of "cleaner production" strategies. Processes at the provider side of the chain are analyzed in their direct relevance for social practices and consumption domains.

5.2 Outline of the Argument

In this paper we will further analyze the strategies and motives that guide providers in making available a green offer of a certain quantity and quality within social practices. We are particularly interested in the kind of consumer orientation that comes along with these provision strategies. We first address the question why an explicit consumer orientation in green provisioning is needed (Section 5.2). As we argue next, consumers as change agents have to be informed, activated and organized in order to help reduce both the *direct* and the *indirect* use of energy and resources in their social practices (Section 5.3). The core sections of this paper concern the systematic analysis of provider strategies. The focus will be on companies and actors on the market, since they have a key role to play in the development of new, greener products, production processes, information flows and images. First we will describe, in a general sense, which strategies for the greening of production and consumption processes entrepreneurs use (Section 5.4), followed by an attempt to evaluate these company strategies from the perspective of the citizen-consumer (Section 5.5). The framework that we present in these sections is generic in character, but the analysis it is based upon is mainly informed by experiences of companies and consumers in OECD countries. We will conclude the paper with an exploration of the ways in which the framework applies to emerging consumer classes in developing countries and transitional economies (Section 5.6).

5.3 Why Looking at Environmental Impacts of Consumption?

In debates on sustainable production and consumption, there are a significant number of scholars and policy makers who hold that sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles can be realized without the active involvement and commitment of citizen-consumers. In view of the difficult, heterogeneous, un-organized character of the consumer target group, they claim, it is preferable to organize more sustainable production and consumption patterns "behind the back of end-users".[2]

The arguments used in support of this claim are twofold. First, it is argued that the most significant burden of production-consumption chains can be found "upstream" in the chain: in the processes of extracting raw materials, production and transport of intermediary products and end-products. The part of the environmental pressure realized at the downstream side of the chain, during the use phase (consumption, waste production, re-use etc.), would be too small to justify a special consumption policy. Second, it is argued that citizen-consumers, when it comes to their consumption behavior, from the perspective of policy makers seem to be virtually "un-steer-able" and difficult to control, at least with the steering models and instruments developed hitherto.

In response to the first argument of consumption decisions and activities at the down-side of production-consumption chains being less significant and relevant when compared to the decisions and activities higher-up in the production chains and networks, we would argue that:

- The environmental pressure at the end-user side the chains (amounting to approximately 1/3 of total pressure) is still a considerable proportion and difficult to neglect when trying to reduce footprints of production and consumption (Huber, 2004).
- The absolute and relative proportions of the consumer related environmental pressures are increasing in virtually all OECD-countries, with consumption related impacts being related to the most obstinate and persisting kind of environmental deterioration (Vringer et al., 2000), and

[2] Joseph Huber, in his more recent work, clearly distances himself from a citizen-consumer oriented environmental policy, as can be read from the following quote: "A paradigm shift from downstream to upstream implies a parallel shift in the emphasis of policy. Environmental policy will again have to focus on industrial production, while not spending too much time on user behavior and consumer demand. Demand, though, has an important role to play. But it is manufacturers of end-products such as buildings, vehicles, appliances and consumer goods, and also large retailers, who are in the position to effectively implement supply chain management. This is none of a user's nor of a government's business." (Huber, 2004: 22)

- Consumer involvement in more sustainable production-consumption chains is not restricted to only the “direct pressure on the environment” in the end-use phase, but also stretches towards the “indirect pressures and impacts” as they occurs in the provider-dominated phases of the chain (Vringer & Blok, 1995).[3]

The final argument, in principle, is wide-ranging and of great importance. It recognizes that the environmental performance of citizen-consumers, in their everyday-life consumption behavior, is connected to and partly determined by what has happened in previous phases of the production-consumption process. When one buys a new car, already a quarter or more of total environmental impacts – when judged from a Life Cycle Assessment point of view – is gone. Consumers concerned about reducing their ecological footprints are likely to engage themselves one way or another with the upstream processes and their impacts next to reducing the environmental pressure in the use phase of the products and services. In this respect the distinction between direct and indirect environmental impacts is relevant to discuss in some more detail.

5.4 Direct and Indirect Environmental Impacts and the Relative Power of the Citizen-Consumer in Production-Consumption Chains

The distinction between “direct” and “indirect” environmental impacts is relevant because the idea behind the use of these concepts in research and policy is that consumers should not only be informed about the pressure on the environment they cause themselves, in the phase of “direct use”. Consumers should also get information about the pressure on the environment which is caused by others (mining companies, farms, transporters, manufacturers, etc.), in the phases preceding the end-use phase, and about the impacts after disposal (recycling, landfill, incineration, etc.). Current label systems deal with direct and indirect impacts in different ways. Energy labels, as they are applied for cars and appliances like refrigerators or computers, usually inform the citizen-consumer about energy use in the end-use phase. On the basis of this direct energy use, the car or fridge gets a score ranging from A to D etc. These labels say virtually nothing about the indirect pressure on the environment as it is related to the production and transport, storage and distribution of the car and the fridge. Other labels specifically target the indirect impacts on environment. Examples are organic food labels, MSC and FSC and more recently

[3] The distinction between “direct” versus “indirect” pressure on the environment is especially used in research into energy use, but in our opinion this distinction has a broader applicability (Vringer & Blok, 1995). It is worth noting that in literature on company environmental management “direct impacts” usually refers to impacts of the company itself (on-site impacts), while “in-direct impacts” refers to impacts upstream and downstream, including impacts of products in the consumption stage. Here we use the terms in accordance to the consumer perspective.

the Carbon Credit label for food. Still other labels incorporate impacts of production as well as impacts of use, as for instance the EU Ecolabel for indoor paints.

In the EU Ecolabel, as in many other generic environmental labels (e.g. Nordic Swan, Blaue Engel) the choice for including direct and/or indirect impacts is based on Life Cycle Assessment considerations. Only those phases in the life cycle that contribute most to the total of life cycle impacts are included. From a perspective of consumer agency, however, communication at the consumption junction through ecolabels and other types of product information is not only a matter of conveying information on the product's life cycle impacts, it is also a matter of involving consumers in different phases of the product chain. In this perspective, information about the direct pressure on the environment has another character and serves another goal than information about indirect pressure on the environment. When aiming at reducing the pressure on the environment, consumers have other means at their disposal for direct impacts than they have for indirect environmental impacts. One is, as it were, confronted with other dynamics of exercising power. In the case of direct environmental impacts there is much more influence on processes as compared to indirect impacts.[4] These dynamics are visualized in Figs. 5.1a and 5.1b.

Both figures center on information communicated at the "consumption junction" (Schwartz-Cowan, 1987). Other streams of information (e.g. from ENGOs to citizen-consumers, or from providers to ENGOs or government) are not included. Figure 5.1a depicts how providers gather information on impacts in the different phases of the production-consumption chain and communicate this informa-

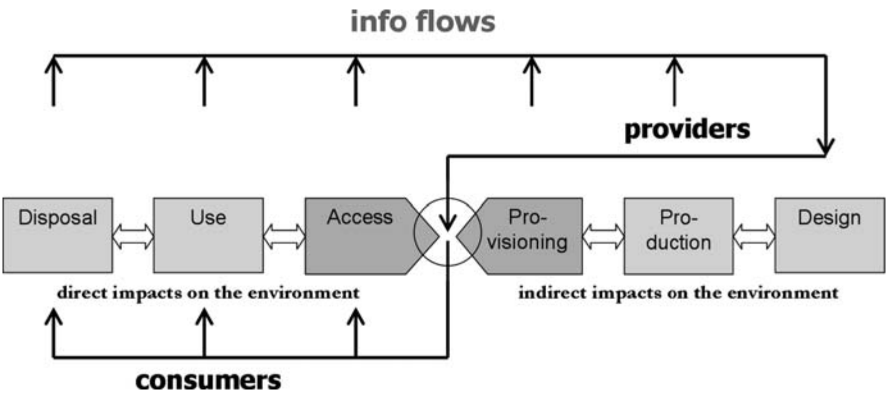

Fig. 5.1a Information-Flows Related to "Direct" and "Indirect" Environmental Impacts

[4] Although we continue to speak of "product chains", the analysis presented here is more generally applicable to networks of providers and users. In the sphere of energy, water and waste services, for instance, we can speak of the distinction between "before" and "after" the meter: inside the house the citizen-consumer is the boss and he/she is responsible, while he/she can exercise only limited power on the expert systems responsible for building, maintaining and well-functioning of the network or "grid" before the meter. The meter, literally, functions as the "shift" between end-users and providers (Van Vliet, 2002; Hegger, 2007).

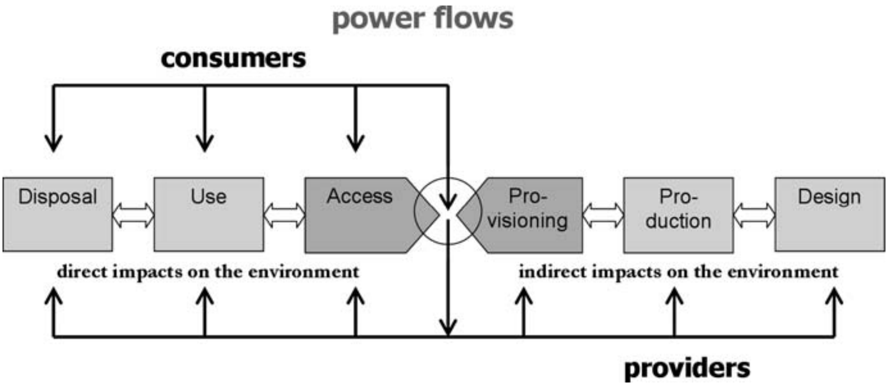

Fig. 5.1b Relative Power of Consumers in Influencing the (in)Direct Environmental Impacts within Production-Consumption Chains

tion through ecolabels and other information formats to consumers, who can utilize this information in access (e.g. in deciding "to buy or not buy"), use, and disposal. Figure 5.1b illustrates that consumers have the power to directly change their ways of disposal, use and access, but also have power to influence providers through the consumption junction (in particular, through their product preferences), and in doing so can provoke change in all stages of the product chain (e.g. through changes in product design by the providers).

5.5 Provider Strategies for Developing Green Offer

The availability of sustainable action perspectives strongly varies per consumption domain and social practice, but in most cases green supply depends directly on the behavior of pro-active providers who, challenged by governmental regulations and societal trends and pressures, try to create markets and level playing fields for new products and services.[5] The environmental policy of (national) governments, from the 1970s onwards, has been a strong initiating and regulating factor for making green products and services available. Today however, in terms of the "modes of provision" of green products, the market mode has become the most dominant dimension, at least after the first wave of privatization in the EU from the 1990s onwards. States are less involved in developing green supply themselves, via the state-mode of provision. They instead tend to use their market power when applying and stimulating green procurement programs. For that reason, the behavior of

[5]In CSR literature we can speak of a business case – more sustainable products and services lead to the creation of surplus value for the company, including (1) creating economic value (efficiency; finding new markets; distinction by means of an extra quality in a "saturated" market); (2) creating reputational value; and (3) parenting advantage (Dan & Kim, 2003).

companies and other market parties (branch associations, consultancy firms, chambers of commerce, professional organizations etc.) has become of crucial importance in developing and making available more sustainable products and services.

Because of the dominance of the market mode of provision, we will gear the analysis of provider strategies to the behavior of entrepreneurs and their innovation activities in the context of markets. We will start with a brief look at the various ways in which entrepreneurs have been involved in sustainable development so far, distinguishing between three basic forms of involvement.

5.5.1 Involvement in "Cleaner Production" Strategies

From the 1970s onwards many studies have been carried out into the process of innovation and diffusion of new, clean technology. In particular the shift from "end-of-pipe" technologies to "clean" production processes and technologies was found to be related to characteristics of entrepreneurs and firms. Also network-analyses have contributed to a better understanding of the "environment-related behavior" of firms (Cramer & Schot, 1990; Cramer, 2006). In this strongly technology-oriented literature distinctions were made between types of technology: from end-of-pipe via clean technology to preventive technology and technology for integrated chain management; Cradle to Grave and Cradle to Cradle strategies. Technological innovation was linked to waste and emission prevention assessment (within companies) and Life Cycle Assessments (analysis of environmental impacts over the whole product life cycle) to determine optimal solutions for minimizing process and product impacts. In addition to methods of assessment and technology innovation, these strategies also featured new types of standardized and certified management and auditing systems, of which ISO14001 is most broadly known. Technological and managerial strategies were connected to attitudes of entrepreneurs aiming for eco-modernization of their productive activities. These attitudes were said to vary from defensive (refusing to do anything unless forced by law) on the one extreme of the spectrum to pro-active (seeing environment as a challenge for innovation and for finding new markets) on the other extreme (Van Koppen & Hagelaar, 1998). Taken together, this type of strategies can be characterized as "cleaner production" (UNEP, 2002). Cleaner production strategies may or may not be extended to the consumption and disposal phases. Typically however, they deal with these phases from a technology and company management (eco-efficiency) perspective, and do not incorporate an explicit orientation on "green products" or consumer information.

5.5.2 Involvement in Product Policy Strategies

As a second main category of company involvement, we distinguish innovation strategies focusing on new, green products and services. In this type of strategies, Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) of products are not only used for improving eco-efficiency, but also for shifting consumption patterns. One of the results of product-oriented research and policy is the presence of a wide range of product labels. There are labels at different scale levels (from the EU to private, local entrepreneurs) and they are characterized by the nature and the range of the product groups they refer to, and by the nature of the (environmental) information flows brought together in these labels. For discussing and evaluating the consumer orientation of supply strategies of providers, both the formats and contents of (eco)labels are important indicators, next to the different ways in which labels can be incorporated into social practices of consumption.[6] Another feature of these product-oriented strategies is the shift from products to services. Consumptive use is not thought of in terms of buying and owning a material product, but in terms of utilizing a specific service over a particular period in time. This way of redefining product use opens new options of more frequent use, parallel use, and forms of reuse and recycling. The so-called product-service-systems receive considerable attention of consumption scientists (Meijkamp, 2000; Scholl, 2007).

5.5.3 Involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies

The third category of strategies we distinguish is related to the principle of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). While its origins are much older, it was only in the 1990s that CSR emerged as a dominant principle in corporate strategies, when it became closely linked with sustainable development and the "Triple P bottom line" of People, Planet and Profit (Kolk, 2003). CSR-related strategies include the implementation of certified management systems, as mentioned above, but also encompass ethical codes of conduct, and voluntary forms of public reporting, for instance by issuing an annual sustainability report according to the standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, 2006). In such reports companies provide transparent and detailed information on the company's social and environmental objectives beyond financial profit, and its actual performance in meeting these objectives. By publicly demonstrating their sustainability performance, companies earn their "license to produce". Moreover, they improve their rankings on the sustainability rating systems that have emerged in global financial markets, such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Group Index.

In the past, CSR has developed quite separately from consumer oriented provision strategies. CSR-related information is usually communicated to other target groups than consumers, and consumer oriented information is usually devoid of references to CSR-related strategies (see textbox on Wal Mart). But apparently, this

[6]For example in the domain of housing, there existed many labels and information schemes which are hardly used at all in consumption practices. Both real estate agents and citizen-consumers buying and selling a house turned out to be only scarcely aware of the possibilities to incorporate environmental labels into this practice (see Putman & Van den Burg, 2007). This was one of the reasons why the Dutch government decided to introduce an integrated environmental label for all houses to be bought and sold from 2008 onwards.

situation is changing. Zadek, Sabapathy, Døssing, & Swift (2003) distinguish three "generations" in the development of CSR: a first generation of philantropy; a second generation of strategic corporate responsibility, characterized by the aforementioned management and reporting systems; and a third generation they call "competitive responsibility", where the challenge is to "create markets that systematically reward sustainable practices" (Zadek et al., 2003: 10). In this third generation, CSR and consumer oriented strategies become of mutual importance. When discussing the consumer orientation of provisioning strategies, therefore, it may be useful to distinguish between strategies that mainly aim at developing green products and finding new markets for them, and strategies that situate such efforts within the broader orientation of CSR.[7]

5.6 Consumer Orientation Within Provider Strategies

Our brief overview of the efforts companies are making for sustainable development illustrates that there are different ways in which market actors can engage with sustainable development. They can:

- Make production processes and products more sustainable during the production phase (reducing the indirect impacts on the environment) and during the consumption phase (reducing the direct impacts on the environment);
- Engage and actively cooperate in making this process of greening visible to citizen-consumers, for example by labeling (parts of) the product portfolio and by showing to consumers the different ways in which the company and its production processes are being made more sustainable;
- As organizations not only hammer out and make visible their performance with regard to sustainable development but actively seek to place their sustainability initiatives and responsibilities in the broader context of the need for a society in which lifestyles and consumption patterns are organized in a sustainable way.

For an explicit consumer oriented company environmental policy, all three types of corporate activities are relevant. They will be further analyzed and judged from a specific "citizen-consumer perspective" below. A key notion in our analysis is that companies can target their activities more or less explicitly at the end-users of their products, addressing these actors both in their role as engaged citizens and in their role as (critical) consumers. At present, an explicit consumer perspective is often missing or only implicitly available in sustainability strategies of enterprises. Too

[7] One of the issues to be confronted in this area is the distinction between "environmental" criteria in the strict, technical sense of footprints, emissions, and energy-use on the one hand and broader social images of sustainable development on the other. The process of the "cultural (re)embedding" of technical environmental criteria in broader, attractive images of the good society is an issue taken up for example in VROM 2005.

often "environment" or "sustainable development" are seen as internal, production-process-oriented and clean-products-oriented affairs to be managed by the technological experts and environmental staff of the company. This is the case when utility companies supply water, energy and waste services to households and hardly think about the different ways in which end-users as "co-producers" can be used – and made co-responsible – for a more sustainable supply of water, energy and waste services (Van Vliet, 2002). This is also the case when companies pursue major efforts to achieve cleaner products and production processes but hardly use these activities to profile themselves towards consumers and to position themselves as a green enterprise.

Because we argue that taking a consumer orientation in green provisioning is important for engaging citizen-consumers with green consumption, we propose to systematically analyze the various provider strategies for sustainable development with regard to the nature of their consumer orientation. In characterizing the behavior of providers we will use the three dimensions of greening distinguished before:

1. The greening of product flows and associated production processes: consumer orientation in the green product and process line;
2. The way providers organize information flows around their green offer: consumer orientation in the information line;
3. The images and narratives with which green provider concerns are made visible and communicated towards consumers: consumer orientation in the socio-cultural symbols line.

Crossing the different levels of greening strategies with these three dimensions produces the matrix of Table 5.1.

In the following sections we will elaborate on the information line and the socio-cultural symbols line. Before doing so, however, we point at the cumulative logic of the matrix, going from left to right and from top to bottom. Companies that do not make actual improvements cannot present trustworthy information or narratives; and companies that are not engaged in environmental product improvement and consumer information cannot make a consistent claim to a sustainable production and consumption strategy. Strategies that so to say skip this cumulative logic, may be called deficient. A well-known deficient strategy is greenwash, which means that images and narratives of green products or green corporate citizenship are presented which are not backed up by actual improvements and reliable information. Another deficient strategy, in our eyes, is companies presenting themselves as green companies, and engaging in the promotion of sustainable practices (e.g. supporting local nature conservation projects), but remaining consumer-silent with regard to the direct and indirect performance of their products.

At the highest strategy level, companies welcome and co-organize consumer involvement for making consumption more sustainable. Citizen-consumers and their organizations are seen as partners in a sustainability dialogue; they are – as it were – "pulled into the chain" with the help of various forms of political consumerism (Micheletti, 2003).

Table 5.1 Consumer Oriented Provider Strategies

Dimension level	Improving environmental performance	Providing information to consumers	Presenting images and narratives to consumers
1. No environmental product strategies	Improvement of production processes (indirect product performance) only	No or incidental consumer oriented information flows	No or incidental presentation of images and narratives
2. Consumer-silent product strategies	Improvement of direct and indirect product performance	No or incidental consumer oriented information flows	No or incidental presentation of images and narratives
3. Green product strategies	Improvement of direct and indirect product performance	Information on product performance (eco-label) and product strategy	Green images and narratives oriented to product groups
4. Sustainable production and consumption strategies	Improvement of direct and indirect product performance and promotion of sustainable practices	Information on product performance and strategy and on consumer-related sustainable practices	Images and narratives oriented to product groups and to sustainable citizenship

5.6.1 Information and Presentation Strategies

A telling feature of the environmental management strategies of many large companies, is that these companies make substantial efforts for greening their processes and products, but do not make their efforts known to the outside world. Companies do not want to profile themselves with green products because they do not see environment and sustainable development as a "selling point", because they do not want their "normal" portfolio to get an image of "not-green", or because they are afraid to attract the attention of ENGOs and get dragged into disputes in which production decisions become (eco)politicized. In such cases, companies deliberately decide not to attach a consumer strategy to their efforts for sustainable development.[8] Even when companies do have an active information strategy that encompasses LCA, tracking and tracing along the product chain, labeling and certification, this is often not combined with an active orientation to the end-user. The information obtained is mainly targeted to other institutional actors (financing companies; potential business partners; governmental bodies; ENGOs and other civil society organizations), in order to reinforce a solid company reputation: "a good company does

[8]The Toyota Prius presents an interesting case of environmental framing: initially, it was promoted as an environment-friendly car; later, its high-tech character was emphasized, and currently, the environmental qualities are highlighted again (Nijhuis & Spaargaren, 2006).

a good job both financially and environmentally". A company such as IKEA, for instance, internally pays much importance to its environmental performance but does not want to pro-actively use this as a selling point or in the context of "branding" activities (Martens & Spaargaren, 2002; see also textbox on Wal-Mart).

Once a company opts for an active consumer orientation in the presentation and information strategy there is, theoretically speaking, a range of different formats for framing the information to customers and expressing the general orientation of the company. For illustration, we mention three of the possible formats.

- "We are a company that also welcomes green customers, and we try to cater for their needs, like we do for other customers."
- "We are gradually but inevitably greening more and more parts of our product portfolio, so we are interested in attracting more green customers and providing them with the information they want."
- "We have sustainability as our key corporate mission and we offer products and services that enable consumers of varying groups and lifestyles to make sustainable consumption work in relevant consumption domains (mobility, food, dwelling, holiday)."

The first and second format represent a modest and a more ambitious version of the level three provider strategies (green product strategies) in Table 5.1. The third format reflects level four in this table (sustainable production and consumption strategies). Particularly at this level, the information presented to customers would not only concern specific product characteristics, but would also highlight the sustainability performance of the company more generally, including, among others, the environmental performance of the production processes, transport, and buildings. This can be achieved, for instance, by visualizing the use of solar power, by displaying environmental certificates and awards for the company, or by improving the biodiversity and landscape quality of the company's terrain. When buying products, customers would not only get information on products, but also be made aware that they are buying from a green company.

The case of Wal-Mart.

The US-based multinational retail company Wal-Mart presents a characteristic case of information-giving. It has two general websites, one targeted to consumers (walmart.com) and one targeted to other actors – such as business, NGOs – interested in corporate information (walmartstores.com). The site for consumers gives no direct links to environmental information. Only by searching on keywords, for instance "organic", visitors get access to information on "earth-friendly products" such as organic cotton and energy-saving light bulbs. In the product information of other products, usually no information on energy use or other environmental attributes is provided (Wal-Mart, 2008a). By contrast, the corporate information site has "Environment" as one of its four most prominent links, leading to a large number of internet pages with information on environmental improvement of processes and products. Here, Wal-Mart expresses an international, pro-active environmental strategy. "We are creating networks of innovation – made up of suppliers, associates, and non-governmental organizations. We are working on sustainable packaging, cotton, wood, fish, produce, electronics, and the elimination of substances of concern in all merchandise. We have been discussing our intentions with government officials in the United States, China and beyond, and we are encouraging legislation that promotes a healthy future for every-one" (Wal-Mart, 2008b). Behind Carrefour, Wal-Mart is the second largest international retail chain in China. Its Chinese website mentions environment in general terms, and gives examples of community-based environmental projects supported by Wal-Mart China, but there is no environmental information about products. The Chinese website provides links to the general websites of Wal-Mart (Wal-Mart, 2008c).

5.6.2 The Socio-Cultural Dimension of Consumer Oriented Strategies

In the anthropological literature on consumption the social and symbolic dimension of consumption is emphasized. "Forget about products", Douglas and Isherwood (1979) boldly state in this respect. Do not look at the (green or not-green) products itself but at the meanings people seek in or behind the use of these greener products. With the consumption of more sustainable products, people show that certain social norms and values are essential for them. They think for example that animals are generally mistreated in modern production and consumption systems, and for that reason choose not to consume meat or dairy products or to consume only products for which is indicated – through a label or otherwise – that animal welfare has been taken into account during the production phase. Sustainable development – be it animal welfare, or protection of vulnerable ecosystems, or a socially more responsible way of production – is always loaded with socio-cultural images to which various (lifestyle) groups of citizen-consumers attach meaning and priorities.

People differ with respect to the priority they attach to sustainable development and green products. Next to differences in the general environmental attitudes of consumers, we see differences emerging between different consumption domains (food, dwelling the house, leisure and holiday, mobility, clothing and personal care). In some domains, there are already many "green images" and meanings of sustainable development available. Next to general notions as "less emissions" or "climate neutrality", some domains have very specific narratives which help shaping the consumer concerns and attitudes within these domains. For example, the attention for child labor is articulated very specifically in the clothing sector, and less in food production. In clothing and personal care, energy use and the associated climate problems feature less prominently as compared to the domains of housing and mobility. In the area of food, health related concerns (food risks as well as health benefits) are salient, while in the domains of housing and clothing they are less prominent, and in the domain of (eco)tourism they are not (yet) articulated.[9]

[9] When comparing different consumption domains for their environmental story lines and narratives, it can be argued that some domains (for example housing) are very much influenced by the environmental technologies related "engineering rationality", while in other domains "life-world and lifestyle" rationalities are more prominent (for example clothing and travel).

Thus, for each consumption domain a range of domain-specific consumer concerns can be formulated, which providers can take into account in their provisioning strategies. To put it differently, the "narratives" of sustainable development with which providers position their products can be more general in nature or more specific to the domain; and they can connect more or less to the actual sustainable development concerns as they concretely feature within groups of citizen-consumers involved in the reproduction of the social practices within that domain. A building contractor can market a very energy-efficient insulation material with the help of a general "climate-change story line" (if one saves energy one contributes to a better earth) or with a more specific story line in which the isolation product is argued to improve the concrete energy profile of the house (this will bring down your EPN with 0.2) and thereby reduce heating costs for you as consumer. Besides, for the same product different environmental gains can be linked up, more or less explicitly, with other social values or concerns. Insulation can not just lead to financial gains for the end-user but can also be associated with a more healthy indoor climate (not humid, controlled and well-ventilated) and therewith to a better health for its inhabitants.

Companies can engage, more or less, in the domain-specific consumer-concerns and use (or not use) these specific values to typify the socio-cultural meaning of their products and services within their domains. Here again, companies working within different consumption domains are confronted with a different starting position when developing meaningful communication with their clients about sustainable development. Within the food market, thinking about the meaning of food (that is produced in a more sustainable way) for end-users has advanced much further than in a supply-led market such as the housing market. Also the controversies and contradictions in defining sustainable development vary between consumption domains. A pro-active orientation on citizen-consumers in the socio-cultural line means that providers help organizing and take part in a dialogue about images of the good, more sustainable life to be realized with the help of their products, services and images.

5.7 Extending the Analysis to Non-OECD Countries and Their Developing New Middle Classes

Conceptually, our analysis is not limited to highly industrialized countries of the North; empirically, however, it has mainly been informed by examples of provider-consumer interactions in highly industrialized, modern societies. In this final section we reflect on the applicability of our analysis to transitional economies and developing countries. In these reflections, we diverge from the often-heard opinion that consumers in the South, and more specifically the new middle classes emerging in the process of development, have little interest in sustainable consumption, and are bound to follow roughly the same pathways of unsustainable consumerism that have characterized developments in many Western countries. We claim that sustainable consumption strategies of providers, as they are central to our analysis, are of immediate relevance to many non-OECD countries as well. In support of this claim, we point at (1) the globalization of company sustainability strategies and public audiences; and (2) the incipient green consumer orientations in new middle classes.

5.7.1 Globalizing Companies, Globalizing Publics

> Three billion customers a year, tens of thousands of suppliers, more than 450,000 employees throughout the world. . .The Group, through its activities, has an economic, social and environmental responsibility and commits to the quality of its products and the security of its customers. Each day, the Carrefour group mobilizes its competence, energy and resources to build a high performance, sustainable and customer-oriented company. (Carrefour, 2007)

In the sector of food retail Migros (Switzerland) was one of the first major retailers setting sustainability standard for its products and processes. In the 1980s and 1990s, their example was followed by many "national" retailers in different countries.[10] From the 1990s onward, retail powers and their strategies for the greening of production and consumption have taken on a truly global dimension, as the citation above illustrates. These statements – taken from the opening pages of the 2006 sustainability report of Carrefour (2007) – illustrate the global point of view taken by one of the largest retail chains world-wide. While it may be disputed to what extent Carrefour in fact meets its high ambition, it is clear that the sustainability report makes an effort to substantiate the company's claims, by presenting key comparative indicators on several aspects of sustainability for the main countries of operation. Among the indicators used are the energy consumption of stores, and the number of labeled organic or ecological products.[11] Interestingly, these figures show that simple North-South dichotomies are no longer – if ever – useful for understanding provider environmental performance. The energy consumption in stores is highest in Malaysia and lowest in China (899 and 292 kWh per m2 sales area), with European countries varying in between these extremes. The highest numbers of organic or ecological label products are found in France (561) and Italy (560), but Singapore (60) and Thailand (21) perform better than, for instance, Greece (15) and Portugal (4). Even more important than these specific results is the fact that Carrefour displays a global outlook to issues of corporate responsibility by applying the same criteria to all its operations world-wide and by presenting them in one integrated

[10] Different retail chains show different aspects of the sustainable development strategies of retailers: Whole-Foods (US) makes a special case of showing that sustainability can go along with premium quality; Tesco (UK) illustrates the fact that sustainability transitions can be organized within a relatively short period of time; Colruyt (Belgium) combines the greening of their product assortment with a concomitant greening of their retail production processes. The list could be extended with many other national chains and their particular contribution (see also Oosterveer, Guivant, & Spaargaren, 2007).

[11] The instrument of the regular counting of eco-products in retail outlets is used by ENGOs in different European countries to put pressure on retail chains to enhance their environmental performance.

sustainability report. In doing so, Carrefour is a fore-runner, but not an exceptional one. Other international retail corporations take similar courses (see the text box on Wal Mart). This trend of what we may call a globalizing corporate sustainability discourse implies that provider strategies as for example in France directly feed into strategies world wide.

Complementary to the global corporate sustainability reports, there is a globalizing public audience to which the reports are addressed. This audience of among others organized consumers, NGOs and (competing) market actors shares the same discourse, and reviews sustainability reports from a similar comparative global perspective. European ENGOs may, for instance, check how performance in Asia compares to performance in EU countries. Advocates of small-scale, local retail companies may use the figures to demonstrate that they perform better than their transnational counterparts. In sum, the globalizing corporate sustainability discourse, exemplified by the Carrefour report, is both a manifestation of provider sustainability concerns and a driver towards further improvements on a worldwide scale. This not only applies to international corporate networks, but is also relevant in the case of domestic and local provider-consumer networks since they can use elements of the discourse in benchmarking their own performance.

5.7.2 Green Consumer Orientations in Different Regions of the World

Although the corporate sustainability discourse is a major force behind more environment-friendly production and consumption practices, most of it occurs "behind the back" of consumers. As we observed earlier, there is a great difference between the way companies communicate about sustainability to public audiences and the way they address consumers for selling their products. If we look, for instance, on the consumer sites of Carrefour in Belgium and Singapore, items on environment and green consumer products are not easy to find, and quite limited in number (see the Wal-Mart case for another example). More generally speaking, both for developed and developing countries, there is a difference between public reporting on corporate sustainability and the information and images communicated to consumers at the consumption junction. That being said, it is definitely true that in countries such as UK, the Netherlands, or Germany, green offer is much broader and more visible than in, e.g., India or China. Organic production in India, for example, is mainly for export. Nevertheless, the offer of organic products for domestic consumption is growing and struggling with similar obstacles – such as establishing robust supply logistics – as hindered initial growth in the West. A comparative advantage is that India already has successful export-oriented enterprises in organic products, which are now increasingly turning to domestic markets as well (Bhattacharyya, 2004; Carrol, 2005). While it seems premature to state, as one observer does, that "Middle Class India Joins Global Organic Food Wave" (Watson, 2006), it seems plausible that where middle classes have the capacity of buying greener products, green offer will expand at a faster pace than in the early stages of organic production in Western countries.

We have used the example of globalizing food retail strategies to substantiate our claim that provider strategies for the greening of production and consumption are not restricted to OECD-countries only. This having been said we agree of course that the global reach of company sustainable development strategies presents a number of new and sometimes complicated questions to be addressed in future research. Since consumer concerns for sustainable development are different in different regions of the world, also provider strategies for addressing consumer concerns in Asia will diverge in some respects from the strategies used in Europe or Latin-America. Preliminary comparative research on consumer concerns within these regions has revealed so far the significant differences which exist both with respect to the level and the content of consumer concerns for sustainable products and services. A second, overriding conclusion refers to major differences that exist in transparency and trust. Especially in some non-OECD countries, the basic levels of trust in the provisioning strategies of companies is sometimes far below the critical point, resulting in a general skepticism and mistrust from the side of citizen-consumers. Recognizing this widespread lack of basic trust in producers the Chinese Academy of Science for example has argued that

> the key element of the green consumption project is honesty. Only when the green producers guarantee the quality of their green products and only when the government and the market establish mechanisms for preventing fake green products, will the green consumer be willing to pay the "green expenses" for their green consumption (Chinese Academy of Science, 2007: 259–260).

With our analysis of the different roles and strategies companies may embrace when trying to establish a meaningful and sincere dialogue with consumers on issues of sustainable production and consumption, we hope to contribute to the strengthening of the global discourse on the greening of consumption (UN-CSD, 1995; OECD, 2001).

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Chapter 6
From Small Objects to Cars: Consumption Expansion in East Asia

Beng Huat Chua

Abstract To cover East Asia region analytically requires a researcher to abstract from specific geographic locations which vary widely in economic development, and focus on consumer practices. Empirically, the visual urban landscape, which is being rapidly transformed to accommodate consumer culture, appears to "convince" urbanites that goods on display, visually accessible, are within reach, in spite of real financial deprivation. Ubiquitous availability of small objects is a sign of emergence of consumerism; inexpensive but satisfies the pleasures of "having" discretionary income and the "freedom" to choose. Regional, trans-national media flows provide a pan-Asian reference point for consumption practices. As family remains relatively intact in East Asian societies, and economic development is at the nascent state for many locations, consumption is very much focused on family needs and demands rather than individuals. Finally, the highest aspiration is car ownership, emblem of full middle class status, remains out of reach for most of the ascending middle class in East Asia. As the state's legitimacy depends on it, the state will continue to encourage the expansion of consumption as part of economic growth, which does not bode well for global sustainability.

Keywords East Asia · Family oriented consumption · Regional media flows · State legitimacy · Visual landscape

"Consumerism" is always about "excess", never about necessity. "Excess" can be framed positively as breaking away from conditions of necessity and minimal sustenance to a higher level of material culture and, a more civilized status. This has been the historical narrative of the expansion of consumer culture in Europe; the emergence of a modern, urbane, bourgeois life from about the late 17th century. It can be framed negatively as "tasteless" and mindless mass behavior that is overtly exhibitionist, wasteful and culturally "inauthentic"; elitist

B.H. Chua (✉)
Asia Research Institute and Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, Kent Ridge, Singapore
e-mail: aricbh@nus.edu.sg

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sentiments summarized in the derogatory concept of the "nouveau riche" or "arriviste". The emphasis on the "new" as a negative brings out the very class character in discourse on consumerism; the "old", "established" are privileged as "cultured", while the "new" is exactly its opposite, lacking in culture but always attempting and failing, because of the tendency to be "over the top", to imitate the established counterpart. Consumerism is thus never just a material issue but always already a class conscious, "moral" issue. As Asian economies are late developers in capitalism, consumer culture is very much at its nascent state in many of the countries; not surprisingly, then, the new rich in Asia are often subjected to such derogatory labeling, not only from the West but also from its own "old" wealth in their midst.

Post-WW II, Asian countries have been able to yolk the process of "nation building" to the aspiration for a better material life among their hitherto materially deprived population, creating what is called the "developmental" states. The well trodden path of export-oriented industrialization, pioneered by the newly industrialized economies of East Asia – Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Singapore, the so-called "Tiger" economies – has become a model for other late developing nations in Asia. As the countries enter the similar path of capitalist development at different time, they are therefore at different phases of development; for example, as labour intensive industries move to tap on PRC's cheap and abundant labour supply, Singapore has moved up the technology ladder into capital intensive, knowledge-base industries, such as pharmaceutical and biosciences.

Rapid national economic growth has engendered, at uneven rates, a growing middle class throughout Asia. After more than four decades of double digit economic growth, the "Tiger" economies have spawned a consolidated middle class. On the other hand, others such as Vietnam and the People's Republic of China (PRC), which marketized their economies as recently as the 1980s, has a very thin layer of the "middle class", if one used the stringent criteria of a constellation of measures: tertiary education, professional employment and home and car ownership. Regardless of the size of the middle class, all over Asia, national economic development has translated into expansion and improvement of material life. Routinized consumption practices, supported by well established infrastructure of shopping malls and other retail establishments, are two essential and visible components for the development of a consumer culture. Even where the middle class is still proportionally thin relative to the national population, consumerism has pervades the entire society, which can be immediately visually registered by any casual observer, local or foreign.

Drawing on the differences of consumption levels from Asian countries which are at different levels of capitalist development, we can map the steps of development of consumer culture in Asia. Moving from the most immediate to the most inaccessible highest order consumer good within a comparative frame, we are able to construct the "career" of an imaginable consumer as he/she moves up the class ladder to full middle class status. These are, of course, only heuristic tools or "models" which may facilitate comparative studies of consumption and consumerism in different economic environments and processes of class formations.

The relatively recent development of consumer culture in Asia might also recuperate part of the history of its development in the West, contributing to the possibility of a generalized conceptualization of steps towards a consumer culture as part of the process of its globalization.

6.1 Visual Environment

The pervasiveness of consumerism is first and foremost registered visually; consumer culture is unavoidably a visual culture. “To see and be seen” captures this essential visuality – individuals decking out in full amour of fashionable bodily adornments hanging out at alfresco trendy cafes, with their automobiles parked nearby for all to see. Consumption is unavoidably a mode of self-display. However, visuality goes beyond bodily self-display. It is central to the creation of an environment that engenders desire and aspiration to consume: high-rise offices and apartments; ubiquitous shopping malls and other retail establishments with plate-glass display windows housing mannequins in latest fashions; magazines with pages of glossy advertisements from which the publishers derived their profit rather than the actual sales of the magazine; magazines, newspapers, Internet sites with pictorial illustrations on how to decorate your homes, how to “cook” an ethnic dish, how to dress and carry oneself in proper deportment; colorfully handouts and postcards stuffed into the hands of pedestrians on busy streets, and of course, private cars of all makes that clog up the roads. Living in the city is routinized window-shopping, writ large.

Without apparent conscious coordination, the highly visible objects create a visual environment that signifies the “modern” material life; an environment that encourages and engenders aspirations for a better material life, a more “civilized” life through consumption. It is an environment that keeps alive the individual’s motivation to strive to possess and to consume; a motivation that is rejuvenated with each object possessed, consumed. Consumption becomes, and is, a life project. The fragmented-totality of the visual, aspiration-engendering urban environment is particularly important in countries where the discretionary disposable income is very limited and the actual ability to consume remains very low, such as contemporary urban China with its very uneven distribution of consumption.[1] All the consumer items visually on offer in the mundane environment create the illusion that they are all accessible. Visual availability compensates for the material deprivation (Huang, 2004), sublimating actual deprivation, suppressing the fact of inequality of income and access, if only temporarily. As a Shanghai taxi driver says, “Now in Shanghai we can see everything but we also know that we cannot have it. So in comparison

[1] In Shanghai, in 1998 “the gap between the middle 20% and the top 10% was 8,320 yuan; by 2003 it exceeded 25,000 yuan” (Davis, 2005: 172) and, the consumption expenditure of the top 10% doubled 7,594 (1998)–14,515 (2003); next 30% by about 50% and bottom 60% relatively stagnant (Davis, 2005: 173).

to before we know there is a lot out there, but we cannot have it" (quoted in Davis, 2005: 186). Beyond the visual environment, consumption begins with very small objects of desire.

6.2 Four Levels of Consumption

6.2.1 Small Objects: Modernity as Adornment

In 2006, during a conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, a left-wing Indonesian colleague was aghast when he walked past a "nail bar", a very small manicurist shop. To him, this was the measure of both the progressive erasure of socialism in Vietnam and the decadence of the Vietnamese as consumers. He is quite mistaken on the second count; the "nail bar" is an index of the beginning of consumerism. Emergence of consumer culture is precisely in "small objects", like nail polish. Small objects – cosmetics, costume jewelries and, of course, clothes – are generally locally produced and inexpensive and, conventionally, purchased by women. The first blush of consumerism is often to be found in women's bodily consumption practices.[2]

Given their low costs, consumers are spared pangs of deferred gratification. They do not have to save for a period of time to afford the small objects. On the other hand, as objects of adornment that call attention to one-self, they are endowed with high self-display value; such is the raison d'être for urban fashion practices (Simmel, 1950). Thus, with the minimum of discretionary expenditure, one can experience a whole string of pleasures of consumption: exercise the freedom to choose; consume a "useless" and therefore, "extravagant" object for the aestheticization of the self; experience a sense of being released from or unrestrained by the dull necessities of everyday life; display one's success relative to the others in the market place; comparative advantage in consumption being essential to personal motivation to be competitive.[3] No where is this more obvious that in contemporary urban China, where the colors on the urban bodies, men and women, erase not only the drabness of the green, blue and grey uniforms of the Maoist era but also signals the arrival of consumerism as daily life (Li, 1998). With a minimum of discretionary expenditure on bodily adornment one can feel having left behind the past, the rural, behind and stepped into the "modern".[4]

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[2]The success of the global chain, Body Shop, could be in significant measure due to the selling of small personal hygiene and cosmetic items. One of the more successful Asian regional chains is the low cost cosmetic chain, Face Shop, from Korea.

[3]At the macro economic level, "luxury and excessive materialistic desires represent the best incentives for commerce and economic growth" (Sassatelli, 2007: 35).

[4]This is exemplified by the rural-urban migrant female factory workers in the PRC: They spend their leisure time shopping for cosmetics – lipstick, nail polish, face cream, and so on. In the evenings, they return to their dormitories where they talk excitedly about fashion and makeup and where they can find the best buys. The desire to transform themselves and have a new look is what draws them together (Ngai, 2003: 486).

6.2.2 Television: East Asian Cultural References

One of the items in the consumption ladder of a developing economy is television; beginning with sharing a television set, often in a community space, to private ownership. By the late 1980s, one of the "must have" items in a PRC household was a color television set.[5] Regionally, television production, distribution and consumption in East Asia have become highly integrated, facilitated by the proliferation of satellite and cable television stations. Chinese language programs have circulated in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore since the 1960s. In the 1990s, Japanese television drama became pervasive throughout East Asia (Iwabuchi, 2002). This was followed by Korean dramas since early 2000s. With all these crisscrossing, television, along with films and pop music, has been instrumental in engendering what may be called an East Asia Pop Culture (Chua, 2004).

Consumer culture, of course, figured predominantly in the television programs, especially in urban-based serial dramas. The producer of the very first pan-East Asian hit romance-drama from Japan explains the essential ingredient for success: good looking actor and actresses in the late 20s and early 30s, living independently in trendily decorated small apartments, dressed in brand-name clothes of latest season, meeting in trendy, generally Western, restaurants – all add up to an "urbane modern" on display – then add the largely irrelevant content of romance and melodrama (Toru, 2002). This successful formula has been subsequent copied by Korean television dramas (Lee, 2002), which captured East Asian audience with such speed that it came to be dubbed the "Korean Wave" (Chua & Iwabuchi, 2008).

Writing of Vietnamese youth watching Korean TV dramas, Thomas suggests that media representation of present day Korea "signifies prosperity and sophistication and engenders longing, a longing for a richer consumer world, for technical expertise and creativity, and for societies that foster these elements" (2004: 186).[6] Taiwanese fans latch on to the televisual representation of contemporary urban Japan: "as the locus where the individuals pursue freedom, love, and careers"; the imagery of "Tokyo" is a visual place that mediates between reality and dreams. These dreams have not yet been realized in Taipei, but are already presented [in] the "Tokyo" on screen (Ko, 2002: 123, original italics).[7] Japan is the imagined and imaginable future of the youths elsewhere in Asia.

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[5] A fascinating allegory of television and modernity in the PRC is the movie, Ermo (1995, dir. Zhou Xiaowen). For an insightful analysis of this movie and of television in general in the process of modernization of the PRC, see Wanning Sun (2002).

[6] As Thomas observes, there are also Vietnamese who see consumerism driven capitalist modernization as "cultural contamination" and destruction of wholesome local cultural practices. Ambivalence towards capitalist consumerism is pervasive in all developing societies, not limited to Vietnamese (Chua, 2000: 12–16).

[7] Ko's emphasis on youth audiences possibly arose from a generational gap in the reception of Japanese TV dramas in Taiwan. Older Taiwanese, particularly the intellectuals, harking back to the history of the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, are wary of yet another "invasion" of Japanese imperialism.

East Asian transnational television programs have generated an “Asian” self-perception along the single dimension of capitalist, consumerism-driven modern: Japan leads at the front and the less developed economies, like the recently marketized PRC and Vietnam, follows at the “back”, with Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore at the centre. This linear temporality of capitalist-consumerist modern enables television audiences in developed Asian capitalist economies to distance themselves from their counterparts from less developed economies as the “backward Asians”, while simultaneously serve, and is embraced, by the latter, as the imaginable “future”.

The trans-nationalization of East Asian media culture has thus provided consumers, particularly youth, with inter-Asia references for consumer goods and practices. On the street and in the retail shops, Japanese youth fashion is imitated in every major East Asian city. Entire section of a prime shopping centre or a shopping district, in Singapore, Taipei and Hong Kong, is dedicated to marketing of Japanese fashion products of bags, shoes, clothes, accessories, distinctive in their characteristic of “cute”. At its most theatrical are “Cosplay” (Japanized abbreviation of “costume play”) events, in which individuals dressed up as their favorite manga, animé, cartoon or other dark Gothic characters. The entire objective of such events is to parade the costumes, often self-made, and provide photo-opportunities for each other. The colors and complexities, or for detractors “fussiness”, of fashion influenced by Japanese youth street styles and media culture are in sharp contrast with the minimalist, pastel shades of internationalized “brand name” clothes, which are also available throughout Asia. Regionalization sits side-by-side with globalization.

6.2.3 Primacy of Home/Family Consumption

Housing is always a political object. Successful housing provision accrues to the incumbent government a high level of political legitimacy or political capital which it can use to finesse less popular social policies.[8] The central difficulty of achieving adequate provision of housing for the citizenry is cost. This was most apparent in communist economies, where land was nationalized and the state undertook to provide housing as a necessity, thus collects very low rent. Without significant recovery of the construction cost, housing provision became a drain on the national finance. Thus, after one or two cycles of housing construction the communist state ceased completely to build housing. The result was gross under supply of urban housing and virtual homelessness, as multiple families crowded into whatever housing that were available. Housing condition in the society as a whole was worse than that before the socialist revolution.[9] Such was the case with the PRC until 1978 (Zhu, 2000).

[8]For details of this line of argument see Chua (1997).

[9]The situation was much the same in East Europe during socialist regime, see Szelenyi (1983).

From then on, the government changed its policy to encourage homeownership, unburdening the state of its responsibilities in housing provision.[10] From 1980 to 2002, in the city of Shanghai, homeownership rate went from 15% to 80%, albeit, with very minimal space and facilities; minimum standard size of the flat was a mere 56 square meter and it was not until the year 2000, that city regulations bar sales of homes with shared entrances or communal bathrooms and kitchens (Davis, 2005: 179). The majority of the households had bought their flats from the state, which was selling its residential properties to sitting tenants. This push for homeownership has its reference to the successful national housing policy of Singapore, where 90% of the population live in public housing flats.[11] This a concrete instance of the late Deng Xiaoping's declaration that "China could borrow from Singapore experience to do even better" (quoted in King & Kusno, 2000: 62), indicating again an Asian rather than Western reference.

For first time homeowners, home furnishing becomes a preoccupation, especially since many of the small apartments sold are no more than bare concrete boxes, with the minimum of electricity and water outlets. For a sustained period of time, renovating, decorating and shopping for household goods absorb much of the family's discretionary expenditure and leisure time activities. The entire process is to "personalize" the standardized flat into one's own and differentiating it from the others. The PRC citizens are, of course, late comers to the "home modernization" activities. In the developed "Tiger" economies, home decoration is no longer one of obtaining electric home appliances and other basic household necessities but one of building gilded cages for all the creature comforts with individualized personalities.

From a national perspective, household consumption is a good index of the "consumption ladder" of a society with expanding consumerism. For example, in the case of the PRC, in the 1970s the three "must have" household items were bicycle, radio and showing machine; in the 1980s the three items had moved up to washing machine, refrigerators and color television. By the late 1990s, in PRC, "A modern, well-decorated home furnished with a complete set of new furniture plus all the available electric household appliances, [VCRs, video cameras, compact hi-fi systems, vacuum cleaners, microwave cookers, family computers, karaoke machines] and air-conditioning if possible, has become a realizable goal for more and more people, though at different costs and paces" (Zhao, 1997: 48–9). Little wonder that the global furniture chain of Swedish origin, IKEA, is one of the most popular consumption and leisure site in Shanghai. It provides modern European design home furnishing at affordable prices, especially the household objects as small as dish-washing linen (Davis, 2005: 180–182). According to Zhao, "Material betterment centring around the family has become

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[10]For discussion on the progressive movement towards full homeownership in contemporary PRC, see Davis (2003).

[11]Beyond homeownership, following Singapore's example, a provident fund system in which households are compelled to save a small portion of their monthly income towards the purchasing of housing was introduced by Zhu Rongji in 1991, then mayor of Shanghai (Davis, 2003: 187).

a dream shared by all" (1997: 49), such that that the New Left Review in which his article was published re-titled it "Confucian consumerism" on the journal's cover.

6.2.4 Cars

The car – "the central vehicle of all twentieth-century modernization" (Ross, 1995:19) – is undoubtedly the most iconic object that signifies middle-classness everywhere in the world; except the United States, where the car is a totally banal object of everyday life. Signifying excess of discretionary expenditure, thus giving the owner immediate social status, owning a car is what a middle class individual or family aspires to and may be said to be a "project" that they work hard to achieve. However, in East Asia, ownership is difficult either because the purchase and running costs are high relative to low incomes locally or made artificially high by exorbitant tariff on cars and petrol. For example, in Singapore, the phenomenally high cost of ownership is an instrument for controlling car population to avoid traffic jams that turn roads into "parking lots". Ironically, the artificially high cost of ownership arguably spurs aspiration and strife, as unaffordablity only adds to the prestige of eventual ownership, a symbolic emblem of economic success.

For many middle class households, car ownership often comes at the expense of other expenditures, such as health care and other social security insurance. Also, with the grossly underdeveloped infrastructure of road networks, traffic jams are daily occurrences which erase any illusion that the car is an instrument of "freedom" from the city, as it is particularly in the US and Europe.

In spite of traffic jams and pollution in all the major cities in Asia, private car ownership remains available only to those in the highest income brackets. In 2003, in the PRC, 13.6 out of every thousand urban households had a car, with highest ownership rates in Beijing (66 per 1,000) and Guangdong (43.7), in municipal Shanghai, the figure was only 18, with inclusion of neighboring regions in the Yangtze Delta the figure was close to 30; these areas combined account for more than half of the domestic market share. Many of the "private" cars on the road are actually means of making a living for the owners/drivers who operate the cars as "illegal" taxis. In a trip to Shanghai in June 2007, my family and I were driven to and from the airport and a sightseeing day trip by a father and son team who owns three cars, of which only one has a taxi license. In general, in Asia, car ownership has definitely not reached the level such that it is synonymous with the developed middle class nations.

