

THE MIDDLE CLASS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN ZAMBIA

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Abstract: Using Zambia's 2008 Governance Survey, this paper examines the relationship between class, political participation, trust and values. Three notable findings emerge. First, Zambia's middle class is less likely to vote or demonstrate but more distrusting of political institutions and more likely to oppose bridewealth. Secondly, the conceptualization of the middle class makes a difference depending on the outcome of interest, especially in Africa where correlates of class found elsewhere may not necessarily move in the same direction. Thirdly, the results suggest that the main difference is between wealthier Zambians and the poor instead of the middle class and everyone else. © 2015 The Authors. *Journal of International Development* published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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Class has long occupied an uneasy position in the literature on African politics. On the one hand, in the immediate pre-independence and post-independence period, some observers emphasized a clear distinction between classes. Cooper (1987), for instance, points to colonial thinking in 1940s' Kenya where officials saw strikes in the port city of Mombasa as evidence of a growing class consciousness among workers. In the 1970s, Arrighi and Saul (1973) identified a differentiation between unskilled and skilled workers in Africa and claimed that the latter joined with the elite to form a labour aristocracy that supported a neo-colonial social order, while the former comprised part of the truly progressive and potentially radical proletariat. Young (1986) noted that class became a central theme of analysis in the 1970s as inequality expanded and a radical African intelligentsia emerged. A range of scholars even asserted that a nascent middle class was at the forefront of many of the region's nationalist movements (e.g. Sklar 1963; Wallerstein 1967). On the other hand, Lewis (1965) claimed that there was little class differentiation in the region and therefore few ideological debates. This view was echoed by Bienen and Herbst (1996: 27) with their observation that 'Since class is not a salient cleavage in most African [*sic*] countries, the

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ideological organization of parties and associations is highly fluid, and the major issues are still not well-defined'. Hyden (1983: 22) likewise lamented that 'the existing inequalities in Africa are not crystallizing into class consciousness'.

In recent years, however, socioeconomic shifts in Africa demand a re-thinking of the role and salience of class. In particular, the presumed growth of Africa's middle class raises important questions about the prospects for the region's economic and political transformation. According to the African Development Bank (2011), the region's middle class has grown from 196 to 313 million people between 2000 and 2010. Moreover, between 2000 and 2008, the number of households with discretionary income that can be spent on goods beyond meeting basic needs has risen from 59 to 85 million (Roxburgh *et al.* 2010).¹ The concurrent rise in shopping malls, movie theatres and property construction in a host of African cities has been hailed as a symbol of untapped opportunities for the consumer market and a new, more optimistic chapter for the region's development trajectory (Juma 2011; Knaup & Puhl 2012; Mutch 2012).

Less attention, however, has been given to the political implications of Africa's emerging middle class. A long tradition of scholarship highlights the perceived benefits of a growing middle class for democracy, ranging from a shift away from parochial to more cosmopolitan worldviews (Lipset 1963) to greater demands for accountable government (Birdsall 2007) to providing social cohesion and political stability (Barro 1999). Yet, others have suggested that the middle class' preference for stability translates into support for the status-quo and a reluctance to promote greater democratization when it might be accompanied by potential uncertainty (Chen and Lu 2001; Jones 1998).

This paper probes the relevance of the middle class to democracy in Africa by focusing specifically on Zambia. The country offers useful insights about the orientations and behaviours of the middle class for a number of reasons. Long considered the archetype of economic decline in Africa, Zambia recently graduated from low-income to middle-income status because of resurgence in growth. At the same time, because of the nature of the country's political economy, particularly the centrality of mining, class development and analysis have been a long-standing concern since the country became independent. In addition, it experienced its sixth round of elections in 2011. The ability of the opposition Patriotic Front (PF) to defeat the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in those elections placed Zambia into a small group of African countries that have passed Huntington's (1991) two-turnover test of democratic consolidation.

By using Zambia's 2008 Governance Survey, I focus on the democratic behaviours and attitudes of the country's middle class, concentrating specifically on their degree of political participation, trust in political institutions and values. Using an absolute income-based measure of the middle class, I find that those Zambians who fall into this category are not significantly more likely to have voted in the 2008 by-elections, participate in a political rally or be involved in a demonstration. However, they are more likely to distrust political institutions and are less likely to support the concept of *lobola* (bridewealth).