6.3 Not Yet Middle Class

Rapid expansion of global capitalism in Asia, since the 1960s, has engendered the expansion of consumption throughout the region. Visually: Cities vie to build the tallest structures in the world. Streets are lined with retail establishments to dress and feed the bodies – clothes, footwear, hair saloons and restaurants; eating has become leisure rather than necessity. Motorcycles cover the boulevards of Hanoi and Ho Chi Ming City, as Vietnam is among the less developed market economies, while cars jam the streets of Bangkok, Jakarta and Manila, which are at a higher rang of capitalist development. At the most developed premier Asian cities of Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore, citizens have come to prefer the speed of mass rapid transit systems to the slow crawl of cars on the road home; commuters cramp into under- or above-ground mass rapid transit systems at rush hours. All these impressions add up to a veritable scene and sense of consumerism as everyday life. The rapid expansion of consumption across Asia has been largely the result of long years of material deprivations of underdevelopment. It is a process of "catching up" with the West; for some, the catching up is done, for others it is still a long way to go and for a vast majority, it will never be attained.

Citizen's aspiration dovetails with government's desire for economic growth; "excessive materialistic desires represent the best incentives for commerce and economic growth" (Sassatelli, 2007: 35). There is a unity of purpose between the government and the people, if for different reasons. Ability to engender and maintain national economic growth translates into expansion of employment opportunities, stable incomes and expanding wealth for the population, in turn contributes to the legitimacy of the incumbent government to rule. This constitutes the "performance" principle of the incumbent government. Competitiveness of the national economy is dependent upon the individualized motivation of citizens as workers and consumers. They are motivated by both the absolute expansion of consumption as the improvement of everyday material life and the status achievement in competitive consumption.

With the dovetailing of national and individual aspirations, expansion of consumerism has as one of its consequences the "de-politicization" of the citizenry. Individuals in expanding consumer societies are dependent and thus "beholden" to the efforts of the government/state in generating economic growth to further their consumption. Not surprisingly, a society that is experiencing expanding middle class is generally characterized by political conservatism, as social stability is perceived as a desired goal of good governance. The depoliticizing effects of consumerism have been duly noted by critical observers of Asian societies. It is a common belief that the ability of the less than democratic People's Action Party to governed Singapore continuously since 1959 is due to its ability to "deliver the goods", i.e. fulfils the consumption aspirations of the citizenry. This in turn has been the cause of general political apathy among Singaporeans. Similarly, socialist ideology and political struggle for democratization in contemporary China have been displaced as the attention of the citizens is redirected to employment and consumption (Zhao, 1997; Ngai, 2003).

At this point in time, the aspiration of the majority of East Asians exceeds their ability to access all the desired objects that lie within West-defined middle class consumption horizon and standard. However, they are determined to attain all the items, if not in their own life time then in the next generation and the one after that, if necessary. Throughout urban Asia, parents with meager discretionary expenditure would often spend it on their children's education in hope that the latter will move into, and eventually lift the entire family up to a higher rang of the social class ladder and greater material comfort. Education is one area of individualized/privatized human capital investment as consumption (Talib, 2000). Symptomatic of this is the phenomenon of mothers accompanying their school going children to study abroad. For example, Korean or PRC middle-age mothers with their teenage children who are studying in Singapore schools, leaving the rest of the family behind. In many of the PRC cases, the mothers have had to take on marginal and often illegal employment, including sex work, to meet the cost of education and self maintenance in high cost Singapore. Endurance of such hardship shows how determined parents are in inscribing their dreams for middle class standard of living onto the next generation. In such conditions to focus on the consumption of the present minority is to miss the larger aspiration of the rest of the society that are striving to achieve middle class status.

The end point of this consumption drive for Asians is of course the lifestyle of the American and European middle class. Contemporary Asia should remind Europeans of the 1950s and 1960s, when they frenetically embarked on "modernization" of the economy. Immediately after the Second World War, the compressed modernization process in European everyday life had a distinctively "American" feel – American-style household appliances, American-influenced understanding of cars and American familial and individual lifestyles projected by increasingly dominant American entertainment from Hollywood. In short, the modernization of Western Europe was also the arrival of American consumer culture. Kristin Ross succinctly summarized this cultural transformation in France.

The movement inward – "'privatization' – is a movement echoed on the level of everyday life by the withdrawal of the new middle classes to their newly comfortable domestic interiors, to the electric kitchens, to the enclosure of private automobiles, to the interior of a new vision of conjugality and an ideology of happiness build around the new unit of middle-class consumption, the couple, and to depoliticization as a response to the increase in bureaucratic control of daily life. Modernization requires the reaction of such a privatized and depoliticized broad middle strata: a "national middle class"; from this point on, national subjectivity begins to take the place of class" (1995: 11).

Such is the lifestyle that the majority of Asians are aspiring to and most are unlikely to get there but there is no stopping them from trying.

6.4 Consumerism as State Project

The dovetailing of individual expansion of consumption with the state's interest in economic growth renders consumerism as a project of the state, regardless of the stage of development. In Singapore, the state continues to expand ownership of state-subsidized housing into the lower rungs of income strata in the name of providing not only shelter but an "asset" that will accrue and be converted into monetary value to finance retirement and old age. Furthermore, the already very high standard of existing housing stock is constantly being “upgraded” to maintain their property value that is in danger of being progressively eroded by new estates that are better planned, better designed and with greater amenities. In this state-directed promotion of housing consumption, the fact that monthly mortgage payment may be a financial burden that has to be borne for as much as thirty year is seldom discussed. Indeed, the financial burden is itself productive in disciplining the labor force, keeping them at the job in order to maintain their homeownership. Politically, the need of the households to protect their property “investment” has rendered the public housing homeowners vulnerable to political blackmail by the ruling government. It denies citizens in housing estates that elected non-ruling party members to parliament of the funds for upgrading their homes and general environment (Chua, 2000).

In a marketized (capitalist) economy, consumerism has become “both the motive force and the measure of development” (Ngai, 2003:469). In the PRC, in addition to the above mentioned rapid expansion of home-ownership as a means of unburdening the state of its welfare responsibilities, the state also actively encourages consumption expansion through, for example, the promotion of domestic tourism, encouraging citizens to travel to different parts of the country for leisure. A series of state-instituted public holidays have stimulated domestic tourism as an engine of economic growth: On May 1, 1995, the 40 hour work week was introduced, allowing for two-day weekend; in 1997, each of the two national holidays, National Day (1 October) and International Labor Day (1 May), was extended to an entire week; these week-long holidays were promoted by the media as “golden consumer days” or “golden travel holidays”. In the PRC, “Cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen competed with one another to claim the highest rates of consumption and the greatest power to attract and host tourists during these golden periods” (Ngai, 2003:471). In 2000, it was reported, “40 million people traveled during the weeklong Labor Day holiday in May, and the revenue gained from tourism reached 18.1 billion yuan” ($2.18 billion) (Ngai, 2003: 472). With rising affluence, PRC tourists have gone beyond domestic tourism. The same week-long holidays are known to tourism industries throughout East Asia as the “golden week”, during which Chinese tourist destinations, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, gear themselves for massive arrivals.

Stimulating consumption is obviously politically popular and thus, the populist thing to do. Consumption expansion is an effective means of influencing the consciousness of the governed; “democratization of consumption” displaces consciousness of inequality and unevenness of access to consumer goods. Thus, as Lee Kuan Yew, former Prime Minister of Singapore, suggests: “I don’t see any government telling its people to consume less. . .less travel, less food, eat more vegetables, don’t eat more protein. That’s not the way the world is going”. (Straits Times, 7 August 2007). At least East Asia is not going that way because the governments, many of which are unstable or authoritarian, require the economic growth and expansion of consumption for their legitimacy to rule.

6.5 Sustainability

Rapid capitalist economic development of East Asia coincides with increasing consciousness of the impact of human consumption on global climate change, quickening pace of environmental degradation and natural disasters. The dilemma: If the consumption of the expanding East Asian (and South Asian) middle class were to catch up to the levels attained in Europe and America, the world's natural resources would suffer severe strain, if not be completely depleted. "For example, if the level of car-ownership in the US, where two out of three persons own a car, is to be taken as the "standard": 700 million Chinese and 600 million Indians will have to drive around in their own, enclosed, private vehicles. And where will the steel and aluminum to make them come from? And the oil to power them? And the roads to drive them on? The mind boggles..."[12] At current "underdeveloped" levels environmental degradation in the PRC is already becoming common place.

The governments of East Asia are of course aware of the ecological imperative and the danger of unlimited consumption expansion. However, like the US's reluctance to sign the Kyoto Protocol on CO2 emission, the countries in East Asia are equally intransigent in insisting that environmental concern should not be detrimental to their economic growth which is just getting started. The East Asian position appears even more "defensible" than that of the US because the latter is at the apex and sets the standard of middle class consumerism, while the Asian countries are still at the level of accumulating small things and "necessities" of urban life, and may never reach the American standard. Furthermore as mentioned above, the legitimacy of the government depends in part in expansion of consumption across the entire population. The PRC is explicit on this point: for now, it is politically more important for the PRC to develop the economy than to suppress growth in the interest of the natural environment.

The new international division of labor that began in the mid 1960s continues; industrial production from the high labor cost developed economies continues to be transferred, off-shored, to the cheap labor cost locations in Asia. With the entry of the PRC (and India) with its inexhaustible labor force at very low cost, the other East Asian countries are struggling to maintain their relative positions in attracting foreign direct investments. This has transformed the PRC into the "factory of the world", with primary markets in the developed world, especially US and Europe. The ecological issue, ironically, is in significant measure initiated in the developed economies. The responsibility of limiting the ecological impact of consumption thus returns to the First World. It has to consume less to reduce the speed of industrialization and its negative environmental consequences in the PRC. But, repeating Lee Kuan Yew, "That's not the way the world is going". Quite the contrary, in accordance with the logic of world trade, US President George Bush on a visit

[12]Ramachandra Guha, "Greed around the world", The Telegraph (Kolcata), 15 September 2007.

to Sydney, Australia said, "We certainly hope that China changes from a saving society to a consuming society. . .What we want is the government to provide more of a safety net so they [the Chinese people] start buying more US and Australian products",[13] so as to narrow the trade gap between the US and PRC. Thus, instead of encouraging slowing down consumption at home in the US, the Chinese are to be encouraged to consumer more, potentially adding to the existing stresses on the environment.

Obviously, the solution to sustainability is not to be found in either international or domestic politics or in the global capitalism if world leaders choose to continue to function politically and economically at the level of what may be called "capitalist realism", "capitalist commonsense". Political leaders would need to change their ideological frame if there is to be sustainable development with social and economic justice for all. Fortunately, there has been progress made in this direction. The Kyoto Protocol initiative of limiting and progressively reducing carbon output has extended its list of signatories and the hitherto intransigent President George Bush has agreed to limit the carbon output of the US, albeit in the twilight days of his presidency.

Obviously, without science and technology, there can be on "solution" to issues of sustainable development. Admittedly, in this postmodern age, we are more aware of the limits of scientific and technological solutions to any problems. We are also aware of the possibility that scientific and technological solutions could generate their own monsters as by-products. We are therefore understandably not sanguine about the technological solutions to, no less an issue of human species survival. Nevertheless, we remain unavoidably dependent on instrumental scientific and technological definition of the problems and solutions in the issues of sustainable developments.

Finally, the scale, spread and speed of expansion of consumption in Asia, with just below 3 billion people (PRC 1.3 billion; India 1 billion, ASEAN 500 million), appears qualitatively beyond any program of "postmaterialist", "ethical" or "responsible" consumption, such as "green", "recycling" or "fair trade" practices (Meyer, 2006). Yet, the solution to the issue of sustainability must necessarily depend on the individual consumers changing their consumption practices, in hope that the aggregate effects would be impactful enough to be part of the solution. In the end, ecology will unavoidably be the critique of the final resort against capitalist consumerism. A new set of ethical practices with the aim of avoiding the certain extinction of the human species would have to be developed; this ethics would have to include as one of its component a rolling of back of the unlimited expansion of consumption that is the logic of global capitalism in its "commonsensical" or "matter of course" mode. That has to be the way the world is going.

[13] "Spend more, Bush tells China consumers", Today, 6 September 2007.

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Part II
New Middle Classes in China, Brazil, Ecuador and Israel

Chapter 7
Rising Capitalism, Emerging Middle-Classes and Environmental Perspectives in China: A Weberian Approach

Fritz Reusswig and André Isensee

Abstract This chapter addresses the recent growth of the Chinese middle class from a Weberian point of view. Starting from a re-appreciation of Weber's Confucianism study, a comprehensive framework for analyzing China's economic success is presented, including political, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects. According to Weber, ideas and interests have to be balanced against each other in social analysis. The actual and changing role of Confucian values in emerging political and economic institutions is discussed. The chapter assesses the size and composition of the Chinese middle class, and discusses the consequences for consumption and the environment. Although consumerism in China is still confined to a rather minor social segment, its actual growth rate leads to the conclusion that by 2020, China's consumer market will have reached the size of the one that most Western European countries display today.

Keywords Chinese middle-class · Confucianism · Consumption · Environment · Guanxi

7.1 Introduction

Given the sheer size of the country, the growth and structural change of China's middle class is an important case for debating the global rise of middle classes. Will consumerism take hold of China, and will this provide the lethal blow for the planet's carrying capacity? Will a growing middle class nourish a civil society that gives way to a more democratic and less threatening China? Or will it accept communist leadership and its new hegemonic aspirations if only growth and prosperity are guaranteed?

F. Reusswig (✉)
Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, PIK, Potsdam, Germany
e-mail: fritz.reusswig@pik-potsdam.de

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In this chapter, we would like to take a closer look at the emerging Chinese middle-class in the institutional context of what we perceive as the rise of a Chinese variety of capitalism. We do so by applying some non-reductionist insights from Max Weber's sociology, linking cultural values (mainly enshrined in religious systems) and socio-economic institutions and interests (mainly framed as modern capitalism). We will argue that, from a Weberian perspective, many contemporary debates about the meaning and future development of capitalism in China—including the very important role of the middle-class—can be resolved and interpreted in a coherent manner. The chapter ends by addressing one of the major challenges both for the economy and for the culture of China: its endangered environment.

7.2 Beyond Reductionism: A Weberian Analysis of China's Economic Success

Weber's sociology of religion has three major foci: (1) to understand the effects of religious ideas on economic action, (2) to clarify the relations between religious ideas and social groups, and (3) to identify the specific characteristics of Western societies (Bendix, 1977). When Weber first published his study on *Confucianism and Taoism* in 1915, his intention was to underline his theses about the social and cultural causes of the origin of modern capitalism in the West, laid down in his famous 1904 article on *Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber, 1920). Weber thought to have demonstrated that the specific modern form of capitalism—rationally organized, profit oriented, and private capital dominated industrial production—did emerge in Europe due to a very specific religious heritage: Protestantism, especially in its Puritan form. Rational capitalism in Weber's sense implies a couple of institutional features: (formally) free labor, formal organizations, a market for goods and capital, the financial and jurisdictional separation of the private household from production, and rational capital accounting. In addition, modern capitalism does need a couple of other institutional settings in order to flourish and expand beyond social niches: a state securing the rule of law, and a rational bureaucracy managing its financial in- and outflows as well as the provisioning of public goods (Bendix, 1977; Cohen, 1981; Schluchter, 1980). The core institutions of modern capitalism had to be developed by social actors, and Weber identified the urban bourgeoisie as its main social driver. A key element was the specific form of mundane ascetic orientation, favoring profit orientation, calculability, reliability, hard work and a willingness to (re-)invest. Weber spends a large part of his article in explaining why the Protestant religion, especially in Calvinism and Puritanism, was able to provide such a supportive ethos.

In his later years, Weber examined other world religions, always asking which features of the religious system have been particularly detrimental to modern capitalism. In the case of China, Weber focused on the Confucian "orthodoxy" and the "heterodox" side-stream of Taoism—a focus that can be justified even if one takes the cultural and spiritual complexity of East Asia into account (Zöllner, 2002).

One has to be aware of the fact that Max Weber's text on Confucianism contains at least two theses (cf. Hollstein, 2002):

1. The *historical* fact that modern (industrial) capitalism did not emerge in China—despite favorable conditions like a capacity for technological innovation and political stability due to a strong central state—can be explained by the Confucian tradition of "adjustment to the world" instead of "mastering the world", as in the case of Puritanism (Weber, 1920: 534).
2. Rather en passant Weber states that China—and not India or the world of Islam, for example—was well prepared to *adapt* modern capitalism due to two major Confucian features: (a) the crucial role of family and other social networks for economic transactions, and (b) the prominent place of education and learning (cf. Weber, 1920: 535).

We will not discuss Weber's first thesis here, but rather focus on his second one. Our primary concern is the question of whether Weber's second thesis can help to explain the socio-economic development of post-reform China, and if so, why.

Our starting point is the assumption that capitalist markets—regardless whether commodity, labor or financial markets—are no purely "economic" institutions in a narrow sense, but social institutions, i.e. that they pre-suppose social arrangements that help to solve at least three coordination problems inherent to markets: value creation and enforcement, the order of competition, and the creation of coordination. The contextual shaping of markets also influences the economic behavior and internal organization of businesses, leading to different national business systems (Beckert, 2007; Fligstein, 2001; Whitley, 2006).

Examining Weber's text more carefully, we see five elements of Confucianism (cf. Yao, 2003) as being particularly relevant for adapting to an existing capitalist system:

1. *Government Loyalty*. Trust in government is very high in China (L. Li, 2004; Wang, 2004). The Confucian cultural legacy awards conformity with family and political authorities, and dismisses non-conformism, and thus provides social actors with the motivational background as well as the habitus of playing to the rules, and especially to abide by government decisions.
2. *Educational Preference*. One of the core social innovations of historic Confucianism was to decouple social esteem from nativity and ancestry, highlighting the constitutive role of education and merit. Once the ritualistic and formalist elements have been removed (e.g. by Communism, which injected new rituals), the Confucian legacy can become a powerful background driver for both institutional and individual efforts to improve the human capital stock.
3. *Work Ethic*. While Confucianism lacks Protestantism's powerful transcendent sanctification of a work ethic, it does provide the working classes with role models of doing ones duty and refraining from conspicuous consumption, while at the same time the economically non-active elite acknowledges the necessity of economic success as a pre-requisite for its political and spiritual tasks. Participants in the economic process tend to accept inequalities of outcomes.

4. *Trust and Social Networks.* Confucianism perceives the individual as part of larger social units, i.e. their embeddedness, and opposes pure individualism. The concept of shu (reciprocity) is central. Ren (benevolent love, virtue, humanity) stands for the obliteration of the individual, the spirit of sacrifice, self-restraint, lack of privacy and ideological control. Confucianism perceives the family (and family ties) as both important ingredients and as role models for other social relations. Li (rite) stands for an ideal social order, in which everyone could find his/her place in a hierarchy. The social life in China is much more dependent upon personal networks and trust relations than in Western countries.
5. *Cosmic Harmony.* Harmony is an important value in traditional Chinese culture, not only in the social world—where the avoidance of open conflicts and the preservation of "face" is important—but also in a more general, spiritual sense. Today, harmony is re-interpreted in a functionalist manner, representing social coherence and political order.

With the end of the dynasties in 1911, traditional China has vanished—and institutionalized Confucianism with it. The social reality of Confucianism in modern China can be characterized by what Weggel (1997) has termed "Confucianism of the common man", also referred to as "Meta-Confucianism" (cf. Staiger, 2000).

There have been many attempts to understand and explain the Chinese growth "miracle" after the 1978 reforms (cf. Nee, 2005; Schmidt, 2004). Whether or not the "Confucian moment" can be mobilized as supporting factor for Chinese (or other Asian) economic success remains heavily debated. While authors like Redding (1990), Tu (1988, 1996), Weggel (1997) or Hollstein (2002) are in favor of it, others heavily deny any Confucian influence (Sang-In, 1999), or even perceive it as negative for further economic progress (Balazs, 1967; Fukuyama, 1995). According to Hill (2000), the propagation of "Asian values" can be reconstructed as a political ideology of authoritarian leaders, and in addition as "reverse Orientalism".

Basically three paradigms of interpretation compete (Menzel, 2008): (1) According to the *market liberal paradigm*, China's economic success is a consequence of the liberalization of markets, and the export orientation of its industry. The World Bank's study on "The East Asian Miracle" (1993) expresses this view in a classical manner. (2) According to the "revisionist" state paradigm, this success is less an effect of market forces than of developmental bureaucracies, using market forces to ensure national economic growth and power. (3) The cultural paradigm traces economic success and government performance back to traditional cultural values that enable and support both.

Despite their ideological opposition, these explanatory attempts are not mutually exclusive. We would like to propose an integrated view, stressing the necessity to include all three dimensions—market, state, and culture—in order to explain a macro-behavior of a social system.

Neither market, nor state, nor culture operates independently, and no social domain has the power to totally shape social reality on its own right. By stressing the Confucian legacy of modern China we do not want to put forward the cultural paradigm. We simply argue in favor of a comprehensive approach.

This view is fully in line with Max Weber's sociology. Weber repeatedly states that sociological explanations have to take both ideal and material aspects into account; ideas and interests shape history, not either one alone.

Applying this general framework to the more specific conditions of contemporary China, we come up with the following analysis of China's transition to a modern capitalist economy under the specific auspices of authoritarian rule.

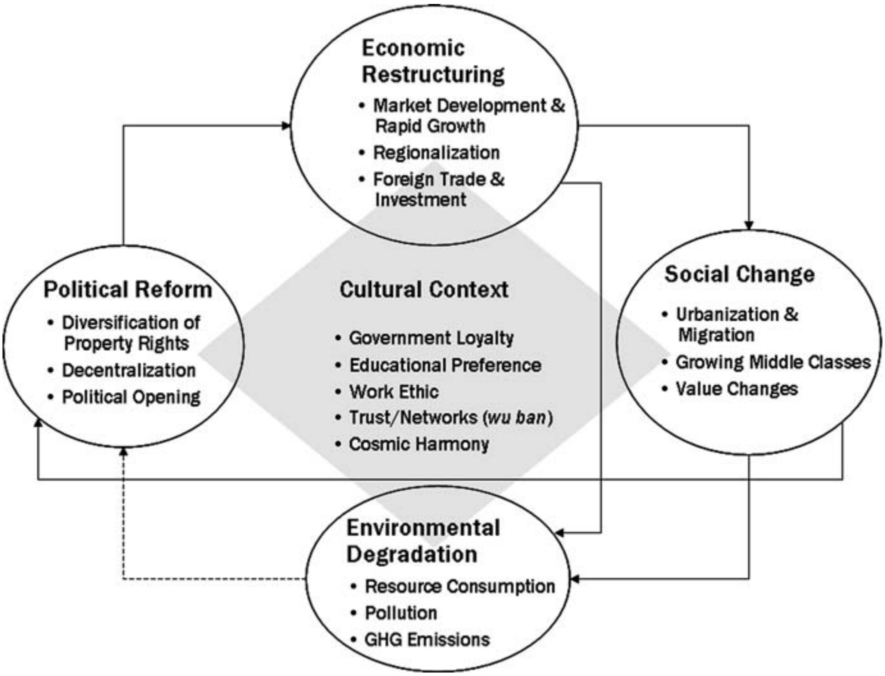

Fig. 7.1 Sketch of a Systemic Process Analysis of the Emergence of Modern Capitalism in China

1. Based on lacking legitimacy after the Cultural Revolution (Teiwes, 2000), the CCP started the *political reform* process in 1978 by lifting the state's monopoly on property, leading to a diversification of property rights. At the same time, the party decided to decentralize political power, which led to a growing role of regional and municipal legal entities. The policy of fiscal decentralization strengthened the economic incentives of municipal and provincial governments to support market-oriented economic reform (Nee, Opper, & Wong, 2007). Finally, it was decided to carefully open China to foreign capital and the international community. This was a stepwise, controversial and highly experimental process, as the CCP could at no point be really sure about the respective outcomes (abbreviated by the Chinese proverb "groping for stones to cross the river"). At the heart of this pragmatic process, we find a pattern of central—local

interaction in generating policy that might be termed "experimentation under hierarchy" (Heilmann, 2008; Nee & Cao, 2005).

2. These political reforms led to an *economic restructuring*. The institution of the market took hold of China, and the 1980s saw the beginning of a sustained economic growth. Economic restructuring played out differently in different regions, with the coastal urbanized East evolving as the major "growth machine". The opening of the country attracted foreign direct investment and established a growing export industry, both processes linking China to the international economy. As the constantly high growth rates of China's economy show, this process is still ongoing (Hu, 2006).
3. Together with economic restructuring, *social changes* occurred, reinforcing the economic growth dynamic. Regionally uneven growth led to rural-urban migration and rapid urbanization processes. Technological changes and income generation in the industry and service sectors led to the emergence of a middle class, able to establish a consumer society in China, especially in large cities. The values of the Chinese society—again especially those of the middle class—changed, leading to more consumerism and self-expression values, as well as to a change in the structure of demand and human capital endowment.
4. As a combined consequence of economic growth and social changes, China's *environment* came increasingly under pressure, both as a resource and as a sink. While the industrial pollution of water and air was and still is a major driver, resource demands and emissions from a growing (urban) consumer class exacerbate the process.
5. Social changes and environmental problems put *pressure* on the *political system*. It needs to manage migration, urban development and social security issues as well as environmental pollution. It is not clear how the semi-authoritative political system of China will deal with the social and environmental costs of its economic restructuring and growth. It may be that a modernized society (as well as the business elite) asks for more political participation, putting pressure on the autocracy of the CCP.
6. These political, economic, social and environmental changes are taking place in a *cultural context*, widely defined by China's Confucian heritage (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). While cultures are characterized by a slower "turnover" time than, say, political decisions or business cycles, they by no means operate independently of the social processes they influence. This raises the question of cultural change in, if not a cultural renewal of China.

It is not our intention to fully explore the implications of this process model. It should only illustrate that the three competing paradigms mentioned above should and in fact can be integrated into a comprehensive view of socio-economic change, taking into account both the interests and the ideas dimension focused by Weber. Before we turn to the role of the middle-class we would like to briefly illustrate the socio-economic context of its emergence, and to give some empirical evidence to our claim that cultural and socio-economic factors are intertwined.

7.3 Socio-Economic Changes and Cultural Factors

As starting point for any analysis of China's economic success—the *explanandum* of a quasi-Weberian analysis—usually serve macro-economic data. We would like to restrict ourselves to only a few of them: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), exports, inequality, and poverty.

Starting from very low total and per capita levels after 1949, post-reform China has experienced a tremendous—and still ongoing—growth of its *national product* (UNCTAD, 2005). The overall GDP development is astonishing (cf. Fig. 7.2) and subsequent growth rates of 8–10% annually indicate a sustained dynamic.

The size of China's economy has increased about tenfold since the launch of market reforms in the late 1970s and, by some estimates, will double again over the next decade. It has become one of the world's major manufacturing centers and consumes roughly a third of the global supply of iron, steel, and coal. China's trade to GDP ratio in 2006 was 65%, and it is also a major "machine" for regional economic integration (Tong & Zheng, 2008). It has accumulated massive foreign reserves, worth more than $1 trillion at the end of 2006. China's rapid growth can be compared to the growth of the U.S. economy at the beginning of the 20th century (Boltho, 2004; Guthrie, 2006). The private sector now accounts for more than half of the industrial production (Dougherty, Herd, & He, 2007), indicating the transition from a centrally planned towards a market oriented society the country is undergoing.

Social inequalities have substantially grown during that process. The gaps of income and general life conditions between rich and poor, urban and rural regions, as well as between men and women (Li, Zhang, Sin, & Zhao, 2006) have dramatically increased. China's Gini-Index, measuring income inequality, has moved

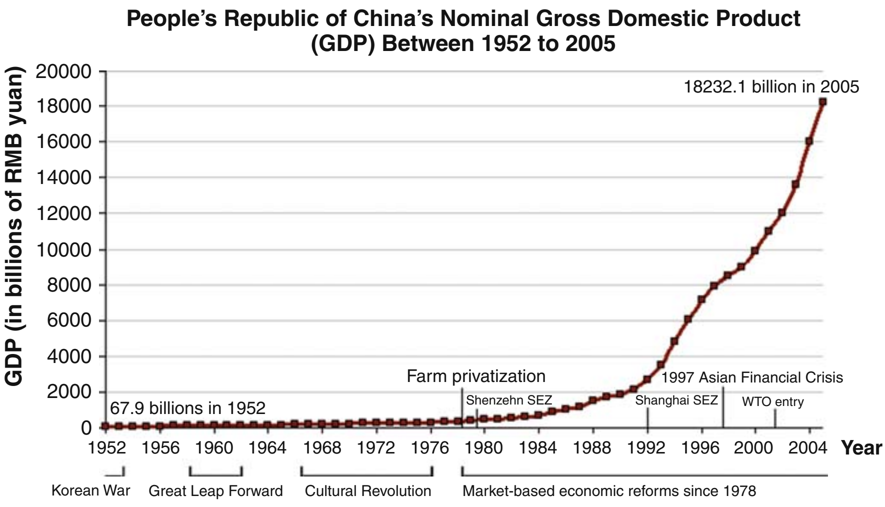

Fig. 7.2 China's GDP from 1952 to 2005
(Source: Wikipedia)

upward from values around 0.2–0.3 during the early 1980s to 0.47 in 2006—well above the internationally recognized warning line of 0.4.[1]

Growing inequalities, however, have not been associated with growing poverty, as in some other developing countries, e.g. Nigeria. The number of people living from less than 1 $ per day (the lower poverty line defined by the World Bank) at the beginning of the reform process was about 71–77% of the total population. In 2008, 13–17% of the Chinese population is assumed to be poor according to that definition—most of them located in rural areas. So China's economic development since the reforms has lifted about 60% of the population (or about 570 million people) out of severe poverty (Dollar, 2008).[2]

These impressive successes and changes have been attributed to a wide range of underlying causes, ranging from economic ones like factor prices (e.g. low wages) to political ones like government performance (e.g. the creation of special economic zones). We would like to hint to some relations between cultural factors on the one hand and economic and political ones on the other, giving evidence to our analytic framework in Chapter 2.

Attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) has been a crucial factor for China's economic success. 14% of China's total capital stock is owned by foreign companies, but more than 50% of its exports originated from foreign-owned firms (UNCTAD, 2005). About 280,000 enterprises with foreign shareholding generated about 10% of all urban jobs and contributed about 21% of all tax revenue. In addition, FDI fuelled economic activities did contribute to the upgrading of the technological basis (Long, 2005; Taube, 2006) (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Origin of Cumulative Utilized FDI in China, 1979–2004 (Based on Data from Morrison 2006)

	Cumulative utilized FDI, 1979–2004	
	Amount ($ billions)	Percentage of Total
Total	563.8	100
Hong Kong	241.6	42.9
United States	48.0	8.5
Japan	46.8	8.3
Taiwan	39.6	7.0
British Virgin Islands	36.9	6.5
South Korea	25.9	4.6

[1] People's Daily Online, 20 July 2006 (http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200607/20/eng20060720_285083.html). A Gini coefficient of 0 indicates equal distribution of income, a value of 1 stands for totally uneven distribution. One should note that inequality in rural or urban areas respectively is lower than inequality across both types of regions (Wu & Perloff, 2005).

[2] While one should appreciate the role of the government in reducing mainly rural poverty, one should at the same time be careful in observing new forms of urban poverty (Liu & Wu, 2006).

The biggest foreign investors in mainland China came from Hong Kong—42.9% of the cumulative FDI between 1979 and 2004. Taiwanese firms account for 7%, but due to the complicated political relations—and tax evasion efforts—much of FDI from the British Virgin Islands (6.5%) has to be attributed to Taiwanese businesses.[3] Although Japanese and U.S. firms have grown in importance for Chinese FDI, more than half of China's FDI did originate from the Sinosphere. Heartfield (2005) speaks of Chinese "comprador capitalism" coming home.[4]

A closer look at bilateral FDI flows to China reveals that the countries which are geographically, politically, ethnically, and economically close to China, have a firm intention of investing in China and enjoy a high FDI intensity, with overseas Chinese firms playing a dominant role (Zhang, 2005). If the intentions of FDI donors are investigated, one can find that overseas Chinese investors are more interested in export oriented business activities, whereas Western investors dominantly try to enter the Chinese domestic market (Buckley & Meng, 2005).

While it would be tempting to read these figures as a clear indication of a purely cultural influence on economic transactions, we would—in line with our Weberian approach that asks for balancing ideas and interests—like to put forward a more nuanced (or once again: embedded) view. There is a very institutional reason behind the more or less silent renaissance of Confucian values and traditions in modern China's economy. When the reforms started, Chinese firms and households could neither rely on a clearly defined institutional environment, nor on a set of routines and role models suited for doing business. The creation of personal and business networks was a core step to overcome both uncertainties: the external one with regard to missing institutions, and the internal one with regard to missing routines. Instead of simply copying Western institutions and models—something that also happened—Chinese entrepreneurs started to build social networks facilitating business relations (extended family, friends, school, university or army friends etc.) that were based on (and reinforced) trust. In addition, pre-communist or non-communist Chinese business models and practices witnessed a revival (Krug, 2002). For many small and big "capitalists" in mainland China, technologies, routines and organizational practices from the Sinosphere (e.g. Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore) had more credibility than ones from other capitalist countries (Haley et al., 1998; Hsing, 1998; Lim, 1996). Particularly, East Asian firms investing in mainland China tend to use the system of mutual trust building in networks (guanxi) more widely, fluently and efficiently than Western firms. Asian firms do more often assess their business success not only in

[3]The actual amount of Taiwan-originated investment in mainland China may be two to three times the amount publicly acknowledged.

[4]A similar situation holds for Shanghai, a city that emerged as China's first global city during the 1990s. In 2000, a total of 23 billion $ have been flowing into the city as FDI. 42.3% came from Hong Kong, 15.7% from Japan, 6% from Taiwan, and 5.5% from Singapore. More than 70% of all FDI to Shanghai originated in East Asia, only 28% in the West (mainly USA, Germany, UK, Australia, and Canada). Accordingly, although not as marked, 55% of all foreign migrants/residents in Shanghai in 2000 came from origin destinations in East Asia, and only 30% from the West (Li & Wu, 2006: 256, Table 2).

monetary terms (as Western firms would do), but also in terms of the creation and maintenance of business networks (Hsing, 1998; Keister, 2001; Leung, 1993; S. Li, 2004; Nolan, 2001; Smart & Smart, 1991).

Guanxi means "relationship" between objects, forces, or persons. Interpersonally, these are relationships defined as "social connections" based implicitly on mutual interest and benefit. Western social research has detected the relevance of guanxi under the heading of social capital. *Guanxi* is a flexible concept. The border between a foreigner and a relevant other is permeable and can include people with the same first name, ex-neighbors, people from the same university, or region. Chinese are very flexible when it comes to find a "hook" for guanxi, so that China offers the paradox of a country with high social capital even without a significant stock of general trust (Panther, 2002). The explicit purpose of *guanxi* is to build a long-term relationship, rather than one that lasts only the duration of an interaction or a contract, encouraging both parties to follow mutually shared social norms and to be moderate in their requests. This distinguishes *guanxi* from simple bribery, which many Westerners confuse. Of course blunt corruption and bribery exist in China, but they can be socially marked as deviant behavior. Social actors generally would rather invest in *guanxi* relationships than directly bribe people to get things done (Smart, 1993). It is a tool that could be used to build enough trust to enforce capitalism without contracts.[5]

What markets require is not legal contracts per se, but a relatively high level of security, an adequate degree of predictability, and some assurance that one has some recourse if the other party fails to follow through on their end of the deal. Legal contracts, and the system of formal and rational law which supports them, may not be the only way to create these conditions (Chen, 1999). During the early post-communist period, *guanxi* enabled overseas Chinese to invest enormous amounts of capital into the country without waiting for legal reform. These "compatriots" (to use the Chinese term) were the principle sources of FDI for township and village enterprises, allowing international capital to flow directly into China's development zones (Murray, 2000).

Guanxi strategies—closely linked to the central relevance of "face"—reduce transaction costs and created trust in the absence of sufficiently functioning formal institutions (Xin & Pearce, 1996). The affinity of traditional Chinese culture served as an important filter for creating new economic relations and business models (Bun, 2000).

The flip side of this "functional fit" between China's Confucian heritage and the requirements of the formation of a capitalist economy is its limited validity over time. Once major institutional uncertainties for market participants have been

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[5]It is interesting to compare the Chinese version of social capital (guanxi) with the Russian one (blat) (Hsu, 2005). Russian blat devolved into corruption, played a major role in state-business relations, but faded in importance for ordinary citizens. Without a way to build trust or extend networks, average Russians retreated into defensive involution, and engaged in predatory behavior against those outside their small circles of friends. Instead of capitalism without contracts, Russia suffered the depredations of capitalists without capitalism.

removed, *guanxi* practices become less functional, if not a hindrance for the further development of "rational capitalism" in Weber's sense. Backed by functioning capitalist institutions, *guanxi* can develop into a Chinese variant of weak ties (Gold, Guthrie, & Wank, 2002; L. Li, 2007); otherwise it can degenerate into a culture of blunt corruption (Cohen, 2006; Siebert, 2007), the fighting of which might endanger the political monopoly of the CCP (Liu, 2007).

But already now, China represents a new variety of capitalism, transcending the alternative of being either a Coordinated Market Economy (CME) like Germany or a Liberal Market Economy (LME) like the U.S. Hall and Soskice (2003) deny that China has created a new variety of capitalism, due to the dominant role of the state. This not only underestimates the capitalist dynamics in the Chinese business sector, it also neglects the cultural embeddedness of China's variety of capitalism (Isensee, 2007).

7.4 The Chinese Middle Class Between Consumerism and Traditional Values

Cultural values need social actors to become reality. With respect to a capitalist economy, the size and quality of the middle class are the most prominent candidates, providing both physical and human capital endowments, as well as motivational backgrounds for the capitalist endeavor (Heilbronner, 1985). There are various assessments of the Chinese middle class, and they differ significantly in size and definition. The two major sources of assessments are *commercial market research* on the one hand, and *academic social sciences* on the other. While commercial research tends to prefer purchasing power as the central criterion, social sciences prefer occupational characteristics.

As an example for a *commercial analysis* of China's changing social structure we would like to refer to a McKinsey study, in which annual income is taken as the central dimension (MGI, 2006). In 2005, 9.4 and 12.6% of the population are counted as upper and lower middle class respectively (Fig. 7.3).[6]

This purchase power based approach predicts a substantial growth of the lower middle class until 2015 and of the upper middle class until 2025. The poor who dominated China's social structure until the late 1980s are assumed to shrink to about 10% of the total population in 2025.

The social sciences prefer occupational status as core dimension of class analysis (Bian, 2002; Chunling, 2003; Schirmer, 2004; Yi, 2005). A Chinese study (P. Li, 2004) reflects the changes between the pre-reform period (1978) and contemporary China (2004) (Table 7.2).

If we re-categorize the unemployed, farmers, working class members and the service class as "lower classes", we can see that this stratum has been reduced from

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[6]The annual income for members of the lower middle class according to this study is \$3,019–4,831, for the upper middle class it is \$4,831–12,077.

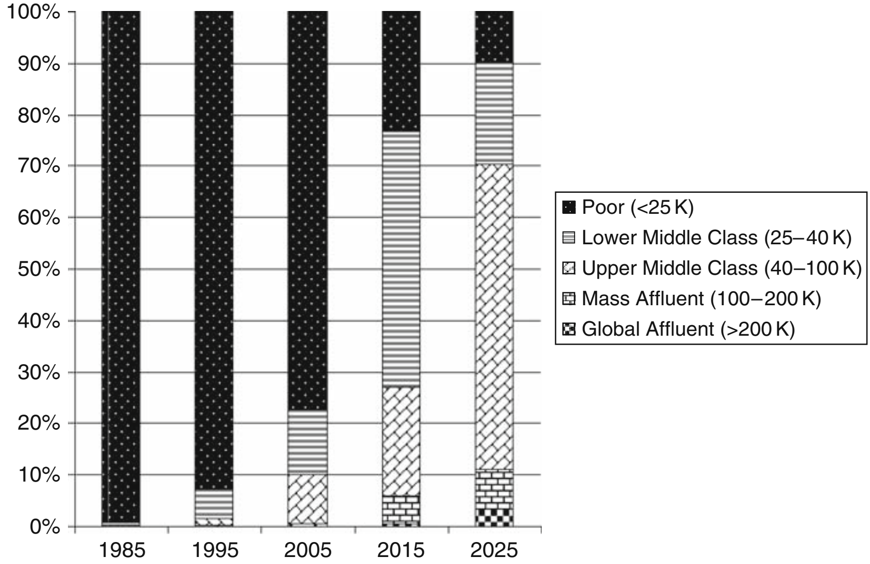

Fig. 7.3 Time Development of Chinese Income Classes (in CNY, 2015 and 2025 are Scenario Based Estimates) (Based on Data from MGI 2006)

Table 7.2 Occupational Class Groups in Percent (Based on Data from P. Li, 2004)

Occupational groups	1978	2004
Ruling Class	1.0	2.1
Manager	0.3	1.6
Entrepreneurs	0.0	1.0
Technical Intelligence	3.5	4.6
Clerks	1.3	7.2
Crafts- and Tradesmen	0.3	7.1
Service Staff	2.2	11.2
Working Class	19.8	17.5
Farmers	67.4	42.9
Urban Unemployed, Casual Workers	4.6	4.8

94 to 76.4% of the total population.[7] Ruling class, managers and entrepreneurs have been re-categorized as "upper class", which has increased its share in the Chinese

[7]This is a rather conservative categorization, as some fractions of the working and especially the service classes will probably count as middle class in terms of purchasing power and mentality. On the other hand, the typical consumption pattern of workers in China's urban growth areas puts additional constraints to their categorization as middle class. Coming mostly from rural areas, the workers' goals are to simply accumulate as much money as possible before they go back to

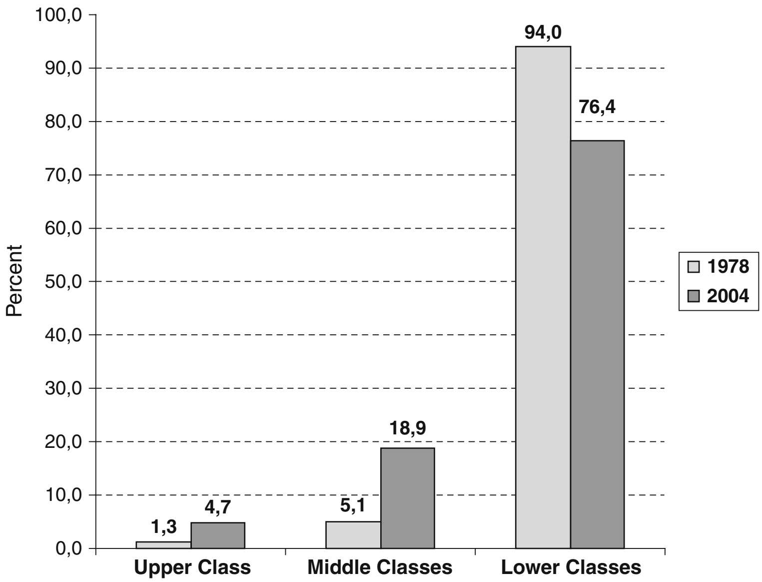

Fig. 7.4 Change in Chinese Class Structure between 1978 and 2004 (Based on Data from P. Li, 2004, Re-categorized)

society from 1.3 to 4.7%.[8] If we classify technical intelligence, clerks and crafts- and tradesmen as "middle class", we can observe a growth from 5.1 to 18.9% of the population (Fig. 7.4).

Despite their different socio-economic basis, both studies assess the size of the middle class in contemporary China as about 20% of the population.[9] With regard to consumption, income-based assessments are at least as relevant as occupation-based class analysis. The minimum threshold of McKinsey for the "lower middle class" ($3,200) is in fact a very low one, equaling $8.76 a day. Even if lower middle class families are in principle able to participate in modern consumer culture, their actual budget does limit this to very selected and/or symbolic acts of participation. One should not underestimate the social meaning of symbolic participation in consumer

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their rural hometowns. This is in stark contrast to typical U.S. or European factory workers who, historically at least, expect to hold their jobs until retirement and be increasingly active consumers. In China, workers engage in factory jobs for a short time and consume very few goods during that time (Fox, Donohue, & Wu, 2005; Li & Li, 2007).

[8]For a brief characterization of the role of entrepreneurs in modern China and their consumption behavior see Goodman 1996.

[9]Chunling (2003) concludes that 27% of the Chinese population can be regarded as middle class in terms of occupational background, whereas 24.6% can be counted as middle class in terms of income. Myers and Kent (2003) count 303 million people (or 24% of the 2000 population) as "new consumers", i.e. purchasing power of at least PPP $10,000 per year, i.e., at least PPP $2,500 per person. According to our assessment, this gives rather an upper boundary for the Chinese middle class. Li and Zhang (2008) assess the size of the middle in all China to be 12.1, in urban China to be 25.4.

culture—usually such acts initiate that culture for those involved in them. We only want to highlight that a realistic assessment of China's middle class in view of modern consumer culture practices should rather focus on the 10% termed "upper middle class" in McKinsey's terminology.[10]

The middle class is predominantly located in the urban areas of coastal mainland China, where the interplay between central government reforms and municipal policies to attract FDI and to loosen the control of the household registration system (*hukou*) has created a material and symbolic urban environment facilitating growth and social change (Lin, 2002). Especially the larger cities in China are the magnet for foreign investment, and thus on their way to a service economy (Tian, Liu, & Zhang, 2002; Zhao, Chan, & Kelvin, 2003).The hukou system creates a working class with weaker rights and lower income, providing China's booming cities with cheap labor supply (Liang & Ma, 2004; Wu & Treiman, 2004). China's ,floating population' is assumed to amount to 130 million people in 2006, and the question of how large the rural labor supply will continue to flow is of core interest for the Chinese growth model. Cai and Wang (2008) argue that future labor supply from the Chinese country side is rather limited.

The reported quantitative changes have been accompanied by qualitative ones. The consumption patterns and lifestyles of urban middle-classes differ significantly from those of (urban and rural) lower classes. The relative weight of necessity items such as food decreases, while discretionary spending (such as on recreation and education, transport and communication, housing and utilities, or household and personal items) is increasing. At the same time, the internal composition of "necessity" items is changing, e.g. in the food sector, where "modern", Western style products and store types are more and more preferred by members of the middle-classes (Curtis, McCluskey, & Wahl, 2007; Veeck & Veeck, 2000). The prevalence of overweight among Chinese adults is 18.9% and of obesity it is 2.9%. In absolute numbers this implies that more than 169 million overweight adults, and around 26 million obese people, live in China today (Zhang, Dagevos, He, van der Lans, & Zhai, 2008). As in Western countries, China's upper middle class consumers increasingly spend their incomes on private homes located in secure and well-off suburban quarters, on cars, and on leisure and travel activities. China seems to have fallen prey to blunt consumerism (Lury, 1996), and the (urban) middle-class is regarded as the major social driver (Croll, 2006; Davis, 2000; Farquhar, 2002; Latham, Thompson, & Klein, 2006). Its members are the spearhead of a transition from comrades to consumers, a process that has only started yet. Some even argue that consumerism has achieved, what Marxism-Leninism in China always tried to be: a new religion (Zhao, 1997).

But macro-economic indicators do not reveal whether or not the members of the emerging middle-class have a propensity to modern consumerism. If, as Max Weber

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[10]Subjective class assessments reveal that 85% of urban residents (N=3,038) identified themselves as middle class (14% as "upper middle", 43.1% as "middle middle", and 28.4% as "lower middle") (Xiaohong, 2004). This subjective class perception in part reflects the overall political climate, but it also reflects the future expectations of the non-middle-class members of society.

states correctly, ideas and interests are linked, we need to go beyond macro-social and macro-economic data. This is possible due to the recent use of the lifestyle concept in Chinese sociology and market research (Schirmer, 2004). Lifestyles are typical patterns of how individuals lead their everyday life (consumption patterns, leisure activities, social relations etc.), together with their attitudes, worldviews, goals, and values. Max Weber has systematically introduced the lifestyle concept into sociology when he analyzed the "styles of life conduct" of key social agents of early capitalism. It has become popular much later in marketing research since the 1960s and in academic sociology since the 1970s, but has been applied to emerging economies only recently.

We would like to refer to the German-French market and media research institute SinusSociovision (2005) and its study of urban social milieus. SinusSociovision's approach to social inequality is applied in market, media and opinion research, but has important roots in the phenomenological tradition of sociology. For China, the institute restricted its research to the urban upper and middle classes. Sinus combines vertical inequality information (class, status) with horizontal differences, referring to values and life goals. Sinus uses the term "milieu" to refer to internally homogeneous social groups, and "lifestyle" to describe consumption and leisure patterns. Introducing the value dimension reveals an interesting social cleavage among the middle-class between more traditional (harmony, slow move) and more modernized (dynamics, full speed) milieus. The latter group is very consumption (and less savings) oriented. To them, improved consumption levels and upward social mobility are core expectations that shape their view of the economic and political system. Should the latter fail in generating social opportunities and growing levels of consumption, the legitimacy of the CCP would suffer seriously. One can also perceive that the more modernized milieus display a higher degree of vertical differentiation.

The "slow move" segments at the traditional spectrum want to see a more balanced type of modernization, with explicit inclusion of values like "humanity", "harmony", and "kind-heartedness".[11] We find higher ranks of cadres as well as leading academics and other human capital endowed groups. In the lower strata, we find two more traditional lower middle-class milieus. Consumption to them is less conspicuous and status oriented, but more a reward for own achievements, a necessary way to express care for their families, and part of a more or less harmonious social progress of the whole country. These "phenomenological" results from market research converge with more class-analytical results from academia, stating that "the" Chinese middle-class is far from being a coherent class with unified social attitudes and behavioral intentions (Li & Zhang, 2008; Tsai, 2005).

Whether or not China will in the future develop into a full-speed consumer society or not also depends upon the value choices of its middle-classes. Confucian traditions, which to some degree are living among the more traditional milieus,

[11] Sinus stresses, however, that the consumerist traits in modern Chinese middle-classes are by no means an exclusive result of social imitation of the West (e.g. via the mass media). Even the "full speed" modernizers always try to reconnect their views and practices to elements of the Chinese cultural tradition.

are being abandoned or re-interpreted by the more modern groups. Should the future cultural orientations of the Chinese middle-class be more open to a (renewed) Confucian tradition, balancing individual consumption and social values, then the country could indeed develop a viable alternative to the U.S.-dominated drive towards global free market fundamentalism (Nolan, 2004). This social cleavage resonates with a political cleavage among party and state leaders, known as the "New Left" versus the "Shanghai Fraction" (Leonhard, 2008). While the latter want—put briefly—an intensified and more liberal capitalism (without threatening the power monopoly of the Party), the former put forward a more "harmonious" variety of capitalism, balancing economic growth with social and environmental goals.

Max Weber wrote before capitalism has evolved into a mass consumer society after World War II. Contemporary China is experiencing this transformation right under our eyes. Its Confucian heritage has helped to bring about a new variety of capitalism. It remains to be seen whether this tradition will be powerful and vivid enough to support another transformation: from socially and environmentally blind to sustainable capitalism. We end our paper by some reflections on this last—and globally very important—challenge.

7.5 Taming the Dragon: Prospects of Environmental Progress in China and the Role of the Middle-Class

Although Max Weber was aware of the close links between energy consumption and modernity, he did not address environmental problems as side-effects of modernity, nor was he—or other early sociologists—confronted with the limited sink capacity of planet Earth as a whole. Given the sheer size of the country and its population, China's dramatic economic growth has massive negative environmental and health consequences. Air and water pollution are among the most dramatic effects in urban areas, soil erosion, deforestation and desertification in rural ones. Environmental activists have reported these problems for years, and foreign analysts tried to get an overview from limited sources (Economy, 2004, 2007; Edmonds, 1994; Smil, 1993). Foreign and Chinese scientists assume that the environmental and health costs of China's economic success story account for about 10% of its GDP (Diamond, 2005; Worldwatch, 2006).