To elaborate on these findings in more detail, the following section focuses on defining the middle class and discussing the literature linking the middle class to various components of the democratic process. Subsequently, I review the history, drivers and manifestations of Zambia's middle class. I then discuss the Zambian Governance Survey

¹Discretionary income is defined by Roxburgh *et al.* (2010) as having a household income of \$5000 or more, based on 2005 purchasing power parity.

(ZGS) and how it was used to create a measure of the middle class. The findings from statistical analyses on participation, trust and values are then presented before concluding.

1 THE MIDDLE CLASS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

A long intellectual tradition emphasizes that the middle class is associated with a range of outcomes conducive to democracy. With respect to democratic transitions, one of the most cited works in this regard is Moore's (1966) finding that historically, only a revolution led by the bourgeoisie such as that experienced in Britain, France and the USA resulted in a capitalist–democratic system. By contrast, revolutions led by landed upper classes or peasants could result in fascism or communism, respectively. This assessment led to his oft-repeated aphorism of 'No bourgeois, no democracy' (1966: 418). Both Boix (2003) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) argue that the middle class is conducive to democratic transitions because its presence suggests lower inequality. Consequently, the costs to authoritarian elites of expanding the franchise will be lower when there is a larger middle class than if the median voter was poorer.²

Similarly, a range of studies have suggested that the middle class engages in and possess behaviours and attitudes that are instrumental for consolidating democracy. For instance, Easterly *et al.* (2006) finds that countries with a smaller middle class are significantly associated with poor indicators related to voice and accountability, civil liberties and law and order. Similarly, Barro (1999) uncovers that countries with larger middle classes are correlated with better performance on electoral rights and civil liberties. Loayza *et al.* (2012) also note that a larger middle class is associated with higher levels of democratic participation and lower corruption. Birdsall (2007) claims that this constituency acts as a potential check on abuses of economic and political power, and it advocates for greater accountability from public institutions, especially when there might be implications for their private assets.

More broadly, this paper examines three important areas of democratic consolidation that existing research suggests might be influenced by whether one belongs to the middle class: political participation (i.e. 'voice'), trust in institutions and value orientations. Political participation refers to a range of behaviours, the most common of which is voting in elections. Because elections are the main mode through which citizens can exercise their voice, voting represents a strong indication of one's commitment to the democratic process. Although low turnout can sometimes be associated with a sense of satisfaction with the status quo, abstention often indicates a sense of disillusionment with democracy or with the party options being offered (e.g. Adams *et al.* 2006). Over time, low turnout may suggest that citizens believe elections are irrelevant for them and cause them to view democracy as an illegitimate means of expressing their voice and policy preferences.

The relationship between class and voting largely has been examined with respect to looking at incomes. In developed country democracies, scholars have found that those with higher income and more education are more likely to vote (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993;

²Based on historical examples in Europe and Latin America, Rueschemeyer *et al.* (1992) note that the middle classes historically have not been inherently more pro-democratic. Instead, they were more likely to embrace liberal values where they confronted intransigent elites and could create coalitions with the lower classes. Furthermore, they had a greater propensity to accept democracy, especially in Latin America, when conservative political parties existed that could protect their interests (Jones 1998). They were less likely to embrace democracy if lower classes were politically organized by socialist parties because of fear over expropriation as a consequence of expanded suffrage (Huber *et al.* 1993).

Teixeira, 1992; Verba *et al.* 1978, 1995). The rationale is that such individuals have both greater time to participate in politics and a greater awareness of the issues at stake. However, analyses of developing country democracies have in fact found that there is either no difference among income groups or that the poor are more likely to turn out at the polls than other socioeconomic classes (Bratton *et al.* 2010; Yadav 2000). Moreover, in Africa, those who are most likely to vote have been found to be those with only primary education (Bratton *et al.* 2010).

Other measures of participation include political activism between and during electoral periods. Participation in demonstrations and protests or contacting an elected leader represents a continuum of behaviours to convey dissatisfaction with the status quo and a belief that elections alone are not a sufficient means of enforcing responsiveness by politicians. On the one hand, adherents to grievance theories argue that it is those who are economically deprived who are most likely to protest (Gurr 1971). On the other hand, scholars of the resource mobilization school believe that not only money but also education, skills and a network are key for demonstrations to succeed (Brady *et al.* 1995; McCarthy & Zald 1977). In Africa in particular, the middle classes including civil servants, university students and professors led many of the protests during the 1990s in the wake of economically painful structural adjustment programmes and demands for multiparty democracy (Bratton & van de Walle 1992).