In addition to local or regional environmental problems, China has entered the space of global environmental problems in many ways, the most visible one being global warming. Despite the fact that per capita emissions of greenhouse gases in China are still low as compared to European and especially U.S. levels, China's growing economy, mostly based on coal and oil, does in fact produce "great leaps forward" also in this domain. In 2006 alone, 105,000 MW new power generation capacity has been installed, equaling Germany's total electricity consumption. China's CO2 emissions have surpassed those of the United States in 2006. China currently emits about 14% of the world's greenhouse gases and is expected to contribute about 17% by 2020. Researchers using provincial data estimate that China's annual growth rate of CO2 emissions is actually about 11% – and not 4%, as the government and some researchers assume. By 2010, China will have emitted at least 600 million metric tons of carbon annually over year 2000. This by far outweighs all emission reductions by the year 2010 from current Annex I countries under the Kyoto protocol, relative to the predicted level in the absence of the agreement, amounting to about 116 million metric tons of carbon (Auffhammer & Carson, 2008). These findings once more underline the global relevance of China's future development.

Given the dominant role of foreign capital driven, export-oriented manufacturing in China's post-reform transition to capitalism, it is not surprising that most environmental problems of the country today (such as water and air pollution, toxic waste etc.) can be attributed to industrial activities and related infrastructure. The dominant role of coal (more than 70% of China's primary energy consumption), low technological standards, and lacking governmental regulation, especially at local levels, encouraged industrial pollution. Given the significantly higher carbon intensity of the Chinese economy, imports from China increase global emissions (as compared to a non-import scenario), and decrease European and American emission statistics (Lia & Hewitt, in press; Shui & Harriss, 2006). A study estimates that about 23% of China's total CO2 emissions are accounted for by the country's net export (Wang & Watson, 2007).

The emergence of the Chinese middle-class, however, indicates a new type of environmental problems being on the rise, which we may term environmental problems of mass consumer societies. If the consumption levels of 100 or 200 million people go up significantly, together with pattern shifts, the ecological footprint of China as a whole is growing—and by far move beyond sustainable levels (Chen & Lin, 2008; Shen, Cheng, Gunson, & Wan, 2005), reflecting a transition from industry-driven to lifestyle-driven environmental degradation (Hubacek, Guan, & Barua, 2007; Liu, Wang, & Yang, 2005; Reusswig, 2007).

Wei, Liu, Fan, & Wu (2007) quantify the direct and indirect impact of lifestyle of urban and rural residents on China's energy use and the related CO2 emissions during the period 1999–2002. The results show that approximately 26% of total energy consumption and 30% of CO2 emission every year are a consequence of residents' lifestyles, and the economic activities to support these demands. For urban residents the indirect impact on energy consumption is 2.44 times greater than the direct impact. Residence; home energy use; food; and education, cultural and recreation services are the most energy-intensive and carbon-emission-intensive activities.

How can the middle-classes contribute to a more sustainable growth pattern in China—and thus, indirectly, on a global level? We see three basic possible points of influence here: (1) as citizens, (2) as consumers, and (3) as professionals.

The political structure of China is characterized by a lack of democratic institutions and procedures, thus strictly limiting the possibilities of citizens to participate in public decision-making. As the mass media are politically controlled, the formation of an independent civil society in China is also very restricted.

However, in 1994 the government passed regulations that for the first time permitted social organizations (*minjian tuanti*) to register and have legal status to operate. Environmental NGOs were the first to register and now form the largest sector of civil society groups in China. Middle-class members are—as in many other countries—overrepresented in Chinese environmental NGOs. Their human capital endowment, their organizational skills, as well as their values predispose them to join the NGO, and to take leadership. Environmental activism in China can be characterized as "embedded activism", i.e. a partly cooperative, partly confrontational co-agency with governmental agencies in a semi-authoritarian context (Ho, 2007). "Embedded activism" is partly coined by political conditions in socialist or post-socialist societies. In our understanding, there is also an element of government loyalty, deeply rooted in the cultural legacy of China, where the "negotiated synthesis" of state-society relations has a long-standing tradition (Ho & Edmonds, 2007; Hung, 2007; Lee, 2007). Mass media, the internet, and "alternative media" are the main channels of communication. The emergence of a green public sphere demonstrates the new dynamism of grass-roots political change (Young & Calhoun, 2007).

While the political system of China gives only limited leeway to put forward environmental values and goals, the expanding consumer society does so all the more. Green consumerism in China still is a marginal phenomenon. But green products and attached values not only enter the emerging market from abroad (Murray & Cook, 2002; Thiers, 2005). They are also rooted in traditional Chinese cultural values, such as "harmony" with nature (Chan, 2001). Higher income and higher education are good predictors for environmental concern, but also age, indicating that many elderly perceive the environment as endangered (Shen & Saijo, 2008).

We see a final role of the Chinese middle-class in "greening" China: as *professionals*. Leading positions both in the state and in the private sector are occupied by middle-class members, e.g. as managers, technical advisors, clerks, attorneys, designers, teachers etc. This offers a potential for including growing public awareness into day-to-day business and government practices. This is supported by efforts of individual firms and business networks to green their supply chains (Zhu, Sarkis, & Geng, 2005). If voluntary business activities to save energy are backed by state policies, their success rate will probably grow (Hu, 2007).

While it has to remain open whether the "greening" tendencies of China will be able to outweigh the environmental effects of its business-as-usual growth pattern, the key role of the middle-class seems obvious. Be it as consumers, as citizens, or as professionals—China's middle-class will be the most important social class to decide about the future pathway of the country. While simple reliance on traditional Confucian values will not suffice to prepare this class for their future tasks—they might even mask growing environmental degradation and social inequalities—their internal modernization could help to shape the face of a new, more sustainable Chinese capitalism.

Given its large social imbalances, China seems to be in need of a new social contract. While it surely has to establish a full-fledged modern capitalism with secure property rights to capital owners, it also has to ensure a full-fledged modern state. The deal might thus be: fully secured property rights in return for the more effective collection and redistribution of tax revenues in order to promote social security, education, environmental protection, and—ultimately—social stability (McNally, 2006). Although a real democracy would be a sufficient condition for that deal, it is not a necessary one for the initial phase. The CCP could initiate the new deal by and large without giving up its political monopoly. This could turn out to be a major advantage of that strategy in the near future. Once initiated, a transition towards a full democracy could be a much more realistic—and peaceful—option. Given the huge environmental costs of China's actual variety of capitalism, environmental protection has to be included into that New Deal. The middle-class will thus be confronted with a choice: unrestricted growth and consumerism, or green consumption and lifestyles. This choice will affect not only global ecology, but also the way modern capitalism is developing (Nolan, 2004). Taming the Chinese dragon might thus well be a major step of taming the capitalist one (Jaeger, 1994). This will not be possible without European and American middle-class consumers taking the lead in reducing the environmental impacts of their domestic, yet globalized production-consumption systems.

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Chapter 8
Globalization of Lifestyle: Golfing in China

Yaoqi Zhang, Jinyang Deng, Suman Majumdar and Bin Zheng

Abstract Traditionally, a person's lifestyle was more locally determined and evolved slowly. However, in the 21st century, globalization makes the globe flat, and lifestyle and taste are globally influenced and can change rapidly. This is especially true for the emerging new middle class, which has changed from primarily struggling for basic physiological needs to enjoying conspicuous consumption, thanks to more exposure to media and information. A good example is the emerging number of golfers in China. This paper uses recent, fast growing trends in golfing in China to illustrate how the tastes and preferences develop and are influenced by commercialization, globalization and public media and to show the impacts of golfing on the sustainable development. It is argued that golfing in China is a result of globalization and a desire to show off one's status, prestige, wealth, delicacy and taste. The emerging middle class population provides the soil, but golf competitions, public media and globalization are the seeds and fertilizers. The impacts of golf courses on the environment and sustainability nationwide might not be very significant for the time being in China, but they have had some local impacts. This paper not only demonstrates the impact of globalization on lifestyle and sustainability, but also provides more general policy suggestions addressing similar problems and phenomena. It is suggested that not only regulation and taxes or economic incentives but also psychological and educational methods to change the public perception could be applied as well. At the societal level, consumer preferences and perception of "goodness" need to be redefined through education and public media.

Keywords Conspicuous consumption · Leisure · Middle class · Sport · Tastes

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Y. Zhang (✉)
School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849, USA
e-mail: Yaoqi.Zhang@auburn.edu

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8.1 Introduction

Globalization, an integrating process of economic, political and cultural systems across the globe, has been escalated by growing trade, fast transportation and communication. It has enormous impacts on economy, social life, culture, political systems and environments. Globalization has promoted the rapid economic growth in Asia, first in Japan, then in 4 small dragons (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea), currently in China, India, and other countries. The economic prosperity has created new middle class who are more exposed to information, especially advertising, and have more resources and ability to know the rest of the world. Immediately following or even simultaneously going with the rise in income are the changing culture and consumption patterns. Chua (2009) divides the change into four levels of consumption: (1) small objects, (2) television, (3) primary of home/family consumption, and (4) cars. The rapidly-growing middle class in the countries and its consumption behavior have promoted consumption of luxury goods, tourism and conspicuous goods. Golfing has already become very popular in the world, especially in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and many other Asian countries now, and has significant environmental impact (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006).

China's fast-growing economy in the past two decades was initiated and benefited from the open economic policy, foreign investment and exports, or simply from integration with global economy. According to a survey conducted by the China Academy of Science and the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the middle class in China makes up nearly 15–18% of the country's total population (Chen, 2006). Another study by a France-headquartered company indicates that 13.5% of the Chinese population can be considered middle class (Chen, 2006). Here, middle class is defined by the company as those individuals who are well-educated professionals with an average annual personal income between ¥25,000 (7 Chinese yuan (¥) = 1$) and ¥30,000 or an average family income between ¥75,000 and ¥100,000. By this definition, approximately 50 million Chinese families with an average annual family income of ¥75,000 were middle class families in 2002. This figure will jump to 100 million by 2010 with an average annual family income of ¥150,000 (Chen, 2006). According to Farrell, Gersch, & Stephenson (2006), "These numbers may seem low compared with consumer incomes in the world's richest countries—current exchange rates and relative prices tend to underplay China's buying power—but such people are solidly middle class by global standards. When accounting for purchasing-power parity, a household income of ¥100,000, for instance, buys a lifestyle in China similar to that of a household earning $40,000 in the United States" (Reusswig and Isensse, 2009).

China is not an exception. The rapidly-growing middle class in the country and its consumption behavior have promoted consumption of luxury goods, such as cars, houses, insurance, and tourism (Chen, 2006). The market is emerging in China wherein the middle class starts to own a car and a big house with a green lawn in a suburban area. This emerging consumption trend in China resembles what the United States experienced in the 1950–60s when the emerging new middle class Americans became more interested in buying houses in suburban areas (Chen, 2006). Meanwhile, globalization has been largely transforming the ideology, culture and lifestyle of the country. For example, the anti-capitalism ideology has no longer existed. The old saying of "money is rusty" was replaced by "getting rich is glorious". As a result, the traditional Chinese cultural values formed in an agrarian society have been radically altered. The old saying of "start working after sunrise and stop working at Sunset" was replaced by that of "time is money". In fact, globalization has already had a great effect on the everyday life of Chinese people. For instance, attitudes toward beauty contests, fashion shows, sexual behavior, dress and hair styles, and leisure have been largely changed in the past two decades due to increasing modernization and globalization. The change is especially obvious for the youths (Xu, 2007).

Traditionally, Chinese people have preferred passive or appreciative leisure activities. In recent years, however, western leisure pursuits that are more active and adventurous (e.g., rock climbing, camping, tennis, golfing, etc.) have been introduced to China. These activities are becoming increasingly popular among Chinese people, especially the young. This change of taste and preference for leisure pursuits, we would argue, is largely a result of conspicuous consumption, which should be examined from a multidisciplinary approach and not just from physical health or economic perspective.

Different from many other leisure pursuits, golfing associated with decency, status, and prestige. Thus, as an introduced sport to China, golfing can be considered an indicator sport by which the impacts of globalization on Chinese lifestyles can be measured and monitored. To this end, this paper uses recent, fast-growing trends in golfing in China to illustrate how tastes and preferences develop; how they are influenced by public media, commercialization and globalization; and how they impact sustainable development in China. Arguably, taste and preference for large land and water consuming golf courses that have been developed in the United States and some western countries are not compatible with China's resources where the population density is much higher and economy is not well-developed. Golfing is more a lifestyle than a sport or a recreation. Golf courses do not just consume resources, they indicate a trend of an emerging new lifestyle, especially of the middle class population, which has become more affordable and exposed to the global economy and culture.

In this article, we argue that the following five factors are the main reasons that golfing has been gaining popularity in China: (1) Golf is an outdoor recreation that well combines sports and spending leisure time in a pleasant environment that is increasingly appreciated due to deteriorated urban surroundings; (2) Emerging middle class citizens want to show their status; (3) Golfing is an ideal way of showing the status since it is played by the upper class people in the developed countries; (4) Many foreigners come to China for businesses and cultural exchanges due to globalization; and (5) Media and commercial advertisements affect public consumption motivations and behaviors, which are coupled with the booming real estate market.

Using golf as an example, we ultimately want to demonstrate how the lifestyle is shaped, how it is developed, and how it influences sustainable development. The consumption phenomenon appearing in China has many similarities with western countries a few decades ago and closely follows that of Japan, South Korea and other early developed Asian countries. More and more evidence shows that China is becoming one of the biggest consumers in luxury goods in the world. Although globalization of culture and lifestyle provides an exciting opportunity to change some unhealthy and less efficient lifestyles, some lifestyles that are not compatible with China's environment and society might also be brought into the country.

8.2 Hierarchy of Needs, Lifestyle, Conspicuous Consumption and Golf

The aspiration for status always comes after having necessity. Based on Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), humans pursue high levels of consumption behaviors, such as achievement of status, self-esteem, and self actualization, after their basic needs are met. Lifestyle means a particular way of life, usually referring to consumption behaviors and relating to tastes, preferences, and social attitudes. Lifestyle has a strong historical and social context. It was first used by Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler in 1929 to denote a person's basic character (Walker & Li, 2007). Lifestyle fundamentally matches social development, but the preferred way to show status can be considerably influenced by the demonstration effect, which is to follow the way other people behave. For example, the tastes and preferences of food are basically a result of biology, but they are also becoming a social taste. Heavy marketing of children's food by TV and internet advertising and viral, or peer-to-peer, marketing shifted children's ideas about food from tasting "great" to tasting "cool" (Schor & Ford, 2007). Marketers posit a set of innate "needs", such as love, mastery, power, and glamour, and attempt to create advertisements with the message that the product would satisfy those needs. Needs include love, mastery, power, and glamour. It is also likely that food advertisers know much more about how to stimulate desire than they share with outsiders (Schor & Ford, 2007).

8.2.1 Lifestyle and Conspicuous Consumption

Lifestyle has a special place in the studies of anthropology, sociology and psychology but hardly in economics. To economists (especially to neoclassical economists), a man is an economic agent who uses rational choices to maximize the utilities subject to his budget level and in response to changes in relative prices of scarce resources. Economics usually assumes that tastes and preferences (or simply lifestyle) are fixed. For instance, to explain why the Chinese are consuming more meats than before, economists, instead of describing changes in tastes and lifestyle, tend to state that it is caused by change in income and/or the change in relative price between meats and vegetables. Their theory is correct. However, meat consumption is not anything new for the Chinese people. A study of old Chinese literature and documents reveals that meat was also an indicator of wealth in ancient times.

Biological evolution (such as preference to meat or vegetables) and environmental adaption of lifestyle are comparatively slow (e.g., the skin and eye color or human reaction to the temperature). They are more a matter of slow natural adaptation, less affected by cultures and not changeable within a considerable time frame (decades and even centuries). From the physiological perspective, most consumers are creatures of habit, and thus the assumption of fixed tastes is a valid approximation when we test for well-established goods and services over a reasonable, short-time scale. This is especially true for a closed or isolated society. For example, rice has been the staple food in China for millennia.

Comparatively social and cultural aspects of lifestyle can change faster when they are exposed to other cultures since they have little relation to basic needs. We know that the clothing people wear, the furniture people buy, the type of housing they want, the sports they watch, or the type of leisure activities they choose have little to do with biological needs and relative price. Now clothing is more something to show to other people (social needs) than a means to keep oneself warm (physiological needs). Therefore, peers and rivals have important impacts on the changes in tastes and lifestyles. When society is closed and isolated, the culture will change very slowly. However, when society is open, one culture will have a significant influence on other cultures.

We know the rule of "survival of the fittest" or "natural selection" in jungles. In modern time and in human society, wealthy people take the lead of new lifestyles since being wealthy is an important indicator of competitiveness in the social jungle. However, it is still difficult to determine what would be the new lifestyle (e.g., clothing, house, car, resorts). Usually, it is a new product or invention that shows better features than the old one or a new discovery about the goods. There are many examples of the evolving preference, such as holiday resorts, automobiles, and clothing fashion. Levitt, Stephen, & Dubner (2005) found an interesting pattern of ways people named their children and why some names were used more frequently by some people during a specific period of time. The reason was not that those names sounded sweeter but that many people unconsciously linked their perception of the different names to people who gave the society good images (rich, powerful, beautiful, or good citizens).

In the last half of the twentieth century, globalization has been accelerated by transportation, migration, and information transformation. Therefore, advertising has been playing an increasingly critical role in shaping people's tastes and lifestyles (e.g., Galbraith, 1958; Packard, 1957). Advertising shapes and leads consumer behavior. Asian countries are obviously being gradually more westernized. The spread of Hollywood movies and the fast foods of McDonald's and KFC are a result of globalization. Friedman (2006) demonstrates the impacts of globalization in the 21st century. Whenever the United States has any popular programs, China follows, possibly for two reasons: (1) Information and advertisements are promoted by the developed countries, and (2) Anything from developed countries is assumed to be good.

The earliest and most successful treatment of taste and lifestyle in economics was done by Veblen (1899), who used the concept of conspicuous consumption to describe lavish spending on goods and services by the upper class to display income or wealth (such as jewelry, clothing, excessively large houses) primarily in order to manifest their social power and status. The phenomenon of conspicuous consumption is not totally new, having existed in ancient times in the forms of Egyptian Pyramids, the Palaces of Kings and Emperors, etc. What is new, according to Veblen, is a new class that emerged in the capitalistic society in the 19th century as a result of the accumulation of wealth during the Second Industrial Revolution. Such a phenomenon was totally different from the previous era in terms of scale. An important condition of conspicuous consumption is that a large proportion of income is not required for the basic needs, such as food, shelter and clothing. He also saw sports as conspicuous consumption. Veblen argued that the true reason for the popularity of sports was their usefulness as a means of displaying conspicuous leisure.

Marshall (1920) also pointed out paths of taste changes of consumption: increasing demand for more varieties, more subtle and better quality, more social, conspicuous and distinctive in consumption. The changing desires led to some new inventions. In recent decades, the most notable contribution to taste in economics was made by John K. Galbraith (1958) and Gary S. Becker (1996), who argued that as society became more affluent, lifestyles and tastes became more important in consumption behavior. This thought is consistent with post-Keynesian economics that emphasized Maslow's hierarchy of need (Lavoie, 1992; Pasinetti, 1981).

From an evolutional perspective, it is well known that only the fittest survive. Those who show some attributes of fitness attract more opposite sex partners. Culturally, those attributes were unconsciously thought of as beauty. Only a few decades ago, slightly over-weight people were viewed as more beautiful since only those who could get access to sufficient food and nutrition appeared wealthy. As food has become no longer a problem, such perception is gone. Conspicuous consumption is the best way to get the information of wealth and status across to peers. Children's food preferences are largely influenced by the public media (Schor & Ford, 2007). Individuals often indulge in consumption that is not only recognized by their peers as an indicator of status but that also distinguishes them from other people (Bourdieu, 1984). The great efforts human beings put into non-food activities reflect the high cost of communication in a large and complex society (Chen, 2005).

8.2.2 Conspicuous Consumption and Golf

According to Berghahn (2007), to some degree, globalization is indeed Americanization. In order to relate conspicuous consumption to golf, a brief examination of who consumes, or plays, golf in a developed country such as the United States would be useful. Such an examination would allow for a comparison of how golfing has developed in China as a conspicuous consumption more than as a recreational activity.

In the home of golf, Scotland, the game was accepted across social lines in the 16th and 17th centuries. A long and noble version of the game was played by aristocrats on more developed seaside courses, while ordinary people played a short game in village churchyards (Starn, 2006; cited from Hamilton, 1998). The first permanent golf club in North America, Canada's Royal Montreal Club, was founded in 1873. St. Andrews, one of the oldest golf clubs in the United States, was established as a 3-hole layout in 1888 at Yonkers, New York and was a country club. More than a thousand private courses were built in the period of golf's massive takeoff between the 1890s and the late 1920s. The first municipal course was built in 1895, and there were several hundred public courses as of 1929 (Starn, 2006).

In 2000, there were 26.4 million golfers aged 12 and over in the United States. Approximately 5.4 million (22%) of them were avid golfers (National Golf Foundation, 2004). In 1999, these golfers played on a total of 16,747 golf courses (Crompton, 2000). In the 1980s and 1990s, approximately 35% and 46%, respectively, of new courses were associated with a real estate development (Garl et al., 2001). More recently according to Laing (2003: 3), "More than three quarters of the courses under construction today are part of larger real estate projects."

People playing golf or choosing to live in a golf community can be regarded as performing conspicuous consumption to some extent. First, a large proportion of residents who live in such a community do not play golf as evidenced in previous studies. For example, Firth (1990) found that "only one in ten fairway homes is owned by a golfer" (p. 16) in New England golf course communities. Solano (1991) observed that only 30% of residents in the golf communities with which he was familiar played golf. Gimmy and Benson (1992) reported that "as few as 20% of residents in developments play golf" (p. 130). Belden (1993) reported that up to 80% of buyers in new golf course developments didn't actually play the sport. Muirhead and Rando (1994) also found that 20% to 30% of households within a golf community actually bought golf memberships at a course. More recently, Nicholls and Crompton (2005) found that only 29% of respondents reported that a member of their household played golf regularly (once a month or more) at the subdivision course. Second, golf courses serve to elevate the image of a community and people are attracted to image. Golf reflects affluence and prestige, and some people may seek to enhance their self-esteem or social standing by buying into a golf community or playing the game. Previous studies found that factors such as status, image, and exclusivity of golf courses motivated people to play golf (Garl et al., 2001). For example, Solano (1991) noted, "The prestige has overwhelmed the sport itself" (p. 56). Petrick (2001) found that visitors appeared to be motivated more by status than infrequent locals, and he suggested that "marketing efforts which emphasize golf as an elitists sport, should be more effective for visitors, than for those that play locally, but infrequently" (p. 68). In addition, according to Garl et al., "Many buyers in golf communities are not golfers; rather they appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the course, the permanent open space, and the perceived exclusivity of the community" (p. 6).

Based on the above examination of golfing in the United States and other western countries, the popularity of golfing can be explained by at least six reasons: (1) It is a good outdoor exercise; (2) A golf course is usually located in an agreeable place; (3) It can be played by all ages of people and is especially good for the aged and women; (4) It can be used as a way to transcend (Chopra, 2003); (5) It is played on wide-open grasslands that are attractive to human beings from evolutional perspectives (Cullen, 2000); and (6) Golf can be used as a means of conspicuous consumption.

Here, we primarily focus on the last one: conspicuous consumption. Not all people agree that golf was originated from the aristocracy (Starn, 2006), but it is no doubt that historically golf has been strongly related to richness and fame. Golfing has been dominated by rich white men as a form of conspicuous consumption until very recently. Long ago, Mencken (1948) considered golfing as conspicuous leisure. Some people thought that the costly game (from equipment, elaborate etiquette and exclusive clubs) was a way for America's elites to mark their identity and to isolate themselves from those socially inferior (Mrozek, 1983), while some other people regarded golfing as a xenophobic dimension of the Scottish and British aristocracy to the new immigrants (Brodkin, 1999; Moss, 2001). Starn (2006) also found that golf expansion at Pinehurst (in North Carolina) and around the United States coincided with spiking anti-immigrant sentiment toward impoverished new arrivals from the Balkans and southern Italy: "Golf, a sport perceived as linked to the lifestyle of the Scottish and British aristocracy, possessed an aura of Anglo-Saxon-ness, in contrast to the pastimes of what one observer called the 'swarthy, unwashed masses'."

Some evidence from other countries/regions also indicates that golf is used as a way of showing status and doing business with customers. The golf developments in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan tell a similar story of golfing as conspicuous consumption. Even in some African countries (e.g., Zimbabwe), golf is a popular leisure activity primarily as a means of meeting people (export customers) and as an indicator of status (Bell, 2000). In the following section, we will closely examine the golf expansion in China.

8.3 Golfing Development as Part of the Lifestyle in China

Even though it is sometimes argued that golfing was invented in China (Smith, 2006), the first golf course was not introduced into China until 1984, and the game has become popular there only in recent years. From 1984 to 1988, only 9 golf courses had been developed with 630 million yuan; another 22 with 3.14 billion yuan from 1989 to 1993. But 262 golf courses had been developed with about 20 billion yuan from 1994 to 2003 (Jian 2006, data from General Administration of Sports of China 2005).

Among the total 293 golf courses in 2004, 70 courses were invested and owned by business people from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and 68 by foreign companies, 45 by the State and 42 by collective entities, and 68 by domestic private entities (Jian 2006, data from General Administration of Sports of China 2005).

The golf courses were mainly distributed in coastal area, especially Guangdong (60), Beijing (32), Shanghai (29), Jiangsu (22), Hainan (14), Zhejiang (13), Liaoning (13), Fujian (11), Shangdong (9) and Tianjin (7), and tourist destination like Yuannan (7). Therefore the distribution can almost be classified into three belts: the coastal area having most of the golf course, the most remote and interior without (like Qianghai, Guizhou, Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Shanxi and Tibet) and the one between these two belts with a few courses being developed (Jian 2006, data from General Administration of Sports of China 2005).

All but two of the 300 golf courses in China are luxury country clubs that provide services including restaurants, hotels and caddies (Wong, 2006). According to a recent market study (E-Composites, 2004), the golf club market in China will see an annual growth rate of over 25% for the next 5 years. According to People's Daily (2003), China's golf lovers have exceeded 1 million, and the number is increasing at an annual rate of 30%, as reported by a "world managers" survey published at the award-granting ceremony of the "world's most influential golf course" held on November 23, 2003.

Several reasons can be summarized to describe golfing as an emerging lifestyle in China.

8.3.1 Leisure and Sport

Golf is often associated with the terms "green", "oxygen", "light" and "friendship". Golfing combines leisure and sport very well. Playing golf is relatively more comfortable than playing other sports. It is an outdoor activity within a beautiful landscape that is also often adjacent to favorable tourist locations (i.e., mountains, oceans, and lakes). A golf course itself is usually a beautiful park, and such an environment is increasingly appreciated in China by the urban dwellers due to the shrinking open and green space in the cities. In recent decades, the major consumers have come from the emerging middle class. They pursue new ways of leisure after their business schedule and look for ways to spend their accumulated wealth.

According to Chen and Wang (2005), 68% of golfers are motivated by leisure, 63% by physical exercise, 21% by business, and 16% by the opportunity to build connections. This seems inconsistent with our expectation, but it is not surprising considering that a significant number of players are foreigners who work in China. If we were able to separate out the Chinese players, the results would be different. Golfing, for some of them, may gradually and eventually become a habit and a lifestyle.

8.3.2 Investment and Conducting Business

Although golfing was initiated and developed primarily for leisure and sport in western countries, it is strongly related to business in recent history. In the United States, golf is the unofficial sport of the business world. It is said that business decisions are actually made on the golf courses. For this reason, the successful conduct of business golf is an important business skill. The picture is similar in China. Many Chinese play golf neither as a leisure activity nor as a sport, but purely for business purposes (at least the initial motivation). Golfing is a great opportunity to communicate and build connection with the western businessmen who live in China or who simply visit China for business purposes.

Golfing was added to the undergraduate curriculum in Xiamen University in order to provide expertise so that students may be more employable in the job markets. On the university president's website, he claims that "opening golf courses may help students understand [western] culture and learn networking skills, which may be good for them after graduation." Sun Jinwei, a second-year humanities student at the Tsinghua University in Beijing said that golf was a "useful networking skill" (Clark, 2006). Huang Sheng, 21, a marketing student at the Renmin University in Beijing, said golf was "fundamental" for business because it helps build connection (Clark, 2006).

Golfing not only works as a means of career and business opportunities at the individual level, it also helps in creating an image of open policy and good investment environment at the societal level (People's Daily, 2004). Many local officials believe that a golf course is a sign of a good investment environment, and many foreign investors see it that way. In the words of an official, "What matters is that we have a course, regardless of whether or not we profit from it."

8.3.3 Acquiring Status

For most Chinese, playing the game as an indicator of social status of successful people is probably more important than pursuing it as a leisure/sport activity. Playing golf is indeed a symbol of the newly emerging rich and elite in China even though it may no longer be regarded as a sport that is exclusively for the rich in the West. In China, "GOLF" is often interpreted in Chinese as "Gao and Fu," which implies "High (in political position of ranking) and Rich (in wealth)." The annual membership fee of a typical golf club ranges from $12,000 to $36,000. The membership fee is $181,250 at the Shanghai Sheshan Golf Club (Wong, 2006). According to Friedman (2001), "In Beijing today, being a member of the right golf club is becoming the same status symbol for the Communist elite as it is for capitalists in the West." Such status is important in order to compete in business.

8.3.4 Promotion by Public Media and Tourism Industry

The media have played an important role in promoting golf (Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Golf competition has become one of the most advertised sports in China. For example, Shenzhen also boasts the largest number of golf competitions and golf competition organizers. VOLVO China Open, the most influential golf competition on the mainland, was initiated by the Shenzhen Golf Club. CITIC Forward Management, in addition to managing golf clubs, also hosts many amateur golf tours and youth competitions. Other major professional golf competitions, such as Tiger Woods China Challenge and Dynasty Cub, are organized by the Mission Hills Golf Club in China (Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2006). Golfing contests are held by golf clubs in Shenzhen all year round. The tourism industry is another result of globalization that facilitates the golf development in China and other developing countries. As early as 2001, Thomas Friedman, the famous columnist for the New York Times, and the author of the popular book The World is Flat, joked, “If 20 years ago the only reason to go to China was for the Great Wall, now it’s also for the Great Golf” (Friedman, 2001).

8.3.5 Golfing and its Impacts on the Environment and Society

Golf courses occupy a large amount of land. One standard 18-hole golf course needs at least 70 hectare of land. Research indicates that golf courses have replaced large amounts of farmland and have caused disputes between the developers and local farmers in China (e.g., Fu, 2004). Because the lawns for a golf course must be fertilized, watered, sprayed and managed, golf is generally believed to have negative impacts on the environment (Ru & Zhou, 2006; Zhang, 2006).

The impacts of golf courses on the environment and sustainability nationwide might not be very significant, but they have had some local impact. For example, Feng (2007) reported that a project to regenerate Beijing’s Old Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan), which had been semi-wild since the 1950s, would involve the clearing of old trees and vegetation to make way for a golf course-style lawn of imported turf, changing from high density of shade, large amounts of vegetation, and a high degree of biodiversity to a more water-consuming land cover. More importantly, the change reflects a growing obsession with golf courses that have spread across many of China’s cities.

8.4 Final Remarks

It seems apparent that when a society’s lifestyles are changing significantly towards affluence, and conspicuous consumption, they are based more on social desires than on biophysical needs. Globalization universalizes lifestyles, which has become an important issue in the emerging health and environmental problems. Some people argue that the western lifestyle and consumerism significantly contribute to local and global environmental problems and threaten sustainability (Princen, Maniates, & Conca, 2002; Stern, Dietz, Ruttan, Socolow, & Sweeney, 1997).

Golfing is only one example of luxury goods and conspicuous consumption. More and more evidence shows that China is becoming a new continent of luxury goods, including automobiles, mobile phones, watches, clothes, furniture, etc. (Qian, 2006). China is now the world’s third-largest market for luxury goods. Even more surprising is that not only are the nation’s 300,000 millionaires snatching up high-end wares, but also the white-collar employees are indulging in the urge to splurge (Schwarz & Wong, 2006).

The first and most significant impact on the environment can be caused by automobiles. China, whose people have long been seen as a nation moving on two wheels, is now shifting gears and moving towards a nation on four. China surged past Japan to become the world's No. 2 vehicle market after the United States in 2006 as car purchases by newly affluent drivers jumped by 37%. The announcement highlighted China's fast evolution from a "bicycle kingdom" to a major auto market where foreign producers are racing to open factories and sell to a growing urban middle class. China's overall vehicle sales, including trucks and buses, rose 25.1% to 7.2 million units last year according to China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (The Associated Press, 2007).

Housing can also be a source of environmental problems. The picture of a western style house with adjacent green lawn was never so prominent in China before. However, today the growth of green lawns in China is evident, as are the booming businesses of the enumerable lawn-care providers and the lawn-care tool makers in the country. An American style modern building and surrounding green lawn for many offices and hotels have also become trends. According to Liu (2005), western professionals are preferred by developers for designing the major construction projects in China because western signatures on their designs are considered to be prestigious and thus ideal for publicity purposes. The utility derived from a green lawn and playing golf is often more psychological, not materialistic. Many people in China even spend money on these luxury goods and activities in order to differentiate themselves from ordinary people (Cha, 2007). Thus, in many cases, the new consumption pattern is the result of the tendency to show off. However, the people who use a lawn only for their own aesthetic pleasure and play golf only for physical exercise and mental delight cannot be ruled out, but there are fewer of them.

With only 1.4 mu (15 mu = 1 hectare) of farmland per capita, the Chinese government worries that luxury golf courses will take away too much land and water resources since a standard golf course occupies 40–50 hectares of land and uses 3,000 cubic meters of water every day (Wong, 2006). In addition, they also create some hatred against the rich and public anger and criticism amid the widening gap in China. Xiamen University's announcement that golf is a required course in the law and economics curriculum provoked outrage in China because it is still frowned upon as pastime of the rich (Clark, 2006).

Economists usually do not like to judge lifestyle. Whenever the consumer is willing to pay, the product has utility to him, so all goods are good. Individuals know how to maximize their utilities under their budget level. Economists usually do not investigate why people value some things more than others and why their tastes and preferences change. Most economists have not asked how we come to want and value the things we do (Bowles, 1998). In the globalization era, lifestyle is not an endogenous variable and should be included in an economic study. For example, economists can also seek policy and solution beyond regulation and taxes.

The central government of China has used both regulation and taxes to curb the trend of the golf course development. The central government imposed a moratorium on golf-course construction in 2004 to protect the country's scarce land resources. The order, however, has not been taken seriously by regional/local governments, which have been using golf courses as a means to boost their local economies. There are 176 golf courses in 26 provincial regions in China, but only one was approved by the central government (People's Daily, 2004). In 2005, China further started to limit the building of villas, golf courses and other luxury projects in an effort to protect the environment and prevent wasteful investment (China Daily, 2005).

Taxes have also been used to slow down the golfing industry. Regarding golf as a luxury sport, the tax authority levies a 23% consumption tax on golf – the same amount it charges for nightclubs – as opposed to a 5% tax rate on other sports (Wong, 2006). Despite the controversy and aggressive regulation and taxes, golf continues to be popular among college students, who regard it either as a new, healthy sport or as an entrance ticket to the business world where deals are often clinched on golf courses (Wong, 2006).

Since golfing is a conspicuous consumption, more than just a leisure pursuit for most people, we would suggest using more psychological methods to change public attitudes and perceptions. If regulation is effective, the shortage of golf courses with the growing demand will increase the price of golfing, which will make it an even better indicator of the elites. If we cannot change the perception of golfing as a "good" image associated with wealth and status of decent citizens, they will look for other places or even countries to play golf if their demand cannot be met locally due to golf courses being regulated with a high tax.

Only when we build a public consensus that getting rich is glorious but that golfing is a not necessarily a means to show off the glory, the demand will decrease. In other words, it is too costly to use golfing as a communication tool. This is exactly like smoking. Although pricing and regulations are useful, perception and social consensus are also very important. At the societal level, we need to redefine "good consumption" and enhance environmental ethics among the public. Therefore, the major task is to change and mold consumer preferences by redefining "goodness" through education and public media as well. In economics, the welfare will be largely increased if golfing is substituted by other kinds of leisure activities.

Changing lifestyle through education or other means should be used as an important policy toward sustainable development. As compared to technology, culture is more subjective to value judgment. With fast globalization, economists should not treat taste and preference as fixed in consumer behavior and must investigate the mechanism and dynamism of the changes and their impacts on local as well as global sustainability.

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Chapter 9
Who are the Knowledge Workers of Campinas, SP, Brazil and how do they Live? Local Impacts of Global Trends

Leonardo Freire de Mello

Abstract During the last decades, Brazil has undergone a huge and accelerated modernization process. The Brazilian industrial park grew up and became competitive, not only regarding its internal market but also the external one by aiming at global market competition. In addition, Brazilian society has also undergone a remarkable modernization process, in order to promote its economic development. Traditional rural and urban oligarchies were substituted by new pressure groups and interest groups – the so-called "new middle classes" – that represent the emerging power structure of the country. During all these years, the country experienced a long- lasting and profound economic crisis which left serious scars on its social tissue. However, the gap between the richer and the poorer continued to widen during this period, bringing violence and lowering the quality of life in the already chaotic Brazilian metropolitan areas. The main focus of this paper is to understand who are the knowledge workers in Campinas, SP, Brazil and how do they live and work. The research considers that they are an important part of the growing and affluent new upper-middle class. This new group has remarkable consumption patterns that make them different from the "classic" middle class – especially regarding spatial consumption patterns. Their values are quite similar to those of their peers living and working in developed countries. In addition to a conceptual discussion of new consumption patterns and their impact on spatial, environmental, social, and cultural issues, the paper offers a description of this new group – based on census data – and compares it to other two local social groups.

Keywords Consumption patterns · Knowledge workers · Campinas · Space · Place

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L.F. de Mello (✉)
Assistant Professor at the Urban and Regional Planning Program of the University of Vale do Paraíba – UNIVAP, Brazil
e-mail: leo.mello@gmail.com

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9.1 Introduction

During the last decades of the 20th century, the Planet and human societies went through a series of social, economic, and environmental transformations which occurred on a scale and speed never seen before. Never before in human history, in such a short period of time, was a greater volume of technological development observed, that took people to unseen levels of interaction. A huge and broad web of telecommunications and *on-line* data transmission spread all over the world, not only on its surface but also over and under it.

The societies and economies of the different countries became much more modern and complex, which permitted a greater quality of life in a major part of the world, as well as generating externalities that put populations and cultures under severe risks.

Those transformations, however, are not equally experienced by all societies nor by all individuals of a given society. The gap between those who connect to the brave new technological world and those who are still at its margins increased during the last years of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century.

Technology, technological innovation, research and technological, economic, and social development are features that become more and more fundamental for the economic survival of societies. This made businesses, institutions and professionals dedicated to technological development become progressively more valued by countries, states, regions and cities.

Brazilian metropolitan areas face an internal and accelerated degradation process, losing power, influence, jobs and industries to smaller cities that, in turn, offer more competitive advantages to businesses installed there and, at the same time, attract people with promises of quality of life that the metropolises are no longer able to offer. The Campinas Metropolitan Area – especially the municipality of Campinas – fits perfectly into this profile, even though it is characterized by a performance somewhat better than other metropolitan areas of the country.

Campinas is the second largest city in São Paulo, the richest Brazilian state. The city's population is 959,496 people and the analyzed group (333,439 people) represents 34.75% of this total. Female knowledge workers represent 19.66% of total population and 38.13% of total female population of the city. Male knowledge workers represent 15.09% of total population and 31.15% of total male population of the city. The sex ratio of the total population is of 52% women to 48% men. In Campinas though, knowledge workers ratio is 56% women and 44% men.

The growth of a new economy changes radically the way cities and regions obtain and keep their competitive advantages. This economy stimulates the development of regional advantages based on the capability of quickly mobilizing the most prepared and qualified people, the most needed and valuable resources, and the ability to turn innovations into viable and competitive businesses and products. This way, the competitive advantage nexus moves to the regions that are able to generate, attract and retain the best talent (Florida, 2000).

The Campinas Metropolitan Region (CMR) and, in a particularly accentuated way due its specific characteristics, Campinas municipality is inserted into the global processes in a very particular way, both as an entity coupled to the global economic relations and dependencies, but also in terms of global cultural trends and urban ideologies mediated through i.e. the previously mentioned information technologies networks. For the inhabitants the city of Campinas, in a Brazilian comparative framework, is perceived to be a model both in terms of environmental quality, as well as in terms of the concentration of high technology companies, research centers and universities. This makes Campinas the destination of many knowledge workers, attracted by job availability. This paper intends to help to make the comprehension of this clearer. However the city suffers to an increasing extent classical urban problems, like a number of recent environmental contamination cases and a significant decrease of local indicators of quality of life connected to the rise of the urban violence during the last decade. A fact that might in a longer time horizon affect spatial dynamics in terms of choice of settlement within the urban borders and in the region of Sao Paulo state.

9.2 Identifying Knowledge Workers

Concepts like occupation, activity and knowledge, all of them are fundamental for the definition of an applicable category of knowledge workers.

As a point of departure, the Brazilian Classification of Occupations (*Classificação Brasileira de Ocupações*) – CBO2002 collected and classified by the authorities is necessary along with a theoretical discussion of the terminology behind the term.

Manuel Castells, in several of his works (Castells, 1996, 2002, 2003a, 2003b), affirms that the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century will be remembered in the future as the historical moment when the Planet became a huge network connecting individuals and institutions, all of them connected and interacting by the massive use of telecommunication, high speed data transmission and processing technologies.

However, Castells also points out that this “dive” into the global network is not – and probably will not be –, in the short and medium terms, accessible to individuals from all societies. A few connect intensely and faster to the new networks and to the new capital and information flows, which only highlights the economic and social differences already existing. Among those so privileged, shines a new social class, that authors like Richard Florida call the *creative class,* formed, in its majority, by knowledge workers. Following questions are necessary to get closer to grasp who is a knowledge worker? What is his/her working field? (Mello, 2007).

The expression – or at least its use in the media, academy and in economics – is normally credited, to Peter Drucker and Fritz Machlup, in the 1960s. During the following decade, Daniel Bell, Erik Olin Wright and Robert Reich continue to elaborate the definition of this new social class, but it is Paul Fussell's research on the so-called *X Class*[1] and David Brooks' research about the *BoBos*[2] that will determine the fundamental parameters of the definition established by Richard Florida and adopted in the current paper, as will be shown below.

Richard Florida was chosen as the main sociological reference regarding the definition of classes mostly due to his very interesting – and frequently polemical – approach to the new urban middle class groups formed by the knowledge workers with similar consumption patterns and tastes, as well as lifestyles in general. The descriptions made by Florida of knowledge workers and the creative class which they form are, a very interesting and useful way to describe a subdivision of the new

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[1] According to Florida, Paul Fussell captures, perhaps unconsciously, many of the characteristics that he gives to the creative class, especially when '*near the end of his 1983 book Class* [...] *Fussell noted the presence of a growing "X" group that seemed to defy existing categories*: *[Y]ou are not born an X person... you earn X-personhood by a strenuous effort of discovery in which curiosity and originality are indispensable.... The young flocking to the cities to devote themselves to "art", "writing", "creative work" – anything, virtually, that liberates them from the presence of a boss or superior – are aspirant X people. ... If, as [C. Wright] Mills has said, the middle-class person is "always somebody's man", the x person is nobody's. ... X people are independent-minded. ... They adore the work they do, and they do it until they are finally carried out, "retirement" being a concept meaningful only to hired personnel or wage slaves who despise their work.'* (Florida, 2004: 67–68)

[2] Acronym for *Bohemian-Bourgeois*, the term was created by David Brooks and used in his book *BoBos in Paradise*, published in 2000, to define the "heirs" of the *yuppies* (*Young Urban Professionals*) of the previous decade. Both *terms* have negative and pejorative meanings. According to the author, *BoBos* frequently come from the '... *corporate upper-middle to upper class, they rarely oppose mainstream society, claim highly tolerant views of others, buy lots of expensive and exotic items, and believe American society to be meritocratic'* and are the '*'new upper class' represented* [by] *a marriage between the liberal idealism of the 1960s and the self-interest of the Reagan era*'. The criticisms to Brooks' work are founded on the fact that he did not give any empirical proof that this new elite was really "new" and that '*the BoBo trend merely represents changing tastes and preferences of a pre-existing upper-middle class (not a product of social mobility).'*
According to Melinda Wittstock's article '*Are you a BOurgeois BOhemian?*', published on *The Observer*, May, 28th, 2000, BoBos:

- *"Believe that shelling out £10,050 on a home media centre is vulgar, but that spending it on a slate shower stall is a sign you are at one with the Zen-like rhythms of nature;*
- *Work for a company as cool, hip and enterprising as you;*
- *Go on adventure seeking vacations to the remotest parts of the world to X-treme ski, mountain climb or whitewater raft, or do you simply settle for a ride in the sport utility vehicle to the nearest haute-design shops and local purveyors of Third World treasures;*
- *Dress "geek chic" or hippy chick – and don't forget the titanium Omnitech athletic gear;*
- *Have a newly renovated kitchen which looks like an aircraft hangar with plumbing – even after the feng shui;*
- *Give to Tibet, but not always to the local homeless;*
- *Feel cheated and betrayed if a big supermarket sign that normally says 'Organic Items Today: 130' today counts only 60;*
- *Earn upwards of £67,000 but were never in it for the money;*
- *Buy Third World to save the Third World.*'

middle classes that occupies a very prominent position in our metropolitan areas, especially in areas like Campinas (Mello, 2007).

In essence, Florida establishes that the core of the definition of the creative class – and consequently, of what is a knowledge worker – is economic. And, more than this, its economic function '*underpins and informs its members' social, cultural and lifestyles choices'*, including '*a great many knowledge workers, symbolic analysts and professional and technical workers*' and, so, composed of '*of people who add economic value through their creativity*' (Florida, 2004: 68).

As Florida highlights, in this case, the use of the term class does not correspond to its traditional Marxist sense, because '*most members of the Creative Class do not own and control any significant property in the physical sense. Their property – which stems from their creative capacity – is an intangible because it is literally in their heads*' (Florida, 2004: 68).

In truth, the creative class is much more related to the definition of social class given by Max Weber, who considers distinctions based in the three dimensions of inequality – class, power and prestige. In the Weberian tradition, class is a term used to:

> [. . .] refer to life opportunities, or to people's capacity to obtain what they want and need from the market: to buy goods and services, to protect themselves from the others, and so on. From this viewpoint, the class position rests in a higher number of features than only the relationship with the production means — as occupational prestige, education, experience and qualification and intelligence levels, inheritance, luck, ambition and family formative environment [. . .] Weber's multidimensional approach not only extends class' analysis, as well as helps to identify the complexities related with class' position and relationships, especially if the relationships are considered into the context of the three dimensions of inequality and of the facts that affect them. Even if power, prestige and wealth frequently come together, they, to a certain point, vary in an independent way. A leader, for instance, can consider him or herself high in terms of power and prestige, but relatively low on wealth, in the same way that wealth does not automatically bring power or prestige (Johnson, 1997: 38).

This approach relates much more to the creative class and to its members, as well as to the importance of the role that creativity begins to play, a role that was, before, played by the sell of work and time.

The main question consists in the identification of the occupational groups which develop activities whose aggregated value comes from the creativity of workers in creating better and more modern processes, products and concepts, dedicated not only to the direct resolution of already existing problems, but also to make human activities more efficient and in a broader sense, more agreeable (Mello, 2007).

A good example of a product of knowledge workers creativity is *iPod* developed by Apple, that was not made to solve any specific or concrete problem, but very quickly became a huge sales products success, allying quality, technology, design and style, and generating many other derived and associated – as, for instance, *iPhone*, whose planning and production phases alone developed 200 new patents.

To make this possible, it was necessary that a knowledge worker analyze and decode the symbols and signs of important consumer groups; observe the growing tendency of digital music consumption; recognize and define, clearly and objectively, the profile of the consumer of this kind of media; and create, based on all those observations, a product able to satisfy the needs of its potential consumers, even before they were consciously perceived by them.

A contemporary icon was created and instantaneously absorbed by global culture, and an extremely successful product will, for some time reign alone and absolute in the market, with no equivalent competitors, which only confirms the proximity of science and art in the functions played by knowledge workers (Mello, 2007).

This example points to what a knowledge worker can do, but it is still necessary to define more clearly which people use creativity in their jobs, developing or improving more modern products, processes and concepts.

Among the fundamental characteristics, probably the more obvious are related to the educational and academic background of these workers who probably are individuals with the highest education levels among a given population. This can be credited to the fact that a solid educational background (obtaining at least one university degree) is fundamental for the development of a knowledge worker's career (Mello, 2007).

However, is it correct to generalize and to consider all individuals with many years of schooling as knowledge workers? Probably not, because not all of them work directly with the development of knowledge and technological advance. Occupations must also be considered.

Only those individuals who have functions related to science and education will be considered knowledge workers in this paper. However, some authors – among them Florida – support the idea that artists in general, should be included, because their activities and occupations are related to the arts, and contribute, even indirectly, to technological innovation. According to Ianni, there are '*in art, formulations, comprehensions and even forecasting that, in the dialogue with the sciences, produce a much broader panorama of reality. The artist is, many times, a seismographer of reality*' (Ianni, 2003).

For Richard Florida, the characteristic that distinguishes the creative class is that "*its members engage in work whose function is to 'create meaningful new forms'*". The writer supports the idea that this class is composed by two groups: one more "hard core" and another, more fluid sphere surrounding it which allows it to develop interfaces with the other classes and with the larger society (Florida, 2004: 68–69).

Inside this core, which he calls *Super Creative Core*, is where we can find the *strictu sensu* knowledge workers – '*scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers and architects, as well as the thought leadership of modern society: non-fiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts and other opinion-makers*', occupations which fulfill '*the highest order of creative work*' and are directly associated to the production of:

> [...] new forms or designs that are readily transferable and widely useful — such as designing a product that can be widely made, sold and used; coming up with a theorem or strategy that can be applied in many cases; or composing music that can be performed again and again. People at the core of the Creative Class engage in this kind of work regularly; it's what they are paid to do. Along with problem solving, their work may entail problem

> finding: not just building a better mousetrap, but noticing first that a better mousetrap would be a handy thing to have (Florida, 2004: 68–69).

Inside the second sphere, we will find the *creative professionals*, workers with higher education but who do not develop activities directly connected to the technological development. They work:

> [. . .] in a wide range of knowledge-intensive industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services, the legal and health care professions, drawing on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems. Doing so typically requires a high degree of formal education and thus a high level of human capital (Florida, 2004: 69).

In other words, the *creative professionals* are lawyers, accountants, business managers and other workers who, in one way or another, support – in a very broad sense – the work of those directly connected to research and innovation.

Within this sphere we find artists and people like web designers, writers, musicians and filmmakers – occupations at the interface of art and science. The closer an occupation is to the core of a particular system, the more directly it is related to technological innovation. Florida goes on to classify occupations according to their rank within the creative class, as shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 The Class Structure Proposed by Richard Florida

Creative class	
Super creative core	Computer and mathematical occupations
	Architecture and engineering occupations
	Life, physical, and social science occupations
	Education, training and library occupations
	Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations
Creative professionals	Management occupations
	Business and financial operations occupations
	Legal occupations
	Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations
	High-end sales and sales management
Working class	Construction and extraction occupations
	Installation, maintenance and repair occupations
	Production occupations
	Transportation and material moving occupations
Service class	Health care support occupations
	Food preparation and food-service-related occupations
	Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations
	Personal care and service occupations
	Low-end sales and related occupations
	Office and administrative support occupations
	Community and social services occupations
	Protective service occupations
Agriculture	Farming, fishing and forestry occupations

9.2.1 Within Which Professions are Knowledge Workers Operating in Campinas?

The following analyses are based on data from the 2000 Brazilian Demographic Census published by the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* – IBGE. To identify the knowledge workers who live and work in Campinas, SP, Brazil, three categories and four categorization criteria were created as shown in Table 9.2.

The three last criteria are justified because they establish the professional and territorial profile of the group in question. The first criterion, as the most arbitrary of the four, is justified by the fact that to be considered a knowledge worker in the way this study proposes, the individual has to have completed at least one undergraduate course, which is generally achieved after 22 years of age. The same rationale allows us to consider that by the time an individual completes undergraduate study he will normally have accumulated at least 15 years of study.

However, some individuals graduate before and others after 22 years of age. In our calculation, those who graduated at ages superior to the maximum limit were counted, but those who graduated before reaching age 22 were not considered (their total number is probably very small and does not interfere with the final volume of knowledge workers in Campinas).

When we consider the totals for each of the groups and reduce the universe to be analyzed from a population of 959,496–333,439 which is 34.75% of the total population of the city, it shows that women in the group constitute 19.66% of the total population and 38.13% of the female population of the city. Men represent 15.09%

Table 9.2 Analytical Categories and Criteria

Category	Criteria
Creative Professionals (knowledge workers of the super creative core and creative professionals)	1. To be 22 years old or older. 2. To live in a permanent private household in Campinas, SP, Brazil. 3. To work and/or to study in Campinas, SP, Brazil. 4. To have 15 or more years of schooling **and/or** to have one of the occupations listed in Table 9.3.
Other professionals – with university degrees	1. To be 22 years old or older. 2. To live in a permanent private household in Campinas, SP, Brazil. 3. To work and/or to study in Campinas, SP, Brazil. 4. To have 15 or more years of schooling **and/or** to have one of the occupations listed in **TABLE A.**[1]
Other professionals – without university degrees	1. To be 22 years old or older. 2. To live in a permanent private household in Campinas, SP, Brazil. 3. To work and/or to study in Campinas, SP, Brazil. 4. To have one of the occupations listed in **TABLE B.**[2]

[1] Not *included* here because it's too big and was not considered essential for this paper. If necessary, please contact the author [leo.mello@gmail.com].
[2] Not *included* here because it's too big and was not considered essential for this paper. If necessary, please contact the author [leo.mello@gmail.com].

of the total population and 31.15% of the city's male population. Considering the total population, 52% are women and 48% men. In the selected population, 56% are women and 44% men.

The proportion of knowledge workers is relatively low, only 8.9% of the selected population, which is less than 3% of the total population of the city.

Men are the majority – 54.69% – of Campinas' knowledge workers. This number is superior to the male proportion of 48.69% observed in the group of other professionals with university degrees, but is inferior to the 57.91% among those without a university education. So it can be concluded that there is an interesting gender perspective to the demographic development within the city that would be relevant to study further. One of the considerations is how contemporary gender structure of educational patterns will in the long run contribute to a likely change in the composition of knowledge workers in the city.

Knowledge workers are also on average younger than their peers who completed a university education. The average age by sex shows that creative women are, on average, even younger than women of the two other categories and also younger than the average of the whole population of the city. Creative and those with university degrees have almost identical average ages – 40.0 e 40.1 years, respectively – superior to the average of the third group of the selected population.

It was also possible to observe that men earn higher wages than women. There is a great difference between the average wages of male creative professionals and other male with university degrees graduated professionals, especially when they are compared to the male not graduated professionals. This difference reaches about 400% when compared to the average wages of other males with university degrees – 23.4 minimum wages – with the average wage of the not graduated male professionals – 6.6 minimum wages –, what shows that the university degree is still an important determinant of the wage range in Brazil, and especially in Campinas. When we analyze consumer goods, there are few differences between creative professionals and other university-trained professionals, but there are large variations in comparison with professionals without university degrees, as shown in Table 9.3.

Television sets are the most popular goods among the analyzed population: 96.78% have at least one television set. Only 0.59% of creative professionals, 0.51% of other university-trained professionals and 3.91% of professionals without university degrees do not have a television. Most creative and other university-trained professionals – 37.25% and 37.13%, respectively – have two sets. 45.08% of those without university degrees have just one set. The group with more sets, in percentage terms, is that of university-trained professionals: 13.19% of them have four or more television sets.

Car ownership follows a different pattern. Among the total selected population, 32.28% do not have any car and 45.16% have only one. The creative professionals and the other university-trained professionals show higher percentages of people with three or more cars – 14% and 12% respectively – numbers much higher than observed among professionals without university degrees – 3% – and the average of the total selected population – 5%.

Table 9.3 Goods Ownership and Number of People in the Household, for Creative Professionals, Other University-Trained Professionals and Other Professionals without University Degrees – Campinas, SP, Brazil – 2000

	Creative professionals		Other university-trained professionals		Other professionals without university degrees		Total	
Good	*n*	%	*N*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Television sets								
0	175	0.59	195	0.51	10,372	3.91	10,742	3.22
1	8,377	28.18	9,896	25.84	119,644	45.08	137,917	41.36
2	11,072	37.25	14,223	37.13	92,905	35.00	118,201	35.45
3	6,534	21.98	8,939	23.34	31,391	11.83	46,864	14.05
4+	3,566	12.00	5,052	13.19	11,098	4.18	19,716	5.91
Total	29,724	100.00	38,306	100.00	265,409	100.00	333,439	100.00
Cars								
0	2,281	7.67	3,136	8.19	102,224	38.52	107,642	32.28
1	12,335	41.50	16,619	43.39	121,625	45.83	150,580	45.16
2	10,954	36.85	13,687	35.73	33,035	12.45	57,677	17.30
3	2,717	9.14	3,396	8.87	6,418	2.42	12,531	3.76
4+	1,437	4.83	1,467	3.83	2,107	0.79	5,011	1.50
Total	29,724	100.00	38,306	100.00	265,409	100.00	333,439	100.00
Number of people in the household								
1	3,081	10.36	3,047	7.96	9,835	3.71	15,963	4.79
2	6,918	23.28	8,269	21.59	39,088	14.73	54,276	16.28
3	6,408	21.56	8,152	21.28	63,157	23.80	77,717	23.31
4	8,125	27.34	11,139	29.08	72,341	27.26	91,604	27.47
5+	5,192	17.47	7,699	20.10	80,989	30.51	93,880	28.15
Total	29,724	100.00	38,306	100.00	265,409	100.00	333,439	100.00

10.36% of creative professionals live alone. This is more than twice the value observed in the total selected population – 4.79% of households with only one person.

The spatial distribution of these groups repeats the segregation pattern already observed in the city of Campinas and its metropolitan region. Income is the main feature in the spatial location of individuals and families. People with similar income levels tend to occupy nearby areas and/or areas with similar characteristics.

The spatial distribution of the selected population according to the categories used here is shown in Figs. 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3. No significant variation between creative professionals and other university-trained professionals was observed but a clear pattern is that the most dense settlement within Campinas is it's mid, but that the spatial distribution of knowledge workers within Campinas is generally spread somewhat evenly throughout the neighborhoods in the city, besides the

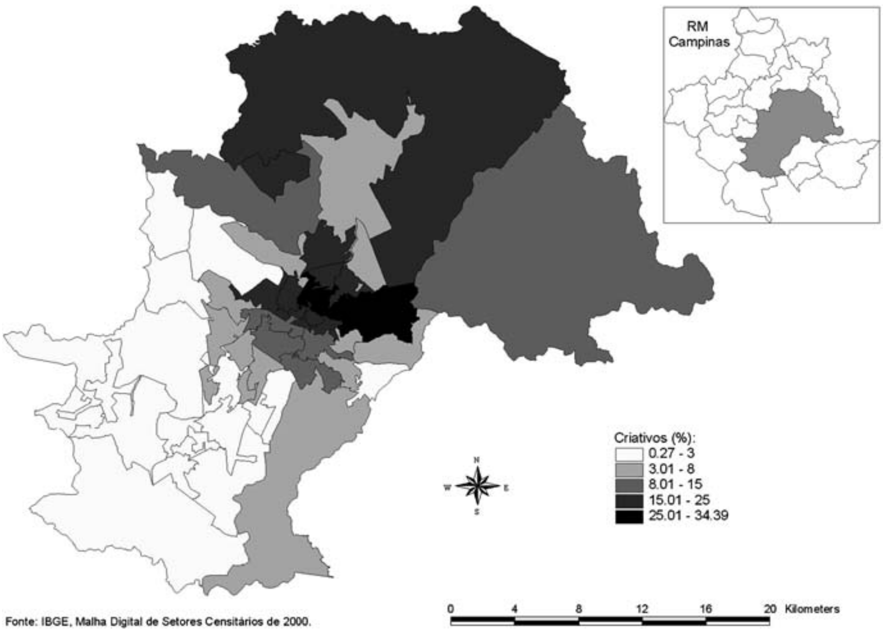

Fig. 9.1 Map 1 – Spatial Distribution of Creative Professionals by Census Areas – Campinas, SP, Brazil – 2000

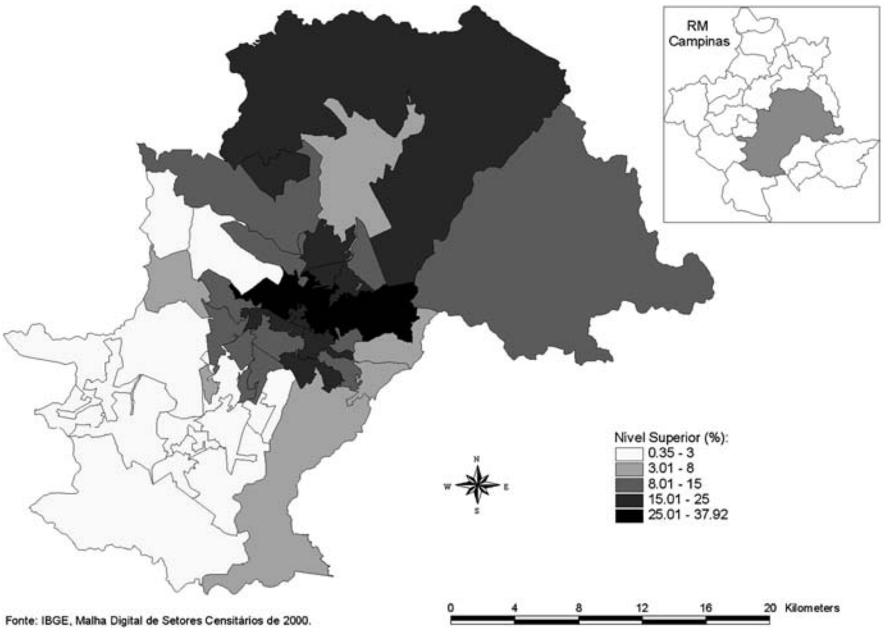

Fig. 9.2 Map 2 – Spatial Distribution of Other University-Trained Professionals by Census Areas – Campinas, SP, Brazil – 2000

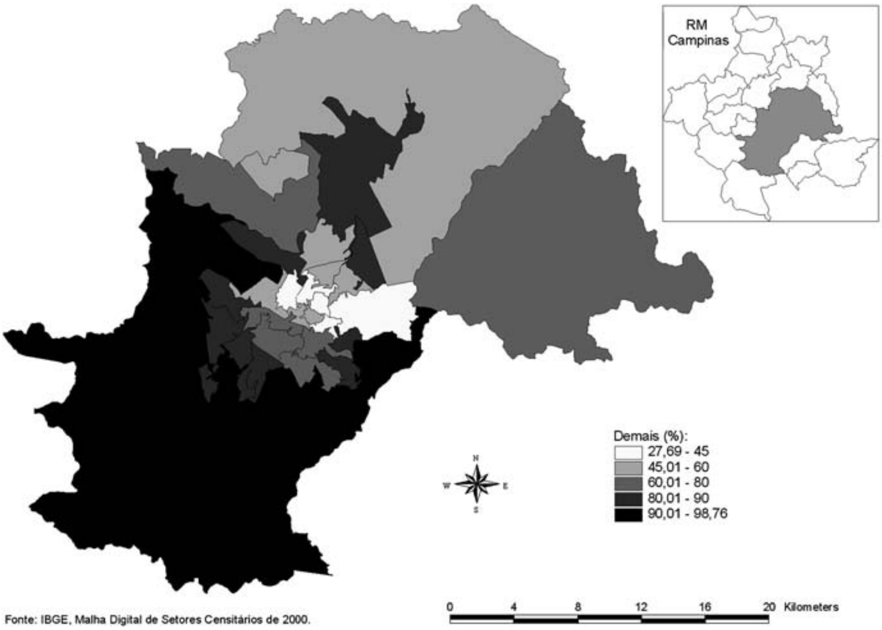

Fig. 9.3 Map 3 – Spatial Distribution of Other Professionals without University Degrees, by Census Areas – Campinas, SP, Brazil – 2000

southernmost neighborhoods. Both groups tend to occupy the same areas. The mid which was most densely populated by knowledge workers with university degrees and the creative professionals show, paradigmatically, the lowest concentrations of professionals without university degrees. Outside the scope of this study is the consideration that housing prices might affect the groups differently as income will vary between groups, and even within a group contributing to an even larger complexity.

9.2.2 Consumption

Robert Kates returns to a definition of consumption that, even after 30 years, still helps to point some directions in the search for a better understanding of the issue. This definition was developed by the Royal Society of London and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences at the end of the 70s and establishes that:

> Consumption is the human transformation of materials and energy. Consumption is of concern to the extent that it makes the transformed materials or energy less available for future use, or negatively impacts biophysical systems in such a way to threaten human health, welfare, or other things people value (Kates, 2000: 3).

Donald Sawyer, in his article "Population and Sustainable Consumption in Brazil" – one of the few articles about population, consumption and the environment produced by the Brazilian demographic community – points to a quite interesting and polemic question when he affirms that:

> International perspectives on population and consumption are strongly influenced by a vision that is partially true, but overly simplified, that environmental degradation is caused by consumption in the North and poverty in the South [. . .]. In a less simplistic vision, it is recognized that there is also over-consumption among high income segments in the South (Sawyer, 2002: 227).

Sawyer also believes that, instead of what many of the international agencies advocate, poverty reduction will not necessarily result in the reduction of environmental degradation because:

> [. . .] increased consumption would inevitably involve greater consumption of raw materials, energy, land and water (withdrawals from nature) and greater pollution of the air, water and soil (return of residues to nature) (Sawyer, 2002: 227).

In their daily lives, people make choices and decisions based on their perception of the reality that surrounds them. Most of the time people will be seeking to maximize the satisfaction of their needs, even those that are unclear or not very well defined. What to wear, what to eat, which way to go to work are examples of the decisions we make and that affect, to variable degrees, the way we live and interact with others and with the environment.

The selection of the place to live, is to the contrary of its apparent simplicity, likely to be one of the most complex decisions one can make. Very frequently, the issue is not treated with the attention it deserves and may result in lack of satisfaction, especially considering home as one of the most important components of quality of life – especially in the contemporary metropolis.

A house is not only a set of building materials associated to structural characteristics. It also represents a series of unique and specific locational characteristics – for instance, location in relation to the workplace and to major transportation routes. In the same way, a neighborhood is not only an agglomeration of houses, shops and infrastructure. The option for a specific house or community or neighborhood is clearly related to the choice of a determined standard – or *griffe* – of quality of life (Mello & Hogan, 2008).

As counterpoint to the space of movement, of uncertainty and of exposure to risk, the home represents pause, safety, and protection from risk. However, to live in the metropolis implies commuting between "safe" places through a space of uncertainty, where some of the metropolitan risks, such as those associated to spatial displacements, define and manifest themselves in a particularly intense way (Mello & Hogan, 2008).

Richard Florida, referring primarily to the United States, says that '*people are more mobile. We are postponing marriage. Our family structures are morphing*'. At a smaller and less broad scale, this is becoming true in emerging countries like Brazil that are becoming urban – and metropolitan – very quickly.

The sprawled urban structure, typical of contemporary metropolitan agglomerations, is normally characterized by large distances between origin and destination points. This is aggravated by a nearly total absence of efficient and comfortable public transportation – with rare exceptions – also characteristic of Brazilian metropolises. All of this means that the automobile acquires a central importance. At the same time, the generalized use of individualized transportation systems based on cars reinforces the urban dispersion pattern.

Pierre Filion, Trudi Bunting and Keith Warriner, in their model *Space-Place-Proximity* – SPP,[3] suggest that the demand for a higher quality of place changes in function of the dispersed pattern, establishing a vicious circle. They affirm that:

> A marked attachment on the part of residents for place features provided by a dispersed urban environment, such as large lots and homes and homogeneous neighborhoods, and for proximity features, such as convenient access to close-by activities and closeness to the countryside, contributes further to propel this type of urbanization (Filion et al., 1999).

The importance of place and of its quality for contemporary society becomes even more relevant when we consider the globalization effects on local culture and on the way individuals experience space. Several authors – such as Richard Florida (Florida, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004) and Ashish Arora (Arora et al., 2000) – consider as fundamental the role that place and quality of place play in the attraction and retention of people, especially knowledge workers.

9.3 Conclusions

This paper represents some of the final – but not-definitive – results of an effort to understand the connections between global trends such as the spread of the New Economy and of Globalization and certain local social changes in Brazil, seeking to articulate the rise of a new social group – the knowledge workers – and the impacts of their lifestyle and consumption patterns.

The literature suggests that the physical and environmental characteristics of different places, aggregated in a specific quality that defines each one of them, affect locational decisions of people, families and firms. Authors like Richard Florida, Ashish Arora, and Irene Tingali consider that the creative class is particularly sensitive to variations in quality of place.

This sensitivity manifests itself especially in the experiential dimension of quality of place. Environmental quality appears to influence directly experiential quality, even considering that the methods of perception and evaluation are still not sufficiently clear

This process is different in developed countries – especially in the United States. In these countries, the large network of research and academic institutions, together with an equally large technological job market, creates a volume of job opportunities for knowledge workers which allows them to choose in which city to live, according to individual preferences and to socioenvironmental characteristics of the city.

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[3]This model is '*an explanatory model linking* dispersion *to changes in the respective weight given in residential location choices to space (defined here as metropolitan-wide accessibility), place (home and neighborhood features) and proximity (the possibility to reach quickly activities such as shopping malls and employment, present within different parts of a metropolitan region)*' (Filion, Bunting, & Warriner, 1999).

They can select a destination in which they will be able to have an exclusive life style, coordinating experiences like a bohemian nightlife, intense cultural activity or the practice of radical sports, with a career.

In the Brazilian case, the reality is very different. The options for a knowledge worker are restricted to a number small enough to be counted on the fingers of one hand (Mello, 2007).

Nevertheless, even if he or she does not have a large number of cities to choose it appears that in Brazil the knowledge worker has a very reasonable number of possibilities, when we focus on a smaller scale, on city like Campinas or on its metropolitan region.

The real-estate market of the large Brazilian cities is prodigal in the supply of the most varied living options, with something to offer almost any socioeconomic class. There is a very reasonable number of people who may be called "knowledge workers" living and working or studying in Campinas and this research points to the fact that the creative class is a new category of social classification in Brazil. However, the group does not have the dimensions observed by Richard Florida in the United States and Europe.

In terms of consumption, however, especially regarding space and its commoditization it is possible to affirm that Campinas and its knowledge workers represent a very important power.

Another issue important to stress is the difficulty – aside from conceptual difficulties of definition of consumption – is of obtaining data about consumption. As Kates states, "in contrast to population, only limited data and concepts on the transformation of energy, materials, and information exist" (Kates, 2000: 3), even in the highly industrialized countries and this make it harder to advance the discussion of the issue.

It is even more difficult to get reliable data relating population and consumption, especially in developing countries. The rate of change of such data is much greater than the capacity to collect and process data of the research institutions. In any event, it is possible to affirm that while the population explosion expected during the 60s and 70s did not happen – at least not in the predicted way nor with the anticipated intensity – the consumption explosion is real (Mello & Hogan, 2008).

Richer populations obviously have higher consumption patterns than poor ones. However, the growth potential of the "Global Consumer Class"[4] is enormously greater in developing countries. We may then conclude that the expansion of consumption is likely to be even greater than what has been observed so far, and

[4] "Those people have income superior to $7,000 per year in terms of purchasing power parity (an income measurement adjusted to purchasing power in local currency), which means approximately the level of Eastern Europe poverty line. The global consumers class itself varies a lot in terms of wealth, but its members characteristically have television, telephones and Internet associated to the culture and ideas which are transmitted by them. This class accounts for about 1.7 billion people around the world – more than 25% of world's total population" (Gardner, Assadourian, & Sarin, 2004: 5).

that much of this will take place in developing countries like China, India, Brazil, Pakistan and Indonesia.

According to Gardner et al. 2004, the Worldwatch Institute warns of the imminent "consumption explosion" that awaits us. The United States has 290 million inhabitants and according to the Worldwatch Institute, 84% of them – or 242.5 million – are included in the "Global Consumer Class". This leaves a market expansion range of only about 16% or approximately 46 million new consumers to be conquered.[5]

China, in turn, has only 19% of its population (239.8 million people) in the consumer class. Its market expansion range – considering current numbers – is 81%, which is equivalent to more than 1 billion new potential consumers. The numbers for India are similar. Brazil has a group of 57.8 million in the "Global Consumer Class" (2002 data), which represent 33% of the country's population.

Given this scenario, some questions immediately arise: Is Earth able to support such a volume of consumption? If all the Chinese (and Indians, Indonesians, Malayans, Egyptians, Brazilians etc.) become "Global Consumers", will Earth have the capacity to supply the necessary resources and to deal with the consequent garbage? What about the regeneration capacity of ecosystems and life support systems of the planet? (Mello & Hogan, 2008).

The population's spatial distribution has been strongly related to consumption since the beginning of the urbanization process, when the first cities where built in areas with abundant resources like water, hunting, fisheries, minerals and timber. Today, this correlation with the physical proximity of resources is not so clear nor so decisive in decision-making processes (Mello & Hogan, 2008).

The major settlement pattern nowadays (dispersed and with low intensity of land use, also known as sprawl), paradigmatically represented by North American suburbs, is related in a deeper and more complex way with the consumption issue.

Currently space is consumed as any other product. This stimulates the development of a real-estate industry in which quality of place plays a strategic role. As mentioned by Gardner, Assadourian and Sarin: "Large suburban homes had helped to promote consumption of a great number of durable goods, including refrigerators, television sets, furniture, washers and automobiles [. . .] Real estate enterprises of low density are about 2.5 more intensive users of materials than high density enterprises" (Gardner et al., 2004: 17–18). All those features can become externalities (this is because they foster socioenvironmental risk which magnify vulnerabilities of societies) or "un-wanted by-products" such as the violence, obesity (and related illnesses), environmental contamination, traffic jam, stress, and reduction of leisure time.

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[5]This emphasis of the Worldwatch Institute represents an evolution of the sometimes neomalthusian position of its founder Lester Brown, which had reduced the problems related with development to 19 dimensions of the "population problem" (For a more recent version, see Brown, 1999). Without rejecting its previous position, the Worldwatch Institute now considers consumption as a fundamental issue.

No one knows the future consequences of today's choices, but we will definitely need a new and improved set of tools to understand the complex global society in which we are living. This paper sought to help in the building of this toolbox.

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Chapter 10
Sustainability of a Life Más Cómodo? Agricultural Change, Remaking Families, and the Emerging Indigenous Middle Class in the Ecuadorian Andes

Jason Pribilsky

Abstract Since the 1ate 1960s, labor migration to the United States, and more recently to Spain and other parts of western Europe, has become a crucial component of the Ecuadorian economy. Indeed, remittances stand right behind oil revenues in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). This chapter addresses some of the effects of this migration and concurrent remittance stream on rural villages of the Azuayo-Cañari region of Southern Ecuador. Here, the remittance economy has severely altered traditional agriculture, communal work practices, and development projects. This paper charts the ways remittances have reordered household economic strategies, consumption patterns, and modes of living and raises the idea of an emerging "indigenous middle class." I address, for instance, how many households have suspended agriculture altogether in their use of remittances, turning rural villages virtually into sites of consumption—of new houses, cars, and durable goods—where production has little place. This change is perhaps most starkly evident in the ways this new class has reordered domestic and family life and, in particular, the ways children are raised and socialized. By bringing together the decline in agriculture with family and child-centered consumption practices, this paper aims to move beyond binary analyses of migration development (based on narrowly focused inquiries on the negative or positive economic impact of remittances) to answer questions about the ways families themselves go about restructuring their lives surrounding new production and consumption regimes and the meanings they bring to these changes.

Keywords Agricultural change · Class · Ecuador · Migration · Remittances

J. Pribilsky (✉)
Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies at Whitman College, Washington, State, USA
e-mail: pribiljc@whitman.edu

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10.1 Introduction: An Embarrassment of Riches?

In 1999, in the small Andean community of Jatundeleg that served as my fieldsite for research for almost 10 years, I attended a routine community meeting, like many others held each Sunday evening. During this particular week, however, the community was hosting two engineers from Ecuador's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) who had come to discuss "new farming opportunities." Veteran farmers who had long eked out a hardscrabble existence growing corn and potatoes feared the worst, namely that this was an attempt to get peasants to acquire official title to their land, a proposition many assumed to be one step from taxation. Despite the night's chill and the land-titling rumors, the meeting fetched a large crowd of peasant villagers, including a number of returned migrants fresh from the United States.

As it turned out, there was no discussion of land titling, but indeed a new farming opportunity—the use of greenhouses [*invernaderos*] to grow vegetables for market. The representatives described a community-led program with MAG technical assistance in the building process, crop yield monitoring and marketing. The project cost—including materials, seeds, and fertilizers—was nominal (under $500) and would be covered by a pooling of community funds and donated labor. For farmers who were experiencing one of the worst growing seasons in recent memory, the prospect of productive yields prompted a visible excitement in the room. Yet, when the engineers pushed villagers to support the program, the room fell silent. A few minutes later an elderly man arose, adjusted his wool poncho and addressed the room:

> In those communities that are purely *indígena-campesino* (Indian-peasant) they are a community [*comuna*] because they have to be. They have to work together because they are poor. We are not—we are rich people [*ricos*]. We have our own property. Everyone has their own land. We have to be really organized to do something here.

The president of the community followed, framing the problem in the context of migration:

> Here people are going to leave if they have the money—or even if they don't, and maybe even more so if they don't have it. If they have enough money to put into this project and they are interested, they are going to pay for it themselves. Why wouldn't they? If something goes wrong, they can take care of it themselves. We are a community, but a community of families that can look out for themselves. . .The problem is union.

Although the speakers' words were a harbinger for the project's doomed future, the evening ended with an agreement that villagers would confer among themselves and contact the engineers at a later date. That date never transpired and few people spoke of the project again.

The meeting that promised to be a show of stereotypical "peasant suspicion" at best, village apathy at worst, had turned into a revelatory anthropological snapshot to be questioned and analyzed. What had happened? What did the statements put forth by the elderly campesino and the village president about being "rich people" and "a community, but a community of families that can look out for themselves" represent? Did these words capture the general sentiment of the community?

Certainly many Jatundeleg households who did not enjoy the benefits of migrant remittances could have profited from the greenhouse project. Why had *they* not spoken up? In this chapter, I place the greenhouse meeting in a context of socioeconomic changes currently afoot in the Ecuadorian Andes—changes largely resulting from over four decades of labor out-migration to United States (and Europe more recently) and the massive influx of remittances into rural highland (sierra) villages. Approximately 10% of Ecuadorians live outside their nation, much of this out-migration occurring in the past decade (For an overview of migration patterns, consult Jokisch & Pribilsky, 2002; see also Pribilsky, 2007 and various contributors in Hidalgo, 2004). Remittances sent back to families in Ecuador have had a major effect on both temporarily stabilizing a perpetually unstable economy and more fully integrating Ecuador into the global economy. In fact, remittances are second only to oil as an earner of foreign exchange, constituting 5.3% of total GDP in 2004. Almost half of all dollar remittances (46%) have filtered into households of the Andean sierra, a region primarily populated by indigenous peasants (Hall, 2005: 13). In an example of precipitous cultural change, indigenous households have restructured livelihoods away from subsistence agriculture towards a reliance on international labor migration.

In what follows, I analyze the development of what might be profitably termed an emerging "indigenous middle class" in the Andes as a reflex of decades of migration. As the important longitudinal work of sociologist Alejandro Portes has revealed (Portes, 1985; Portes & Hoffman, 2003) for many of region's poorest countries, migration has proven to be one of the few strategies driving class mobility in the face of significant employment contraction in the last decade. In absence of other economic stimuli, remittances have quickly proven to be, in the words of Salvadoran scholar Carlos Ramos, "the real economic adjustment program of the poor in Latin America" (2002).

In Ecuador, the importance of remittances as both a cushion against the instabilities of the global economy and as a long-term development strategy has been explored in a number of studies, mostly in economic terms; less well known are the on-the-ground effects of these processes. Using ethnographic methods and survey data gathered from over 200 households in migrant sending communities of southern Ecuador, this paper charts the ways remittances have reordered household economic strategies, consumption patterns, and modes of living. I address, for instance, how many households have suspended agriculture altogether in their use of remittances, turning rural villages into sites of consumption—of new houses, cars, and durable goods—where production has little place. This change is perhaps most starkly evident in the ways this new class has reordered domestic and family life and, in particular, the ways children are raised and socialized. Rather than reproducing future farmers, many Andean parents treat children as "in development" whose best resources are education and not agricultural knowledge. By bringing together the decline in agriculture with family and child-centered consumption practices, this paper aims to move beyond binary analyses of migration development (based on narrowly focused inquiries on the negative or positive economic impact of remittances) to answer questions about the ways families themselves go about restructuring their lives surrounding new production and consumption regimes and the meanings they bring to these changes. As I argue, looking at these changes in tandem better affords an analysis of how attendant features of globalization—beyond remittances—help to shape the ways rural households define, give purpose to, and organize, their new lives. At same time, however, the impact of migration on new agricultural regimes and consumption patterns will have long term effects on the sustainability of traditional Andean livelihoods. As I describe below, long-term processes of labor migration are not likely to result in enhanced farming opportunities or any other kind of re-entrenchment of indigenous lifeways. Instead rather, how best to funnel the massive revenue generated by remittances will be left to government administrations and non-state actors (such as NGOs) who will need to understand migration less as a "problem" and more of an bittersweet opportunity to explore post-agricultural futures.

Two broad processes are addressed in this paper. First, I examine the material consequences of migration and analyze how, as remittances impact the local economy, the need for cash (particularly U.S. dollars) both to maintain households rooted in agriculture and to ensure the agriculture future of the next generation has increased for nearly all village households, in some instances escalating the tensions and divides between village rich and poor. While increases of economic capital in Jatundeleg are the concern of the first process, the second involves the role of social capital and new claims to status and prestige afforded by expanding forms of commodity consumption and the outlay of remittances. As I develop in considerable elsewhere (Pribilsky, 2007) on the form and definition of transnational families, commodity consumption provides a key arena in which migrant families can maintain status and mediate tensions by redefining commitments to community life. Building new homes in the community, sponsoring fiestas, spending lavishly on children, and contributing generously to public works projects are just some of the ways migrant households contribute to the "production of locality" (Appadurai, 1996). While, at one level, people can recognize that these presentations challenge long held racist images of indigenous peoples in Ecuador (see de la Torre, 1999) at the local level new consumption practices have simultaneously introduced powerful new standards of material success by which people judge theirs and others' status, ultimately raising the cost of everyday life.

Conceptually, this paper investigates concepts of class specifically as constituted in *micropractices* associated with the influx of remittances and the dominance of activities surrounding transnational migration in a local economy with reordered social and economic commitments, new meanings given to rural life, and new assumptions about wealth. Following other anthropological analyses of emerging class identities in developing regions (see, e.g., Gewertz & Errington, 1999 for Papua New Guinea; Liechty, 2003 for Katmandu), I focus on class as a set of grounded practices rooted in consumption. As such, my understanding of class most immediately conforms to a Weberian understanding of status and the practices he described as being associated loosely with "lifestyle." For Weber, status as a constellation of class-like social relations, was clearly distinguishable from class. While class stratification emerges from people's relations to production, "status groups are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special styles of life" (Weber, 1968: 937).

10.2 Background: Village Wealth and Poverty

The history of southern Ecuador studied through different economic booms—an earlier period of artisan production and coastal migration in particular—attests to the fact that communities like Jatundeleg have always maintained "rich" and "poor" households. Yet by the time of my research, migration to the United States had widened this gap significantly. Households with no migrant kin remitting from abroad could hope to bring in an average monthly income of between \$90 and \$170 by cobbling together agriculture with local wage labor or by owning a small shop (*tienda*). In contrast, households with migrant relatives could see an average monthly remittance of between \$200 and \$250 (see Figs. 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3).

Despite the fact that the remittances were responsible for a new level of inequality in local social relations, villagers of all social classes consistently described this transformation in positive terms, as sure signs of the poor region's "development" [*desarrollo*] and "progress" [*progreso*]. Some of the poorest families I knew who benefited the least from migration could nevertheless point to a number of benefits resulting from the elevated wealth in the community. The most important improvements residents cited were the yearly repairs made to the two rutty dirt roads that connected Jatundeleg to a nearby *canton* capital (county), roadways that would periodically wash out leaving the town isolated for weeks at a time. In addition to opening the village up to a far greater number of services (from the delivery of cooking gas to an expanded number of foodstuffs sold in the village *tiendas*), the increased access had also convinced local officials to construct a Seguro Campesino (Social Security) health clinic staffed two days a week.

Such newly lauded conveniences, however, could not drown out subtle, yet persistent criticisms from members of households whose own access to money was frequently unstable. Drawing on the contrasts between pre- and post-migration periods, Alejandro Sinchi, a village elder who supplemented his subsistence farming with what he complained of as "too little" cash sent from his son working in New York, explained:

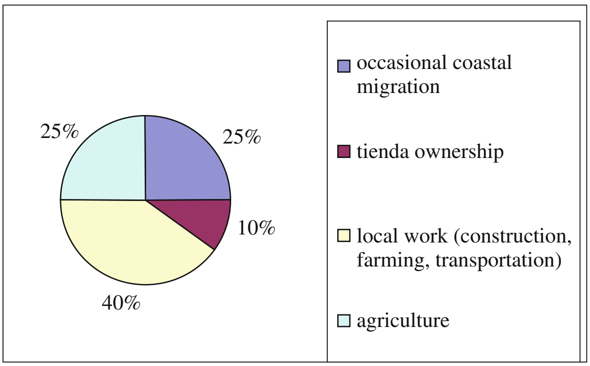

Fig. 10.1 Sources and Percentages of Household Income of Non-international Migrant Households
Source: Study data, Household Census, 1999. Percentages are based on survey of forty-five domestic units

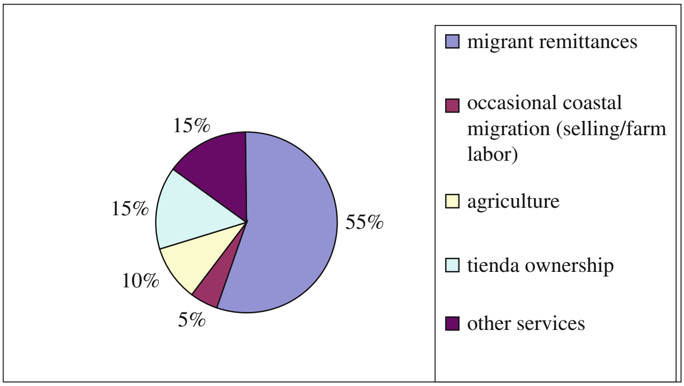

Fig. 10.2 Sources and Percentages of Household Income of International Migrant Households Source: Study data, Household census, 1999. Percentages are based on survey of forty-five domestic units

> It used to be that only the ricos had cash, the ones who made hats or had jobs [outside the village]. They could buy new land, livestock, and build houses. My family was poor, but my father had lots of land where we grew tremendous crops. You can't believe it! Tremendous fields of nothing but corn [*puro maíz*]! We grew just corn because everyone wanted corn. And that was our money at times. We could trade the corn for whatever we needed—sugar, kerosene, tools; whatever we needed. . .Today everyone needs cash everyday. I tell my son I better join him in YONI (colloquialism for New York City born of the bumper sticker slogan I ♥ NY) since I am always chasing the *dolarcito* ['little dollar'].

While increased affluence has worked to differentiate families "with cash" from those who were more intensely tied to a subsistence livelihood, it has been the influx of U.S. dollars, as opposed to the national currency, the sucre, that posed the greatest

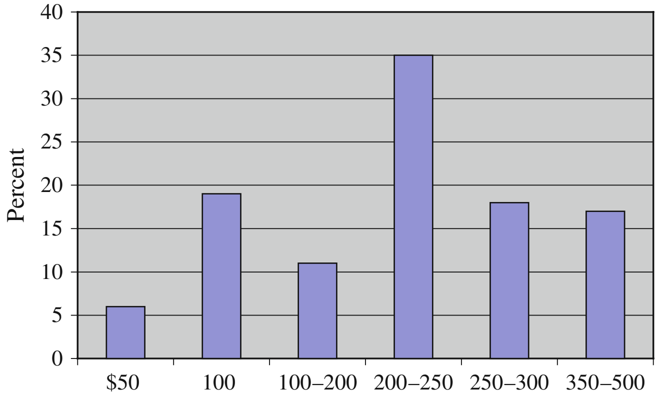

Fig. 10.3 Average Amount of Monthly Remittances Sent to International Migrant Households Source: Study data, Household Census. Percentages are based on survey of forty-five domestic units

challenge for poor families. For migrant households, incomes in dollars provide a level of wealth well above that of households involved in domestic wage labor and high exchange rates between the currencies allowed dollar-rich households to speculate with their money and increase their overall wealth.

The upper hand migrant households had over their non-migrant, dollar-poor neighbors reached particular strength as Ecuador's economy slipped deeper into crisis in the late 1990s. In early 1999, the rate of exchange hovered between 6,000 and 7,000 *sucres* to the dollar; by early 2000 the *sucre* had fallen to 24,000 to the dollar with no signs of abating. Soon after, Ecuador's Central Bank stabilized the currency at 25,000, foreshadowing plans to fully "dollarize" the economy by September 2000.

Historically, wealth in the Azuayo-Cañari region has been tied up in land ownership, the ability to harness labor (through reciprocal labor agreements known as *prestamanos* (lending hands) and *cambiomanos* (changing hands), and, to a lesser extent, through the ownership of livestock. However, as remittances were transformed from a source of income that families used to manage households to a currency of exchange between households, the costs of subsistence living increased for everyone. Not only did cash become an essential part of everyday life, it also became an increasingly important component for the maintenance of status in the village.

While wage labor, and its ability to increase the divisions between rich and poor, is nothing new in Jatundeleg, the effects of international migration in village life have served to drive these divisions deeper. In particular, as new transnational households fashion lives that combined subsistence farming with remittances from migrant labor abroad, their choices have village-wide ramifications. Inflated land prices and the decrease in reciprocal labor, in addition to elevated costs of agricultural inputs, created tensions between those who had access to cash and those for whom access was more difficult. These tensions between households can take various forms ranging from idle gossip to the dissolution of reciprocal ties and open hostilities between families. Many people, however, like those whose livelihood required seeking out wealthy villagers for loans, or in some cases for their *compradrazgo* ties [godparent relations], could not afford to pursue their grievances and potentially risk jeopardizing alliances with wealthy patrons. Eventually, many accepted, if only tacitly, changes afoot in the village as inevitable costs of progress and leading more comfortable lives.

10.3 The Rising Costs of a More Comfortable (Más Comodo) Life: Changing Lifeways and the Pressures of Development

Residents of Jatundeleg often drew upon the concepts of the *ñaupa tiempos* (glossed as the "olden times") and of migration-led development as bookends to capture the great intensity of change they had experienced in their lives. In one sense, discussions of *desarollo* [development] and being *progresivo* reference forms of state-sponsored development that invaded the community in a smattering of campaign stickers pasted on bus windows and imposing roadside billboards trumpeting public works projects. Villagers also located the source of these changes in the mental outlook of residents themselves, and, in particular, with returned migrants. Returned migrants were often described to me as *más despiertos y avivados* [more awake and ready] than non-migrant villagers, an expression typically describing the excitement and leadership that some returned migrants brought to initiatives of community development. While their desires for a more comfortable life—in initiatives to bring potable water, better roads, and improved telephone and electricity service to the community—are shared by nearly all, access to these conveniences are not. Moreover, while individual households could choose or not choose to take part in certain consumer practices, eschewing development projects was not so easy. The increase in the number of community development projects represents one of the central arenas where many residents acutely felt the rising costs of subsistence life. As opposed to personal consumption choices, not coming fully on board in development projects had ramifications beyond failing to appear "modern" and the status that provided. A family's failure to participate could raise accusations of being *cerrada* [closed or reserved] and antisocial in relation to community activities.

Development projects throughout Ecuador, and Latin America, often bring together community actors, the state, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs in particular have assumed a critical role in this process as the Ecuadorian government has steadily retreated from this function under neoliberal restructuring. In the transition to non-state actors and market incentives, top-down development models have been replaced by community partnerships whereby sponsoring organizations look to local residents (especially emerging "middle class" households) to aid in the planning process, donate labor, and assume a portion of the financial costs of a project. In Jatundeleg, the influx of migrant remittances greatly complicated this process. Many projects wealthy villagers fought hard to bring to Jatundeleg were costly in terms of both the labor and financial contributions necessary. For wealthier households, "sign-up" fees or a monthly bill for utility services frequently amounted to little in their overall budget. Moreover, wealthier families can more easily provide their own labor or, in some cases, to pay others to fulfill their requirement. By contrast, poor households often struggled to meet the labor requirements and take advantage of the new conveniences. As one villager explained to me, "For village work parties [mingas], people work one or two days a month. However, to have these new things, we have to work four or five days at a time . . .Sometimes we forget who we are working for. Is it the *comúna* or *los ricos* [the rich]?" While project goals often received overwhelming support, questions like this one regarding for whom was the poor villager working for signaled the difficulty such ventures pose for some village residents.

A telling example of the way Jatundeleg's emerging indigenous middle class complicated the development project entailed the replacement of a pumped water system that delivered water to households via a series of above ground pipes [*agua tubado*] with a new well. Widely seen as a vast improvement over the current system, the project promised to deal with pipe breakages and clogs that often rendered the system unusable for drinking, washing clothes, or bathing for weeks at a time. A group of households headed by returned migrants spearheaded the project, bringing together engineers from the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) and funding from an Ecuadorian NGO. Participating households were required to pay for a portion of the supplies and to contribute many days per month of community labor—digging ditches, laying pipes, and constructing the actual well. For many families, who either had a home in the *centro* or were in the process of building one, the water project received strong support. Many of the domiciles included new rural luxuries such as multiple bathrooms, kitchen sinks, and elaborate cement clothes washing boards—conveniences that required large amounts of clean water. Two months after the project was proposed, almost two dozen households were participating, agreeing to pay nearly $180 in material fees and to donate labor (one family member two days a week for a month). The fact that some village women no longer had to trudge to the river with their dirty laundry or that households experienced fewer water shortages were marked improvements residents thoroughly embraced. However, as the divide between those connected to the well and those not grew more obvious, some poor households began to feel marginalized. For example, during dry spells poorer households connected to the *agua tubado* found themselves borrowing water from neighbors with the new system. While the cost of the project stood in many people's way, it was the labor requirement that many found most vexing. While most migrant households could afford the labor donation or buy their way out of it, unremunerated labor was simply not an option for many poor families. As one poor villager explained in frustration: "The village is changing tremendously, this is true, and it is a positive thing. Thanks to God for the United States [*Gracias a Diós por los Estados Unidos*] that people here can have better lives for themselves. But these *proyectos* [projects] are no longer projects of the *comúna.* They are not for the whole of the community. . .Soon there will be two *mingas*—those for the rich and those for the poor. In all, the village is moving forward, but some people are going to be left behind."

Such examples of resentment were exacerbated by rumors that the true costs of the project were actually much lower, but it was the "excessive" domestic needs (namely washing machines and new showers) were elevating the costs of development for all. Again, rarely did these hostilities move far beyond the level of gossip and the occasional disparaging remark against *los ricos.* To be sure, many poor households simply could not afford to dissolve their ties to more affluent households, from whom they counted on support, including the patronage of *compadrazgo* ties. Indeed, over time, these ties, in the form of short term loans and the security of steady *jornalero* work, had become important ways for some villagers to realize their goals of being connected to the well.

Migrant affluence, while lessening the burdens of rural life, has also come with its own set of new problems. One such problem was that of increased security. Migration clearly meant that some households sat on more wealth than others, much of it stored away in people's homes. Migrant households also commonly converted earnings into electronic goods and jewelry, items that held their value better than *sucres*, and could be easily sold for cash in city shops. During my fieldwork, news of at least a half dozen burgled homes worked its way through the pipelines of village gossip, prompting a discussion of village security to shift from trite gossip to a course of action.

In spring 1999, a group of Jatundeleg families, including several victims of the recent burglaries, explored the possibility of forming their own justice system. Advocates proposed a system of nightly "rounds" [*rondas*], whereby each household would take turns patrolling the village. The idea quickly divided the community. For some families who were already feeling the squeeze on their labor from other proposed projects, commitment to a *ronda* presented itself as a burden on top of burdens. One resident who had yet to benefit from the well project complained, "I can't keep giving more days to the *comúna*. Sure, I want to see the village be safe and calm, but I am a farmer and I must work." Poorer households grew to believe that the recent crime wave did not affect all residents equally, but instead was largely driven by the increases of cash and consumer goods acquired by migrant households. By the close of my research in the village, nobody had yet to make the "rounds".

In 2001, during a return trip to Jatundeleg, one of the first things I noticed was the addition of a large red and white sign posted at one of the community's most important crossroads:

> Jatundeleg and its neighboring communities united in the same idea of progress *[progreso]* welcome tourists, *comerciantes* [sellers of goods], and foreign visitors. For our security and yours, we ask for your cooperation in supporting our laws. If you are a native or a foreigner, please respect both public and private property. We will bring suspicious people to the attention of the community secretary.

The sign had gone up shortly after the final discussions about organizing the *rondas* ended without support for the initiative. As many residents reported, the sign was a gesture of "saving face" on the part of those whose proposal failed. The sign's request—"to bring suspicious persons to the attention of the community secretary"—was also nothing but symbolic. Without a *ronda*, the secretary could act in ways no different than ordinary villagers could, which was to report incidents to the ineffectual *cantón* police. Without consensus, those whose wealth made them targets for robbery proceeded to minimize the threat in the ways they had been doing for some time: by fortifying their homes with high iron fences and steel window barricades.

Overall, new class divisions in Jatundeleg, largely based on consumption practices, had sparked a sizeable debate as to whether the community was "united in the same idea of progress." For many, the idea of unification in progress was ironic given the vastly different perspectives villagers maintained with respect to local development. Some residents—typically those without remittances, especially liked to point out the differences between the *invernadero* project and the *ronda* proposal. In the first case, households linked into the remittance economy had essentially squelched the greenhouse discussion by arguing that few households would need the extra assistance and that, if they so chose, they would pursue it on their own. In the second case, it was non-migrant households, who generally had fewer valuables, that stood firm against contributing to the *rondas*.

10.4 Agricultural Lives, the Indigenous Middle Class Identities, and the Dolarizacíon del Maizal

> Pretty soon, there will be a total *dolarización de los maizales* [dollarization of the cornfields]. Then what will we do? (–Jatundeleg resident, 52)

The response above is representative of the changes many households not connected into migration have felt in Jatundeleg in recent years. Indeed, frequent references to corn and cornfields in discussions of village politics point to a fundamental aspect of changing rural life. Signaling more than just another commodified component of their agricultural existence, the theme of corn in conversations of migration, village wealth, and change simultaneously played into a richly symbolic local arena of meaning. In particular, references made to the "dollarization of cornfields" suggests that not only economic livelihoods were in flux but also peoples' sense of a specific changing indigenous Andean identity. In this section, I explore how key transformations in the production, consumption, and meaning of *maíz* reveal fundamental redefinitions of village life.

Although households in Jatundeleg cobbled together income from a diversity of sources, including remittances, all of the participants in my household census counted subsistence farming as their primary occupation. By their own self-identification as campesinos (peasants), rural Andeans identify their history and livelihood with working the land. In the absence of other easily discernible ethnic identifiers, the crops villagers grew, the foods they ate, and the pace and rhythm of an agricultural calendar made claims on, and formed the basis of, local identity. The agricultural history of the Azuayo-Cañari region where Jatundeleg is situated is one of villagers coping with poor quality soils and uneven terrain, the lack of formalized irrigation, and sluggish markets in which to sell crops. Although the majority of crops were grown for subsistence, the yields accounted for far less than half of the foodstuffs Jatundeleg households consumed.

The exception to the pattern described above was *maíz*. While villagers commonly grew only a couple of principal crops or limited their crops in their *chácras* (fields) to concentrate on fruits and vegetables in small garden plots [huertas], almost no family ever went a season without planting *maíz*. In fact, for young people, the host of crops of their parents' and grandparents' generations—barley, quinoa, wheat, potatoes—meant little to those who had grown up with fields of *puro maíz* [nothing but corn]. In the *cantón* Déleg, well over 50% of total agricultural production was dedicated to corn (Sempértegui, 1991: 36).

To understand the changing meaning of corn requires understanding something of its symbolic importance in indigenous highland communities. At its core, corn symbolizes aspects of life giving, fertility, and fecundity. The *maizal*, or cornfield, is also symbolically structured. Traditionally, positioning of cornfields around village houses formed part of a loose ideology of village unity and strength, as a "buffer" between values of *ñaupa tiempos* and modern times. As their staple crop, villagers grew corn for nourishment. However, *maíz* historically also served as an important exchange commodity, in both economic and symbolic senses. At the symbolic level, the exchange of food in the Andes enacts social relations based on reciprocity and trust between and within households (Allen, 2002 [1988]; Weismantel, 1988; Corr, 2002). No meal in an Azuayo-Cañari household is ever complete, especially when guests are present, without a steaming bowl of boiled *mote* (hominy) placed in the center of the table. Hungry hands grab for it to fortify otherwise thin soups and to satisfy a hunger before a main course is served. In decades past, maíz also played an equally important role in ritual life as the base ingredient of *chicha* (locally brewed corn beer). In the *ñaupa tiempos*, elders recalled how *minga* hosts would offer endless cupfuls of *chicha* as workers took part in communal labor. Additionally, it was only those households with ample stores of corn could harness enough labor. While in recent times, *canelazo* (a hot spiced drink made from sugar cane alcohol) has replaced *chicha at mingas*, (because it requires no fermentation process), corn beer continues to be an important component of village fiestas. Fiesta sponsors had to ensure large enough stores to produce the beverage or they have to purchase it from other villagers. Maintaining a steady supply of corn, in various forms—in cornmeal, as *mote*, or for making *chicha*—served the important function of meeting the obligations of village social life even as other forms of status and cultural capital were emerging.

Economic relationships were traditionally also fashioned around the production and consumption of corn. Early in my fieldwork, I had accepted the working hypothesis that the remittance economy was, albeit slowly, ultimately undermining local agricultural practices. During conversations with *campesinos,* as well as Ecuadorian migration scholars, I had grown accustomed to a common refrain (and lament) that rural lands were increasingly becoming *tierras botadas*—lands "thrown out" of production as a result of out-migration (cf. Jokisch, 1998). Echoing the findings of studies on the impact of migrant remittances on agriculture in Mexico (e.g., see Durand, Parrado, & Massey, 1996; Reichart, 1980) as well as studies addressing internal migration in the Andes (e.g. Collins, 1988), the combination of labor scarcity, environmental degradation, and remittance economies suggested the fate of local farming. In some instances this surely was the case. Among the wealthiest migrant households (whose migration histories stretched back to the 1970s), farming had been steadily displaced by more profitable ventures, such as raising dairy cattle and opening small businesses. For these households, all their *maíz* needs could be met by purchasing it from neighboring families. In other cases, some migrant households ceased to farm altogether, instead allowing poor villagers to sharecrop their land. This tactic assured a constant access to corn but the freedom to pursue other economic activities.

Geographer Brad Jokisch (1998, 2002) has systematically explored the relationship between land use patterns and migration in migrant sending communities. Assessing competing theses that propose that migration either has the potential to improve agriculture (by channeling remittances into production) or that migration diminishes its importance, Jokisch describes middle-class peasants as pursuing a "middle-path" (2002: 2). While these households have not abandoned agriculture, they have tended not to improve it either. Participation in the remittance economy has not prompted families to channel their new wealth into agricultural inputs (i.e. fertilizers, new crops, enhanced seeds, irrigation, etc.). In a comparison of two migrant sending communities with varied migration histories, Jokisch found few substantive differences between non-migrant and migrant households with respect to agriculture. On average, both communities recorded near equivalent per capita *maíz* yields (Jokisch, 2002).