Like turnout, political trust can reflect the health of a democracy and its long-term viability. Political trust refers to an orientation towards government based on 'how well the government is operating according to people's normative expectations' (Hetherington 1998: 791). Whether it is better for citizens to demonstrate higher or lower trust is the source of some controversy. On the one hand, Newton and Norris (2000) argue that the erosion in trust of political institutions can have long-term negative consequences for social and political stability. Moreover, some research suggests that higher levels of political trust significantly increase citizens' commitment to uphold their obligations such as paying taxes (Scholz & Lubell 1998). On the other hand, Hardin (1999) suggests that unconditional trust in political institutions may not help strengthen democracy if it simply reflects an uncritical citizenry that blindly accepts the actions of political elites. Consequently, declining rates of confidence in political institutions may be a reflection of an increasingly sophisticated citizenry (Warren 1999). Mishler and Rose (1997: 419) concisely summarize this double-edged element inherent to political trust: 'Democracy requires trust but also presupposes an active and vigilant citizenry with a healthy scepticism of government and willingness, should the need arise, to suspend trust and assert control over government.'

Class in turn may influence one's degree of political trust.³ Those who have greater expectations from their public institutions may also be those with a higher socioeconomic status who might better understand how their institutions should ideally function. Indeed, political trust is more likely to diminish as material well-being improves and citizens evaluate their institutions with more exacting standards (Inglehart 2003; Offe 1999). For instance, in Latin America, Turner and Martz (1997) found that those from the poorest

³There is another line of scholarship that focuses on socioeconomic status and interpersonal trust, rather than political trust. In that literature, some argue that trust carries risk and therefore it is riskier for the poor to trust than the rich. Some studies show that distrust is more common among those with poor education, low income and low status (Banfield 1958; Putnam 2000). Macro studies by Inglehart (1999) and Knack and Keefer (1997) also find that wealthier nations and those with greater income equality have higher levels of social trust than poorer and more unequal ones.

socioeconomic group expressed more confidence in government institutions than any other income group. They argued that those at the higher end of the socioeconomic spectrum are more likely to understand how government institutions actually work and to understand their flaws, leading to less confidence. Sanchez and Senderowitsch (2012) argue that the middle classes in the Dominican Republic are less likely to have institutional trust, leaving them to place fewer demands on government for improvements in public services. By contrast, the poor may be more likely to trust political institutions because this socioeconomic group is most likely to have benefited from clientelistic ties with political elites (Espinal *et al.* 2006).

Finally, drawing on sociological arguments, Inglehart and Welzel (2009) argue that the expansion of the middle class should be accompanied by a shift towards more liberal values. The empirical evidence supporting this view is mixed. Recent surveys have suggested that the middle class do exhibit different values than lower class citizens. For instance, the Pew Research Center (2009) found that a larger share of the middle class than the lower class supports honest elections, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, tolerance of homosexuality and concern over the environment.⁴ Nasr (2009) also echoes these views by arguing that the growing middle class in the Middle East is contributing to a decline in Muslim fundamentalism and an embrace of more cosmopolitan world views. Tang *et al.* (2009) find that in China, those who subjectively identify as members of the middle class or who belong to a middle class profession are more likely to possess a greater preference for democracy. By contrast, Lopez-Calva *et al.* (2011) do not find that the middle classes in six Latin American countries possess distinct values vis-à-vis other socioeconomic groups.

2 DRIVERS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF ZAMBIA'S MIDDLE CLASS

Zambia's middle class originally expanded as a consequence of key policies of the post-independence ruling party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). These included a variety of reforms between 1968 and 1970 that were aimed at the 'Zambianization' of the economy.⁵ For example, loan facilities were established for small entrepreneurs, while retail and wholesale licences were restricted to Zambian citizens. Zambians were also given opportunities to purchase farmland abandoned by white settlers. As a consequence, Zambian participation in sectors such as retail, transport, construction and commercial agriculture became more pronounced (Baylies & Szeftel 1982; Eriksen & Eriksen 1975). At the same time, the government took over a number of formerly foreign-owned industries, leading to a rise in indigenous parastatal managers, especially in the copper-mining sector, which Sklar (1975) labelled as the 'managerial bourgeoisie'.