Why then do households enmeshed in the remittance economy continue to devote time, energy, and capital to the production of unproductive maíz? In different guises, I posed this question to the farm families I knew in Jatundeleg, and I frequently received the same pat response: *Así somos* [That is who we are]. Jokisch explains this phenomenon as a kind of security against fluctuations in the local economy and especially against inflation. In Jatundeleg's migrant households, maintaining crops was especially crucial during the first years after a migrant's absence, when household costs are greatest and the regularity of remittances not yet guaranteed. Agriculture also continues to plays an important role for women by giving them a security cushion if husbands should fail to remit or not remit enough to meet household needs. "[Women] continue to cultivate their land because it allows them the security of procuring much of the household's food, reduces overall food costs, and provides them with a modicum of economic independence" (Jokisch, 2002: 19).

Because of the many ways maíz in Azuayo-Cañari society approximates what French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1967 [1950]) called a "total social fact,"—anchoring the social, cultural, and material lives of villagers—the community-wide commitment to its production provided a certain level of comfort for those who saw migration as disruption from the ñaupa tiempos. At the same time however, some village households who depended on maíz for a significant portion of their subsistence worried about the ways an incipient *dolarización del maizal* was threatening their farming livelihood. In particular, the infusion of cash into the production of corn reoriented the basic principles of reciprocal exchange that had long governed village relations. A common refrain I heard on the topic was that, 'Before there was money, the poor had *maíz.*' These kinds of agreements were still present in Jatundeleg in the late 1990s yet were quickly becoming marginalized in the dollarized economy. Still many of Jatundeleg's poorest families relied on their corn surpluses to stand in for cash in local transactions. For example, one returned migrant told me that in years when he did not want to cultivate all his fields, he would occasionally purchase corn from one of Jatundeleg's poorest households, even though he could get a better price elsewhere. Similarly a tienda owner I knew maintained an almost ten year relationship with a family in a neighboring village with whom she traded goods from her store for the family's *calcha* [corn stalks and husks] which she used as animal feed.

While the decline of maíz as a medium of exchange was noticeable by all, the rising costs of maíz production presented itself as a more constant worry for households with the least access to cash. Under favorable circumstances, most households managed to meet their farm labor needs by recruiting extended family members. However, during the labor-intensive stages of weeding and planting for instance, extra help was indispensable. Many elderly villagers spoke fondly of the ways households met their labor needs in the past through reciprocal work exchanges [cambiomanos and prestamanos]. By the early 1980s, these exchanges had nearly vanished, as migration took able-bodied men from the community and the cost of sponsoring work parties greatly increased. I recorded only one prestamanos party during my year of fieldwork in the village. The sponsor was a returned migrant who had marshaled together approximately thirty residents to break ground on a new field and to assemble a barbed wire fence. The event was awash in alcohol, cigarettes, and food (a pig roast served in a traditional style [pampamesa] upon the ground). The expense, clearly far greater than most households could spend, prompted jokes afterwards that it would have cost less to hire a group of day laborers than the expenses incurred in the minga.

Ironically, as the flow of remittances into Azuayo-Cañari villages had done little to provide incentives to improve and develop agriculture, land itself had become a highly valued commodity. As Jokisch (2002: 27) describes, the sale of land has lead to a burgeoning "peri-urban landscape of cultivated real estate" as the value of land unhinged from its actual monetary value for crop production, has lead to steady price increases. In the mid-1990s, a hectare of cultivatable land in Jatundeleg fetched $3000 or higher (a price tag already higher than the national average). By the time of my research, the same parcel of land sold for between $7,000 and $10,000 with prices set in dollars. Migrants owned on average twice as much land as non-migrant households. In the highly charged rhetoric that surrounded the high prices, villagers whose access to cash was minimal accused their migrant neighbors of *parcelando los cerros* [of, "parceling up the hills"]. Mention of *los cerros*—land held in common—was significant for it linked together the purchase of individual land with a metaphor of community history. Land-grabbing households would commodify not only available farmlands but community relations as well. In reality, the *cerros* had been spared the intense real estate boom. Instead the most significant parceling of land was underway in the expanding and urbanizing centro where the goal of land ownership was not so much the cultivation of crops, but rather the cultivation of new forms of status.

10.5 Middle Class Maneuvers: The Commodification of Status in Jatundeleg

In the face of the emerging gulf between rich and poor households in Jatundeleg and new idioms of class, residents adamantly cling to a portrait of their community as anchored in the model of the *comúna*. Members of the *comúna*, or *comuneros*, described their community as sharing a common livelihood and mutual obligation to one another, solidified through reciprocal labor and backed by the formalization of compadrazgo ties. Thus, a household's status could be defined by its ability at any one moment in time to secure mutual aid in the form of labor, the borrowing of goods (such as farm implements and bulls to plow), and access to credit. Although the necessity of cooperation had begun to wane for many households, the social forms buttressing did not. Because such acts had long organized forms of cooperation, often in ritualized ways, they were quintessential to the formation of community membership. In short, rites of the comúna were socialized and subject to rules, sanctions, and social pressures even after their economic necessity had slackened. Thus, as much as households desired more comfortable lives based on new definitions of *progreso* and *desarollo*, they felt compelled to pursue their new goals within the traditional avenues of participation. For many migrant households, what counted most was not so much the accumulation of status as the activity of status management.

The connection between family life and village status came together for many households in the building of new homes. In 1999, sending villages throughout the Azuayo-Cañari region were riding a wave of new home construction unprecedented in previous eras. In Jatundeleg, the blossoming of new homes added to an already diverse built environment comprised of three general architectural style and types. The oldest housing type in the community, generally occupied by the village's poorest residents, consisted of one and two room wattle and daub structures doubling as sleeping and cooking areas. Just as important, and perhaps more important than the interiors, was the outside patio space, where much of a family's activities would center. Beginning around the late 1970s, a second class of housing emerged, driven by the earnings of seasonal migrants to Ecuador's coast. Houses built in this era were generally larger and made of cement and concrete block. While the materials differed, the style of new homes preserved the central features of older housing, including the autonomy of the kitchen from the rest of the house and the centrality of the open patio space. By contrast, a new generation of housing took its cues not from Spanish or local Andean designs, but rather from North American ones. Most homes were multi-storied edifices based on suburban tract-style plans which replaced open courtyards and patios with indoor washrooms, enclosed work areas, and fenced-in yards. Not infrequently, migrants sent home snapshots of homes they admired in the United States for local architects to replicate in the rural Andes. A three-bedroom North American-style home built largely of inexpensive cement and rebar could be had for between $6,000 and $9,000.

I began my fieldwork in Jatundeleg by plotting the approximate ages of new developments in the community and the different housing styles. During my observations I could scarcely stop and photograph a home without a passerby commenting, *¿Casitas lindas, no?* [Aren't they beautiful little houses?] Despite the praise, however, villagers often questioned the "place" of these new homes in community life, sometimes inciting comparison with houses of the *ñaupa tiempos*. To begin, older style homes, including those built in the 1970s, were invariably constructed through a wasi pichana, or communal house-raising, utilizing the donated labor or kin and neighbors. By contrast, the complicated designs and specialized electrical and plumbing requests for new domiciles often precluded the use of community labor. Similarly, new domestic construction also operated on a different timeline of completion than previous projects. During a *wasi pichana*, in most cases, a home could be built to a livable standard in a matter of days. Conversely, new homes could take many years to complete and many never made it to completion and were left like empty shells on the landscape. Complaints about stacks of unused concrete block, rusting rebar, and piles of loose gravel were common.

To describe the unsettling qualities of new housing styles, some villagers referred to them as "chiri wasis" [cold houses]. A cold house was not simply one where propane gas stoves had replaced open fire hearths, but more substantially where the signs of symbolic warmth emanating from the visible activities of family life were difficult to detect. To be sure, newer homes tended to shift people's domestic activities out of sight from the casual passerby as once mundane activities such as shucking beans, peeling potatoes and doing laundry were now hidden behind high fences and replaced by empty yard spaces. Similarly, new housing styles were not conducive to the types of casual socializing to which families were accustomed.

Few families who occupied a modern house wanted the reputation of living in a chiri wasi. Nor did they necessarily always use their domestic spaces in the ways the architecture might suggest. For instance, wives who lived in new homes would at times continue to do their laundry in the open yard; some families allowed animals to wander and nest in the new homes as would be standard in older homes, much to the consternation of urban cultural critics. In addition to these small attempts to "relocalize" their decidedly non-local domiciles, migrant households also used their homes to make more public claims to status and communicate a sense of modernity that their family was moving ahead [*adelantando*]. Eschewing fiesta sponsorship as means to garner status and respect, migrant households instead often chose less public rituals to convey and maintain their status.

Parties for baptisms, first communions, confirmation, and birthdays to a lesser extent, occupied the place that fiesta sponsorship might have in other contexts—a claim to community participation. The all-day and sometimes all-night events centered on eating and dancing. Alcohol consumption often played only a minor role in contrast to its prominence at fiestas. The foods served typically followed holiday convention, though in greater quantities and more elaborate in presentation. Helpings of traditional roasted *cuy*, potatoes, and soups often came in specially purchased paper dishware with plastic utensils as opposed to everyday chipped enamelware. Specialty cakes topped off an afternoon of feasting, again with special writing identifying the child and his or her celebration. Such celebrations that simultaneously featured the claims of *iony* modernity with a celebration of family life also served to combat criticism and sway opinion about the negative effects of migration on children. Families in Jatundeleg, Ayaloma, and Shullín were all well-informed of the critical opinions of journalists and an array of experts (including lawyers, psychiatrists, physicians, social workers, and teachers) who persistently linked migration with the rise of rural *hogares desorganizados* [disrupted households]. The migration of one (and in some cases both parents) was closely linked to a litany of conditions and problems in children and adolescents including, though not limited to, depression, explosive anger and violent behavior, animal abuse, poor school performance, "gender identity confusion", homosexuality, stuttering, timidity, and bedwetting (see Ochoa, 1998; Pinos & Ochoa, 1999). Villagers peppered their conversations on the subject with a host of technical terms taken from developmental psychology, such as *abandono* [abandonment] and *negligenca familiar* [parental neglect], borrowed from newspaper and television coverage.

Some among the migrant households, of course, knew the children's afflictions first hand which they typically glossed as nervios, a standard idiom of distress (Pribilsky, 2001).

While not every child of migrants experienced problems, nearly all migrant parents went to some effort to distance themselves from negative associations of migration. In particular, families countered such images by emphasizing their commitment to providing a "modern" childhood for their children. In the same ways that critics of migration drew legitimacy from popular psychology, migrant families linked their modern aspirations for iony modernity with modern child rearing techniques. During a visit to the home of one young , Sandra showed me how she had taken to buying a couple of copies of Ecuador's newly inaugurated parenting magazine, *Crecer Feliz* [Growing Up Happy] while shopping in the nearby commercial center town of Azogues. The glossy magazine pages were filled with tips on how to improve parent-child relations and to boost school performance, in addition to advertisements for the requisite items of a modern childhood. While the magazine's intended audience was likely white Ecuadorians and urban professionals (as evidenced by its high price tag at the newsstand), Sandra found it a useful model to convey the kind of life she and her husband desired in their newly built Jatundeleg home. When she obliged my request for a tour of her home for my research, she spoke to me about how the priorities of family life had changed since when she was a child. "Before," she said "children worked all the time. Now they go to school and play, and parents play with them." As we passed through the hall and peeked into the children's separate rooms, she noted authoritatively, "Children should have their own rooms," as if quoting from the pages of *Crecer Feliz*. She then paused for a moment and looked at me. "Right?"

While poor households in Jatundeleg could occasionally pool together their resources with other households to host fiestas or make community donations, individual family endeavors such as large baptismal or confirmation parties were often far out of reach. In this regard, the kinds of status claims migrant households made through children's parties represented an especially insidious affront to their ability to maintain status in village affairs. Placing children's needs before those of parents linked moral responsibility with modernity. If parents could not provide for their children, what did this say about parent's commitment to their children? Perhaps most distressing for parents of poor households were their children's acknowledgements of these subtle messages. One non-migrant villager shared with me his feeling of horror when after a weekend of festivities following a confirmation, his son asked if he would go to the United States for him so they too could have a celebration.

10.6 Conclusion: Migration and the Pain of Dollars

The experiences of Jatundeleg villagers, as they grapple to realign their identities with the rising costs of subsistence livelihood, reflect challenges nearly all rural Andean communities face as part of an increasingly globalized economy. Families approached these challenges not as hapless victims, but rather as agents with their own aspirations for "progress" and "development." By doing so they articulated a new standard of living for themselves, one heavily influenced by a desire to challenge the disparaging images of being "rural folk" and indigenous and adopt those of iony modernity. Although, as this chapter underscores, the means to achieve these community-wide goals were not uniformly available to all villagers. Decades of remittances served to create an ever-expanding chasm between rich and poor. Still, villagers experienced these changes not in open hostility, but rather through a reconciliation and recognition of the growing pains of becoming progresivo. Along the way, they experienced what I often heard cleverly labeled the "pain of dollars" [*dolor de doláres*]. Progress in the form of better water systems, improved roadways, increased security, more efficient agriculture (e.g. greenhouses), and better security all required increasing amounts of cash to acquire. At the same time, some families found their ability to garner and maintain status in the community slipping as costs elevated.

As the other chapters in this volume attest, seeking solutions to unchecked consumption of new middle classes requires a multi-dimensional approach that simultaneously links class and status aspirations (as evidenced by new consumption regimes) with economic motivations of people themselves. In the nearly 30 years of labor out-migration from Ecuador, the motivations driving the undocumented exodus of thousands of people first to the United States and now to destinations in Europe cannot be unilaterally defined as "economic." The effects of this migration, and specifically, the flood of remittances into rural Andean villages, however, have precipitated serious economic and sustainability challenges for households not directly benefiting from exodus. As the rising cost of subsistence livelihoods rise for everyone, it is imperative that new economic opportunities are located in a changing economy. Where these solutions and opportunities will come from is unclear. The response of the Ecuadorian government over the last ten years to channel remittances into new productive industries and stymie migration has been largely ineffectual, leaving small migrant associations to the task of seeing to migrant affairs (Jokisch & Pribilsky, 2002). The creation of a new governmental body to oversee the needs of migrants and their families, La Secretaria Nacional del Migrante (SENAMI) has yet to make any dramatic moves. At the time of this publication, the brightest hope appears to be coming from local initiatives to find new economic opportunities alongside migration, spear-headed by international non-governmental organizations. In Cañar province for instance, where Jatundeleg is located, a Spanish NGO (Codesarallo—Cañar/Murcia), funded by the Spanish government and local Cañar municipality, is attempting to carve out new opportunities in community tourism, artisan production, and micro-industries such as cheese production as an alternative to migration. The benefit of this pilot program (with hopes of expanding to other regions heavily affected by migration), if any at all, will have to await evaluation.

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Chapter 11
New Middle Class and Environmental Lifestyle in Israel

Tally Katz-Gerro

Abstract This chapter explores the way class location in general and new middle class location in particular affect environmental lifestyles among Israelis. Israel is a unique case because on the one hand it is well embedded in global processes of production and consumption but on the other hand labors under a volatile regional conflict, which means that the environment does not rank high on the public agenda. I test two competing theoretical predictions on the association between class location and environmental lifestyle. I pay particular attention to a relatively new class segment that the literature portrays as having special affinity with environmental issues, namely social-cultural specialists. The first prediction argues that contemporary environmentalism draws support from a broad cross-section of society rather than from particular social groups. The second prediction maintains that environmentalism draws more support from the social-cultural specialists because this class is composed of individuals who are highly educated, trained in more humanistic and value laden knowledge and skills, and develop more progressive attitudes and behavior. Based on analyses of survey data I conclude that in the Israeli context the hypothesis on the broadening base of environmentalism receives support, and that the cleavage between technocrats and social-cultural workers is of no consequence for environmental lifestyle.

Keywords Environment · Israel · Lifestyle · New middle class · Social-cultural specialists

11.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the way class location in general and new middle class location in particular affect environmental lifestyles among Israelis. The aim is to reveal the social bases of support for issues missing from the usual set of Israeli public

T. Katz-Gerro (✉)
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel
e-mail: tkatz@soc.haifa.ac.il

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concerns such as economic inequality, national security, and national identity. The environment is a multidimensional concept, and very often the local, the national and the global dimensions are not distinct. This is particularly characteristic of Israeli society, which on the one hand is well embedded in global processes of production and consumption but on the other hand labors under a volatile regional conflict with limited resources devoted to solving environmental problems. Making individuals' lifestyles the focal point of analysis here contributes to understanding the role that the global issue of environmentalism plays in a Western society in which the environment does not rank high on the public agenda.

I pay particular attention to a relatively new class segment that the literature portrays as having special affinity with environmental issues, namely social-cultural specialists. Here I should clarify that class location is defined according to occupational groupings: technocrats are the old middle class, for example, administrators, managers, and technicians; social-cultural specialists are the new middle class. They engage in occupations with a component of social service and social-cultural knowledge such as teaching and art. Indicators of environmental lifestyle include measures of pro-environmental concern and behavior.

I test two competing theoretical predictions on the association between class location and environmental lifestyle. The first prediction follows the general literature on environmental attitudes and behavior, which argues that contemporary environmentalism draws support from a broad cross-section of society rather than from particular social groups. By this approach we would expect that class in general and the new middle class in particular are not major determinants of environmentalism in Israel as compared with other socio-demographic characteristics.

The second prediction follows research on the new middle class, referring to the emergence in the second half of the 20th century of a new class cleavage between two occupational segments in the middle class. The first is occupations with a technical component whose tasks are easier to monitor: these are the technocrats. The second is occupations with a social-cultural knowledge component whose tasks are more difficult to monitor: these are the social-cultural specialists. The literature maintains that the two segments differ in class consciousness, such that environmentalism (much like other global social issues) will draw more support from the social-cultural specialists because this class is composed of individuals who are highly educated, trained in more humanistic and value laden knowledge and skills, and develop more progressive attitudes and behavior (Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, & Guingi, 1995; Güveli, Need, & De Graaf, 2007b). Based on this claim, I would predict that individuals in the social-cultural segment will be more likely to support pro-environmental lifestyle indicators than technocrats or members of other classes.

The chapter opens with a discussion of the specific meaning of environmentalism in Israel. This will provide the contextual focus for the role that class plays in Israeli society in terms of environmental lifestyles. In the literature review that follows I first consider studies on the correlates of environmental lifestyle, highlighting the broadening base hypothesis. Next come those on the relevance of class to social issues in general, and on recent changes in class structure and the growing significance of the new middle class in Western societies. I continue with a discussion of possible empirical aggregations of the new middle class that constitute the distinction between social-cultural workers and technocrats. I also detail research that shows that individuals of different classes exhibit different attitudes and interests. Finally, I present hypotheses, data, and analyses, followed by a discussion of the results.

11.2 Environmentalism in Israel

Contrary to increasing academic, policy, and lay interest in a variety of environmental concerns all over the world, Israeli social scientists have demonstrated little interest in this topic, in keeping with the marginal relevance of environmental concerns on the Israeli public agenda. Social science scholarship on environmental issues in Israel is not well developed, despite a growing environmental assessment literature.[1] Only a handful of articles have gone beyond documenting environmental problems to investigate how interpretations of these problems are linked to group narratives. Although Israel is characterized by significant technological and economic development, Israelis' main points of reference are still connected to issues such as security, economic growth, and immigration (Horowitz & Lissak, 1990). This results from the duality that exists in a country part of whose population is highly modernized and integrated into globalised cultural patterns, while other parts live under "Third World" conditions. In the context of such a particular historical and demographic constellation, "the environment" and "sustainability" are perceived and conceptualized in myriad ways. For example, concern for the environment in Israel stems from instrumental considerations rooted in local structural conditions that reflect the firm linkage between regional conflict, economic transformation, and environmental issues.

The emphasis on economic development that has dominated public discourse since the inception of the state is at odds with environmentalism, which seeks to curtail exploitation of natural resources. Whereas a form of rational environmentalism is gradually being adopted by the Israelis (de-Shalit, 1995), a view of the environment as an all-embracing topic related to post-materialist values has not yet penetrated the their consciousness (Drori & Yuchtman-Yaar, 2002). While the environment increasingly deteriorates, owing to rapid economic growth and population expansion, the ecological crisis has not evoked mass political demands for improvement (Yishai, 1979). At the institutional level, Israel has had a ministry of the environment only since 1988, but environmental campaigns have been conducted mainly in the NGO arena. Total counts of environmental NGOs in Israel vary, but they number in the dozens. Several major environmental campaigns have been conducted in recent years that were grounded in narratives of long-term sustainability (Katz-Gerro, 2006).

[1] A notable exception is Tal's (2002) detailed overview of environmental issues and environmentalism in Israel.

This notwithstanding, some researchers argue that much like other countries, Israel is experiencing a transitory stage to a new, post-modern condition, in which local trends meet global trends. This encounter is accompanied by struggles because it questions taken-for-granted premises that constituted the state (Ram, 2000). The nation-state is being eroded by global forces, for example, the creation of super systems in economics, communication, and defense. It is also affected from below by local trends, for example, the emergence of new ethnic, religious, and cultural identities (Ram, 2003).

In sum, new global trends and indicators of a liberal civil society have emerged in Israel, but they are still not rooted in Israeli society, which emphasizes traditional and modern Zionist nationality (Ram, 2000). Nevertheless, evidence exists of a tendency to move from a materialist to a post-materialist outlook while emphasizing sensitivity to the environment (Yishai, 1999; Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006), and environmental concern is rising in Israel as in other countries (Pew report, 2007). This gradual change in the role of environmental lifestyles in Israelis' everyday lives leads us to ask which factors are responsible for shaping such lifestyles, and whether class location, as a prime determinant of attitudes and behavior in a variety of topics, also plays a role in this case.

11.3 Social Structures and Environmental Lifestyle

11.3.1 The Correlates of Environmental Attitudes and Behavior

Attitudes and behavior are embedded in a social-structural context. Social structures promote or constrain resources and opportunities (e.g., time, money, information, access). The literature lists several factors that influence attitudes and behavior of individuals and groups regarding the environment. Studies report that *education* exerts the principal influence. Better educated individuals usually have wider knowledge of science in general and of the environment in particular; they are aware of the causes and consequences of environmental issues, and tend to develop political awareness and critical thought (Morrison & Dunlap, 1986; Jones & Dunlap, 1992). Most research shows that *age* and environmental awareness are inversely related (Van Liere & Dunlap, 1980; Howell & Laska, 1992; Kanagy, Humphrey, & Firebaugh, 1994). In terms of *gender* differences, research shows that women are concerned with safe, healthy, and hazard-free environmental conditions while men concentrate on economic realms that are structurally opposed to safeguarding the environment (Stern, Dietz, Kalof, & Guagnano, 1995; Dietz, Stern, & Guagnano, 1998; Olli, Grendstad, & Wollebaek, 2001). Another dimension of disadvantaged groups is *ethnicity*. Some research argues that disadvantaged ethnic groups lack resources and will therefore embark on environmental defense to a limited extent, both socially and politically (Mohai, 1990). Other research finds the opposite: minority populations engage in greater environmental activity because they tend to be more vulnerable to environmental injustice (Phoenix, 1993; Bullard, 1994; Dietz et al., 1998).

In addition to the centrality of economic means as a determinant of pro-environmental attitudes, research has also focused on post-materialist values. This argument is inspired by Inglehart's Value Change Thesis (Inglehart, 1977). Based on Maslow's (1954) Hierarchical Need Theory, Inglehart (1977) distinguishes between "materialist" and "post-materialist" goals of individuals: the former concern economic and security needs, the latter the pursuit of humanistic and democratic principles (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995: 9). Inglehart argues that materialist goals are more urgent than post-materialist goals because they are more directly associated with survival (de Graff, 1988). He draws a direct link between the economic security created by advanced industrial societies and a gradual shift toward post-materialist goal orientations of individuals in those societies. Value change in Inglehart's thesis comes about as young post-materialist generations replace old materialist generations. Young generations are hypothesized to be more post-materialist than old generations since the former grew up during periods of economic prosperity and security, particularly post-WWII. Inglehart's (1995) affluence hypothesis states that in rich countries, more people hold post-materialist values and are more environmentally concerned. Economic affluence allows individuals to turn their attention from their own material survival to the survival of the natural environment (Diekmann & Franzen, 1999).

The literature is equivocal regarding the connection between *income* and *class* position and environmental lifestyle. Some research shows that individuals with higher incomes have greater environmental awareness, while other research demonstrates a negative relationship between income and environmentalism; still other studies identify an insignificant association between income and environmental concern and behavior (Mertig & Dunlap, 2001; Ling-Yee, 1997). While better-off individuals may have greater access to convenient recycling, energy-saving appliances, organic food stores, programs that promote environmental issues, etc. (Derksen & Gartell, 1993), arguably the lower classes will express greater concern over environmental conditions that affect them and will act vigorously to eliminate pollution and health hazards in their place of residence (Mohai & Bryant, 1998).

11.3.2 The Broadening Base Hypothesis

While several theories suggest that individuals of different social strata differ in their environmental attitudes and behavior, empirical literature suggests that environmental consciousness is spreading among various strata in society. This is known as "the broadening base hypothesis" (Jones & Dunlap, 1992; Tevet, 1997). It posits that as environmental hazards become more overt and noticeable, media coverage of environmental issues brings them to every household, and the public grow increasingly aware of them. This might mean that relationships that previously existed between socio-demographic variables and environmental awareness are weakening with time, as environmental awareness is no longer limited to specific social strata. In research on the social bases of environmental lifestyle in Israel, Ne'eman-Avramovich and Katz-Gerro (2007) report that the most central variables, for both behavioral and attitudinal indices, are education, awareness of consequences, and environmental knowledge. Place of residence (mainly the distinction between the suburbs and the big city) has a moderate effect. All other variables have, at best, minor overall effects on the various indices and variables. The results suggest that the major social cleavages in Israeli society, such as ethnicity, class, gender, and religiosity, are largely inconsequential for environmentalism. Gender, ethnicity, and to a certain extent income, strikingly and contrary to routine international reports do not play a significant role in determining attitudes and behavior on environmental issues. The results provide little support for the widespread view that environmental concern is an elitist issue that may be inconsistent with the interests of the less affluent segments of society. Along these lines, the broadening base hypothesis receives support as socio-demographic strata do not seem to be the driving force behind environmental attitudes and behavior.

11.4 Research on the New Middle Class

Before delving into the specific characteristics of the new middle class, I consider the relevance of social class for determining lifestyles of individuals in advanced globalised societies, a matter subjected to much debate in the past forty years. Views on the role played by class have ranged from claims that social classes are "dying" (Pahl, 1989, 1991; Holton & Turner, 1989; Clark & Lipset, 1991; Goldthorpe & Marshall, 1992; Clark, Lipset, & Rempel, 1993; Pakulski & Waters, 1996) to evidence that new social classes are emerging (Kriesi, 1989; Güveli et al., 2007b) and that class still plays a significant role in various social realms.

A less debatable assertion is that the class structure in advanced economies has undergone vast changes in the past four decades (Elfring, 1988, 1989, 1992; OECD Employment Outlook, 2000; Breen, 2004). These include the growth of the service sector, rising female participation in the labour force, and educational upgrading. These developments have altered the employment structure in Western countries, particularly in the salaried middle class. Sociological literature offers an abundance of conceptual and empirical tools meant to depict the class structure in contemporary Western societies. These tools aim at defining homogeneous categorical groupings of social positions based on the resources available to individuals who share a specific class position. Following the proclaimed changes in the employment structure, the argument has been made that updated class schemes should partly shift their focus from hierarchical boundaries to horizontal cleavages. Class schemes are typically based on the industrial division of labour, but since industrial labour markets are transforming into post-industrial labour markets, new schemes should be developed. For example, Esping-Andersen proposed that a new scheme should acknowledge that managers in the middle class reflect industrial logic in the division of labour whereas professionals in the middle class realize post-industrial logic (Esping-Andersen, 1993: 13). Traditional classes, especially the service class, are too aggregate, and should be disaggregated for analytical use (Grusky & Weeden, 2001). Thus, the salaried middle class should no longer be thought of as a unitary grouping, and heavy emphasis should be laid on the difference in the work logic of various occupational groups (Oesch, 2006: 264). Several attempts have been in the literature to translate these proclaimed changes in the class structure into empirical aggregations of occupations into classes, as described in the following section.

Brint (1984) summarizes four new class aggregations that have been discussed in the literature and that define occupations in the social-cultural sector. The narrowest definition includes only professionals in the arts, media, teaching, academic research, and government regulatory and welfare activities (Kristol, 1972). A more inclusive definition refers to professionals in scientific and technical occupations and in occupations concerned with cultural production (Gouldner, 1979). Ladd's (1978) aggregation includes salaried professionals and managers with baccalaureate and higher level degrees. Finally, Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich's (1977) aggregation, which is most broadly perceived, includes salaried professionals and managers of all educational levels. Brint reports that Kristol's aggregation of arts- and social science-related occupations was the only one of the four new class definitions to show a strong, consistent pattern of liberalism across the range of attitudes thought to separate the new and old classes (Brint, 1984: 52).

11.4.1 New Class vs. Old Class

Although several suggestions for the conceptual and empirical formulation of a new class scheme have been made, most scholars agree that a modified scheme should distinguish a "new" class of knowledge workers from an "old" class of industrialists and business owners. Occupations in education, health care and social services, for example, which score high on cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984), constitute the "new class" of post-industrial society. Occupations assumed to have a relatively high economic dimension are those of the "old" middle class, such as economics, engineering, management, and administration. The debate continues on the precise composition of the new middle class, but most scholars agree that its members are distinguished by their high levels of education and by white-collar occupations in the nonmarket, service sector of the economy (Brint, 1984; Bruce-Briggs, 1979; Cotgrove, 1982; Kriesi, 1989).

What is the significance of this distinction? The new class of cultural workers are seen to share economic and political interests, and value systems. They all want to maintain and increase their autonomy, have a powerful government sector, raise taxes from the private sector to invest in the public sector, and they support politics regarding "non-material issues" like lesbian/gay marriage, euthanasia, and environmentalism (Lamont, 1987).

Eckersley (1989) explains why members of the new class are predisposed to support the goals of the environmental movement. He argues that they are relatively independent of the volatility of the market sector, hence more inclined than the working class to be critical of the industrial system and actively involved in seeking reform. Work that built on Inglehart's (1990) distinction between materialism and post-materialism has argued that the occupations chosen by members of the service class correspond to materialism and post-materialism. Materialists are found more among managerial and technocratic occupations, for example, managers and administrators, while post-materialists are more common in social and cultural occupations, whose practitioners are more sensitive to the problems caused by various modernization processes (Cotgrove & Duff, 1981; Kriesi et al., 1995).

In sum, since the 1970s several scholars have claimed that the middle class is no longer a single class, but two. These are conceived in different ways, but in all cases a cleavage within the middle class is implied, be it between the "old" class and the "new" (Bruce-Briggs, 1979; Brint, 1984), the cultural elite and the economic (Bourdieu, 1984), knowledge experts and managers (Wright, 1985; 1997), or technocrats/controllers and social-cultural specialists (Kriesi, 1989; Van de Werfhorst & De Graaf, 2004).

11.4.2 Güveli's New Class Scheme

In the empirical measurement I follow the work of Güveli and de Graaf (2007) who distinguish a "new" class of social and cultural specialists and an "old" class of technocrats with both a higher and a lower version in the service class. Two combined criteria serve to distinguish technocrats and social-cultural specialists. The first is level of difficulty in monitoring the tasks they perform: those performed by the latter are more difficult to monitor than those performed by the former. The second criterion, inspired by the work of Kriesi (1989), is the social and cultural feature of occupations and it has two components: whether an occupation involves a feature of social services and whether specialist social and cultural knowledge is needed for it to be done well. Occupations do not need to have at least one component to be classified as social-cultural specialists. Güveli and de Graaf (2007) build on the new classification schema by De Graaf and Steijn (1997) to adjust the EGP class schema which already incorporates the theories of Kriesi (1989), Lamont (1987) and Esping-Andersen (1993).

Research based on this formulation of the new middle class has shown that the middle class fractions differ in their political orientation, with social-cultural specialists becoming more leftist since the 1970s in the Netherlands (Güveli, Need, & De Graaf, 2007a); that the "new" social classes are more closed than other traditional social classes, and the immobility of the low-grade social-cultural specialists increases over time significantly (Güveli & De Graaf, 2007); and that social and cultural specialists differ significantly from technocrats with regard to their sociopolitical and economic preferences and behavior (Güveli et al., 2007b).

11.5 Hypotheses

Following the discussion above, I posit three hypotheses, two pertaining to the association of class with environmental lifestyle, and one to values.

1. Individuals in the new middle class are more liberal/progressive on environmental issues than individuals in the old factions of the middle class/other classes.
2. Social class, defined as a distinction between technocrats and social-cultural specialists, has a stronger impact on environmental issues than other social position variables, most notably education.
3. Post-materialist values mediate the effect of class on environmental attitudes.

11.6 Data

Data were drawn from two separate data sets, which asked the same questions. The data were pooled to produce a larger sample. Data for 2000 were drawn from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), which in that year included an environmental module. ISSP is an international public opinion consortium which since 1983 has annually surveyed various social issues in different countries across the globe. Currently, 38 countries participate in the surveys, which cover various topics including education, welfare, and inequality. The survey was conducted in Israel between April and July 2000 by the B.I. and Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research at Tel Aviv University.[2]

Data for 2006 were drawn from the Israeli component of the ISJP (International Social Justice Project) 2006 project.[3] They consist of two stratified random samples of households in Israel: Jews and Arabs. Among the Jewish population 800 addresses were sampled, stratified by region and community size. Within each household, only one head of household was interviewed, totaling 793 adults. The ISJP questionnaire was translated into Hebrew, Russian and Arabic, and interviews were held in person at respondents' homes in their preferred language.

11.7 Variables

11.7.1 Independent Variables

Class. Class categories are based on a version of the CASMIN class schema, adjusted to distinguish public sector social/cultural specialists from other groups in the service classes. Güveli and de Graaf (2007) used 12 specialists on job or labour markets to mark the middle class occupations as technocratic or specialist social-cultural according to the criteria outlined above.[4] Only respondents who (a) fell into

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[2]The data were made available to the authors by Israel Social Science Data Center (ISDC) at the Hebrew University.

[3]I wish to thank Arye Rattner for allowing me to use the data in this survey, which he coordinated.

[4]The reliability coefficient of the experts' allocation is 0.95; no expert disagreed greatly with the others, and overall reliability could not be improved by leaving out experts (for more details see Güveli et al., 2007). The coding scheme was obtained from Güveli (2006).

the latter grouping, and (b) worked in the public sector, belonged to the new middle class. A conversion of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) occupational codes into a modified class scheme was made available by Güveli (2006).[5] The final scheme includes the following categories: (Ia) high-grade technocrats: managers of big firms, governmental and non-governmental administrators, scientists, etc.; (Ib) high-grade social-cultural specialists: doctors, dentists, university teachers, social scientists, high church officers, etc.; (IIa) low-grade technocrats: managers of small firms, engineers, computer programmers, etc.; (IIb) low-grade social-cultural specialists: medical assistants, professional nurses, teachers, artists, etc.; (III) routine non-manual employees: in administration and commerce, rank-and-file service workers; (IV) self-employed persons: small proprietors with and without employees, farmers; (V/VI) skilled manual workers: lower-grade technicians, supervisors of manual workers, skilled manuals; (VII) semi-unskilled manual workers: semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, agricultural and other workers in primary production.

Because of the small number of cases, the two technocrat classes (Ia+IIa) and the two social-cultural workers classes (Ib+IIb) were collapsed. The other classes were collapsed as follows: intermediate class (III+V/VI), petty bourgeoisie (IV), and working class (VII).

Education. Measured as years of schooling.
Income. Measured as natural log of individual income.
Gender. Male was the omitted category.
Age. In years.
Size. Size of community: 2500 inhabitants or less (1), 2501–10,000 (2), 10,001–20,000 (3), 20,001–50,000 (4), 50,001–100,000 (5), 100,000 and more (6).

Post materialist values. The index was measured by two questions on four political goals that respondents believed their country should give priority to: two materialist goals (maintaining order in the nation, fighting rising prices), and two post-materialist (giving people more say in important government decisions, protecting freedom of speech). The first question asked which of these goals have the highest priority in the respondent's country; the second asked which goal should have the next highest priority in the respondent's country. Each answer was weighted

[5] Several occupations are listed in Israel under EGPI or EGPII, while in the Netherlands they are listed as some other class. In a personal communication with Güveli we obtained the class locations of those occupations as follows: 3310 primary education associate teaching professionals, 3320 pre-primary education associate teaching professionals, 3330 special education associate teaching professionals, 3340 other associate teaching professionals, 2149 architects, engineers and related professionals not elsewhere classified, 2211 biologists, botanists, zoologists and related professionals, 3231 nursing associate professionals, 5149 other personal services workers not elsewhere classified into IIb (low-grade social and cultural specialists), 4111 stenographers and typists and 4190 other office clerks classified into IIa (low-grade technocrats); this is because their work tasks do not involve social services or social-cultural skills, and performers of these tasks are easier to monitor.

according to the following system. A post-materialist goal in response to the first question received a value of 2, and a post-materialist goal in response to the second question received a value of 1; a materialist goal in response to either question received a value of 0. Values were then summed for each respondent. The final index ranged from 0 to 3. Missing values were replaced by an available answer to either question.

Ethnicity. Ethnicity combined respondents' and their fathers' country of birth. It was represented by three dummy variables: for second-generation Israelis, Israelis of American-European origin (Ashkenazi), and Israelis of Asian-African origin (Mizrachi). An additional category, named "other," designated respondents for whom information on ethnic origin is missing.

Religiosity. Measured on a five-point scale of very religious/orthodox, religious, traditional, semi-secular, secular.

11.7.2 Dependent Variables

Environmental concern. This was measured with the following item: "Claims about environmental problems are exaggerated." Response options ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Trust in science. This was measured with the following item: "Modern science will solve environmental problems so there won't be a significant change in our lifestyle." Response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Willingness to pay. This was measured with the following item: "I am willing to pay much higher prices to protect the environment." Response options ranged from 1 (very unwilling) to 5 (very willing).

Recycling behavior. This was measured by asking respondents to specify the frequency at which they sorted glass or cans for recycling. Response options ranged from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Another response option was 0, namely recycling was not available; data of respondents who selected this option were omitted from analyses on this indicator.

11.8 Results

First, the distribution of the class categories in our sample is shown in Table 11.1; the distribution of the new classes is similar to that reported from other countries. For comparison see cross-national distribution of the new class by Mertig and Dunlap (2001) in their Table 11.3, and by Brint (1984), Table 11.3 on page 47.

Table 11.2 includes the descriptive statistics of the other independent variables.

Table 11.3 shows distributions of the four dependent variables.

Next, concerning the effect of class and other variables on the environmentalism indicators, Table 11.4 presents stepwise regressions on the four dependent variables in three models. The first model includes class; the second model adds socio-demographic variables and a measure for post-materialist values; the third model adds education.

Table 11.1 Distribution of Class Categories

Class	N	Valid (%)
Technocrats (Ia+IIa)	146	10.9
Social-cultural workers (Ib+IIb)	275	20.6
Intermediate	382	28.6
Petty Bourgeoisie	186	13.9
Working class	345	25.9
Total	1334	100.0
Missing	664	
Total	1998	

Table 11.2 Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

Variable	Mean (SD)	Percent
Female		56.3
Survey (2006)		39.7
European-American		18.1
Asian-African		15.6
Israeli		52.5
Other ethnicity		13.4
Age	40.30 (15.95)	
Income	8.54 (0.68)	
Post-materialism	1.28 (0.93)	
Size of community	4.59 (1.60)	
Religiosity	3.54 (1.26)	
Education	13.32 (2.81)	

Table 11.3 Distributions of Environmentalism Indicators

	Claims about environment exaggerated	Modern science will solve environmental problems	Willing to pay much higher prices for the environment	Frequency recycling
1	12.1	10.8	5.5	34.9
2	34.7	32.2	20.4	37.2
3	24.5	26.9	30.0	16.3
4	21.9	23.3	34.4	11.7
5	6.7	6.8	9.7	

N=1998
1-agree; 5-disagree
1-disagree; 5-agree
1-unwilling; 5-willing
1-never; 4-always

Table 11.4 Standardized Coefficients from Stepwise OLS Regressions

a. Claims about the environment are exaggerated

	1	2	3
Technocrats	–0.015	0.011	–0.004
Intermediate class	–0.006	–0.007	–0.056
Petty bourgeoisie	0.117**	0.110**	0.068
Working class	0.068	0.061	–0.002
Age		0.012	0.000
Female		–0.030	–0.034
Income		–0.015	–0.012
Post-materialism		0.001	0.002
Survey (2006)		–0.071*	–0.052
Size		–0.083**	–0.078**
European-American		–0.072	–0.053
Israeli		–0.032	–0.020
Other ethnicity		–0.043	–0.035
Religiosity		–0.126**	–0.114**
Education			–0.101**
R2	0.013	0.045	0.051
N	1176	1176	1176

b. Modern science can solve environmental problems (scale 15)

	1	2	3
Technocrats	0.034	0.043	0.032
Intermediate class	0.018	0.011	–0.027
Petty bourgeoisie	0.088*	0.079*	0.047
Working class	0.066	0.035	–0.014
Age		0.027	0.018
Female		–0.063*	–0.066*
Income		–0.074*	–0.072*
Post materialism		–0.019	–0.018
Survey (2006)		–0.055	–0.040
Size		–0.071*	–0.067*
European-American		–0.001	0.013
Israeli		–0.003	0.006
Other ethnicity		–0.071	–0.064
Religiosity		–0.032	–0.023
Education			–0.079*
R2	0.004	0.028	0.031
N	1176	1176	1176

c. Willing to pay higher taxes for the environment (scale 15)

	1	2	3
Technocrats	–0.011	–0.033	–0.017
Intermediate class	–0.128**	–0.123*	–0.069
Petty bourgeoisie	–0.063	–0.065	–0.018
Working class	–0.184**	–0.180*	–0.110*
Age		–0.019	–0.005
Female		–0.005	0.000
Income		0.050	0.047
Post-materialism		0.061*	0.060*

Table 11.4 (continued)

c. Willing to pay higher taxes for the environment (scale 15)

	1	2	3
Survey (2006)		0.007	–0.014
Size		–0.028	–0.034
European-American		0.018	–0.002
Israeli		–0.023	–0.035
Other ethnicity		–0.002	–0.011
Religiosity		0.121**	0.108**
Education			0.112**
R2	0.022	0.039	0.046
N	1176	1176	1176

d. Frequency recycling

	1	2	3
Technocrats	0.077*	0.047	0.061
Intermediate class	–0.025	0.022	0.068
Petty bourgeoisie	–0.012	–0.021	0.019
Working class	–0.115**	–0.035	0.025
Age		0.148**	0.160**
Female		0.026	0.030
Income		0.003	0.000
Post-materialism		0.026	0.025
Survey (2006)		0.255**	0.237**
Size		0.163**	0.158**
European-American		–0.011	–0.029
Israeli		–0.018	–0.029
Other ethnicity		–0.043	–0.050
Religiosity		0.020	0.009
Willingness to pay		0.263**	0.255**
Education			0.098**
R2	0.018	0.192	0.197
N	964	964	964

Omitted: cultural workers, Asian-African ethnicity, survey (2000).
*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$

The four models (model 1 for each dependent variable), which include only class dummies, show overall class effects but no substantial differences between the technocrats and the social-cultural specialists. In the analysis of "Claims about the environment are exaggerated", the petty-bourgeoisie and the working class believe this more than the social-cultural specialists. The petit-bourgeoisie and the working class believe that modern science can solve environmental problems. The intermediate class, the petit-bourgeoisie and the working class are less willing to pay higher prices for the environment. In recycling frequency, the working class tends to recycle less than social-cultural workers, and the technocrats recycle more frequently. This is the only indicator showing a significant difference between technocrats and social-cultural specialists, and the association is opposite to what was expected.

When controlling for socio-demographic variables and post-materialism (model 2), the petit-bourgeoisie are still significantly less environmental than the social cultural class in terms of thinking that environmental hazards are exaggerated and can be solved by modern science. The working class effect is no longer significant. The class effects on willingness to pay remain the same, and class differences in recycling disappear when controlling for the other variables.

Model 3 adds education to the other variables. The effect of education cancels some of the significant class effects although others remain significant. Residents of larger communities, secular respondents, and those with more years of education disagree with the claims about exaggeration. Regarding the claim that modern science can solve environmental problems, women are less trusting in science, as are respondents with higher income, who live in larger cities, and who are better educated. As for willingness to pay, only here are post-materialist values significant. Individuals who score higher on this index are more willing to pay. The secular and the better educated are also more willing to pay. Frequency of recycling is associated with older age, size of community, willingness to pay, and years of schooling. Note that explained variance on the three attitudinal variables is around 4–5%; while on recycling it amounts to 20%.

11.9 Discussion

To summarize the results I revisit the hypotheses set out earlier. *First,* the hypothesis that individuals in the new middle class are more liberal/progressive on environmental issues than individuals in the old factions of the middle class/other classes was not supported. The difference between technocrats and social-culturalists was statistically significant only on recycling, and in the opposite direction, meaning that technocrats are more frequent recyclers. *Second,* the hypothesis that social class, defined as a distinction between old and new, has a stronger impact on environmental issues than other social position variables – most notably education, was partly supported. The statistically significant effect of class somewhat diminishes when controlling for education, but to a certain extent both class and education have significant effects on indicators of environmentalism. *Third*, the hypothesis that post-materialist values mediate the effect of class on environmental attitudes was not supported. Post-materialist values in Israel only affect willingness to pay for environmental protection.

In many studies on Israeli society, class is not considered a major determinant of attitudes and behavior. It often competes with income and education, and also with ethnic origin. In the analyses presented here, although class proves moderately important in determining the environmental indicators, its effect holds when controlling for education, income, and other variables. Still, at least based on the indicators analyzed here, there are no differences between class fractions that represent technocrats and social-cultural specialists. This finding can be explained by a principal criticism of the new class theory, namely that it jumbles two phenomena: the emergence of a new social stratum and the diffusion of a cultural attitude.

Although in recent years the professional and technical stratum has expanded in both numbers and influence, the rise of upper white-collar liberalism has had little to do with the class antagonisms and the interests of this stratum. Bell (1976) argued that the apparent liberalism of the stratum reflects the strength of society-wide cultural tendencies – notably cosmopolitan and anti-institutional – that are simply the most visible among the educated. High levels of education, a key ingredient in new class membership, are quite frequently and consistently associated with activism and support for environmentalism, as well as for other new social movements (Inglehart, 1990; Kriesi, 1989).

Education is often reported to be associated with pro-environmentalism, as outlined in the literature review. In our analyses it is also the most important variable. Although income is strongly associated with class, it is not considered distinctive for the new class. The question remains whether it is a separate dimension that has an effect. Our results indicate that its effect is quite modest. I also find that younger age is associated with a critical outlook on the world. Younger respondents should be predisposed to accept the goals of environmentalism. In our results, the only evidence of this is that older individuals recycle more often than younger ones. With regard to gender, some scholars have found that women are more likely to support new social movements (Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993). This may stem from a more empathetic sense of self that women develop (Chodorow, 1978), and their socialization into nurturing, protective roles (reference), or because men more often hold positions that depend on continued economic growth and technological advancement, hence are less willing to align themselves against the modernization process (Mohai, 1992). The results do not show significant differences between men and women, with the exception of one variable: women are less inclined to think that modern science can solve environmental problems. Why do all demographic variables hardly explain public support for environmentalism? Possibly because support for environmentalism is broadly diffused throughout society and other variables are more relevant – situational, psychological, and social network.

I conclude that in the Israeli context the hypothesis on the broadening base of environmentalism hypothesis receives support, and that the cleavage between technocrats and social-cultural workers is of no consequence for environmental lifestyle. This research contributes to analysis of the environmental dimension in Israel, with its focus on how individuals from different social locations adopt environmental routines of daily life. Future research can emphasize questions on how individuals understand and interpret environmental issues, and how this affects social mobilization for action to address them.

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Part III
New Middle Classes in India

Chapter 12
The Political Economy of Lifestyle: Consumption, India's New Middle Class and State-Led Development

Leela Fernandes

Abstract This essay analyzes the political economy of lifestyle that frames middle class consumption in post-liberalization India. The essay argues that the new middle class in India is part of a state-led project of development rather than an expanding consumer group that has naturally been produced by economic growth. Economic liberalization in India operates through two disparate but simultaneous languages of economic development and economic growth. On the one hand, state, non-governmental organizations and World Bank sponsored projects produce narratives of sustainable development that primarily target subaltern social groups. On the other hand, state-led and global policies of economic liberalization deploy celebratory languages of middle class consumption as a sign of the success of such policies. These narratives of middle class consumption and subaltern sustainable development are part of a singular set of state developmentalist strategies in the post-liberalization period. This role of the state suggests that the politics of sustainability will require more than attitudinal shifts amongst middle class individuals. The essay concludes by analyzing possibilities for cross-class alliances between subaltern groups and sections of the middle classes that the state cannot successfully incorporate into this new middle class model of development.

Keywords Caste · Consumption · Development regime · English speaking middle class · State

Images of a prosperous, consuming Indian middle class have now become commonplace in both domestic cultural representations in India as well as in international political rhetoric on India's booming globalizing economy. Such ideological, cultural and discursive practices produce a normative conception of the new Indian middle class as an opulent social group whose growing consumption capacity both symbolizes the benefits of liberalization and serves as the engine for driving liberalization forward (Lakha, 1999). Such changes have produced a spate of public and

L. Fernandes (✉)
Department of Political Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, USA
e-mail: lfernand@rci.rutgers.edu

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scholarly attention to middle class consumption (Rajagopal, 2001b; Varma, 1998). However, despite this focus on middle class consumption there has been relatively little conceptual work that has linked middle class consumption in India with existing debates on sustainability and sustainable development. This article attempts to address this gap through an analysis of the political economy of lifestyle that frames middle class consumption in post-liberalization India. The political and discursive linkages between specific representations of new middle class lifestyles and the ongoing liberalization of India's economy point to both the significance as well as the limits of conceptions of consumption in understanding questions of sustainability, globalization and inequality.

Existing studies of middle class consumption in India have tended to reinforce a consumer preference model of analysis[1] – one that has addressed the relationship between economic change and consumer aspirations and behavior. While such research has yielded valuable insight into questions of subjectivity and cultural change, there is a greater need for an understanding of the systemic relationship between consumption and the restructuring of state developmental regimes under liberalization.

A focus on the relationship between the middle classes and state developmental strategies can begin to provide the conceptual tools that relink middle class consumption with questions of sustainability. Economic liberalization in industrializing countries such as India for instance operates through two disparate but simultaneous languages of economic development and economic growth. On the one hand, state, non-governmental organizations and World Bank sponsored projects produce narratives of sustainable development that primarily target subaltern social groups (particularly in rural areas). On the other hand, state-led and global policies of economic liberalization deploy celebratory languages of middle class consumption as a sign of the success of such policies. The seemingly discrepant narratives of middle class consumption and subaltern sustainable development are in fact part of a singular set of state developmentalist strategies in the post-liberalization period. As I argue in this article, consumption paradoxically both signals and conceals the relationship between the new liberalizing middle class and the current state developmentalist regime. My analysis seeks to conceptualize the new middle class in India as part of a state-led project (and problem) of development rather than as an expanding consumer group that has naturally been produced by economic growth. This interested role of the state suggests that the politics of sustainability will require more than attitudinal shifts amongst middle class individuals. At another level, a recognition of the specificity of the state managed new middle class also opens up alternative possibilities for cross-class alliances particularly with large sections of the middle classes that the state cannot successfully incorporate into this new middle class model of development. State and public constructions of and strategies towards the new liberalizing middle class both conceal and manage inequalities and contradictions within the middle classes. However, persistent internal fractures within the middle classes

[1] For a critical discussion of a consumer preference model approach see Smith 1996.

and the tensions between such fractures and dominant narratives of new middle class lifestyle are important factors in understanding the political obstacles to and possibilities of developing cross-class movements and models of sustainability. I address these issues in this article through a primarily interpretive argument that is based on empirical research I have conducted on the rise of India's new middle class (Fernandes, 2006).

12.1 Conceptual Questions: The Middle Classes and Consumption in India

Consumption has become a central issue in contemporary debates and discourses on India's middle classes. Public rhetoric on the size of India's middle classes (now estimated as 350 million in public discourse in India) has largely centered on the potential consumer market that this group represents for both Indian and multinational businesses.[2]

The visibility of new consumption practices (with newly available consumer goods such as cell-phones and cars) and the sharpness of the contrast between such conspicuous consumption and the relative restrictions on middle class consumption in earlier periods in the twentieth century have intensified the association between the middle classes and consumption in liberalizing India. This association has been consolidated by the self-identification of large sections of the middle classes with new patterns of consumption. Middle class individuals thus point to the availability of new commodities as a sign of India's economic success and explicitly link their own personal identities and socio-economic potential to the consumer choices available under liberalization.[3]

The visibility of such changing consumption patterns has produced an expanding literature on the middle classes and consumption in India. Such scholarship has focused on three central, interrelated areas of inquiry. First, a significant trend in contemporary research is to use income and consumption data as a means of measuring the middle classes (Sridharan, 2004). Such research has been important in providing a set of parameters with which to identify different segments of the middle

[2]This is seen in the practices and data collection methods of survey data on middle class consumption collected by various market research firms. The most well known is the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) which has collected detailed income and consumption data on the middle classes. While the NCAER data provides useful parameters that aid in the measurement of the middle class, as I have argued elsewhere, such survey techniques are in themselves also representational practices that have contributed to the image of an expanding consuming middle class.

[3]This is particularly the case with sections of the urban middle classes that identify with a new middle class identity associated with liberalization. However, it is not limited to urban or more privileged sections of the middle classes. See for e.g., Jeffrey, Jeffrey and Jeffery 2004 on rural and dalit middle classes. For less privileged sections of the middle classes, consumption becomes a strategy of upward mobility; it is also a means that individuals use to accumulate social capital in order to try and gain access to new economy jobs.

classes and in providing a picture of differences in wealth (measured in terms of the possession of particular assets) between different social segments in rural and urban areas (Bose, 2003; Rao, 1994, 2000). A second scholarly trend, has largely addressed the study of the middle classes through empirical and theoretical analyses of the media. Given the visibility of new patterns of middle class consumption, such research has focused on media technologies (such as the role of advertising and television images) in shaping middle class identities (Juluri, 2003; Mankekar, 1999; Mazzarella, 2003; Rajagopal, 2001a). This focus on the media is linked to the third approach a wider conceptual focus on public culture as a central site for identifying and analyzing middle class identities (Appadurai, 1996; Breckenridge, 1995). Studies in comparative contexts have illustrated the distinctive historical role that the middle classes have played in the public sphere (Joshi, 2001). Research in the Indian context has focused in particular on the realm of public culture as the central site for middle class activity and much of the research in this field has tended to associate public culture with practices or identities that are linked in some way to various forms of consumption. While the first trend has focused more on questions of measurement, the second two approaches have shed light on everyday practices and middle class identities (Donner, 2004; van Wessel, 2004). This research has proved particularly fruitful in addressing the dailiness of middle class life, questions of middle class subjectivity and the dominant representational practices that shape these subjectivities. In the Indian case, this research tends to associate new consumption practices with the expansion of privatized spaces and the expanded role of private capital that stems from policies of economic liberalization.[4] The result is an implicit tendency to locate consumption as a site of individual, privatized strategies that are shaped by these processes of privatization.[5] What tends to be concealed in this context is the way in which consumption itself is part of a state-led development regime.[6] The value of a project that seeks to connect the study of middle class consumption and lifestyle with debates on sustainability is precisely that it compels us to ask questions about state-led development regimes.

The argument for an analysis of the relationship between middle class consumption and state-led developmental regimes raises two immediate questions. First, what is at stake in discursive narratives that rests on a naturalized association

[4]Research on other parts of Asia has paid more attention to the role of the state. See for example case studies in Sen and Stevens 1998 and Embong 2002.

[5]At a methodological level, such research tends to focus primarily on particular sites that are explicitly associated with consumption (for example various forms of print or visual media or sites of consumption such as shopping malls, fast food restaurants, leisure parks). A broader problem is the conflation of India's middle classes with consumption and with elite behavior. Such a conflation misses other definitional aspects of the middle classes and also misses substantial socioeconomic variation that exists within the middle classes. I address this in Fernandes 2006. While consumption is often associated with the middle classes, there is also a research agenda which focuses on consumption and poverty. See for e.g., Jha 2007; Kumar and Aggarwal 2003.

[6]The point is not of course to argue that private capital is not important but to refocus attention on state practices and interests.

between the state, development and socio-economically marginalized groups?[7] Or put another way, what can be gained by moving away from a naturalized assumption that the rural and urban poor are the primary object of state development policies and instead conceptualizing the middle classes as the primary object of state development policies?[8] Second, what are some of the distinctive features that characterize this relationship between the middle classes, consumption and India's new state-led development regime?

Consider first, the languages of development that have been produced in the context of economic liberalization in India since the 1990s. Public rhetoric on economic liberalization has centered primarily on the expansion of the middle class. India's "new" middle class is new in terms of a new dominant ideological and cultural identification with such policies of liberalization. However, the social composition and structure of this new middle class under liberalization is not sharply different from the pre-liberalization middle classes. For example, upper tiers of the middle classes that are benefiting from reforms and the intermediary layers of the middle classes that are attempting to gain access to new economy jobs are still largely the upper caste, English speaking middle classes that previously benefited from state employment and state subsidized higher education. What is new then is an intensified identification between this new middle class and the presumed consumer benefits of the economic reforms.[9] There are numerous examples of this identification. Public representations in advertising and the media continually produce and reinforce this identification. Middle class individuals point to the existence of new consumer choices and consumer goods as a sign of the benefits of reforms regardless of whether their personal economic situation has improved (Fernandes, 2006). Political critics and proponents of liberalization both base their debates on question of middle class consumption (either celebrating or decrying the impact of middle class consumerism). It is worth emphasizing that this kind of public middle class consumer identity is relatively new in India. Historically, for instance, the strength of white collar and public sector unionism in India led significant sections of the middle classes to conceive of their public, political identity as workers rather than consumers.[10]

Such public discourses tend to depict this emerging (and expanding) new middle class identity as a natural outgrowth of economic liberalization. By arguing for an approach that addresses the relationship between this new middle class and the question of development, my objective is to note that this new middle class is in fact partly produced by specific state developmental policies. Consider first the discursive construction of this new middle class identity. Elected officials and politicians have actively participated in the often inflated public rhetoric on the size of

[7] For general approaches that address the discursive dimensions of development see Escobar 1994.

[8] See Chatterjee 2004 for a theoretical formulation that reproduces this dualistic narrative.

[9] This is an identification which first became publicly articulated under Rajiv Gandhi's regime. However, its real political force has intensified since the reform period in the 1990s.

[10] On the state of public sector workers under liberalization see Ganguly and Scrase 2001.

India's middle class and on the vast potential consumer market of this group. Prime Ministers from across the ideological range have specifically deployed a narrative about India's expanding middle class as a central platform in governmental efforts to market India's reforms and to draw in private capital. This has ranged from Rajiv Gandhi's early rhetoric on India's middle classes in the 1980s to the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) prime minister Vajpayee to more recent rhetoric from current prime minister Manmohan Singh. Prime Minister Singh's speech delivered in Saudi Arabia reflects the conventional narrative that has generally been deployed,

> Today, India's economy is on the move. For three years, we have witnessed growth rates of between 7.0% and 8.5%. A growing market, with a large middle class, abundant raw materials, highly trained and skilled manpower, especially in the field of science and technology, is thirsting for new investment (Singh, 2006).

Such discursive strategies are an element of the Indian state's strategies in promoting its policies of economic reforms. Rob Jenkins has written persuasively about the ways in which Indian politicians and governmental elites were able to push through the first generation of reforms in the 1990s using a range of informal strategies and institutions, particularly at the local and state level (Jenkins, 1999). While Jenkins focuses on the hidden nature of this process, what he calls "reforms by stealth," (Jenkins, 1999, p. 172) middle class consumption has in fact operated as the public discursive face of state strategies of reform. The expansion of middle class consumption, in effect, is a cornerstone of the discursive practices that have characterized state policies of liberalization that have been initiated since the 1990s.

This narrative of middle class consumption co-exists with the language of sustainable development that is conventionally deployed in policy responses to rural poverty and marginalized socio-economic groups.[11] In particular, this language can be found in World Bank sponsored projects that have been initiated in partnership either with the government or private non-governmental organizations. Consider for example the World Bank's support for new development ideas through its "India Development Marketplace" competition. The competition, designed to encourage grassroots innovation, specifically focuses on sustainable rural development. The discourse of development is explicitly coded through a conflation of sustainability, grassroots development and local village life. As the Bank's depiction of the 2007 session put it, "Many of the participants were dressed in traditional attire from across the country. Folk singers and dancers added to the color and rural flavor of the event" (World Bank nd).

The contrast between such depictions of traditional rural life with images of modern middle class consumption, of course, echo longstanding historical constructions of the modern and traditional. More significantly, such discourses invent two separate economies and portray the middle classes and subaltern social groups

[11] Sustainable development is also of discussed in relation to environmental sustainability but rarely in relation to the middle classes.

as discrete objects within each realm in contemporary India.[12] The middle classes inhabit an economy which is defined by the retreat of the state and growth fueled by the expansion of consumption. Subaltern groups such as the rural poor are located within state economic development which is marked by the need for sustainability and limits on consumption.[13] The effect of these dual narratives is twofold. On the one hand, this juxtaposition between the middle classes and subaltern groups obscures the role of the state in shaping current policies of liberalization. As the new middle class acts as the central visible agent that has been created by liberalization and that consequently supports such policies, state practices of "reforms by stealth" are facilitated.[14] On the other hand, since such discourses dissociate the middle classes from state-led development, shifts of state resources and developmental priorities and policies from the urban and rural poor to the middle classes can also occur by stealth.[15]

My analysis thus far has sought to outline some of the broad strokes of these official discourses. This is not, of course, to suggest that there are no counter-discourses or tensions within these narratives. Consider for example, a recent speech in which Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented a "Ten Point Charter Social Charter" for inclusive growth to the Confederation of Indian Industry (Singh, 2007). Singh specifically addressed the question of growth and consumption, noting that

> The time has come for the better off sections of our society – not just in organized industry but in all walks of life – to understand the need to make our growth process more inclusive; to eschew conspicuous consumption; to save more and waste less; to care for those who are less privileged and less well off; to be role models of probity, moderation and charity.

The speech went on to describe the social unrest that would potentially arise from rising inequalities, noting that

> The electronic media carries the lifestyles of the rich and famous into every village and every slum. Media often highlights the vulgar display of their wealth. An area of great concern is the level of ostentatious expenditure on weddings and other family events. Such vulgarity insults the poverty of the less privileged, it is socially wasteful and it plants seeds of resentment in the minds of the have-nots.

Such rhetoric evidently points to recognition of intensifying socio-economic inequalities and the role of consumption practices in making such inequalities visible. On this front it represents a departure from celebratory discourses on middle

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[12]For work that examines the historical invention of "the economy" as a distinct realm see Mitchell 2002.

[13]This is of course a subnarrative in which this middle class fueled economic growth allows the state to respond to problems of poverty. This idealization of middle class oriented development is not limited to India. See for e.g. Mead and Schwenninger 2002 for an array of writings by economists and analysts who make a case for global middle class oriented development.

[14]The state is thus seen in a more passive role as merely responding to demands from elites and middle class constituencies.

[15]This can be seen for instance in increasingly assertive middle class demands on local municipal council resources. Note however this is also not new to the post-liberalization. Middle class claims on civic and urban development resources have a long history stemming back to the colonial period.

class consumption Nevertheless, such rhetorical recognition of inequality does not disrupt the structure of the two dualistic languages that I have outlined as it continues to portray consumption as an individual choice. A conception of consumption as an individually-based or subjective set of practices continues to displace the role of the state. I have sketched out these discursive strategies precisely in order to provide the context for my argument that current research on consumption in India must extend its current focus on individual subjectivities and cultural practices within new "market-related" sites to an understanding of the ways in which middle class consumption and lifestyles are related to a new regime of state-led development in the post-liberalization period. Current research which tends to implicitly associate "neo-liberal" India with a move from the state to market practices inadvertently reproduce the discourses that I have outlined above.

12.2 India's New Developmental Regime: The New Middle Class and the Politics of Lifestyle

India's new middle class is specifically associated with a shift in national political culture that is associated with the post-1990s liberalization period. This social group is specifically associated with a cultural and political outlook that has embraced liberalization and rejected the state-managed economy associated with the early decades of Indian independence. In both public discourses and academic research the old middle classes are associated with a strong form of state dependency while the new middle class is associated with the choices and opportunities of private sector employment. The Nehruvian state and subsequent regimes in the first decades of India played a central role in materially creating and shaping the middle class through state subsidies for higher (and English language) education and through the promotion of public sector employment. The expanded Indian state itself was a primary source of employment for middle class Indians, thus intensifying this middle class dependency. Conventional portrayals depict the new middle class as a social group that is now tied to the expansion of private capital and new economy jobs rather than the old state-dependent middle class. The political and cultural entrepreneurs that publicly speak for this social group (whether in the media or through more typical forms of associational life such as newly emerging civic organizations) also explicitly argue that the new middle class embodies this kind of break from past dependencies on the state. My discussion of the relationship between middle class consumption, development and the state questions this narrative of the shift from the old state-reliant middle classes to the new privatized middle class at the discursive level. While the relationship between the new middle class and the state has been restructured, state-middle class linkages remain a cornerstone of the developmental regime in the post-liberalization period.

In order to untangle this relationship between the state and the new middle class, it is necessary to first consider the role of the state in shaping economic reforms in

India. Segments of the state in India have played an active role in supporting India's successive waves of economic reforms. This active state promotion of reform has been particularly evident at the local state governmental level as state governments have actively sought foreign investment.[16] This pro-reforms orientation of the state has been consolidated as governmental elites have developed socio-economic interests that are tied to liberalization. State elites have stood to financially benefit from processes of privatization and the expansion of state-private capital joint ventures through both official and unofficial practices of corruption. As Jenkins has noted, writing about the initial phase of reforms in the 1990s,

> There are two crucial lessons from this story. First, there are ample reasons to believe that politicians have recognized that liberalization need not spell the end of their influence over key decisions. And second, that the process of implementing these decisions- because it is characterized by improvisation, which can mask corruption – is a vital contextual feature (Jenkins, 1999, p. 96).

This confluence of interests has continued in subsequent generations of reform and has led to a broader restructuring of business-state relations. However, the state has continued to play a significant role in shaping and overseeing India's economic trajectory (Chibber, 2003; Kohli, 2004; Sinha, 2005).

In the context of this new developmental regime, the state has also remained a central agent in shaping the material dimensions of new middle class formation. Consider for instance the realm of consumption. As I have noted earlier, changing consumption practices are associated with a politics of lifestyle that is the most visible marker of India's new middle class. This emerging politics of lifestyle is not, however, a socio-cultural phenomenon that has arisen purely as a function of changing consumer preferences on the part of individuals or simply because middle class individuals are responding to new global images and lifestyle practices. The politics of new middle class lifestyle is a central component of state-led liberalization. This political economy of lifestyle is specifically structured by local state strategies of urban redevelopment that promote new middle class oriented models of urban life. These strategies center on the question of land usage and highly lucrative financial deals that benefit both local state officials and private developers. Such practices further illustrate the role of the state in facilitating privatization through both official and informal/extralegal practices – for instance by allowing the sale of textile mills in Mumbai despite legal restrictions and working in partnership with private capital to develop new middle class oriented infrastructure (such as shopping malls, jogging strips, and elite residential complexes). Such strategies are not simply examples of state responses to middle class consumer based demands. Rather, they represent a set of practices and policies that engage in the material production of new middle class lifestyle. Such processes point to important historical continuities in between the state-managed middle classes of the Nehruvian period and the new middle class

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[16]While there has been variation in the success of these efforts this has been the case regardless of the ideological bent of the party in power (and has included the Left Front government in West Bengal). On state governments and reforms see Sinha 2004.

in post-liberalization India and caution us from assuming that new middle class politics and identities necessarily represent a sharp break from the past. This new middle class continues to be shaped by the economic policies of the state and continues to benefit from this state-subsidized model of urban middle class lifestyle.

My objective in this analysis is not to present the new middle class in India as a passive object that is devoid of agency. The urban redevelopment strategies that I have outlined have been accompanied by a range of new middle class practices and forms of civic and associational life in which new middle class groups have made assertive demands on the state (for example in conflicts with street vendors and demands for urban beautification programs) (Fernandes). These emerging civic groups have thus seized on these new economic and political opportunities to pressure the state for support. However, the point I am trying to emphasize is that the state in this context is an invested actor and not simply a neutral entity responding to middle class interest groups (or managing competing constituencies when subaltern groups contest these developmental strategies).[17]

The imbricated nature of this relationship between the state and the new middle class holds important implications for any search for alternative, sustainable forms of development in India. At one level, this invested nature of the state suggests that any political attempt at linking the question of sustainability with new middle class practices will require more than attitudinal shifts amongst middle class individuals. A political project of sustainability in effect becomes more daunting because it cannot evade the role of the state. However, at another level, a recognition of the specificity of the state managed new middle class also opens up alternative possibilities for cross-class alliances particularly with large sections of the middle classes that the state cannot successfully incorporate into this new middle class model of development.

12.3 Political Responses and Internal Fractures Within the Middle Classes

India's new middle class represents a dominant socio-political identity that is often at odds with the socio-economic realities of large sections of the middle classes. The political construction of the new middle class as a consumption driven group that automatically benefits from liberalization rests in uneasy tension with both members of the new middle class who are tracked into lower tier segments of new economy

[17]This state-middle class relationship also has important implications for our understanding of contemporary democratic politics. In contemporary election campaigns in India for eg politicians formulate agendas designed to appeal to socio-economically marginalized groups. New middle class rhetoric has condemned these state supports and has focused on the "politics of votebanks" that have captured the state and neglected middle class interests. Such political rhetoric relies on the invisibility of the state subsidies of middle class oriented development that I am emphasizing. Hence the twin narratives of middle class growth versus state led subaltern development provides an ideological basis for middle class claims of exclusion.

jobs as well as with segments of the middle classes that are unable to gain access to these thriving sectors of the economy. Empirical data reveals that it is still largely upper caste English speaking elite tiers of the middle classes that make up the top tiers of this new liberalizing middle class (Fernandes, 2006; Fuller & Narasimhan, 2007; Upadhyay, 2004). The acquisition of various forms of social capital such as education, English skills, aesthetic and cultural knowledge and historical inequalities such as caste, religion and region produce rigid forms of distinction between different segments of the middle classes (Bourdieu, 1984). For instance, the Muslim middle classes and newly emerging dalit middle classes have not had equal access to upper tier white collar middle class employment. Recent data shows that two-thirds of professional and higher degree holders in urban areas are from an upper caste Hindu social background (Deshpande, 2006: 2439). Given the significance of technical and professional education in the formation of the new middle class and its ability to successfully access new economy jobs, such data point to the social exclusions based on caste and religion that are encoded within this social group.[18] Large sections of the middle classes continue to rely on state employment and have not been incorporated into new middle class oriented strategies of development (Ganguly & Scrase, 2001; Sridharan, 1999; Sridharan, 2004). Old and new regimes of state-led development thus continue to overlap in ways that provoke tensions between different fractions of the middle classes.

Consider, for instance, social conflicts over demands for caste-based reservations in education and employment (Deshpande, 2006; Yadav & Deshpande, 2006; Mehta, 2006; Mohanty, 2006). Contemporary politics in India has been characterized by sharp public debates on state reservations for subordinated caste groups in state educational institutions and government service.[19] In recent years, this debate has extended to the question of reservations in the private sector (Kumar, 2005; Thimmaiah, 2005; Thorat, 2005). The rise of this debate encapsulates the tensions between the state's competing developmental projects. At a surface level, the current Congress-led coalition government's role in opening up the political and policy space for private sector reservations cannot be dissociated from a basic electoral calculus.[20] However, at a deeper level, the current Congress-led coalition government is faced with the problem of managing the strains of a liberalizing economy that has not provided opportunities for middle class individuals who are continually exposed to an undelivered promise of access to new middle class membership. The

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[18]On Caste see Sheth, 1999b. Gender is a more complex factor as middle class women have been able to gain entry to new economy jobs. However, these women would still come from more privileged caste backgrounds and they are often tracked into lower tier work such as the call center industry.

[19]The most visible case was the conflict over the Mandal Commission report and the upper caste middle class backlash against the VP Singh government's move to implement the recommendations.

[20]As Kumar notes, the Congress-led government in Maharashtra introduced a bill on affirmative action that includes private sector reservations for dalits before the 2004 assembly polls (2005, p. 803).

Congress-led government's rhetoric on caste reservations in the private sector represents a state strategy designed to incorporate (albeit in largely limited and symbolic ways) these segments of the middle classes within its new middle class-oriented developmental regime.[21]

Such conflicts point to the internal fractures that exist within India's middle classes and caution against a conflation between the middle classes and elites. However, while large segments of the middle classes may indeed not benefit from economic reforms, this does not necessarily mean that these class fractions will necessarily oppose reforms. Consider for example the question of middle class consumption. While demand for consumer durables has expanded significantly since the 1990s, actual patterns of middle class consumption do not necessarily replicate the kind of repeat consumerism that is evident in advanced industrialized countries. The purchase of consumer goods like cars and washing machines remain a major household financial decision and average middle class households do not engage in repeat purchases (for example by routinely changing brands or models). However, a consumer-based identity has begun to shape middle class practices and attitudes in ways that move beyond the narrower English speaking urban base of the new middle class. Individual middle class households strategically deploy consumer goods in order to achieve social mobility. Meanwhile, middle class individuals view the potential promise of consumer ownership of goods as a sign of national progress.

Recent processes of privatization have had important political effects as they have weakened this middle class relationship with worker or union identities. In more recent years, left oriented political parties have on occasion attempted to develop or deploy cross-class consumer oriented identities by linking middle class frustration with rising prices to the economic marginalization of subaltern groups.[22] However, such attempts have not produced significant or lasting political possibilities. Rather, as I have noted earlier, middle class associational life has focused on

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[21] The proposals for reservations were of course met with strong resistance from the private sector. Prime Minister Singh asked the private sector to voluntarily invest in training and technical education for youth from less privileged backgrounds. More recently, a joint task force of ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of the Commerce and Industry of India) and CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) task force set up by the government is formulating a Code of Affirmative Action for all companies affiliated with Assocham and CII.

[22] In the 1990s, the most significant cross-class movement was the culturally exclusivist brand of Hindu nationalism that emerged. This movement was able to effectively deploy anti-Muslim sentiment in ways that linked middle class political conservatism and economic liberalism with the political unrest and anxieties of the urban poor and lower middle classes. This xenophobic nationalism was also able to manage conflicts within the movement between the pro-liberalization orientation of the BJP and the protectionist "swadhesi" leanings of the RSS. See Hansen 1999 and Fernandes and Heller 2006. However, the Congress return to power in the 2004 elections reflects in part a political result of the economic frustrations of sections of the middle class as well marginalized socio-economic groups. The Congress consistently used strong economic populist languages in its campaign and electoral data shows some shift in middle class electoral support from the BJP back to the Congress. The token attempts at caste reservations in the private sector seem to represent the congress' recognition of the precarious contradictions between this populist promise and the inequalities intensified by its economic policies

an exclusionary form of new middle class consumer identity. For instance, middle class organizations have focused on reclaiming urban space from the urban poor and making demands on the state for financial for neighborhood development and beautification programs (Harriss, 2005). While such political orientations naturally have led scholars and political critics to condemn this intensified form of middle class elitism, it is critical to disentangle this new middle class political orientation from the broader variation in middle class interests. For instance, there is a strong paradox between growing new middle class support and reliance on privatized services (ranging from education to municipal services, such as water that is delivered to new housing complexes) and the broad socio-economic interests of the middle classes (Kapur & Mehta, 2004; Kapur & Ramamurti, 2005). The starkest example is of course the case of education. Post-independence state policy has continually favored middle class interests by emphasizing financial support for higher education over primary and secondary school education. Such policies have both created and expanded India's middle classes. These state policies have allowed sections of the middle classes that have had the technical and educational skills to take advantage of new economy sectors and global niches in outsourcing and become the social basis of India's new middle class.[23]

12.4 From Internal Fractures to the Possibility of Cross-Class Alliances

The question that arises then is whether the internal fractures within the middle classes point to the possibility of cross-class alliances in support of alternative models of development. The emergence of cross-class alliances are a longstanding characteristic of Indian political and social history. In earlier decades, the traditional dependence of large segments of the middle classes on state employment promoted left-oriented and labor-based forms of cross-class alliances as middle class individuals were incorporated into public sector unions.[24] The most recent instance of effective cross-class mobilization is located on the opposite end of the political spectrum in the form of the right wing Hindu nationalist movement. Studies of the rise of this social movement (and the related rise of the Hindu nationalist political party Bharatiya Janata Party) in the 1990s have pointed to the success of the movement leaders and organizations in using religious based and chauvinist anti-Muslim rhetoric to forge cross-class alliances between the urban Hindu middle classes and lower-income and lower middle class segments of the population (Hansen, 1999). Such culturally based appeals have been particularly potent in facilitating cross-class protest politics and movements. Zoya Hasan has further

[23]For data on education and state policy see Rudolph and Rudolph 1987.

[24]This varied by region (see Dasgupta, n.d.) and as many critics have not also biased union activity towards the interests of more privileged workers (particularly neglecting workers in the unorganized sector).

argued that inequalities between sections of the middle classes have also led to important changes in national patterns of political participation as sections of the middle classes shifted their support from the Congress party to regional political parties. Thus, she argues that inequalities based on language have produced political and socio-economic divides between the English-speaking and vernacular (Hindi-speaking) middle classes and led the Hindi-speaking middle classes to challenge the cultural-political primacy of the new middle class (Hasan, 1998).

The disjuncture between new middle class politics and middle class interests raises the possibility of a political space for alternative cross-class alliances.[25] Examples of such alliances have not been limited to right-wing culturalist movements but are also evident in social movements that have linked urban middle class activists with questions related to sustainability and forms of economic development that can benefit both the urban and rural poor. On the environmental front, one the most well publicized movements has been the movement to stop the building of the Narmada dam in western India because of the costs to the land and livelihoods of poor villagers. While, the movement ultimately did not prevent the government from moving ahead with and expanding the project, it nevertheless represents a highly successful case of a cross-class movement that linked both middle class activists with rural villagers and domestic activists within India with a broader transnational movement (Khagram, 2004).[26] Regardless of the relative success or failure of this particular movement, it points to the broader fact that India's democratic political system has historically allowed middle class non-governmental organizations and cross-class social movements to flourish. While, as John Harriss has noted, there has recently been an increasing pattern of middle class non-governmental organizations conceiving of middle class interests in exclusionary ways that pit the middle classes against the poor and working classes, there nevertheless remains a longer and wider history which includes cross-class alliances between sections of the middle classes and the urban and rural poor. The challenge in building on this history will be to disentangle the dominant ideological construction of new middle class identity from the more varied social and economic interests and practices that actually characterize India's middle classes. As Lange and Meier have noted, even amongst the upper tiers of the new middle class (highly qualified employees) survey results show that 15–35% of this segment reflect an openness to ecological and international environmentally-oriented discourses (see all Lange & Meier Chapter 1 in this

[25]This remains a possibility not necessarily a likely possibility. The case of the American middle class provides an ideal typical example of a social group that has acted politically in ways that have undermined its own interests. Current debates on the lack of health care and employment for middle class Americans foregrounds this. However, contemporary political rhetoric that is effectively projecting these problems onto marginalized social groups such as undocumented workers from Mexico underlines the ways in which cultural nationalism and middle class conservatism are readily deployed as a cross-class response to socio-economic anxieties.

[26]The limits of the movement again underline the importance of addressing the role of the state. The movement was able to successfully pressure the World Bank to withdraw funding for the project but was less successful in pressuring the Indian government to stop or curtail the project.

volume). The task of linking middle class practices with a project of sustainability is thus a political task rather than one of overcoming fundamental barriers linked to a predetermined middle class civic culture or set of socio-economic interests associated with this social group. This endeavor requires reorienting the discourses and project of sustainability towards a cross-class project of sustainable growth rather than one that must target the rural and urban poor through development. An initial survey of the academic literature indicates that such links have yet to be made even within academic discourse as there is no body of literature that links the study of India's middle classes with the question of sustainability. However, India's political and social history of cross-class middle class activism (that is distinct from the more exclusionary forms of new middle class civic organizations focused on beautification and class-based conflicts over public space) can potentially provide the organizational basis for new political languages of cross-class environmental sustainability. Given that sections of the middle classes may grow alienated from a heavily consumerist-oriented new middle class identity that does not conform to their socio-economic experiences and practices, there is also a viable material basis for such political discourses and movements to emerge. However, the challenge within the realities of contemporary Indian politics will be for organizations, social activists and political entrepreneurs to develop strategies to ensure that such alienation is not diverted instead to culturalist movements such as the Hindu nationalist or other forms of movements that have historically capitalized on a more exclusivist politics of middle class reaction (Fernandes & Heller, 2006).

12.5 Conclusion: Sustainability and India's New Middle Class

The dominant trends that characterize India's new middle class suggest significant obstacles to a broader project of sustainable development. The linkages between this new social group and the current regime of state-led development also illustrate that the development of a cross-class approach to sustainability requires more than changes in individual middle class consumption attitudes and practices.[27] The divergent narratives of sustainability and consumption in effect largely displace the focus of sustainability debates from this state-managed new middle class model of development to rural development schemes for marginalized communities. Meanwhile, new middle class rhetoric on and demands for urban livability converge with state urban redevelopment strategies that are consistent with this model. Thus, it would seem that the possibility of developing a more broad-based project of sustainability rests on the more daunting task of disentangling the "new" middle class from the middle classes. Nevertheless, the long history of cross-class social movements and activism within India's democratic framework of politics provides the potential for

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[27] The importance of state-middle class linkages in shaping developmental strategies is not new or unique to the Indian case. Comparative research in a range of empirical research has demonstrated that state conceptions of sustainability often favor middle class oriented models of development. See for instance case studies in Evans 2002.

the creation of alternative languages of sustainability that can help build coalitions linking sections of the middle classes and the urban and rural poor.

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Chapter 13
"Environmentality" in the Neoliberal City: Attitudes, Governance and Social Justice

Emma Mawdsley

Abstract In this paper, I discuss how Arun Agrawal's notion of "environmentality" might be used to think about the changing environmental beliefs and behaviors among India's "middle classes". Agrawal's arguments concern the impacts that devolved local institutions for forest management have had on environmental practices and consciousness. Through an appreciation and critique of Agrawal's work, I question whether similar shifts towards plural, decentralized and participatory regulation in urban contexts might also foster the environmental subjectivities that Agrawal sees as part of the emergence of new political subjects "positively engaged" with the environment. Using Delhi's bhagidari scheme as an example, I suggest that we should be skeptical about the likelihood that diverse classes will identify shared environmental interests; or that emerging environmental concerns amongst the middle classes are necessarily ecologically effective or socially progressive. Nonetheless, as Agrawal reminds us, within any social group we can expect a spectrum of environmental subjectivities based on more than simple interests and identities.

Keywords Environmentality · India · Middle classes · Neoliberal city · Urban governance

> [Environmentality] refers to the knowledges, politics, institutions and subjectivities that come to be linked together with the emergence of the environment as a domain that requires regulation and protection (Agrawal, 2005a, p. 226).

13.1 Introduction

In this paper, I discuss how Arun Agrawal's notion of "environmentality" (Agrawal, 2005a,b) might be used to think about certain aspects of the changing environmental beliefs and behaviors among those who, for the sake of convenience, I will refer to

E. Mawdsley (✉)
Department of Geography, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK, CB2 3EN, England
e-mail: eem10@cam.ac.uk

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as India's "middle classes"[1] Agrawal's arguments concern the impacts that devolved local institutions, in his case community forest management schemes, have had on environmental practices and consciousness. Through an appreciation and critique of Agrawal's work, I question whether similar shifts towards plural, decentralized and participatory regulation in urban contexts might also foster the environmental subjectivities that Agrawal sees as part of the emergence of new political subjects "positively engaged" with the environment. [2] Changing individual and social norms are, after all, one essential component of ecological modernisation theory, a key theme in this volume.

The paper will first outline Agrawal's rendering of "environmentality", noting critical retorts, and making two particular observations that I wish to address further. It then turns to some of the current debates around "civil" and "political" society, and other analyses of associational life in urban India. Here I draw strongly on some recent work by John Harriss, which encapsulates a broader set of arguments skeptical of the inclusionary claims of the "new politics" of devolved, participatory governance. In the penultimate section, Delhi's *bhagidari* scheme is first described, and then subject to critical analysis. Observations made by Sanjay Srivastava (2007) are central here. The paper concludes by trying to link these discussions up to the main themes of the volume – sustainability and globalization.

13.2 "Environmentality"

Arun Agrawal's recent work on "environmentality" is rich, ambitious and provocative. Based on extensive work in the Kumaon Himalaya, he examines how the shifts in the institutional regimes of environmental governance have promoted greater environmental awareness and indeed action in those villages that have set up Forest Councils. He is concerned with:

> . . . what is perhaps the most important and underexplored question in relation to environmental regulation. When and for what reason do socially situated actors come to care about, act in relation to, and think about their actions in terms of something they identify as "the environment"? (2005b, 162)

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[1]There are a tremendous range of theoretical differences and methodological challenges raised when attempting to define, situate and study the "middle classes". While the term provides a convenient short hand notation, its casual use can easily lead to sloppy thinking, inappropriate referents, and generalization across a wide spectrum of groups with varying experiences, interests and opinions. This paper does not seek to resolve these, but for more detailed discussions, see Deshpande (2003), Shukla et al. (2004), Fernandes (2006), amongst others.

[2]This differs from Luke's (1995) earlier formulation of "environmentality", which "'examines how discourses of nature", ecology or the environment, as disciplinary articulations of "eco-knowledge", might be reinterpreted as efforts to generate systems of "geo-power", over but also within and through, Nature for the governance of modern economies and societies' (p. 57). While both Agrawal and Luke draw on Foucaudian theorising, Luke is closer to the classic themes of knowledge/power, disciplinary governance and the panoptican.

To pare it right down (and here with scant reference to the Foucauldian theory upon which he elaborates), Agrawal argues that the transformation in the management regime of the Kumaoni forests, from the early colonial model of exclusion, domination and state-led silvicultural/scientific expertise, to a model based on community participation in governance and local management, has significantly altered *practices* and *consciousness* in relation to the care of the forests. Agrawal suggests that the *experience* of decentred government (for example, how the new village forest council is elected, or how it decides to implement monitoring practices and rule enforcement) has led to shifting *attitudes* towards the forests for which the villagers now have significant managerial responsibility. Agrawal is not arguing that a heightened awareness of the value of the forests (economically, through their subsistence and commercial potentials; or in terms of their ecological services) has necessarily led to a greater "environmental subjectivity" – in other words this is not being driven by shifting perceptions of interests alone. Rather, he proposes that the experiences and practices that accompanied the new regulatory regime, associated with plural, stakeholder-led, participatory governance, *preceded* and facilitated the shifting consciousness, and thus, as he puts it, the emergence of new political subjects. Agrawal is therefore not just adding another study to those which have critically evaluated the ways in which the new institutional regime has played out in terms of forest management and local development, but is centrally concerned with the way in which the practices demanded by such a shift in governance have created new environmental subjectivities. As he says:

> Widespread involvement in specific regulatory practices [here the Forest Committees associated with changing Indian paradigms of forest management] is tightly linked with the emergence of greater concern for the environment and the creation of "environmental subjects" – people who care about the environment (2005b, 162; parentheses added).

He explains that this notion of environmental subjectivity does not rely on a distinction between a purist notion of a reified appreciation of the "natural environment" versus material interests. Rather, "in such situations, self-interest comes to be cognized and realized in terms of the environment" (2005b, 162).

Agrawal therefore does not subscribe to essentialist, neo-romantic assumptions about the environmental wisdom and/or concern of the *pahari* (mountain) people. Indeed, he opens his paper (2005b) with the case of Hukam Singh, a young man who thought that it was both futile and unnecessary to try to protect the local forests. A few years later, however, Hukam Singh, now a member of one of the new Forest Council, "had become a convert to environmental conservation" (161). Not only did Singh think that he and other villagers could manage the forests better than the state, but that they should do so, and that this was important for reasons beyond immediate self-interest – Singh refers to the national good and to wider ecological stability. Agrawal's contention is that Singh's conversion had come around as a result of his *experience of the new governance practices*, not because of a pre-existing innate ecological consciousness, and nor, particularly, because of evident material self-interest in the well-being of the forests.

Agrawal therefore questions the relationships between identity, interests and beliefs/behaviors (noting that the latter two are by no means necessarily coherent), and suggests that, too often, particular social identities – he focuses on gender and caste – are simplistically correlated with particular interests. Reading interests off identities, he argues, is common to very different streams of environmental scholarship, from Shiva's ecofeminism to Bina Agarwal's more economistic approach (Shiva, 1988; Agarwal, 1997). Agrawal contests this relationship, and drawing on his Kumaoni study, suggests that the involvement of individuals and villages within specific regulatory practices is more likely to correlate with their enhanced environmental subjectivity than their structural-social location in terms of caste or gender.

> Socially defined identity categories are a poor predictor of interests precisely because they objectify and homogenize their members, ignoring the very real lives that people live in the shadow of their social identities (2005b, 174).

This is not to suggest that interests do not matter (although they are often more conflicting and complex than suggested), but that we should think of subjectivity as "a palimpsest on which involvement in institutionalized practices inscribes new and sometimes conflicting understandings of what is in one's interests (2005b, 166).

> Under changing social conditions and institutions, identity categories as guides to a person's interests only make sense to the extent that they prevent, facilitate or compel practice (166).

Thus, after comparing environmental subjectivities in villages that have not set up Forest Councils to those that have, one of Agrawal's empirical conclusions is that:

> Clearly, engagement with the regulatory practices of monitoring and enforcement is positively connected with both the existence of environmental orientations among Kumaon's residents and with higher monetary and material contributions towards [forest] enforcement per household (2005b, 177).

Developing his theoretical argument, he goes on to say:

> The inference important for policy is that certain forms of environmental enforcement are associated with greater commitment to environmental conservation, higher levels of local involvement, and the generation of environmental subjectivities. The larger point of the discussion is that participation in certain forms of environmental regulation and enforcement generates new conceptions of what constitutes the participants' interests (2005b, 177–8).

Arun Agrawal's arguments around environmentality have prompted a number of other studies which have found this a valuable framework for understanding local environmental politics and shifts in environmental subjectivities (e.g. Haggerty, 2007). Indeed, the contention that engagement with regulatory practices can profoundly shape environmental subjectivities is a timely intervention given the global neoliberal paradigm of decentralized, devolved governance regimes, in which citizens are encouraged to adopt the role of "stakeholders" and partners with the state.

Agrawal's arguments concerning "environmentality" have been subject to criticism too, with the target ranging from his deployment of Foucauldian ideas of governmentality (Gupta, 2005); to methodological techniques and analysis (Goldsworthy, 2006); to claims that he has not embedded his analysis in a fuller history of forest politics and cultures in Kumaon (Narotzky, 2005; Sundar, 2005). I would add that Agrawal makes no reference to a huge body of work in the west and elsewhere, which has sought to define, elucidate and explore the nature and formation of environmental values and behaviors (see Tuan, 1974; Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1996 for just two examples across the spectrum of approaches). The enormous methodological challenges of elucidating values have been reflexively and critically examined by many, including Burgess, Limb, and Harrison (1988). This rich seam of work, with its many and sometimes competing strands, suggests that environmental values are contingent, complex and often contradictory. Scholars have also parsed out the complex interplay of technologies (e.g. Shove, 2004; Lankford, pers. comm.), and their dynamic relations with "norms", interests and possibilities. But, for the purposes of this paper, I make two slightly different criticisms, and elaborate upon them by asking whether this is a concept that is useful for theorizing environmental subjectivities among India's urban "middle classes".

13.2.1 Agrawal's "Environmentality" in the Urban Context

In a discussion of changing governance regimes in Indian urban areas, Agrawal's ideas should have very considerable traction. Building on a rich indigenous and more recent history of associational organization, Central, State and various levels of local and municipal government are experimenting across India with more participatory and decentralized forms of governance (Bardhan, 2002; Johnson, 2003; Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava, & Veron, 2005). While varied and highly context specific, this trend is nonetheless an identifiable dimension of the global neoliberal paradigm of governance (World Bank, 1997). The outcomes have been institutionalized in different ways, with different actors, power differentials and forms of functioning. The issues addressed are also varied, but most of these newly institutionalized devolved, decentred and participatory regimes include some focus on a variety of "environmental" issues. These include solid waste management, sanitation facilities, air pollution and development of green spaces. In the light of criticisms below, it is important to state that some of these initiatives are explicitly aimed at a socially progressive agenda, with environmental goals being tied to an inclusive civic agenda. Agrawal's notion of "environmentality", and his proposal that environmental subjectivities can arise from these new practices rather than necessarily precede them, is therefore one that could be fruitfully explored in the urban context. However, I have two reservations about the rather optimistic note struck by this work, neither of which would be limited to urban contexts, but which may be especially problematic in such cases.

The first problem that emerges from my reading of Agrawal's paper is the notion of collective community identity and functioning. Building on surely one of the richest streams of historical and contemporary environmental study available, Agrawal sites his fieldwork in Kumaon, which together with the Garhwal Himalaya region has attracted immense amounts of scholarly interest. Kumaon is, of course, by no means a homogenous society. The "standard" sociological differences of caste, class, ethnicity, age and gender are accompanied by more regional differences than is often allowed for. But even acknowledging a more varied and dynamic social structure than frequently depicted, relatively speaking, Kumaon's mountain communities tend to be smaller and far less socially differentiated in terms of class, caste and ethnicity than their plains counterparts (see Mawdsley, 1996, 1998). Even under these conditions, as Goldsworthy (2006) has pointed out, Agrawal is perhaps insufficiently attentive to power differentials that might mediate the ability of particular households and individuals to make themselves heard within the "village" committee, or have their interests represented (Agrawal's discussion of Sukhi Devi's disenchantment with and disengagement from her local Forest Council, seems a little cavalier, for example). When it comes to far more heterogenous housing colonies and slums that make up the various micro-geographical communities of India's towns and cities, how then, might the "collective" (environmental) good be defined? Where are the boundaries set, geographically and socially? At the heart of Agrawal's case lies a recognition (even if, as he says, belated and to an extent the outcome of practice) of a "mutual interest in forests" (2005b, 181, emphasis added).

> The *joint* production of interests is based on *multiple daily interactions* within the *community* (2005b, 179, emphasis added).

The scale of urban "communities", their diverse needs, outlooks and occupations, are all likely to severely challenge the identification and reality of mutual interests, as well as the means of negotiating them. This does not in any way conflict with Agrawal's argument about the relationship between actions/practice and subjectivities – the role that specific regulatory regimes may play in changing environmental consciousness as well as behaviour. But it does caution against what seems to be a rather optimistic note in his analysis.

Following on from this, a second problem that arises is the notion of "environmental subjectivity" being a progressive value – something that segues into "people who care about the environment" (2005b: 162). In Agrawal's case study, it is the forests that are under discussion, with a focus on their provisioning of timber and non-timber forest products, as well as watershed protection and soil stability functions. But as the history of forest politics demonstrates, the notion of a "desirable", "functional", or "good" forest can be deeply contested between different actors (discounting, for the present, the interests of non-human species and assemblages). A history of forests is one of conflict, between peasants and aristocrats, Forest Departments and villagers, farmers and herders, commercial and subsistence interests, wildlife conservation organizations and development agencies (e.g. Thompson, 1975; Pathak, 1994; Jackson & Chattopadhyay, 2001). Even before the question of appropriate styles of management arise, the ecological profile and intended benefit stream of the forest is contested. These differences have been parsed out in some detail in relation to Kumaon (Shiva, 1988; Mawdsley, 1998; Guha, 1999; Rangan, 2000). I would suggest that when we get to the context of cities and urban areas, what constitutes a collective "environmental good" is perhaps even more open to ontological and epistemological uncertainty. For example, the policies employed to reduce air pollution in Delhi have been critiqued for impacting badly on the poor (small polluting industries were relocated, for example, with little or no compensation for owners or workers); for only displacing pollution rather than reducing it (older non-CNG vehicles were sold to other city transport fleets; while the industries were relocated rather than reformed); and for representing a middle class priority, rather than the most pressing need of the poor – clean, available water (thus constituting an opportunity cost in terms of environmental activity and investment).[3] Amita Baviskar has documented the reactionary nature, and even violence, of the environmental politics of the city. She discusses one case in which middle class householders beat a migrant laborer to death for defecating in “their” housing colony space. There was, of course, no sanitation provision available for him (Baviskar, 2002; see Mawdsley, 2004). At present the Delhi government is engaged on a slum demolition programme of staggering proportions as part of a policy of turning Delhi into a “clean, green” global city.

Here is the underlying issue. Agrawal appears to have taken as granted that greater “environmental” awareness and practice is desirable – environmental subjectivity implies “people who care”, and this is good. This overlooks the regressive and authoritarian (and indeed, frequently ecologically-deficient) “environmentalism” that can and has always been one strand of “green” theorizing and politics. Again, it doesn’t undermine his main thesis, but it cautions us to scrutinize the different dimensions of “environmental subjectivity”.

To continue, but from a slightly different angle, I turn now to recent work by John Harriss (especially Harriss, 2005 and Harriss, 2006), based on research with various collaborators in Latin America and India.

13.3 (Environmental) Politics, the Middle Classes and “Civil Society”

Harriss sets out a critique of “consumer-citizen” politics, arguing that the new participatory spaces that are opening up in urban governance are generally dominated by, and act in the interests of, the wealthier and more elite fractions of society. Harriss argues that the mainstream, World Bank style decentralization agenda “abstracts [civil society] from the field of class relations” (2006, 449, parentheses added), contributing thereby to an “anti-politics” politics. Elaborating on Chatterjee’s (2004) distinction between “civil society” and “political society”, Harriss finds that (notwithstanding differences between cities) different types of “political participation” and degrees of “successful” interaction with the state in India tend to fall along class lines. Whereas the urban poor rely more on political parties and membership organizations, the middle classes have increasingly turned to “civil society organizations” which seek to work in “partnership” with the state. Whereas the political participation of the urban poor is directed towards securing various citizens’ rights (health, education, a minimum wage, freedom of information, gender

[3]For a discussion, see Veron (2006).

rights) through lobbying and agitation; the goal of middle class-dominated associational efflorescences tend to focus on securing consumer-oriented services, and policing the social and geographical boundaries of their privilege.

> If we take associational activism as an indicator of political participation then we find a strong tendency for wealthier and particularly more educated people to be involved, clearly calling into question the popular notion that poor people are able to secure effective representation or "empowerment" through participation in associations in civil society (Harriss, 2006: 455).

Harriss argues that there is an observable stratification between "civil society" organizations (often run by upper class individuals, with ties to large corporations, located in middle and upper class areas of the city, characterized by "professional" systems, and which have adopted the language of accountable government, stakeholders and transparency); and those working for and with "political society" (often located in the slums or poorer areas, talking the language of rights, using agitation and demonstrations as one tool in their limited armory, with weak cultural capital, stronger ties to political parties, and aiming to secure basic rights for poorer people). As Nair (2005, 336) puts it, the agenda of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force, an exemplar of a middle class civil society organization enabled by the new neoliberal governance regime, is:

> Roads, rather than public transport; garbage and pollution, rather than public housing; mosquitoes and public toilets rather than public health (quoted in Harriss, 2006, 458).

The overall impact, argues Harriss, is to depoliticize the realm of urban governance. The emphasis on decentralized, participatory governance, in partnership with newly empowered citizens, further empowers the middle classes and elites to promote their agendas; while closing down the spaces of urban politics. Urban governance becomes the search for rational solutions amenable to technocratic solutions under the sign of globalizing modernity. To the extent that the interests of the poor are actively engaged with, the preferred model is that of paternalistic charity and attempts at "uplift". Harriss concludes that, *contra* World Bank expectations that citizens interests can and should be increasingly represented by and articulated through NGOs and voluntary associations:

> . . . the extent to which the vibrant associational activity of Delhi, Bangalore, or Chennai provides for 'voice and participation' on the part of the informal working class is very limited. The context of civil society organization in class relations in conveniently ignored by many of the protagonists of 'new politics' (Harriss, 2006: 463).

Based on extensive empirical data, Harriss argues:

> Working poor people, our evidence shows, may be excluded through the "new politics", and progressively denied the possibility of engaging in politics as self-realisation. There are now more channels for influencing government (and thereby securing representation) – established as a result of civil society activism – but those who can avail themselves of the opportunities offered by organizing in civil society tend (unsurprisingly) to be the better educated and relatively wealthy. The paradox that increasing opportunities for participation

may actually increase political inequality stands opposed to the claims of the protagonists of the "new politics" who tend to ignore the class-differentiated character of the civil society space (Harriss, 2006: 464).

Like Chatterjee (2004), Harriss may be accused of making too strong a distinction – "civil" and "political" society are perhaps rather more interactive and over-lapping than these analyses suggest, not least through informal processes and nodes. Nonetheless, the broad trends described clearly have empirical and theoretical purchase, and I would suggest that one arena within which we might explore these ideas, and appraise Agrawal's arguments, is that of urban environmental governance.

Following Agrawal, we might expect that the experience of new managerial responsibilities, mediated through the new stakeholder institutions, and legitimated through a neoliberal reinvention of the state as partner in enabling service provision – have fostered a new "environmentality", and a greater "environmental subjectivity" within urban communities. But my criticisms and Harriss' studies suggest that the outcome may be geographically and social uneven, divisive, and environmentally and ecologically unjust. Agrawal's rendering of "environmentality" may well prove a useful framework – but we need to reappraise the implicit assumption that such environmental subjectivity will promote ecological sustainability or socio-environmental justice.

13.4 Case study: Bhagidari

The example of Bhagidari precisely shows up, I suggest, the valuable potential of Agrawal's notions of the interplay between "... knowledges, politics, institutions and subjectivities that come to be linked together with the emergence of the environment as a domain that requires regulation and protection" (Agrawal, 2005a: 226); but, drawing on Harriss (2005, 2006) and Srivastava (2007), it can be used to question whether the outcomes of such emerging environmental subjectivities are necessarily ecologically or socially progressive. Delhi's Bhagidari initiative may well provide an example of how the new governance paradigm can help facilitate regressive environmental subjectivities.

The following substantial section is extracted (not in full) from the official Bhagidari website (http://www.delhigovt.nic.in/bhagi.asp).

The Concept
"Bhagidari" – the Citizen's Partnership in Governance:
is a means for facilitating citywide changes in Delhi;
utilizes processes and principles of multi-stakeholders (citizen groups, NGOs, the Government ...) collaboration;
applies the method of Large Group Interactive Events;
aims to develop "joint ownership" by the citizens and government of the change process; and
facilitates people's participation in governance
... on assuming power in December 1998 this Government outlined a philosophy for governance – responsive and participative. This has specifically stemmed from the belief that

Government must work in partnership with the people. Citizens must feel that successful and meaningful governance cannot be achieved without their involvement and without their role. In view of this the concept of "Bhagidari": The citizen – government partnership was evolved and the "My Delhi – I care" drive initiated.

Evolution of the Bhagidari Concept

. . . the need was to identify or develop a model that helps the citizens and government officials meet, sit together, interact, overcome their inhibitions, and develop a real dialogue, to act together and solve problems together. This would help involving the citizens in governance. To evolve a mechanism for putting the concept of Bhagidari into practice, wide consultations were initiated with various citizen groups-the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), the Market and Traders Associations (MTAs) and other NGOs. Discussions were also held with Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Delhi Development Authority, New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Vidyut Board, Delhi Jal Board and Delhi Police and the Department of Environment and Forest. These departments subsequently became the participating Departments in the Bhagidari Programme.