By mid-1970s, many from this class became key members of the cabinet and legislature. They often benefitted from the distribution of state loans such as through the Credit Organization of Zambia, which in turn required their loyalty to the ruling party (Baylies & Szeftel 1982). But the copper crisis by the end of that decade prompted increasing criticism from business members of the middle class of the one-party system (Baylies & Szeftel, 1982). For instance, Bates (1976) notes how businessmen in the Copperbelt

⁴The study defined the middle class as those with yearly income of \$4286 or greater in standardized international dollars.

⁵A vast number of studies were published in the 1970s and 1980s on class formation in Zambia. For some examples besides those cited here, please see Burawoy (1972), Scott (1978) and Southall (1980).

became strong supporters of the United Progressive Party because of disillusionment with UNIP's inability to deliver on its promises. Economic crisis dominated much of the 1980s as copper revenues fell, and the incomes of mineworkers and their families in Copperbelt contracted. The unsuccessful implementation of seven International Monetary Fund-sponsored stabilization and adjustment programmes between 1973 and 1986 contributed to mounting inflation and unemployment. Businessmen consequently aligned with trade unionists and other elements of civil society in creating the MMD, which finally ousted UNIP in the 1991 elections.

However, continued economic privatizations during the 1990s resulted in large scale deindustrialization. Manufacturing was particularly affected as a flood of secondhand clothes imports replaced domestic textile production, particularly in Lusaka.⁶ The decline in copper prices, coupled with privatizations, resulted in the loss of more than 25 000 jobs in the mining sector over the 1990s (McCulloch *et al.* 2000). Low economic growth and the increasing prominence of the informal economy as many urban Zambians' main source of employment eroded the prospects for further expansion of the middle class.

During the 2000s, however, the economy began to rebound. While gross domestic product per capita growth averaged around -2 per cent between 1990 and 2000, it increased to 3.1 per cent between 2001 and 2011.⁷ Although unemployment and poverty still remain high, there has been evidence of an increase in formal sector jobs. For instance, between 2005 and 2008, formal sector jobs grew from 416 324 to 522 761 (Republic of Zambia 2011), especially in the mining, construction, manufacturing and social sectors. Foreign direct investment has been spurred by the creation of a multi-facility economic zone (MFEZ) in Chambishi in Copperbelt in 2007, which focuses on copper smelting, food processing and manufacturing household appliances, wires and electric cables. As of 2009, the enterprises established in the MFEZ provided 3500 jobs (Felix Mutati speech 2009; UNCTAD 2011; Bräutigam & Xiaoyang, 2011). Due to an initiative launched in 2007 to increase recruitment in the health and education sectors, there also has been a surge of professionals in those areas (UNDP 2011). Furthermore, Zambia's tourism and commercial agricultural sector benefitted from Zimbabwe's political implosion (Carmody 2009).

There are a number of indicators that the country's growth process is occurring in tandem with a revitalization of the middle class. Although the Zambian stock exchange only had 700 investors when it was established in 1994, there are now over 30 000, most of whom are Zambian (Carmody 2009). In addition, personal income taxes have increased from 433.8 to 3877.3 billion Zambian kwacha between 2000 and 2010.⁸ Bank lending to consumers increased by almost threefold between 2004 and 2007 (Baker 2008). The establishment of a credit bureau in 2008 has enabled banks to both assess the creditworthiness of borrowers and in turn to reduce the costs of borrowing that were previously inflated by the perceived high risk of default (Baker 2008). A growing area for the banking sector is the provision of housing mortgages including for a 3700 housing estate in the suburbs of Lusaka (Phillips 2007).

⁶In fact, Situmbeko and Zulu (2004) note that the number of textile manufacturing firms fell from more than 140 in 1991 to just eight by 2002.

⁷See World Development Indicators. Total gross domestic product growth averaged 0.7 % between 1990 and 2000 and 5.7% between 2001 and 2011.