Issues Taken Up

The issues that have been taken up are simple and common issues that impact on a citizen's everyday life. These are issues that are amenable to simple solutions. The idea is to build up on these first successes and to take the movement forward to addressing more complex matters.

For Delhi Jal Board

RWAs to be made aware of water saving/waste conservation; Payment and collection of water bills to be done by RWAs; Distribution of water through water-tankers; Replacing old/leaking pipelines; Water Harvesting-involving RWAs; RWAs role in internal colony sewage system; Desilting of sewers; Awareness against using water from Hand Pumps for drinking purposes.

Sanitation

Solutions on community bins; RWAs role in internal colony sewage system; Overseeing the work of sanitary staff by RWAs; Door to Door collection of Waste/Garbage; Generation of public awareness on sanitation

For Department of Environment and Forests

Plantation and maintenance of saplings; Greening of the colony; To discourage use of plastic bags

For Delhi Development Authority

Solutions to prevent encroachment; Maintenance of community parks; Prevention of encroachment; Maintenance of common areas; Parking inside the colony

[EM: Other areas include Police, Weights and Measures, Sales Tax and the Industries Department]

Implementation Mechanism

In consultation with the Asian Centre for Organization Research and Development (ACORD), a professional body, the "Large Group Interactive Events" (LGIE) was devised as an appropriate model to train citizen-groups and government officials (of all levels) to sit together, to discuss their viewpoints on common problems and build up consensus for solutions and their implementation. This model envisages the following steps:

1. Workshops with citizen groups be held where representatives of citizen groups discuss the selected issues with officials of Public Utility Departments, viz. Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Vidyut Board, Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Police, Sales Tax Department and the Department of Environment and Forests.
2. Each workshop of three days duration will have the participants seated in a tablewise arrangement. Each table has 4 citizens (2 each from 2 citizen groups, viz. Residents

Welfare Association or Market Traders Association) and 5–6 officials of Public Utility Departments. Care is taken to seat area officials of Public Utility Departments at the table where representatives from citizen groups of their area are sitting. In a workshop around 30–35 such table arrangements are made.

3. Each table group works on issues selected by the Design Team. The group discusses and builds consensus on solution of issue-based problems. Each stakeholder’s (including the citizen’s) role and responsibilities are identified and committed.
4. After the workshop, the RWA/MTA wise list of solutions is sent to concerned departments and Deputy commissioner (Revenue) offices. They hold regular meetings to implement and monitor solutions.
5. The Area Officers ensure a fortnightly meeting with their area RWAs. The District Officers of the public utilities monitor and co-ordinate the working of these Area Officers. [EM: thereafter various monthly and quarterly meetings, which extend all the way up the governance hierarchy].

The website highlights some of the scheme’s successes, including dealing with encroachers, providing identity cards for hawkers allowed into one colony, and reducing plastic bag usage. There is not space here for a full analysis of Bhagidari, but we can make several observations.

First, the scheme falls very much within the World Bank-style idealized model of urban governance. Indeed, in 2005 it won a UN Public Service Award. As Sanjay Srivastava (2007) says:

> The Bhagidari idea produces its own version of urban citizenship and space. Inspired by global theories of corporate governance, and psychologised theories of human interaction, Bhagidari workshops produce significant visions of the contemporary city. Here, participants sing and dance to a specially written Bhagidari anthem (praising citizen-state “cooperation”), while wearing specially designed baseball caps, and waving colorful flags. It is a fascinating vision that marries the idea of the consuming – perhaps “Macdonaldised” (Ritzer 1993) – citizen to a transparent and responsive state machinery. Here also, the citizenry and the state are tightly entwined through the ideas of legality, cooperation, criminality, transparency, and the right and responsibilities of the citizen with respect to the city ... The Bhagidari scheme is a guide to the contemporary consciousness of the official city through, foregrounding as it does, the relationship between the market and the state; “authorised” and “unauthorized” spaces; the domestic sphere, the state, and the market; and, the globalized vision of the metropolis in light of planning for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in particular, and city planning in general.

Second, at present the scheme is limited to “authorized colonies”, and not the unauthorized colonies and slum areas in which the majority of Delhi’s poorer inhabitants reside. This automatically privileges the wealthier sections of Delhi society, who are increasingly able to access and influence various government bodies, co-designing and managing these newly devolved regulatory institutions and practices. While the Delhi Government has talked about extending the scheme to unauthorized colonies, there seems to be little impetus behind this at present.[4] Augmenting this structural bias towards wealthier groups, the degree of “cultural capital”

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[4] Although very recently the extension of *bhagidari* to unauthorised colonies has been under discussion again (Charlotte Lemanski, pers. Comm.)

required for the interactions described clearly acts in favor of those who share the same educational and class background as the various state officials with whom they will so proximately interact for two to three days, and then in the ongoing collaborative fora. This potentially very significant scheme in terms of shaping Delhi's urban governance is, therefore, clearly tilted away from the poor and towards the better off.

Following on from Harriss and the work of many others, we can suggest that the environmental initiatives and concerns expressed within the bhagidari meetings, are likely to prioritize the specific environmental priorities and agendas of the wealthier groups, and that (following my argument above) these are not likely to be universally shared priorities. Indeed, they may in fact be positively inimical to the interests of the neighboring poor. There is certainly considerable evidence to suggest that most of those who inhabit the authorized colonies are deeply pre-occupied with drawing various boundaries between themselves and the poor (see Dickey, 2000; Waldrop, 2004). Here is Srivastava's description of one bhagidari meeting with a Residents Welfare Association (RWA):

> Also on the first day, senior officers of various government departments were introduced and the audience was encouraged to write down questions to which it wanted responses, and hand these to the officers. The latter were to come back on day three and provide "answers". Subsequently, on the other days, there were discussions on a number of issues, including: 1) Police and RWA cooperation; 2) servant verification; 3) RWAs informing police about those houses where both husband and wife went out to work (i.e. where houses are vacant during the day), and "inspection" of all unoccupied houses; 5) drawing up be [sic] list of maids, hawkers, plumbers, etc. in order to only allow "authorized" people into the locality; 6) the 'security' threat from Jhuggi-Jhopri [slum] dwellers; and, 7) surprise check (by the police) on the private security personnel employed by the RWAs. It was also suggested that the MCD and the police should be informed about 'those families that don't pay attention to RWA', and that these should be 'challaned' (penalized). The RWAs, it was further agreed, must have a list of all families within their purview . . . So, for example, on day 3, the Deputy Commissioner of the MCD reported that by 2006, "all Jhuggi-Jhopri (JJ) colonies along the Yamuna banks would be demolished", and that the area would be transformed into a "tourist spot". The MCD Deputy Commissioner was followed by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (North Delhi) who informed the audience about police activities regarding regular surveillance of "Bad Characters" and "History Sheeters", police cooperation with RWAs and Nagarik Suraksha Samitis (Citizen Security Committees, a police sponsored network). He asked the RWAs to be a regular source of information on strangers and "young men with mobiles and motorbikes, but with no obvious source of income". The police, he concluded was very active in "JJ clusters", trying to prevent crime.

As many commentators have observed, the consonance between dirt and disorder, pollution and poverty, is a resonant one in higher caste and class consciousness (e.g. Chakrabarty, 1991). While it may appear for the most part rather tangentially discursively located in the discussions above, the social construction of a "desirable environment" – in its many guises, from ecological services provider to aesthetic commodity – is absolutely central to these debates. The "cleansing" of middle class colonies and increasingly "public" spaces is pursued and legitimated partly through a discourse of municipal greening.

13.5 Conclusions

Agrawal shows how the spaces of participation opened up by new institutional arrangements have, in some cases, proved socially empowering, developmentally progressive, and ecologically stabilizing. The shift towards a more responsive, citizen-oriented state which guarantees all citizens their rights, is a positive move, despite difficulties and unevenness (see Corbridge et al., 2005 for a detailed and insightful analysis). However, even in Kumaon, participatory governance (and here specifically in terms of resource management) has not always been environmentally effective or socially just, never mind other parts of India more riven by caste, class, religious and gender divides. In urban India, class may increasingly be fracturing society not just along economic and cultural lines, but in terms of representation and voice within the changing paradigms of governance. Long-standing inequalities are being amplified and re-articulated by the new dispensation associated with the participatory governance paradigm.

Ecological modernisation demands changes in knowledge, values and behaviors, as well as technological innovations, industrial re-organization, regulatory shifts and improved administrative capacity. But, I would argue, few ecological modernisation theorists dissect the notion of the collective good – within and across generations, and at different scales. It is this moral, social and political realm that is the most challenging for environmental theorists. In this paper, I have argued that urban environmental governance shows up such divides especially acutely. The increasing trend towards bourgeois environmental concern in India and in other rapidly urbanizing and industrializing countries may, in some cases, have progressive dimensions. But we need to be deeply wary that of the notion that “environmental subjectivity” is necessarily a progressive position, or that it then promotes desirable behaviors. Agrawal’s claim that the new institutional arrangements designed to promote and harness “local” awareness, empowerment and involvement in governance are indeed useful in understanding “environmentality”. Moreover, his arguments remind us that interests cannot be read deterministically off identities – something many commentators on India’s growing middle classes tend to do, whether they are uncritically celebrating or uncritically demonizing them. The answer is to abandon the comfortable generalizations of modernisation theorists and neo-traditionalist romantics, and attend empirically to the patterns and specificities of the range of middle class environmentalisms in India and elsewhere in the world.

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Chapter 14
India's 'New Middle Class' and the Globalising City: Software Professionals in Bangalore, India

Carol Upadhya

Abstract The chapter draws on a study of software professionals in Bangalore to sketch the cultural orientations and social identity of India's 'new middle class', especially in terms of consumption patterns and lifestyles. It also poses questions about the environmental consciousness of this class through an examination of the globalisation of the city through the agency of IT corporates. By tracing the connections among globalisation, consumption, middle class identity, and political and cultural transformations in the city within the specific context of the software outsourcing industry, the chapter probes the specificities of middle class environmentalism in India and explicates its limitations and possibilities.

Keywords Consumption · Globalization · Indian middle class · Software professionals · Urban environment

From the 1990s, India entered into a new phase of its development, that of liberalisation and globalization. This was a period of rising incomes, opening up of the market, large-scale entry of foreign consumer goods, diversification of occupations (especially in services), and increased consumption among the middle classes. India's dramatic debut on the global stage was precipitated in part by the success of its software outsourcing industry. Bangalore, one of the major centres of outsourcing activity, has grown rapidly both demographically and economically and as a result is facing myriad urban infrastructural and environmental problems. The city hosts an estimated 300,000 IT workers, who also constitute a highly visible and well-to-do segment of the urban middle class. Thus, Bangalore as a prime example of a globalizing city in India, and IT professionals as representative of the 'new middle class' (Fernandes, 2006), provide an apt context through which to explore the question of middle class consumerism in India.

C. Upadhya (✉)
National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science Campus,
Bangalore – 560 012, India
e-mail: carol.upadhya@gmail.com

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In this paper, I draw on ethnographic and interview data to sketch the cultural orientations and social identity of the new middle class, especially in terms of consumption patterns and lifestyles.[1] I then relate this discussion to the question of environmental consciousness and movements by focusing on the globalising of Bangalore by corporate and political elites and its links with urban ‘environmental’ activism. By tracing the connections among globalisation, consumption, middle class identity and upward mobility, and political and cultural transformations in the city within the context of the IT industry and its workers, I hope to probe the specificities of middle class environmentalism in India and explicate its limitations and possibilities.

14.1 Environmentalism and the Indian Middle Class

India has been home to a range of unique environmental movements and philosophies, from the Chipko ‘hug the trees’ movement in Himachal Pradesh (Guha, 1989) to struggles against displacement and environmental damage caused by large dams such as that led by the Narmada Bachao Andolan. Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997; also see Martinez-Alier, 2004) have characterised these movements as representing an ‘environmentalism of the poor’ because, unlike most environmental movements in the West, they have centred round issues of equity and social justice as well as sustainability. In contrast to the ‘environmentalism of the rich’ in the North whose concerns lie with the preservation of pristine nature and wildlife, India’s movements situate human society within nature and locate environmental destruction in capitalist industrialisation and contemporary modes of living. Growing out of these movements, India has produced rich debates among intellectuals, academics and activists on the question of development and the environment.

Although middle class activists have been important actors in these movements – which have been located primarily in rural areas and among adivasis (Baviskar, 1995) – and most of India’s theorists of ecological sustainability are also drawn from the middle class, awareness of these contemporary critiques of development have not permeated the middle class as a whole. Instead, another variety of envi-

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[1] This paper draws on a study of the Indian information technology and IT enabled services (IT/ITES) workforce in India and abroad that was carried out by A.R. Vasavi and me along with a research team at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, during 2004–2006 (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006). The research project was funded by the Indo-Dutch Programme on Alternatives in Development, the Netherlands, and was carried out in collaboration with Peter van der Veer of the University of Utrecht. Research methods included formal and informal interviews with a large number of IT and ITES employees and managers and their family members, and with others connected with the industry, as well as observations of informal interactions at workplaces and outside. As with the entire project and all my writing from it, the ideas in this paper are as much Vasavi’s as my own and as usual I thank her for her comments, although I retain sole responsibility for any errors. I also thank the organisers and participants in the “Globalizing Lifestyles” workshop at Bremen for their helpful responses.

ronmentalism, which Amita Baviskar (2002, 2007) terms 'bourgeois environmentalism', is more visible and increasingly powerful in India, rooted as it is in the interests of the hegemonic middle class as well as private capital and the state. Urban bourgeois environmentalists tend to eschew questions of equity, and rather than drawing a connection between their own resource-intensive lifestyles and the environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity about which they claim to be concerned, they locate these problems elsewhere, attributing them to rural poverty, overpopulation or ignorance (Baviskar, 2007:8). In this discourse, poverty is not seen as a consequence of inequality or structures of power, or even of ecological destruction; instead poverty is a trope used by elites and the state to push the development agenda of high growth rates and greater global integration. Because the educated middle class has largely been captivated by the contemporary ideology of globalised fast-track economic development, ideas of ecological sustainability or alternative development paradigms are ignored or ridiculed, and activists such as Medha Patkar (leader of the Narmada Bachao Andolan), who oppose infrastructure development projects that marginalise and displace the poor, are painted as anti-development and anti-national. This split between middle class environmentalism and the environmentalism of the poor is paralleled by the class-differentiated development agendas of the state – analysed by Leela Fernandes (this volume) – that advocate heightened consumption for the liberalising middle class but 'sustainable development' and austerity for the rural poor and subaltern groups. Thus, 'varieties of environmentalism' (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997) in India are class-linked, and their ideologies and practices are largely shaped by the interests and social location of their constituents.

Middle class environmentalism can be seen as but one manifestation of the emerging culture and the political orientation of the 'new middle class', which is being produced by an array of different forces, especially the opening up of the Indian market and global economic opportunities. Although, as Fernandes points out (this volume), consumerism is a state agenda, it is also an agenda of class and corporate interests – both Indian and global. Because of the hegemony of the middle class, their monopoly over the media, and their dominance in the public sphere of 'civil society', the connections between environmental degradation, poverty, and middle class/elite lifestyles and consumption patterns remain largely unarticulated. I return to these questions at the end of this paper through a discussion of current debates on the urban environment. But first, I address the theme of consumption and the new middle class in India in the context of globalisation by presenting some findings from a study of upwardly mobile software professionals in Bangalore.

14.2 Consumption and the 'New Middle Class'

The Indian middle class had its roots in the colonial era with the spread of English education and new white collar occupations, but it came into its own as a hegemonic and dominant class during the post-independence Nehruvian development regime. The rapid expansion of higher education, government services and public sector enterprises created a large contingent of salaried employees whose dominance depended on their cultural as much as economic capital. This ‘old’ middle class, while it was better off than the masses of the urban and rural poor, was not wealthy, and in the context of India’s ‘socialist’ path of development had to be content with relatively low levels of consumption.[2]

With the introduction of economic liberalisation programmes from the late 1980s, through which India became more integrated into the global economy, the markets began to be flooded with new media images and foreign consumer goods, and a consumption-based middle class lifestyle was promoted through advertising and the media (Deshpande, 2003; Fernandes, 2006; Mankekar, 1999). With rising incomes, aspirations and purchasing power, many in the middle class could afford to pursue this new lifestyle, such that consumption increasingly became a primary signifier of middle class status and identity. The increasing dominance of this ‘ideology of globalising consumerism’ significantly transformed the culture of the urban middle class as well as political discourses about consumption, leading to a shift from a ‘developmentalist to consumerist vision of the nation’ (Mazzarella, 2003: 71).

In the context of this overwhelming public discourse linking the middle class with consumption, an important question concerns how middle class identity and consumption practices are actually being reshaped. The adoption of globalised consumption habits appears to be typical of the newly rich and transnationalising middle classes everywhere, especially in Asia (Robison & Goodman, 1996), and has been a very visible phenomenon in urban India over the last two decades as well. This is usually attributed to the expansion in professional and highly paid employment, the growth of business opportunities, rising incomes, and the easier availability of a wide range of consumer goods. In cities such as Bangalore, the boom in urban consumption is quite visible in the mushrooming of opulent apartment complexes and upscale shopping malls, hotels, and restaurants; the exponential multiplication of motor vehicles clogging the roads; and the growth in foreign travel and other leisure activities. Yet in the absence of reliable data on consumption, it is difficult to separate the hype from actual practice or to analyse the operations of consumption as social practice. Consumption as a sign of modernity and progress and as a source of self-definition and identity for the middle class appears to be highly significant, but the new consumerism has not been simply absorbed and adopted without critique (Upadhya, 2008). We need to examine empirical evidence on changing consumption patterns and to better theorise the connections between globalisation, economic growth, and the emergence of a consumerist ‘new rich’ class. In the following

[2]The category of the “middle class” is very slippery in the Indian (or any) context (Deshpande, 2003), and in this paper I do not discuss the problems of definition and identification of this class, which have been debated sufficiently by other scholars. For the present purpose, I understand “middle class” as an economic, political and social category defined primarily in terms of occupation, education, and income/property and with a specific cultural orientation. Most important for the present discussion is the hegemonic position of the urban middle classes in contemporary India.

section I attempt to fill this gap through a discussion of consumption practices and attitudes among software professionals in Bangalore.

14.3 Worker-Consumers of the New Economy

With the 'cultural turn' in the post-industrial economy in the West (du Gay & Pryke, 2002), the production of identity, especially through consumption, has become central to work itself, and workers have been reconstituted as consuming rather than producing subjects (du Gay, 1996; Freeman, 2000). This process can be observed among the workers in India's new high-tech, offshore industries as well – especially software services and business process outsourcing (BPO). While the IT sector encompasses a range of jobs, from 'low-end' call centre and data processing work to 'high-end' software development and consultancy, the new workforces that have been produced by these industries display broad similarities in terms of their social backgrounds, global orientation, and emerging lifestyles. In this paper I focus only on software engineers, or 'IT professionals': call centre and BPO workers constitute another highly visible but distinct segment of the 'consuming classes' who require separate consideration (Vasavi, 2008).

One of the most significant socio-economic characteristics of this new category of globalised technical workers are the high salaries they command, compared to others in equivalent occupations and of similar age and educational background. The rising demand for qualified personnel and the expansion in the number of companies and size of their workforces in Bangalore are pushing salaries ever higher. The substantial purchasing power of IT professionals allows them to engage in high levels of consumption. Moreover, they achieve this economic status at relatively young ages. Given this, one would then expect them to engage with the new consumerist lifestyle. Another important characteristic of software workers is their exposure to global lifestyles, due to frequent 'onsite' assignments and foreign travel for work as well as their imbrication in transnational production/service networks even while working from 'offshore' locations. Their experiences of other countries and cultures also shape their subjectivities and orientations to consumption.

As part of a larger study of software professionals, a structured questionnaire survey of 132 IT employees in Bangalore was carried out during 2004–05, which included questions on consumption habits and values.[3] Reflecting the overall youth

[3]The survey was designed to cover employees of different types of software companies, from large Indian services companies to multinationals to small companies. The final sample size of 132 employees of eight companies was much less than the target of 500, due to difficulties in getting permission to conduct interviews. The selection of respondents in each company was supposed to be by stratified random sampling based on the demographics of the workforce, but the sampling was not exact nor did we have control over the selection of respondents. Given the small sample size and inadequate sampling, the results of this survey should be regarded as indicative rather than representative of IT professionals as a whole. This discussion also draws on the narratives collected through a large number of unstructured interviews.

of the Indian IT workforce, three-fourths of our respondents were age 30 or less. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents were males and 32% females – a gender ratio that is higher than the industry average of about 21%. Due to the nature of their employment, all of the respondents were highly educated – 76% had engineering degrees and most of the remaining had graduate and post-graduate degrees in computer-related subjects. Nearly half of the respondents were at the entry level as junior or senior software engineers, one-fourth were team leaders or technical leaders (junior management positions), and the remainder were middle level project managers or above.

The findings of this survey support to some extent the idea that software professionals conform to the 'new cultural standard associated with a hegemonic urban middle-class lifestyle' (Fernandes, 2000: 619). Most of those interviewed possessed many of the consumer goods that have become emblematic of this lifestyle – a motorcycle or car, cell phone, elaborate music and home entertainment systems, and so on. Seventy per cent of respondents owned televisions, 66% music systems, one-half had two-wheelers (motorcycles or motor scooters), and 42% cars. A large proportion owned washing machines, DVD players, home computers, or refrigerators (Table 14.1).[4] Surprisingly, however, given their ubiquity in contemporary urban society, only three-fourths of respondents reported that they have mobile phones. Purchase of expensive branded clothing and shoes is common in this group; indeed, one of the most important categories of expenditure in their budgets was clothing and consumer goods (Table 14.2).

According to popular media reports, a major consumption item for software professionals is real estate, and they are said to be investing in apartments and land at a relatively early age. Our data corroborate this impression: 42% of those surveyed owned a flat, house or plot, while another 21% were planning to buy property. Property ownership is strongly linked to age and work experience: 68% of those in the

Table 14.1 Ownership of Consumer Goods. (Total Respondents = 132)

Consumption item	Percentage of respondents owning the item
Mobile phone	75
Television	70
Music system	66
Fridge	59
Home computer	57
Two wheeler	52
Car	42
DVD player	42
Washing machine	42
VCD player	39
Microwave	24

[4]The refrigerator is probably the consumer durable found most commonly in Indian middle class households, but in this sample many did not report refrigerators as an item they personally owned because they were unmarried men or women living in rented accommodation or with their parents.

Table 14.2 Major Items of Expenditure

Expenditure category	Percentage of respondents who mentioned item as major category of expenditure
Household expenditure	74
Savings	71
Clothing, accessories, consumer goods, etc.	50
Entertainment	17
Loan repayment	16
Supporting parents	12
House rent	11
Eating out	11

age group 31–35, and 100% of those aged 36 and above, owned property; but even in the 26–30 age group 38% had their own houses. These data clearly show that IT professionals have the means and the desire to invest in housing and immovable property at a much earlier age than most others of similar social and educational background. Many IT employees have purchased flats in the new luxury housing complexes that have come up all over Bangalore.

Although responses to survey questions on expenditure indicate that software professionals conform broadly to the consumption-oriented lifestyle of the new middle class, an unexpected result is that, for most, the most important item in their budgets, after routine household expenditure, is savings (Table 14.2). This suggests not only that software professionals earn enough to maintain upper middle class lifestyles, but that they also plan for the future. Given the uncertainties associated with the IT industry (the volatile job market, the industry's dependence on global customers, and absence of employment security) and IT workers' pursuit of individualised career strategies, this is not unexpected, for employees must plan for their own future economic security.

Shopping habits are another gauge of lifestyle changes. In Bangalore and other major urban centres in India, retail business has been transformed rapidly in recent years from a pattern of many small shops concentrated in commercial areas and traditional markets populated by many small vendors, to supermarkets, large department stores, shopping malls, and upmarket branded and designer stores, all catering to the tastes and aspirations of the new middle class and the elite. According to respondents, IT professionals prefer to shop in these new malls, large department stores, and brand outlets rather than in neighbourhood markets, and they also spend more money than their non-IT friends and their own relatives. When asked where they normally shop for vegetables and other kitchen provisions, almost half mentioned supermarkets, but 60% said that they still sometimes go to small neighbourhood shops. When asked where they normally buy their clothes, shoes and other personal items, 32% said ordinary neighbourhood shops, half mentioned large department stores, and 57% visit upscale brand or specialty stores. Those in the

26–30 age group were found to patronise brand stores most frequently. The ability to buy expensive goods from upmarket shops and malls represents, for many software professionals, their newfound economic and social status.

The adoption of these consumption styles is related in part to their identity as ‘global professionals’, which demands that they construct a persona for work that differs in significant ways from the ‘real’ or social selves that they present to family and friends. The global personality type that is being shaped by this industry requires global amenities and infrastructure to house it – the brand name shoes and clothes, yuppie foods, upscale bars and restaurants as well as international chains such as KFC, enclosed self-contained living communities, cars, ‘international’ schools for the children, and so on. The lifestyles and consumption preferences of IT professionals are actively shaped by their organisations, which offer classes in corporate grooming and etiquette and also impose dress codes. The ambience of IT workplaces is very Western, or ‘global’, and the employees too are expected to conform to the dominant style of the global corporation through their dress, mannerisms, and modes of communication. The personal and cultural transformation that is expected of Indian IT professionals represents, for many, a decisive break with their cultural roots and traditional styles of dress and deportment. The distinctive work culture and habitus of IT spills over into personal lifestyles, as IT workers absorb this ‘global culture’ and its habits. Indirectly, this conditioning, together with their substantial purchasing power, create new consumption habits by promoting the purchase of certain types of clothing and accessories, consumer goods, and leisure activities.

The change in consumption style is most visible in choice of housing – IT professionals prefer to buy or rent in the new style apartment complexes that provide amenities such as swimming pools, gyms, security, and even retail and banking outlets within their high walls. Bangalore real estate developers compete to create luxury ‘suburban’ gated communities to house the higher ranks of IT managers and the new business class, as well as middle range apartment blocks affordable by younger IT professionals. The real estate boom and high level of demand for housing have driven Bangalore real estate prices to Mumbai levels and beyond, gradually displacing the old middle class and the poor from the city. Rising property values and changing residential patterns are an important sign of the rise of the new middle class in the city. These new residential arrangements, and the lifestyles they promote, are feeding into the creation of a hegemonic and homogenised middle class cultural style, built on globalised or hybrid imaginaries, as the names of various apartment complexes and their marketing campaigns testify (Palm Meadows, Venezia, Green Acres, Eden Gardens, etc.). Real estate advertisements emphasise their Western or global affinities, comparing life within these gated communities to that in Switzerland, California, or Scotland. They also provide privatised solutions to urban environmental degradation, such as full power backup systems (in case of power failure) and assured private water supply through tubewells, tanks and water filtration systems (in a context where most Bangalore localities receive municipal water for a few hours a day, if at all). Living in these globalised cocoons, the new middle class is partially shielded from the reality of urban life in Bangalore and so are not impelled to engage with the city's pressing environmental and urban problems (except when they drive out into the traffic).

From the environmental point of view, perhaps the most significant lifestyle change witnessed in cities such as Bangalore has been the explosion in the ownership and use of private vehicles. As noted above, most of the survey respondents owned two-wheelers or automobiles. The geographical expansion of the city, the location of many software companies on the outskirts, and shortage of housing in those areas, have meant that many IT employees have to commute long distances to work. While most companies run bus or shuttle services, many techies prefer to commute in their own vehicles, mainly due to the unpredictable work timings and long hours. Increasing congestion on the roads has only added to their commuting time. While most middle class residents complain about the traffic problem and the consequent air pollution, most nonetheless opt for private over public transportation (which is largely inadequate) – a phenomenon seen in most Indian cities and towns. It is rare to hear members of the new middle class advocating the use of cycles, walking to work, or better public transport; instead, the purchase of a vehicle (that too, as expensive as possible) is a primary goal for most, and in order to be able to drive with greater ease they advocate road widening (which is inevitably accompanied by felling of trees) and more flyovers and underpasses to relieve congestion. The bases of these environmental attitudes are discussed further below.

14.4 The 'New India' and Middle Class Consciousness

While many of our informants have adopted the consumption-oriented lifestyle of the new middle class, their discourse about consumption, materialism, and sociality contain direct or indirect critiques of India's emerging consumer culture and its consequences, and of their own cosmopolitan lifestyles. Many of their narratives suggest that they feel that they have lost out on traditional forms of sociality because of their new lifestyles (Upadhya, 2008). Most IT professionals are better off than their own parents, most of who belonged to the old middle class (Upadhya, 2007), and this upward mobility is a primary sign of their success. At the same time, many feel that because of their hectic working lives and the race to accumulate and succeed, they are not able to enjoy the social and cultural life that their parents had. Many complained that they have 'enough money but no time to enjoy it'. Thus, despite obvious changes in consumption patterns and visible transformations in lifestyles, many members of the new middle class have not fully bought into the ideology of consumerism, which appears to be in conflict with 'old middle class' values of family and sociality.

This discomfort with the new lifestyle might be expected to give rise to anti-consumerism or some kind of environmental consciousness. However, there are other discourses and ideologies at play within the new middle class, which together with the 'ideology of globalising consumerism', work to legitimise new forms of consumption. One of these is the widespread middle class faith in India's progress in the era of globalisation and liberalisation. The recent rise in the rate of economic growth together with the globally visible success of the software industry have transformed India's international image from that of a poverty- and corruption-ridden third world country to an emerging power, poised to compete with China. This shift has given the country a positive sheen among the new middle classes, who also identify with the success story of the 'new India'. This renewed sense of patriotism has only reinforced the faith in the conventional growth-driven path of development. It must be recalled that until the late 1980s, Nehruvian socialism and autarchy remained the dominant economic ideology, but after liberalisation people belonging to the new middle class by and large have become votaries of neoliberal capitalism and globalisation. This development paradigm depends on energy-intensive, consumption-oriented economic growth. Moreover, the globalisation of the new middle class has meant that they aspire to replicate Western lifestyles in India.

In the midst of the celebration of India's success in IT, the achievements of its scientists, professionals and entrepreneurs, its newfound political presence in the world, and its current rapid rate of economic growth, there appears to be little space for environmental concerns. India's new middle class and educated youth on the whole look forward to a more prosperous and powerful India, and their experience of the post-liberalisation decades suggests that the country is on the right economic track. In this context, movements such as the Narmada Bachao Andolan that challenge the standard development paradigm are anathema to most of them, barring a few idealistic youth. Middle class environmental causes include wildlife and forest conservation, clean air and water, over-population and the like, while internationally significant issues such as global warming or the dangers of nuclear energy are ignored or downplayed, largely because action on these fronts threaten the prospect of economic progress.

14.5 Globalizing the City: The IT Industry's Bangalore

The position of the new middle class with respect to environmental issues can be illustrated by a look at current conflicts and debates surrounding environmental degradation in the cities, particularly in Bangalore. In this context, two trends are especially salient – the rise of middle class civic activism, and the emergence of corporates as social and political actors through their involvement in urban governance (in public-private partnerships) and informal influence on urban planning and development schemes.

The rapid growth of the IT/ITES industry, the substantial earning power and new consumption practices of IT workers and other upwardly mobile professionals, and the emergence of a range of ancillary businesses and services catering to the expanding new middle class, are among the factors behind Bangalore's recent transformation into a metropolitan city of over seven million, the consequent congestion and pressure on infrastructure and civic services, and striking cultural and spatial changes in the city. While many of these changes are found in other cities as well due to post-liberalisation economic trends, the IT industry has had specific significant impacts on Bangalore – the mushrooming of upscale office complexes and campuses housing software and BPO companies and the emergence of new leisure and lifestyle industries catering to the large population of IT workers have led to large-scale land acquisition, transformations in land use patterns and a real estate boom. The negative impact of rapid population growth and rising consumption levels on the city's physical environment is constantly bemoaned by older residents, the middle class and the elite: the nightmarish traffic, erratic power supply and scarce water, flooding during the rainy season, and endlessly stalled flyover projects, all testify to the inability of the state to cope with Bangalore's unplanned growth.

The reality of daily life in the city stands in sharp contrast to the imagined Bangalore of corporate elites, who hold up Singapore or Shanghai as models of rational urban development. Bangalore's iconic status in the global cultural economy, and its popular representation as an 'information city' or the 'Silicon Valley of India', are not simply by-products of the industry's success, but are images that have been consciously fashioned and promoted by the IT industry with the eager cooperation of some of the political elite, the business classes, and a large segment of the new middle class. The industry's campaign to create a 'brand Bangalore' to make the city attractive for foreign investment has created a 'split' city in which one segment of the population dwells in the space of the national/global while the majority remain rooted in place, or locality. The split between old and new Bangalore is starkly visible in the contrast between the gleaming modernist offices and posh green campuses of software companies, and everything else around them. IT workplaces are largely deterritorialised, situated physically in the city but connected economically with the global economy. As a result, they are largely delinked from the local environment, giving rise to contradictions and conflicts around control over urban space, planning and governance. This split has been exacerbated by the promotion of consumption-based cultural identities within the new middle class and the elite, and the attendant expansion in the real estate and construction as well as retail, entertainment, and other service industries.

The rapid growth and transformation of the city has also created logistical problems for businesses, such as ever-increasing commuting time, scarce hotel rooms, and overall decline in the quality of life. From the IT industry's point of view, the city's decline repels visiting foreign clients and acts as a deterrent to the expansion of their activities. Due to this, industry leaders have been pressurising the state to address the city's problems, especially through infrastructure development (roads, flyovers, a new international airport). These efforts to influence state and civic policies were most visible in the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF), a corporate-led initiative that was established during the S.M. Krishna regime (1999–2004) to improve the city's physical infrastructure and social landscape (Ghosh, 2005). The IT industry enjoyed a close relationship with the Krishna government, to the extent that it was able to redirect urban development towards the 'Singapore model' (Nair, 2000, 2005). Although the BATF is now in abeyance, IT czars continue to use various means, including periodic threats to quit the city, to push the state to 'do something' about the 'woefully inadequate infrastructure' in the city.

In the discourse about Bangalore's urban development that has been generated by the IT industry, the problems of the city have been framed as those that affect their business (rather than issues such as urban poverty, unequal access to resources, etc.). The plans chalked out by corporate-led civic initiatives point to a specific strategy for colonising and utilising urban space and for making the city attractive to foreign investment – traffic regulation, improvement of roads, city beautification, and (with less emphasis), better public transport systems (Nair, 2005: 333–347). Their priorities illustrate the corporate/middle class understanding of the 'problems' created by the urban poor (i.e., the working class) as those of order and cleanliness rather than of poverty, and their solutions advocate a technocratic and managerial approach that ignores the imperatives of a democratic polity. Even when these efforts have yielded minimal results in terms of actual 'improvements', their ideological impact has been significant, in that business leaders have been able to use the infrastructure debate to promote a particular vision of Bangalore that is now accepted by most of the middle class as well as the state. Their solution to civic problems is not to address their root causes but to bypass them by pushing for urban development projects that will allow them to continue to function effectively *from* the city. In essence, they want to create a city within the city, a patchwork with islands of global industry and residential areas for global workers, tied together by a network of good roads that only the wealthy and the IT class can afford to use – such as the elevated toll road to Electronic City (location of the famous Infosys campus and several other IT companies), and the six-lane highway cutting through the heart of the city to reach the new international airport. Instead of advocating better public transportation as a solution to the city's traffic and air pollution problems (as in Delhi for example), it should be noted that these plans promote the use of private vehicles – already a major problem in Bangalore.

The splitting of the city is also experienced by IT workers, many of whom appear to dwell *in* the city but not *of* it. They circulate through its spaces between home, work and the new sites of consumption in cocooned transport vehicles along designated arteries, engaging directly with the rest of the population only through casual and fleeting encounters with the working poor who provide essential services to the middle class and the city. Thus, the fantasy of the global city does not belong just to the IT elites – it is shared by the upwardly mobile middle class as well, especially the younger generation – who believe that India is on the rise and that Bangalore can be as innovative and competitive as Silicon Valley, if only it is freed from the nooses of bureaucracy, corruption and ordinary politics that are strangling the city's development. These attitudes, which appear to be shared by a large section of the middle class, colour their perception of, and orientation to, environmental issues.

14.6 The Middle Class and the Urban Environment

As in Delhi, Mumbai and other major Indian cities, Bangalore has seen the rise of middle class activism around urban 'environmental' issues over the last decade or so. The issues identified by these movements have centred largely on cleanliness, order and safety – air and water pollution, slums, garbage, overcrowding, traffic problems, poor infrastructure, and civic services. Middle class activism has coalesced around beautification drives, garbage collection, building of parks, campaigns for the removal of hawkers and animals from the roads, relocation of slums, and the like. The emergence of residents' welfare or neighbourhood associations, civil society organisations such as Janaagraha (which focus on state accountability and the creation of extra-political citizens' power), and new parastatal agencies and semi-autonomous corporate bodies for urban infrastructure planning, development, and management, are all manifestations of the kind of urban governance reforms seen across the globe, often tied to loans from international agencies such as the World Bank. As Mawdsley discusses in her paper (this volume), drawing on the work of John Harriss (2006, 2007), these new forms of urban governance promote a kind of 'consumer-citizen' politics and are usually dominated by the elites and the middle class, who have used these platforms to set the 'urban environment' agenda, supported by the corporate sector. Urban governments have begun to follow this agenda, as in the slum clearance and relocation projects periodically pursued in Mumbai, Delhi and other cities in the interests of new infrastructure projects, cleanliness and lawfulness (and real estate developers). In state-supported programmes for 'citizen-state cooperation' such as Delhi's *bhagidari* scheme (Srivastava, 2007), the interests of the state and the middle class appear to collapse into one another, both driven by the ideology of globalisation and corporate-led development.

In all this, the dovetailing of the agendas of the middle class, corporate bodies, and the state is striking. The 'visions' of the future that have been drawn up by state and corporate groups (usually by international consultants) for India's metro cities, such as 'Bangalore 2020', are quite homogenous, retailing ideas about 'world class cities' or 'international financial centres', to achieve which the poor, the slums, the dirt and disorder of the streets must be removed and modern infrastructure installed. In this vision for India's cities, political and corporate elites and middle class citizens appear to speak with one voice, and indeed they have come together on 'public private partnership' platforms such as the BATF. As Fernandes argues, the new middle class 'politics of lifestyle' is closely linked to the state-led liberalisation programme as well as to these strategies of urban redevelopment. Against this background of urban political transformation, the IT industry's attempts to globalise the city, and the alienation of most IT workers from their surroundings, it is doubtful whether a new urban environmental consciousness that departs from the politics of aesthetics and lifestyle will emerge from the middle class. Whether movements of other citizens, including the poor (for instance, against the privatisation of water), will fill this gap remains to be seen.

Having said this, it must be acknowledged that at least some software professionals have a social conscience. One informant, for instance, remarked that ITPL (the hyper-modern International Technology Park in Whitefield that was developed by the government in collaboration with a Singapore-based company) 'is like a middle finger in the face of rural India.' Many IT professionals engage in voluntary work with NGOs working in the fields of social service or education. But this consciousness of the increasing social and cultural divide in the city does not usually translate into real concern either for those who are excluded from the economic boom or for its environmental consequences. For instance, environmental issues that have galvanised large sections of the population in Karnataka, such as the dispute over the sharing of the waters of the Cavery River with neighbouring Tamil Nadu state (water on which the city largely depends), have not engaged the middle class – perhaps because the present system of water distribution ensures that middle class and elite neighbourhoods receive adequate water (augmented by private supplies), while it is the urban poor who suffer from erratic supply.

14.7 Concluding Thoughts

In this paper I have attempted to sketch out, however tentatively, some of the connections between globalisation, deepening middle class hegemony, the new middle class consumption-oriented culture, changing cityscapes, and urban environmental politics in Bangalore, focusing on IT professionals as representative of the new middle class and the IT industry as the leading edge of globalisation in the city. Mapping these cultural and political transformations should help us to better analyse the politics of environmental and civic movements and their connections with existing structures of power. Against this background I return to the questions raised at the beginning of this paper.

The entry of the global IT industry into India has produced a new category of globalised consumer citizens and workers who build their identities in part through their participation in global circuits of consumption. Although IT professionals voice discomfort with the new consumerism and the social implications of their lifestyles, it is not clear whether they draw a connection between the latter and India's multiple environmental crises. To the extent that the new middle class has constituted itself by adopting globalised consumption styles, it is unlikely to become an advocate either of an 'environmentalism of the poor', which is regarded as anti-development, nor of a more comprehensive global environmentalism that requires curtailment of consumption. As newly globalised subjects and champions of the 'new India', members of the new middle class support the neoliberal path of development, which essentially entails catching up with the West. Despite rhetoric about 'leapfrogging' into the 'knowledge economy' and the 'clean' nature of the IT industry, resource-intensive industrialisation and urbanisation are inevitable elements of this trajectory.

Similarly, the environmental consciousness of IT industry leaders does not extend beyond complaints about the dilapidation and overcrowding of their 'global city'. Software companies in Bangalore attempt to portray themselves as good corporate citizens by funding trusts and organisations dedicated to improving primary education or providing public toilets, but they have never taken responsibility for the creation of the 'infrastructure problem' and urban chaos that they constantly decry. For both the industry and its 'new middle class' employees, it is globalised economic growth, together with new technologies (not least among them, IT itself), that will provide solutions to the problems of the environment, as well as poverty, and alternative development paradigms that foreground sustainability and equity have not found their way onto their agendas.

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Chapter 15
The Changing Food Scenario and the Middle Classes in the Emerging Megacity of Hyderabad, India

Christoph Dittrich

Abstract While poverty levels are declining in India, concerns over food and nutrition are increasing. In the changing food scenario of globalising urban India two contradictory trends can be recognised: The first concerns the underprivileged urban dwellers who are still highly exposed to food insecurity and hunger. Deficient diets cause severe incidence of malnutrition particularly among women and children. The second major trend concerns the rapidly changing food consumption patterns and diet transition among the emerging urban middle classes. Due to economic growth and new lifestyle choices their demand for greater variety of food products has never been as it is at the present. Supermarkets and fast food outlets mushrooming all over the big cities are just one indicator of this. This paper analyses the changing food scenario in the emerging megacity of Hyderabad. It starts by providing an overview of recent trends in the food provision and retail system, then, goes into changes in food purchasing and dietary patterns among Hyderabad's middle classes and covers nutrition related health issues. Finally, the issue of localising sustainable food practises is discussed.

Keywords Globalisation · Hyderabad · Lifestyle changes · Urban food system · Urban middle class

15.1 Introduction

India's economic growth has accelerated significantly since 1991, when the country opened up its markets to foreign investors and slashed regulations. With GDP growth rates of six to nine per cent over the past decade, the country has become a hot spot for investors, a dynamo in the outsourcing and high-tech industries, and

C. Dittrich (✉)
Institute of Cultural Geography, University of Freiburg, Freiburg, Germany
e-mail: christoph.dittrich@geographie.uni-freiburg.de

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a competitor for headlines with that other emerging economic power, China. If the country keeps up its high growth pattern over the next decades the Indian market will undergo a major transformation. Income levels, which have roughly doubled since 1985, will almost triple over the next two decades and India will climb from its position as the world's twelfth largest consumer market in 2007 to become fifth largest by 2025.

As incomes have risen, the shape of the country's income pyramid is also changing. India is creating a sizeable and largely urban middle class. Exactly who and how many people constitute this expanding middle class is hard to estimate and varies according to its definition (Ablett et al., 2007; Fernandes, 2006; Sridharan, 2004). In 2005/06 the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) defined about eighteen million households (ninety million people) as the affluent middle class with a real annual household disposable income of more than 200,000 Indian rupees (14,500 euro at purchasing power parity (PPP), comprising approximately nine per cent of the country's population). Along with the estimated 300 million 'aspirers', who still have relatively modest means (households earning 90,000 to 200,000 Indian rupees per year; 6,500 to 14,500 euro at PPP), they constitute India's new consuming class and act as the main drivers of the booming domestic market (NCAER, 2007). Accordingly, their consumption habits and resource-intensive lifestyles lead to increased resource consumption (e.g., water, land, energy) and greenhouse gas emissions (Mawdsley, 2004). Growing household disposable income and new lifestyle choices also have strong impacts on India's urban food systems and nutrition practises (Pingali, 2007; Pingali & Khwaja, 2004; Shetty, 2002).

15.2 Trends in the Food Retail and Provision System of Hyderabad

During recent years, the emerging Indian megacity of Hyderabad with its present population of more than six million developed into one of India's leading new techone cities. The agglomeration, which is expected to grow to about eight million inhabitants in 2011, is reaching its place to 'Cyberabad' as a centre for information and communication technologies and hardware as well. Hyderabad's ICT-industries, predominately located at 'Hitec City' at the urban fringe, are growing at rates that are amazing compared to world standards, about thirty per cent annually, and they were worth over 3.5 billion US dollars in 2006/07. The city also emerged fast as the biotech hub of India (Dittrich, 2008).

Due to times of economic boom, Hyderabad generates considerable opportunities, but also strong pressure for change accompanied by environmental degradation. The agglomeration grows much faster than its infrastructure, and the largely uncontrolled urban sprawl fosters negative effects of high traffic volumes, ecological overload, unregulated and disparate property markets and such extremes of poverty and wealth living side by side that already provoke social unrest.[1] The meteoric rise of the metropolis to 'India's second Silicon Valley' after Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) and the shift toward a liberalised market-oriented political agenda result in profound changes on the metropolitan social map, creating a highly polarised and fragmented social setting. One of the main driving forces behind this urban restructuring are the urban middle-class consumers as the most visible representatives of liberalising India. In Hyderabad about forty per cent of the city's population belong to this highly heterogeneous social stratum, comprised of various reference groups with their own economic, political and socio-cultural backgrounds and interests.

One important segment of Hyderabad's middle class consists of highly skilled and English-speaking urban professionals of the modern service industries, but also of members of the real estate, banking, accountancy, advertising and entertainment businesses. This 'new' urban middle class also includes thousands of workers in call centres and data entry and transcribing work offices, almost all in their twenties and early thirties, whose most characteristic feature appears to be consumerism. They spend a considerable part of their earnings on global consumer goods like western-style clothing, consumer electronics, motorbikes and other luxuries and are keen to display their latest acquisitions actively to a public audience (Fernandes, 2006; Fuller & Narasimhan, 2007). Due to growing household disposable income and new lifestyle choices the urban middle classes also demand greater diversity of food products, and their enthusiasm for eating out has never been as great as it is at present. This makes investing the city's food retailing and provision system exceedingly profitable.[2]

Since the late 1990s Hyderabad, like all other large Indian cities, experiences the entry of the corporate retail sector at a progressive rate. Malls, hyper- and supermarkets, fast food outlets, coffee shops and ice-cream parlours are mushrooming all over the city. At the beginning of 2007 there were already over one hundred large-scale retail businesses across the entire city, with the exception of the high density historic city centre. Twenty of them have a sales area of over 100,000 sq. m. each.[3] Hyderabad is thus among the cities with the highest density of supermarkets in the country. An end of this expansion is not in sight. The supermarket chains Subiksha and Reliance Fresh, who specialise in selling fruits and vegetables, are planning to double the number of their franchisees by 2010 (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007).

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[1] Hyderabad has a long history of communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims. In 2007 the city was shaken by different terrorist bombings and subsequent riots, killing over one hundred people and injuring hundreds more.

[2] India's retail industry is one of the fastest growing worldwide and was estimated to be worth 350 billion US dollars in 2007, of which the organised retail accounts for only eight per cent. This organised part of the retail industry is growing at thirty per cent annually and is likely to reach 33 billion by 2015; cif. India Brand Equity Foundation, Retrieved January 21, 2008, from http://www.ibef.org/industry/retail.aspx.

[3] The majority of Indian shops is rather small in size; fewer than five per cent of the stores have more than 100 sq. m.

While domestic operators are speeding up their expansion plans foreign retail giants are figuring out ways of entering the Indian market.[4] Waiting in the wings and actively negotiating with several Indian companies as potential partners are the US retail giant Wal Mart, Tesco from the UK and Carrefour from France. Germany's Metro and South Africa's Shoprite have already entered the India market with a cash-and-carry business that supplies retailers and restaurants only. Some international fast food chains including Dunkin' Donuts, Häagen-Dazs, McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut and Subway have recently opened branches in some of the city's prime locations. They offer food and sweets prepared to Indian sensibilities.[5]

However, the city's food retail system is still largely dominated by the so-called informal sector which is characterised by high levels of self-organisation, decentralisation and low capital input. Most retailing of fresh foods still occurs in regulated producer markets (rythu bazaars) and roadside hawker parks.[6] Thousands of traditional retailers like kirana (mom-and-pop stores), grocers and provision stores follow their business in every part of the city. Another important pillar of Hyderabad's food provisioning is the system of public distribution of foods, which came into existence soon after independence in 1947 through government ration shops and where food grains, oil, red chillies and onions for the daily consumption of the poor are distributed at subsidised rates (Landy & Ruby, 2005).

This traditional system of urban food retailing is now under severe pressure. A recently conducted study reveals the negative effects of corporate retail outlets on the existing shopkeepers and vendors. The majority of *kirana* shopkeepers and petty traders already experience a sharp decline in their sale and turnover, since corporate retail outlets have come up in their area. Local vendors deplore losses of forty per cent and many vegetable vendors have already given up their business because they could not compete with prices, product quality and the shiny product presentation of the surrounding retail outlets (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007).[7]

15.3 Changing Food Purchasing and Dietary Patterns among Hyderabad's Middle Classes

It is mostly the upwardly-mobile middle class with their rapidly changing lifestyles and consequently evolving preferences and tastes who enjoy the fruits of the 'retail revolution'. These consumers already have the incomes adequate to meeting their

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[4] At present, foreign direct investment is permitted only in a single brand retail with fifty-one per cent ownership, so that several foreign retailers are entering the market through the back door, selling to the wholesale market or tying up with an Indian partner.

[5] McDonald's offers home delivery and vegetarian burgers, and Pizza Hut's only all-vegetarian outlets are located in India.

[6] Over the past few years a substantial increase in the number of street food vendors has been noted. According to EKTHA – Footpath Vendors Association Hyderabad has about 15,000 street food vendors who provide a large selection of cheap and nourishing food to urban dwellers.

[7] A study conducted by the Research Foundation for Science Technology and Ecology/Navdanya in the Paharganj area of Delhi achieved the same results; see http://navdanya.org.

basic food needs and so, instead of increasing the amount of food they buy, they increase their spending on 'higher-value' items in terms of variety and quality. A survey undertaken in one of Hyderabad's upmarket suburbs reveals that particularly the middle-class age group of 25–45 years prefers to purchase their food and beverages in sophisticated retail outlets and supermarkets. Notably the emerging super malls with their everything-under-one-roof and shop-in-the-shop concepts appear to be the sanctuaries for younger middle-class shoppers where they can temporarily secede from the hot, noisy and dusty Indian reality, 'just like being in a foreign country', as one shopper stated. Another customer added: 'I love shopping at the new-style grocery store where I can get ready-to-drink packaged buttermilk, instant noodles and soups and even frozen chickens, marinated meats and pre-cut I don't have to clean.' Other main reasons given by customers for buying at corporate retail outlets were the large variety of hygienic and fresh food, special offers, the relaxed air-conditioned environment, convenient parking space and saving of time (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007).[8]

With more single working youth, nuclear families, working mothers, and generally faster-paced, mobile, metropolitan lifestyles, Hyderabad's affluent middle class is increasingly prepared to spend on eating out, ready-to-eat food and experimenting with alternative cuisines and more diverse food and beverage products. The city is currently undergoing an incredible mushrooming of upmarket restaurants, clubs, food courts, coffee bars and eateries reflecting rising living standards, the loss of the joint family kitchen with grandmothers or aunts preparing meals, and the growing importance of the event nature of food. Restaurants serving Italian, French, Lebanese and even Mongolian food have recently opened. Interviews with young urban 'climbers' reveal that their enthusiasm for resource-intensive lifestyles and consumption patterns implies their desire for social acceptance but also reflects their attitude of downward delimitation towards those who are poor and vulnerable and not willing or capable to participate in consumerist lifestyles.[9]

Apart from fostering the consumption of a growing diversity of food, the middle class will also drive changes in the way food is purchased. Traditionally, Indians preferred to buy fresh food, with fruits and vegetable sellers offering their items usually twice daily at the doorstep, and housewives using only freshly ground spices to prepare meals and beverages. Packaged food was traditionally perceived as 'stale'. However, as a result of growing necessity and affordability, this mindset is slowly changing, and a new perception that 'packaged is hygienic and high quality' is resulting in rapidly growing sales of branded and packaged food. One

[8] Formerly exotic vegetables and herbs are now more commonplace in Hyderabad. Single upmarket grocers sell broccoli, iceberg lettuce, thyme, basil and other non-Indian products.

[9] Another important aspect of downwards delimitation apparent among middle class adolescents is the increasing use of the 'Hinglish' or 'Inglish' street languages, the mixing of Indian English with Hindi or other Indian languages. This trend accompanied the rapid spread of English across India (English language-skills serves as a kind of 'passport' to jobs and to entering the lower middle class), but is also a result of blockbuster Hindi movies and the universal appeal of certain programs of Hindi TV channels, such as 'Indian Idol' and 'Kaum Benega Crorepati'. Using 'Hinglish' or 'Inglish' is regarded as 'cool' and also sets the young members of the middle class apart from the parent generation and the poverty-stricken non-English speakers.

survey on supermarket customers showed that processed and convenience food is purchased by three-quarters of middle-class households. Most items bought were ready-made products, such as instant noodles and soups, sauces, jams and pickles, carbonated drinks, biscuits and chocolate bars (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007). Better electrical infrastructure and the greater penetration of refrigerators and microwaves mean that frozen foods are also becoming increasingly popular.

While poverty levels are generally declining in urban India, concerns over food and nutrition security are increasing. In Hyderabad, two contradictory trends can be recognised: The first concerns the underprivileged urban dwellers. Over half of Hyderabad's population is poor, and more than 1.2 million Hyderabadis live in marginal settlements. This social stratum of 'poor involuntary climate protectors' (Reusswig, Lotze-Campen, & Gerlinger, 2005) is still highly vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger. Deficient diets also cause severe incidence of malnutrition particularly among women and children (Smith, Garrett, & Vardhan, 2007).[10] The second major trend concerns the rapidly changing food consumption patterns and diet transition among urban middle classes. According to Pingali and Khwaja (2004) this process of diet transformation can be seen as evolving in two distinct stages: During the first stage, income-induced diet diversification, middle-class consumers move away from inferior goods to nutritionally superior foods and replace some of the traditional staples, especially pulses and millet, traditionally a very important source of vegetable proteins in the habitual Indian diet. In Hyderabad middle-class consumers typically demand higher quality varieties of rice and significantly increase their wheat consumption in the form of bread and other wheat-based products such as cakes and cookies. It is important to note that the use of wheat is changing as well, since there is a move away from the traditional flat bread (chapati) to more commercialised bread products similar to those found in Great Britain or the US (toast, white bread) (Shetty, 2002). There is also a tendency towards traditional dishes and food preparation techniques falling into oblivion. The very rare consumption of millets as *raghi* or *jowar*, the declining use of tumeric and cumin or the loss of knowledge of using boiled rice water are a few examples.

In the second stage of the process of diet transformation the new dietary habits of the more affluent ones are starting to reflect global patterns. Middle-class consumers in Hyderabad exhibit a strong preference for livestock and dairy products, sugar, fats and oils and highly processed convenience foods and drinks, all of which are readily available in the emerging supermarkets and fast-food outlets.[11] Consumption of fast-food snacks is also increasing tremendously. According to a study conducted by the National Institute for Nutrition, sixty per cent of adolescent girls from

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[10] The study also clearly evidenced the lack of state- and city-level involvement in food and nutrition issues (Smith et al., 2007).

[11] A survey on middle-class supermarket customers revealed that processed and convenience food is purchased by about eighty per cent of the shoppers (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007). According to a survey on dietary habits of school children in Hyderabad, less than one percent of low income groups consumed instant food daily, while middle-class pupils eat instant food nearly every day (Vijayapushpam, Menon, Raghunatha Rao, & Antony, 2002: 685).

Hyderbad's affluent class consume fast food at least once a week, forty per cent even opt for carbonated drinks and bakery items every day (Raghunatha, Vijayapushpam, Antony, Subba Rao, & Rameshwar Sarma, 2004). Most importantly, schools and colleges in middle-class areas permitted franchisers of multinational corporations to sell anything ranging from chocolate bars, potato chips and carbonated soft drinks in their canteens. Pizza, burgers and ice cream subsequently became food symbols for younger middle-class Hyderbadis. In addition, as experiences from other countries suggests the popularity of 'lifestyle' categories such as premium foods, health and dietary supplements is also growing across the city, particularly for high-end global consumers.

A very recent trend is the growing market for healthy and organic food reflecting the emerging health consciousness of the affluent urban class.[12] This growth is becoming evident in the increase in organised producers, retailers and product offerings in markets, where the movement had previously been driven entirely by the spirit of individual initiatives of the farmers, the odd entrepreneur and non-governmental organisations. In Hyderabad, there were six locations in 2007 where organic food items could be purchased. The range of goods differs greatly, especially in comparison to '24Lettered Mantra', the first organic superstore countrywide, set up in 2005 by Sresta Natural Bioproducts Pvt. Ltd. in the up-market neighbourhood of Banjara Hills.[13] The store sells organically grown fruits, vegetables, staples and spices, which are otherwise hard to find in retail. Food Bazaar, the food division of Pantaloon Retail, based on a comprehensive food and grocery store format and operating three outlets in Hyderabad also introduced an organic product line in 2005. Fabindia, the one-billion-rupees apparel and home furnishings retailer, also ventured into organic foods. Their goal is to be able to offer customers a completely organic lifestyle.[14] However, according to experts, the supply chain mechanism, quality, consistency, storage facilities and shelf life are still the big critical issues for the organic foods segment to grow. At least in Hyderabad, the demand for organic food is still in a very early but vital stage. Interviews with middle-class supermarket customers revealed that just one quarter of them had ever heard about organic food, although most claimed to be more health conscious than a few years back. The study also found out that most of the customers opted for organic food because they suffered from hypersensitivity and other health problems. Environmental

[12] India is one of the largest exporters of organic food products worldwide (seventy per cent of the total organic food production is exported), but there are still very few locations within India (predominantly in the big cities) where organic food can be purchased (Bhattacharyya & Chakraborty, 2005; Lohr & Dittrich, 2007).

[13] In 2007 the company expanded countrywide and opened stores in Bangalore and Pune.

[14] Non-brand organic food items are also available at the Dekkan Development Society's office at the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Tarnaka. Both Fabindia and the Dekkan Development Society obtain grains, pulses and millets from regional farmers producing under their guidelines. At the Erragadda Rythu Bazaar two stalls offer organic food and every Sunday farmers also sell organic farm products there.

reasons or the well-being of farmers did not appear to motivate their purchase (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007).

The process of diet globalisation is clearly assisted by the globalisation of the mass media. The proliferation of global entertainment through popular television programmes or block-buster movies permits the wide-scale advertising of global products. Sports events with national coverage are often sponsored by famous food brands, too. This has a huge appeal particularly for the young market. According to Pingali and Khwaja (2004), fifty per cent of food advertising in India is targeted at children, and seventy per cent of those customers who purchase convenience food do so because their children ask them to. As a result, the mass media make certain types of food socially prestigious or pin a label of tastiness to certain dietary items. Another aspect of the influence of the mass media on consumption practices is the very consumption of television itself. Idle watching, uninterrupted snacking, a sedentary lifestyle and abstaining from outdoor activities make the average middle-class adolescent who spends four to six hours a day in front of the TV more prone to obesity and other food-related non-communicable diseases (NDCs).

15.4 Health Issues

The changes in dietary practises and lifestyles associated with rising affluence has drawn attention to the disturbing escalations in the prevalence of chronic NCDs, especially coronary heart diseases, diabetes mellitus, hernia, liver disorders and changing profiles of cancer. The underlying feature common to these developments is the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity in the urban middle classes.[15] India ranks among the ten nations with the highest obesity rate worldwide, and a closer look on Hyderabad's health situation also gives evidence to this fact.[16] About thirty per cent of the city's middle-class adolescents are overweight and ten per cent are obese (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007). As childhood and adolescent obesity persist during adulthood, these findings are alarming. There are two major factors responsible for the increasing number of obese urban Indians. Firstly, obesity results from the over-consumption of calories and too little exercise. Studies recently conducted in Hyderabad clearly show that there is a general tendency among higher-income families towards high-energy foods such as fast-food snacks, carbonated beverages and sweets in combination with too little physical exercise. The city also boasts a ravenous appetite for sweets of all kinds. Sweets are nowadays obligatory at any social occasion and during any visit to someone's home. Particularly children quickly learn to prefer tastes, flavours and even textures that are associated with

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[15] Obesity is an excess of body fat that frequently results in a significant impairment of health. According to the Body Mass Index (BMI), somebody is overweight when they have a BMI ranging between 25 and 29.9 and obese if their BMI is 30 or more.

[16] Nutrition consultants in Hyderabad also increasingly face the problem of very skin, zero-calorie dieting young females following the western-style obsession with beauty.

calorie-dense foods. Obesity is also related to family size and birth order. The majority of obese children belong to nuclear families and are the eldest or the only child.

The second factor responsible for the increasing number of obese urban Indians are genetically induced metabolic disorders, consisting of hypertension, insulin resistance, abdominal obesity and dylipidemia. Hyderabad also exhibits a dramatically increasing incidence of diabetes and impaired glucose tolerance due to unhealthy lifestyle modifications (less movements, more fattening foods, higher stress). In the city, seventeen per cent of adults are estimated to suffer from the disease, India's highest concentrations and three times the share of two decades ago (Mohan, Madan, Jha, Deepa, & Pradeepa, 2004). Several local hospitals, also known as the 'sugar hospitals', are devoted to the illness. Diabetes and related complications also have strong economic implications for patients.[17] Middle-class diabetics often exhaust a quarter or more of their income on medication and care, while most of health insurance policies do not cover this disease. On the other hand, a small segment of urban consumers are becoming more and more aware of health-related issues and are increasingly concerned about the nutritional content and functional value of their food. There is an increasing demand on 'light' products with reduced fat and calories, and a shift to nutritionally fortified food products, for example, iodised salt, vitamin fortified fruit juices, digestion supporting breakfast cereals or calcium-enhanced milk products (Lohr & Dittrich, 2007).

15.5 The Issue of Localising Sustainable Food Practises

In the emerging Indian megacity of Hyderabad research on the food question is not a big issue, and knowledge about the metropolitan food system and its environmental impact on which to base action is still very scarce. Pilot research projects carried out under the framework of the 'Sustainable Megacity Hyderabad' project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in 2006 focused on food insecurity, nutritional status and health, consumer cooperatives, street food vendors, and changing food purchasing and consumption patterns. They were the first studies of the kind and the collected data on nutritional status were the first compiled in well over a decade (Helmerich, Moid, Hanisch, & Wulf, 2007; Lohr & Dittrich, 2007; Smith et al., 2007; The Community Studies Team, 2007; Wipper & Dittrich, 2007). All these studies showed that every sub-system of Hyderabad's food scenario is subject to dynamic re-framing following changes in structural characteristics of the urban society and wider trends of the globalising economy. New lifestyle patterns of the city's affluent classes, their growing demand for highly processed, fast and convenience food and a higher amount of kitchen appliances accompanied by the shift to motorised purchasing practises reflect the

[17] People with diabetes are 25 times more likely to develop blindness, 17 times more likely develop kidney disease, two to four times more likely to develop myocardial infarction and twice as likely to suffer a stroke than non-diabetics.

trend towards westernised standards of energy and natural resource consumption. This goes hand in hand with a new aesthetisation and emotionalisation of food consumption, which put forth new patterns of nutrition practises and 'event consumption'. These attitudes of consumerism with high environmental impact substantially contribute to the overutilisation of the natural resource base of the region resulting in deteriorating environmental conditions and contributing significantly to the city's growing CO2-emissions.[18] High concentrations of noise, air and water pollution, accompanied by unsolved problems of waste generation also pose serious constraints to sustainable development. Since 2001 the number of privately owned cars in Hyderabad has approximately doubled. In the narrow old town streets and along the aterial roads air pollutants and noise emissions already exceed the World Health Organisation's threshold values by more than tenfold (Gosh, 2007). The city also produces about 3,000 tons of solid waste every day, and most of it is not generated by the poor. Low-income groups produce only 0.5 kg of solid waste per head and day, whereas the consuming middle classes produce up to 2.0 kg per head. Thus the low-income groups are the losers of the modernisation process in two senses: They cannot afford modern consumer items and at the same time they suffer most from the consequences of extensive resource exploitation and environmental pollution, not to mention the widely ignored food insecurity and nutrition problems of the disadvantaged population groups.

The above-mentioned pilot research studies also revealed, that technical approaches alone will not suffice to achieve a resource-extensive, socio-economically sustainable and low-emission urban food system for Hyderabad. A more holistic and contextualised perspective is required that also has to take into account the complex socio-political nature of food provisioning and food consumption of all segments of society. Food consumption must therefore be understood as a socially and institutionally created set of practises, or as Tischner and Kjaernes (2007) stated:

> Food consumption is a form of social action and cannot be reduced to a conscious decision at the point of purchase. We have to consider that consumption practices happen within social institutions like the family, work, and the marketplace and that these practises are themselves institutionalised.

For the Indian context it always has to be emphasised that food-consumption issues must both be linked to questions of food and nutrition security and be embedded in wider production-consumption systems.[19] The poverty-stricken population of Hyderabad lacks both adequate food intake and nutrious food products (The Community Studies Team, 2007). The studies also clearly pointed out that any attempts to change the lifestyles of the affluent population groups in accordance with the

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[18] According to Myers and Kent (2003) the Indian middle classes account for less than one-eighth of the year 2000 population but two-fifth of the country's purchasing power. With respect to the major sector of transportation, primarily cars, they accounted for eighty-five per cent of private spending. Their per-capita energy consumption has been causing CO2-emissions fifteen times greater than those of the disadvantaged population groups; see also Reusswig et al. (2005).

[19] For the theoretical framework on sustainable consumption practises see the contribution of Spaargaren and van Koppen Chapter 5 in this volume.

struggle against climate change has to address the questions of whether climate change matters to people and if so, or if not, how and why. Otherwise every attempt to communicate the issue and to change purchasing and consumption patterns is doomed to fail.

Another important facet of the 'big issue' Food Sustainability Transition would involve a fundamental change in direction towards localising rather than globalising food activities. Experiences from Europe and the US reveal that localisation, essentially a process of decentralisation, entails far less social and environmental upheaval and induces a lot of benefits for many instead of concentrating the food business in the hands of a few mega-corporations (Spaargaren, 2004). Sustainably decentralising food retailing in the Hyderabad context would imply the protection and strengthening of the already existing retail system of demand-oriented *kirana*-shops and street food vendors, which is highly resource-extensive, low-emission and employment-generating. Localisation of food systems also means that farmers can grow varieties that are best suited to local climate and soils, allowing flavour and nutrition to take precedence over transportability, shelf life and the whims of the global market. The strengthening of community markets would also give farmers an incentive to diversify their crops which leads itself to organic methods, since crops are far less susceptible to pest infections. The role of consumers in this context could simply be to substitute products from their region for products produced far away to select seasonal products and purchase closer to the local/regional producers, for example, by going to farmer markets. From the consumer perspective, the implications and scope of daily food routines will depend on how food mileage and sustainability issues are reflected in product information and branding, product diversity, quality, price and mode of distribution. All these issues and the socio-cultural and political potential for more sustainability in the food scenario of Hyderabad must be studied locally and more specifically.

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Chapter 16
Highly Qualified Employees in Bangalore, India: Consumerist Predators?

Hellmuth Lange, Lars Meier, and N.S. Anuradha

Abstract This chapter discusses the lifestyles of the upper tier of the Indian new middle classes. Its members can be seen as a pilot group which is about to adopt a "Western" way of life. But there is little evidence that environmental and social responsibility were basically being rejected, as suggested by the predator hypothesis. The data suggests that many in this group like to shop and consume, however, in a businesslike and sober way, trying to pragmatically balance diverging concerns. Ecological concern is just one among many, and clearly one that is accorded minor importance. But about one third of the sample explicitly repudiates excessive consumption and can be seen as amenable to elements of the ecological and the civil society discourses – which is the same pattern as can be found in the West.

Keywords New middle classes · Consumption · India · Social and environmental concern

16.1 Introduction

Agenda 21 of the United Nations (1992) sets out two primary objectives: the defeat of unsustainable modes of industrial production and the defeat of unsustainable patterns of consumption. The rise of the new middle classes[1] in rapidly developing countries, due to the environmental and social impact of their lifestyles, is treated as an aggravating cause of scarce resources and an increase in CO^2 emissions (cf. Myers & Kent, 2003; Winters & Yusuf, 2007). The negative impact of these lifestyles has been illustrated by a growing ecological footprint (cf. Flavin & Gardner, 2006: 4).

H. Lange (✉)
Artec Institute, Research Center for Sustainability Studies, University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany
e-mail: lange@artec.uni-bremen.de

[1] In view of the heterogeneity of the group, we prefer to speak here of the new middle classes in the plural.

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A prominent example of this is India. In 2000 its overall number of "new consumers" was estimated at more than 132 millions (cf. Myers & Kent, 2003). The spending on consumer durables in India grew by 53% between 2003 and 2004 while passenger car sales grew by about 25% in the same period (cf. Ryan, 2006). In fact, its new middle classes even began to epitomize the concern that the demands of Agenda 21 might not be met at all. Even worse, with their consumerist lifestyle and by their growing number, it was feared that they would even erode the humble progress that had been achieved toward a more sustainable future so far, mostly in the realm of the early industrialized countries. In this context, they stand accused of lacking any sense of social and environmental responsibility, thus being a congeries of "consumerist predators" marked by "complete insensitivity to any social concern" (Varma, 1998; cf. Gupta, 2000).

16.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

There is no doubt that much empirical evidence can be adduced in favor of these kinds of reproaches and concerns. But, at the same time, a couple of severe objections need to be raised. In our view, labeling the "new middle classes" as passive, short-sighted and naïve consumers caught by simple messages of consumption and unable to reflect critically on their behavior recalls the colonial picture of India as the unenlightened "Orient" (cf. Said, 1978). Moreover, it raises more questions than it can answer. This applies particularly to the following:

– How relevant are national varieties of modernization?
– How homogeneous or heterogeneous are the "new middle classes"?
– Is globalization restricted only to bad habits?

16.2.1 How Relevant are National Varieties of Modernization?

In modernization theory, the degree to which there really are different "modernities" is controversial (cf. Eisenstadt, 2000), mainly as a consequence of historical path dependencies (see Schmidt Chapter 2 and Kuhn Chapter 3 in this volume). But it is beyond question that, in spite of significant similarities between different countries, there are, coexisting, "varieties of modernity" (Schmidt, 2006) or "varieties of capitalism" (Streeck & Yamamura, 2004). This applies also to the effects of globalization. The peculiarities of nation states, such as specific political histories and socio-economic structures, remain powerful forces in shaping the development of particular countries in specific ways. Therefore, the new middle classes are not acting in a uniform space of global modernity. Instead, their social activities are embedded in particular national settings which, in the context of different policy fields, institutional settings and cultural frameworks, lead to specific shapes of modernity. Hence, in spite of a growing number of common features, French modernity is, for example, different from German modernity, and Chinese modernity is different from Indian modernity, today and tomorrow too. This also applies to lifestyles. In consequence, and paradoxically, the globalization of lifestyles needs to be examined within the framework of individual country specifics.

Acknowledging that "there is no homogeneity within civilizations" (Schmidt, 2006: 88) and that societies comprise different cultures and identities (cf. Bourdieu, 1986; Hall, 1991), our survey focuses on parts of the new middle class in Bangalore as a specific urban setting in India. The city of Bangalore is presented widely as the city of the information society (cf. Heitzman, 2004; Nair, 2005), with unique structures such as global interconnections, above-average purchasing power of a large number of young professionals and related infrastructure such as bars, shopping malls, clubs and gated communities.

16.2.2 How Homogeneous or Heterogeneous are the "New Middle Classes"?

A second dimension of heterogeneity characterizes the internal structure of the new middle classes. It is reflected by the evident problems of finding a consensual term (cf. Favero, 2005: 18). Besides "new middle class" (Säävälä, 2006; Fernandes, 2006) other terms such as "new rich" (Robinson & Goodman, 1996), "new urban middle class" (Nijman, 2006), "new consumers" (Myers & Kent, 2003) or "middle class" (Favero, 2005) are in use. Consequently, the size of the group varies considerably depending on the use of the parameters to determine it. This problem has been addressed in the introduction of this volume. But whatever the criterion might be, there is no such a thing as a homogeneous social group, let alone a milieu. This can be demonstrated using the relatively simple criterion of purchasing power. The Indian National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) differentiates between consumption patterns based on the availability of particular commodities (cars, two-wheelers, or air-conditioning systems) according to five income classes (NCAER, 2005). A different analysis also based on income and consumption patterns (cf. KPMG, 2005) leads to similar results as shown in Table 16.1.

In other words, although in the media, and particularly in advertising, (cf. Mazzarella, 2003) the "new middle classes" are commonly addressed as a homogenous social group, they are actually rich in significant internal socio-economic and – consequently – socio-cultural divisions. As Fernandes rightly emphasizes, it is "a small segment of urban upwardly mobile people that has provided the basis for the discursive production of the image of 'the new middle class'" (Fernandes, 2000b: 89, see also Fernandes Chapter 12 in this volume). Considerable parts of this group are less well off and are even burdened with debt (cf. Nijman, 2006; Scrase, 2006). As far as its real socio-cultural heterogeneity is concerned, until now, only limited empirical knowledge has been compiled. Thus, the "new middle class" is still a "mysterious class" (cf. Nijman, 2006). Moreover, "new middle class" is an abstract collective term rather than an empirically meaningful one.

Table 16.1 Social Structure of India

The classes	Number of households (in millions) 2005–06
Rich (Above Indian Rupees 215,000) Own cars, PCs, luxury items	6
Consumers (INR 45,000–215,000) Own bulk of branded consumer goods, 70% of two-wheelers, refrigerators	75
Climbers (INR 22,000–45,000) Have at least one major durable (TV, mixer, sewing machine)	78
Aspirants (INR 16,000–22,000) Have bicycles, radios, fans	33
Destitute (Less than INR 46,000) Hand-to-mouth existence	17

Source: KPMG (2005), from Marketing Whitebook 2003–2004

In any event, there can be no doubt that in India, just as in other countries, the middle classes consist of different groups in terms of income, lifestyles, and working conditions. (cf. Favero, 2005; Fernandes, 2006; Nijman, 2006; Mawdsley, 2004). The Indian middle classes also differ in milieu, race, caste, and gender (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2007; Rhadakrishnan, 2008) As a consequence, and depending on the lifestyle specifics of distinct milieus, their attitudes and everyday routines in general, and their attitudes, with respect to social and environmental responsibility in particular, are similarly diverse.

Hence, empirical sociological research has to decide which group and which specific local setting should take centre stage. In our analysis the focus is on highly qualified employees (HQEs) working in multinational companies in Bangalore. This specific category of Indian society, in 2006, comprised, among others, 1.3 million professionals working within the IT-ITES[2] sector, 930,000 of them working in its export segment (cf. NASSCOM, 2006). The decision to draw on this particular group was made for two reasons: (1) for its purchasing power as a basic prerequisite for enabling decisions in favor of or against the kind of products that take center stage of the debate on unsustainable consumption; (2) for the diverse contacts that many members of this group have with the Western world, often due to particular requirements of their job.

[2]ITES, Information Technology Enabled Service, is defined as outsourcing of processes that can be enabled with information technology and covers diverse areas like finance, HR, administration, health care, telecommunication, manufacturing etc.

16.2.3 Is Globalization Restricted to "Bad Habits"?

Actually, there still is a considerable level of temporary migration of professionals out of India, especially to Australia, North America or Western Europe (cf. Lakha, 2005; Voigt-Graf, 2004); as a consequence, there is an established Indian Diaspora around the world (cf. Vertovec, 2000), and many of its members, as a particular feature of their work settings or just due to family based relations, are part of global information networks. Thus, they can be seen as being part of a global network society which has come into being as a result of different transnational flows (cf. Castells, 1996). Watching Western media products, buying Western products, communicating by e-mail or phone, travelling or migrating by plane – all of these activities are considered conducive to new identities, which exceed the limitations of more traditional local and national identities. In combination with the group's above-average purchasing power, this could in fact foster the mentality that is at the centre of the discourse on "consumerist predators" and an alleged "complete insensitivity to any social concern" (Varma, 1998).

Especially with regard to consumption, prominent scholars see globalization as an eraser of cultural differences, leading to a standardized global culture (cf. Bauman, 2000). From this perspective, consumption, of more or less identical consumer goods and, accordingly, similar habits, is a key driver of global cultural homogenization (cf. Waters, 1995: 139 f.). This understanding is also a core assumption of the term "McDonaldization". The term refers to "the process by which principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American Society as well as the rest of the world" (Ritzer, 2004: 1). Following this assumption, the growing "new middle class", having at its disposal the necessary purchasing power for buying "global" products, can be seen as most relevant promoters of McDonaldization outside North America, Australia, and Europe.

In fact, its members can afford, although to differing extents, products which are both makers of a more pleasant life and highly significant status symbols. Buying cars, TVs, expensive clothes and kitchen appliances, or visiting up-market restaurants, shopping malls, theme parks, or cinemas means living a Western lifestyle and, thus, being somehow part of the West. This image is not limited to the realms of advertisement and the movie industry (cf. Fernandes, 2000a). In the social sciences too, the focus on the new middle classes in Asia (cf. Chua, 2000; Robinson & Goodman, 1996; Sen & Stivens, 1998; Liechty, 2003) is mainly on their consumption patterns and their cultural addiction to, or proclivity for, the West (for India c.f. Lakha, 1999; Säävälä, 2006; Favero, 2005). In accepting this view, two questions arise: (1) Why should the new middle classes spread only bad habits, in particular habits that have a negative impact on the sustainability balance of their countries or even of the whole world? (2) Is consumption the only conduit for transmitting Western values and habits?

According to the theory of reflexive modernity, with the process of modernization, society, which includes political decision-makers, citizens groups and individuals, is driven to acknowledge the emergence of and to cope with severe unintended side effects of former decisions in both social and environmental respects (cf. Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994). Consequently, political decision-makers are forced to acknowledge and to face the related challenges. Moreover, within specific milieus, developing critical positions against problematic aims and effects of earlier modernization processes can be seen as a predictable reaction. Rejecting consumerism has proved to be one core element of such reactions. As has been demonstrated in most OECD countries, specific taste in choosing consumer goods and concern for the environment emerge, not at least, as core features of lifestyles in the realm of post-materialist milieus, accompanying wealth (cf. Inglehart, Basanez, & Moreno, 1998; Franzen, 2003).

Individualization can be considered as a second feature of reflexive modernity. Individualization is an ambiguous process: on the one hand, it leaves behind traditional frames of societal embeddedness and related social obligations and commitments, which is in tune with the predator hypothesis. On the other hand, individualization can also be a prerequisite and a driver of personal commitments both in social and ecological terms (cf. Berking, 1996).

Therefore, the question arises as to why this should be fundamentally different for the new middle classes in developing countries. Why shouldn't, for example, Indian HQEs, having a good education and a good income and, living a more or less non-traditional lifestyle, have social and ecological concerns which are at least in part similar to those of members of the post-materialist milieu in western countries such as the UK, Germany or France? In other words, why should the global spread of consumption patterns be restricted to the "bad habit" of rejecting social and environmental responsibility while the "good habit" of assuming such responsibility is restricted to genuine Westerners?

Moreover, consumption is not the only way of spreading values and habits globally. In sociology, the working process, especially, has always been acknowledged as a powerful force for socialization. Why shouldn't this apply to working in multinational companies, thus making them an important seedbed for the diffusion of values, attitudes and routines? Actually, the post-Fordist working culture in multinational companies focuses explicitly on personal responsibilities to be assumed by the employees as a functional requirement in the realm of cooperative working structures and flat hierarchies. Why then shouldn't related orientations and routines in this sphere also have a supportive function in fostering the spread of orientations towards social and ecological responsibility in a more general sense? Some companies, including Indian companies such as Infosys, have even made this a core element of their corporate identity and accountability (see also Kapur, 2007: 401). This being the case, it seems likely that companies can also have some influence in respect of social and/or environmental concerns of highly qualified employees working in such an ambience.

16.2.4 Assumptions

Against the background of the questions raised it does not make much sense, in India and in other industrializing countries as well as in OECD countries, to look for values, attitudes, and lifestyles which place people clearly on either the "consumerist predator" side or the side of social and ecological concern. Lifestyles are always somewhere in-between (Lange, 2000, 2005; Reusswig, 2007). Instead, it is far more interesting to explore the specific profiles of attitudes and everyday practices of particular groups of the new middle classes in particular countries, and how conducive to a more sustainable future in terms of both social and ecological responsibility these may be. These may also comprise attitudes and routines that add up to assuming responsibility in respect of social and/or environmental concerns – as taken for granted in the US and European countries. Working in globally engaged companies is not only a promising framework for above-average wages which provide the financial basis for resource-consuming lifestyles; due to a comparatively high level of personal experience in international cooperation, it is also a framework that could accelerate the adoption of "post-materialist" values, attitudes, and habits, including the acceptance of social and ecological responsibility. All of these reasons have been arguments for focusing on Indian HQEs working in multinational firms in Bangalore.[3]

In order to test our assumptions we gathered data on two aspects:

(1) What is the role that *consumption* plays for the respondents? The following items served as indicators here: (i) The meaning of visiting *shopping malls* and the criteria that are seen as relevant when it comes to two costly purchases: (ii) buying a *new car* and (iii) choosing the current *place of residence*.
(2) To what extent do the respondents accept *social and environmental responsibility*? Here, indicators are the acceptance of responsibility for social groups beyond the narrow confines of the family and the acceptance of personal responsibility for the reduction of social and environmental problems as a contrast to the responsibility attributed to the government.

The questionnaire comprised questions on both attitudes and habits in the sense of practical behavior.

The responses have been correlated with two variables: "duration of stay abroad" and "age". *Duration of stay abroad* serves to test the hypothesis that the professional and related social context is favorable to adopting "western" values, attitudes and habits that imply some acceptance of social and environmental responsibility and some distance with respect to consumerism, thus balancing coexisting consumerist orientations. *Age* serves as a variable for testing alternative explanations: whether consumption can be seen as a kick that is most strong when it is a biographically new experience, losing at least part of its thrill when people mature and become

[3]Our findings are based on a quantitative analysis of data generated by an online-questionnaire. The respondents (N = 143) consist of highly qualified Indian employees working in the IT and manufacturing sector in Bangalore. All of their companies are engaged in Indo-German cooperation, most of them are German companies. Thus, all of the respondents work in an environment where different cultural traditions meet. The daily work of the HQEs is characterized by continuous contact and cooperation with non-Indian, mostly German, expatriates and team members stationed in Germany.

used to elevated levels of consumption. A contrary distribution of answers – higher levels of social and environmental concern among younger people, lower levels among more mature respondents – could mean that social and environmental concern is part of a generational process rather than a matter of individual biographic experience: social and environmental concern as elements of postmodern attitudes and habits which are part of a more or less omnipresent general culture, impacting more easily and more directly on younger people since they are not yet socialized in a more traditional understanding of modernity ("non-reflexive modernity" according to Beck et al., 1994). Rejecting social and environmental responsibility can be seen as the attitudinal reverse of the postmodern coin. It is this side of the coin which is behind the allegation that the new middle classes are consumerist predators.

16.3 Empirical Findings

Our HQEs proved surprisingly well-suited to analyzing the questions posed[4]: 75% (2) of them classify their lifestyle *as representative of a new more open India.* In other words, they widely accept the leading cultural role with which they are widely ascribed as significant representatives of the new middle classes, with regard to lifestyles in general and consumption in particular. Moreover, 65% (2) also see themselves as *part of a new more environmentally-friendly India*. But, certainly, this self-understanding places all the more emphasis on the question of what exactly they mean by "more open" and "more environmentally-friendly"?

16.3.1 Consumerism

Shopping Malls are symbols of a postmodern urban setting. They are widely seen as the iconic site of both a standardization of the product range on a worldwide scale and of unrestrained consumption (cf. Shields, 1992). Hence, the current opinions and shopping routines of the HQEs regarding Bangalore's malls provide an insight into their attitudes to consumption.

For 73% (2) of respondents, buying *particularly attractive goods* is by far the most approved motivation for visiting shopping malls. More than half of the respondents (55%/2) explicitly stated that they *often like to shop and take time for this.* Hence, consumption seems to be an important element of every day activities and, as

[4]We used a five-part scale ranging from "completely true" to "completely not true". In order to come to more concise profiles we aggregated the answers to a three-part scale consisting of a positive option (completely true or partly true), a negative option (not true or completely not true), and an intermediate option (moderately true). Here and in the following we mostly refer to the aggregated positive option. Additionally, in order to give an idea of the total distribution of the answers, the median values are displayed in brackets. They can stretch from 1 = greatest consent possible to 5 = greatest dissent possible.

can be presumed, of personal and cultural identity too. In as much do these answers confirm the prevalence of a consumerist lifestyle in the pejorative sense of the term – and in negative contrast to the lifestyle of an "old middle class" (Varma, 1998)? There are at least a few statements which can be seen as softening and in parts even questioning the consumerist hypothesis: for many of the respondents the fun aspect of shopping – often seen as a prime element of a post-modern ardor – is at most a secondary motivation for visiting malls. Only 40% (3) of the interviewees go there because *purchases in other stores are too boring.* And for just 25% (4) malls are *places to meet friends.*

Moreover, considerable numbers of the respondents are explicitly critical about malls: 41% (3) of them do not like to go shopping in malls because they are *too expensive*, which might also be seen, at least in parts, as an indicator of the fact that, in terms of purchasing power, even the HQEs as part of the upper tier of the new middle classes are far from being a homogeneous group. Irrespective of the relevance of socio-economic disparities, there are also considerable reservations in terms of subjective preferences: 45% (3) of the respondents affirm the statement: *I try to finish off my purchases as fast as possible*. 25% (4) bluntly assert: *I do not like to go shopping in malls since I find them exaggerated*. Thus, the majority of the HQEs of our sample do like to consume, but most of them do it in a more businesslike and sober way. A significant proportion of the respondents is explicitly critical.

Interestingly, there is no significant variance in the answers to any of these questions with regard to "duration of stay abroad" and "age" – with three exceptions: those who spent more time abroad more "often like to shop and take time for this" (0.227; 0.002)[5] whereas age is significantly correlated with the more skeptical assertions "I try to finish off my purchases as fast as possible" (0.219; 0.002) and "I do not like to go shopping in Malls since I find it exaggerating" (0.197; 0.007). Both "age" and "duration of stay abroad" indicate the relevance of biographical processes. Notwithstanding, the results seem to be inconsistent: open-mindedness to consumption versus more intense reservations at the same time. Age, however, seems to be the more significant variable.

Very similar proportions can be found when it comes to the reasons behind particular purchasing decisions. Today, *cars* belong to the most accepted symbols of modernity and prosperity, all over the world. Unsurprisingly, some of the responses can be ranged as confirming the relevance of this aspect. But nearly all of the results can equally be interpreted, once again, as an expression of a rather businesslike and sober orientation, with purchasers mainly interested in good quality and full access to a whole spectrum of technical features available today that make motoring comfortable and pleasant. Moreover, there is a noticeable internal hierarchy of

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[5]Statements regarding statistical significance of correlations are based on asymmetric ordinal measure of association according to Somers' d. They can take values between –1 and +1. If the variables are statistically independent, the value of Somers' d is equal 0. The sign indicates weather the association is positive or negative. Additionally, the level of statistical significance is displayed (p-value): $< 0.05 =$ significant, > 0.05 not significant.

relevance given to the different criteria offered: nearly 90% (1) of the respondents want the interior to be *well protected against the noise and the fumes from the street*, a demand that is easily understandable against the background of the daily traffic jam of Bangalore. 86% (1), of them want the car to be *well equipped*. 81% (1) want it to be *spacious* for bringing the family along. All of these criteria are not emblematic of consumerist ardor. This applies to the following, too: for 74% (2) of the respondents it seems important that a car is *reasonably priced.* A clearly smaller part of them want the car *to be fast* (61%/2). For only 59% (2), it is important that *it is not an Indian make, but European, Japanese, or American* The least relevance, however, is attributed to pollution: only 53% (2) of the respondents opt for a car that *pollutes the air very little.*

In other words, all the criteria offered find strong support (median values between 1 and 2 out of five possible points). Within this framework, there is a clear differentiation into three groups. Pragmatic considerations find the greatest agreement while considerations based on prestige issues meet with less agreement. A low level of pollution proves to be the least accepted criterion.

With respect to the variables "duration of stay abroad" and "age" the following picture emerges: while four of the items show a co-variance with "age", more extended experience abroad does not lead to any statistically significant correlations. Interestingly three of them belong to the group that indicates a pragmatic perspective. With the increase in age there is a greater proportion that wants the car to be "reasonably priced" (0.325; 0.000) and sufficiently "spacious so that I can take my family along" (0.284; 0.000). They also disagree with the claim that the car should "not be an Indian make, but European, Japanese or European" (–0.197; 0.003). The forth item where the answers correlate significantly with an increase in age expresses the environmental concern that the car should "pollute the air very little" (0.304; 0.000). Apparently, growing affluence which, in our sample, goes along with increases in age does not prevent both a pragmatic stance on consumption and a more strict stance when it comes to pollution as a core issue of environmental concern. At the same time, these data cannot confirm the hypothesis that staying abroad strengthens the environmental concern.

Choosing a *place of residence* is more than a pragmatic decision. It is a matter of distinctive and conspicuous consumption, too. The responses to the different criteria offered here are rather close to each other: clustering around 50%. Only 44–46% (3) affirm that they choose their apartment because of the *architecture and the furniture,* because there are *predominantly people like me*, or because it *has a lot of space for me*. Between 31% and 37% explicitly negate the relevance of these criteria. A number of other features which are less distinctive in social respect are rated as equally important (*place of work is close, reliable neighborhood)* or even more important (54–57%/2) such as *parents live close by, I have my peace there, there is a lot of green, there is a shopping centre, a good school, and good medical facilities* in the neighborhood. The most accepted criteria represent a pragmatic choice rather than the quest for social dictinction:

With respect to the variables "duration of stay abroad" and "age" respectively the more socially distinctive items (such as architecture and furniture; predominantly people like me in the neighborhood) do not show any significant positive correlation. Instead, those HQEs who stayed abroad negate the importance of stylish architecture and furniture more than those who stayed at home (–0.190; 0.019). Moreover, they insist more strongly on both having “their peace and not being disturbed by others” (0.183; 0.050) and having a “reliable neighborhood” (0.292; 0.000). The latter is true as well for the more aged respondents. These also disclaim to insist upon a neighborhood of “people like me” (–0.019; 0.019).

As a balance to the topic of consumerism, the following can be determined in the cases of the fields “car” and “residence”: the HQEs of our sample do like to consume, but most of them do it in a businesslike and sober way. A significant proportion of the respondents is explicitly critical. Environmental concern, however, is the least pronounced concern. In case age and duration of stay abroad show statistically significant correlations at all this is pertaining to those items that indicate non-consumerist attitudes.

16.3.2 Social and Environmental Responsibility

We also addressed the question of if, and how, the interviewees accept social and environmental responsibility. Given the fact that a large number 75% (2) of them look at themselves as part of a “more open new India”, we wanted to know whether they associated with their *professional success* a commitment to assuming more responsibility.

Unsurprisingly, 81% (1) rated their professional success primarily as a result of *my own performance* but even more attributed their success to the *support of my family* (84%/2). In the Indian context this is quite comprehensible. Family is still a key factor in nearly every respect. Professional success is merely one dimension of this circumstance. However, only 38% (3) of respondents agreed that *support is primarily a task of the state, less that of the individual,* while 33% of them explicitly reject this statement.

Moreover, professional success is widely seen as a particular obligation to support others *(I now support more strongly. . .)*. But what does this mean in practice? Again, the answers might reflect specifics of the Indian society. Since there is, if any, only weak support from the state, it is plausible that *the parents* are acknowledged to be the most supported group (84%/1), to a clearly lesser extent *the family* (64%/2). However, an even greater proportion of the respondents (71%/2) claim to give greater assistance now to *friends*. Is this a first indicator of a historical shift from a traditional orientation with a focus on family-bound relations to a more individualized “post-modern” orientation with a focus on friendships which are admittedly based upon a deliberate personal decision? In any event, they are not the only category of persons that are given support as an obligation that is accepted as deriving from the personal professional success. A considerable proportion of our respondents additionally support *social groups* (43%/3). A further 35% affirm that doing so is “moderately true”. In other words, only a small part of them say this is “not true” or “completely not true” (28%).

Family support increases slightly in the older age groups (0.225; 0.000). With regard to the question of support to other groups, including social and environmental groups, there are no significant differences in the case of both variables.

Another dimension that can serve as a testing ground for the egoism/social responsibility question is the field of perceived *intergenerational problems*. As far as their own children are concerned, only 43% (3) of the HQEs emphasize that their children should *learn professional skills that will help them earn a lot of money* whereas 87% (1) of them want them *to learn skills that will help them gain respect.* Even more approval (95%/1) – the highest rating of all statements in the survey – was given to the statement that in the realm of professional choice they want their children to *choose themselves* and that they *enjoy what they do professionally*. Hence, there is a clear orientation towards individual choice which can be seen as part of a "post-modern" orientation, emphasizing personal responsibility and self-determination. In this context, gaining respect, which is a socially anchored goal, is seen as much more important than the more individualistic, materialistic and, potentially, consumption-related goal of earning a lot of money. However, the dynamics of the on-going cultural change is definitely a concern: 57% (2) are afraid of conflicts with their children *since they are growing up with a different value system*. Only 28% (4) endorse the statement that their children *now and then tend to be very egoistic*. However, in view of the breath-taking cultural change in India, particularly in a city such as Bangalore, this is not an indicator of a strong concern. Regarding "duration of stay abroad" and "age" most of the items considered here show no noteworthy variance.

In parallel, we asked whether and, if so, in what sense our HQEs accept *environmental responsibility*. As a reminder, 65% (2) see themselves as *part of a new more environmentally-friendly India,* and 53% (2) support the statement: *If all of them would live as I do, then the environment would be better.* At the same time, 42% (3) bluntly assert, *I do not worry too much about the environment, as I have other worries,* another 19% accept this statement as *moderately true.* Against this background, the claim to represent a "new more environmentally-friendly India" is at least questionable. But the data are not unequivocal. Remarkably, 43% (3) reject the statement that *environmental protection is primarily a task of the state and less that of the individual.* Only 37% of respondents are in favor of the statement.

Yet, attitudes are just one side of the coin. Do they have any practical relevance? The answers are more encouraging than could be expected. 36% (4) of the respondents say that they are *already supporting an environmental group*, 20% (4) have already *been involved in discussions aiming at finding solutions for a particular environmental problem* – quite a remarkable number, even in comparison with European countries such as Germany (cf. Kuckartz & Rheingans-Heintze, 2006). This data disconfirms the view put forward by Varma and others, that there is a general lack of interest and concern for the environment.

More aged HQEs significantly often reject the statement "I do not worry too much about the environment as I have other worries" (–0.226; 0.001) whereas more extended stays abroad go along with supporting environmental groups (0.206; 0.003) and having already been involved in discussions on possible solutions of environmental problems (0.275; 0.002).

16.4 Summary and Conclusions

The Indian HQEs from our sample in Bangalore can be seen as being representative for a significant part of the upper tier of the "new middle classes". On the basis of a high level of qualification, they have been able to achieve superior professional careers. Working in internationally active corporations, mostly German firms, they enjoy both a prestigious job as well as above-average remuneration. This applies particularly in comparison with their former class mates. So, they can be seen as representing the happy few who have succeeded in professional terms as well as in terms of being able to afford a costly lifestyle.

Not surprisingly, our findings show that many of them do like to shop and consume. For a large number, buying expensive consumer goods is an integral part of their aspirations and their everyday lives. So, when it comes to consumption, personal restraint is not high on their list of priorities. In this sense, they can be seen as a pilot group that is striving both to promote as well as to adapt to a Western way of life, thus turning it into a more common lifestyle which, consequently, can no longer be called an exclusively western one.

But are they really "consumerist predators", lacking any sense of either environmental or social responsibility? There is little evidence that could confirm such a view. The data shows that major parts of the group strive to cope with a variety of diverging criteria which are important in combination, so that none can be disregarded. The goal is to come to a pragmatic balance between all of them. In this context, ecological concern is just one concern among many, and clearly one that is accorded minor importance. The result of such coping differs, depending on both the technical-material, functional and economic peculiarities of each of the issues and its particular social and cultural context. However, this is exactly the way the issue is being handled empirically in the "West", too (cf. Hines, Hungerford, & Tomera, 1987; Kaiser, Fuhrer, Weber, Ofner, & Bühler-Ilieva, 2001; Gatersleben, Steg, & Vlek, 2002; Diekmann & Preisendörfer, 2003).

A significant difference from the West, however, results from the fact that the interaction between the rapidly growing part of the population that is able to take the stage as new consumers, on the one hand, and the rise of "the environment" as a political issue, on the other hand, is happening faster in the developing countries than it did in the rich nations of the West. If one takes the boost in private cars as an indicator, then the process started in the USA as early as the 1930s; in Europe in the 1950s. Thus, the whole process of mass motorization stretched over more than half a century. The environment, however, achieved political significance only twenty to thirty years later, since the end of the sixties, not at least as a reaction to the ever-increasing problems of mass motorization. Over twenty to thirty more years, in diverse waves, the environmental topic has developed into a more or less shared concern of major parts of the population. In a country such as India – starting at a clearly lower level of wealth than many of the nations of the West – the whole process has taken shape only since the 1990s, spanning little more than fifteen years from that time on. One can say the same about the rise of the civil society issue. Against this background, the data from our survey clearly shows a faster development. With respect to the time span the western countries had at their disposal, leapfrogging is already happening. The intensity of acceleration of this process is likely to increase rather than decrease during the next one or two decades.

In comparison, the prices of most prestigious consumer goods ensure that newcomers seldom succeed in skipping levels on the ladder of acquiring these goods (see Chua Chapter 6 in this volume). But this is just the reason why future late starters will enter at a stage where environmental and social concern will probably play a more prominent role than it does today.

Admittedly, for the time being, such expectations are hypothetical. But there can be no doubt that, in India as well as in other countries, the rise of the new middle classes has not created a homogenous new class, rather, a variety of different groups and milieus. This is true not only in socio-economic terms, but also in attitudinal respects and in terms of political preferences regarding resource consumption, environmental protection and social responsibility. Although it is evident that most respondents like to consume, only subgroups can be seen as strongholds of consumerist fervor.

Moreover, our data show the contours of a subgroup that, even today, is characterized by a remarkable level of environmental and social concern. Depending on the fields and indicators considered, there is a segment of about 15% to 40% that can be seen as amenable to elements of the ecological and the civil society discourse which is at the heart of Agenda 21, adopted by the UNCED in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Far from being passive and naïve consumers, a considerable proportion of this segment explicitly repudiates excessive consumption. And there is much reason to assume that this orientation will further increase in the future.

Of the manifold factors that impact pace and scope of such change, both age and more extended stays abroad seem to play a relevant – although limited and not concurrent – role as supportive frames of experience and motivation. Hence, the unfolding of social and environmental concern seems to be linked to biographical processes rather than to differences in values, attitudes and habits between younger and older generations. It leaves to be verified by further studies whether and, if so, to what extent age and more extended experience abroad can also be identified as proxies for increases in prosperity. If this could be confirmed it would underline the significance of Inglehard's assumption that also in developing countries such as India environmental concern unfolds primarily in social milieus where basic needs no longer take center stage.

What conclusions can be drawn from these findings? In order to answer this question, it is advisable to recall some experiences that have been made in the West. Empirical findings show that, today, there is a stable and high level of approval regarding all questions that signal environmental awareness and concern. The practical behavior of the citizens, however, continues to lag a great deal behind (for Germany see Kuckartz and Rheingans-Heintze, 2006; Kuckartz, Rheingans-Heintze, & Rädiker, 2007; for France see ifen, 2007; see also Berkhout, Leach, & Scoones, 2003: 19). In the literature there is a wide consensus that this gap is not only due to human or, even more accentuated, moral weakness of the individual (for the "economics of non-selfish behavior" see Meier, 2006); an equally, or even more important dimension is constituted by factors that are only partly in the hands of the individual so that, if at all, the situation cannot be altered substantially in a short span of time or through individual effort (Ajzen, 1991; Tanner, Kaiser, & Wölfing-Kast, 2004).

Such limitations arise from (i) social expectations and practical arrangements within the family, the wider circle of friends and neighbors, and at the workplace. Further limitations arise (ii) from economic factors, such as achievable pay scales and governmental regulations in the form of taxes, financial incentives and institutional regulations (see Reisch & Røpke, 2004; Grunert & Thøgersen, 2005). Other limitations accrue (iii) from material-technical structures. For example, the motor car as the preferred mode of transport can only be left at home if alternative transport facilities are available. Moreover, these have to be efficient, socially acceptable and reasonably priced. If the existing infrastructure does not meet these requirements there is very little that individual citizens can do, even if they do exhibit a high level of environmental concern. Other factors are just as important; and in some respects, even more important. First and foremost, the need for change needs to be politically legitimized and put forward univocally and pertinaciously by the pivotal decision-makers. Additional factors of high relevance are major funds allocated for economic investment, particular skills such as professional knowledge that can assess competing options and arguments, and particular facilities such as a diversity of media that can constitute a forum for public debate and deliberation.

Notwithstanding, the environmental concern of individuals remains substantially relevant with respect to such meta-individual circumstances, too.

Firstly, environmental concern has a central meaning as a starting point for the formation of citizen groups aiming to achieve environment-related goals. At 36%, the share of those of the HQE respondents from Bangalore who declare that they already assisted in such activities is surprisingly high. This is true, even though it may be that in many cases the assistance is restricted to occasional financial contributions. Since the formation and the work of citizens' groups is a basic condition for placing environmental issues on the political agenda of a neighborhood, a city, a region or a country, such financial assistance, or even just moral support, constitutes a significant factor.

Secondly, if environmental questions have become a topic on a given political agenda, the level and focus of civic and environmental concern of the electorate remain key factors, even in the case that most of the citizens are not actively involved in political dispute. They can have a significant political impact nonetheless, as part of an electorate which is supportive or critical with respect to competing policy options – and the related burdens that these might entail with respect to particular interest groups or even larger sections of the population (Diekmann & Preisendörfer, 2003).

Particularly in developing countries, there exists a highly problematic competition and often even an immediate confrontation between the social interests of the poverty stricken populace and "green" projects that embody the interest of parts of the new middle classes. In this context, it is undeniable that actors from the new middle classes have better access to the political decision-makers than people from poorer areas. This is even more of a problem in its practical consequences since in many cases the middle classes have become stylized into the icons of modernization of the country as a whole, due to their characteristics as consumers (see Fernandes Chapter 12, Mawdsley Chapter 13 and Upadhya Chapter 14 in this volume). On the other hand, there is some evidence that specific features of the new middle classes such as higher levels of education and income in particular "have emerged as the best variables for predicting environmental concern" (Chatterjee, 2008: 23).

Conflicting political claims, in an ironic turn, may just give rise to the kind of protest that has been called, "environmentalism of the poor" (Martinez-Alier, 2004). Which of the competing options (or hybrids of them) finally wins the day is an empirical question, since it is largely dependent on the political alliances and coalitions that can be built in favor of either option. Anyway, new political coalitions and related concepts of environmental and societal futures are possible. There are good reasons to assume that, in some of its major aspects, the ensuing debate will not be acted out exclusively as a dispute between poverty stricken groups and parts of the new middle classes, but as a dispute between different sections of the new middle classes, too.

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