⁸See Zambian Revenue Authority Statistical Bulletin, Annual Revenue 1995–2011:http://www.zra.org.zm/Statistical_Bulletin.html.

Nevertheless, this gradually growing prosperity has not eliminated sizeable inequalities in Zambia. Even in urban areas, there is a visible gulf between those who frequently shop in malls and those who are relegated to shanty compounds with substandard housing and minimal public services. Such inequalities undergirded the political campaign of the PF and its leader, Michael Sata, from 2006 onwards. Journalistic assessments suggested that middle class voters, particularly in Lusaka, tended to shy away from Sata's populist rhetoric and instead preferred the status quo policies of the MMD that contributed to the economic boom from which they benefitted (Redvers 2011; Schatz 2007).

3 CONCEPTUALIZING ZAMBIA'S MIDDLE CLASS

While Zambia is now a multi-party regime with a larger and more diverse middle class, the behaviours and attitudes of this constituency have not been examined in any detail. Consequently, this paper explores middle class orientations using the 2008 ZGS, which was commissioned under the aegis of the country's Fifth National Development Plan for 2006–2010. The survey aimed to assess how well Zambians understand governance processes and institutions and to create a benchmark dataset for future analyses of governance progress within the country. The actual collection of data took place during a one-month period between 20 November and 21 December 2008. The survey covered approximately 4000 households and included both rural and urban areas in all nine provinces.⁹

The ZGS has a number of advantages over alternative survey instruments. One of the most frequently conducted nationally representative surveys in Zambia, the Living Conditions Monitoring Survey, offers comprehensive information on expenditure patterns and respondents' employment status.¹⁰ However, it does not ask respondents any questions related to their political views and participation. By contrast, the Afrobarometer surveys housed by Michigan State University provide a more comprehensive analysis of political engagement for 35 African countries.¹¹ However, these surveys do not collect information regarding income or expenditures, and their most detailed information related to employment only distinguishes between whether someone is employed 'full-time', 'part-time' or is looking for work. Likewise, the World Values Survey offers a wealth of data on respondents' political, policy and social views, but it is a relatively blunt tool for capturing individuals' socioeconomic status.¹² The ZGS rectifies the gaps in these other surveys by including a range of useful socioeconomic data and questions relevant to assessing respondents' degree of political participation and knowledge of the actors and institutions relevant to Zambia's democracy.

The ZGS is particularly useful for determining who actually belongs to Zambia's middle class. Admittedly, determining how to measure the middle class is debatable, with variation between those who rely on sociological approaches compared with economic ones. In the Marxian view, classes are ultimately defined by individuals' 'common

⁹The survey is available from the Central Statistical Office of the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (<http://www.zamstats.gov.zm/nada/index.php/home>).

¹⁰<http://go.worldbank.org/IFS9WG7E00>

¹¹<http://www.afrobarometer.org/>

¹²For instance, the World Values Survey asks respondents to classify what 'step' their incomes fall into but does not provide details about the range of incomes that constitute each step for all of the African countries in its sample, including Zambia.

positions within the social relations of production' in the capitalist system (Wright 1980: 326). Ownership of particular assets including money, physical capital and labour translates into a hierarchy of power relations that advantages some over others. Max Weber viewed adherents to a particular class as those who shared similar life chances as a result of not only their ownership of material assets but also their skills and education (Breen 2005). Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) focus more on occupational categories as identifiers of class positions, noting that labour differentiation is a defining feature of societies that have become increasingly industrialized. They delineate eleven different occupational categories, ranging from high level professionals to semiskilled and unskilled manual workers to smallholder farmers. Focusing on occupation categories and especially labour contract status highlights that economic well-being is very much associated with employment security (Goldthorpe & McKnight 2004).

By contrast, economists have divided their attention between absolute and relative measures of the middle class.¹³ Relative approaches define the middle class according to a threshold corresponding with the nature of the income distribution. For instance, some focus on the middle class consisting of those within a certain range relative to the median income (e.g. Birdsall *et al.* 2000; Davis & Huston 1992). Other scholars have defined the middle class as those falling within a particular segment of the income distribution. For example, Barro (2000) and Easterly (2001) focus on those within the middle three income quintiles, while Alesina and Perotti (1996) define the middle class as those within the third and fourth quintiles of the distribution.

Absolute measures use thresholds based on a particular level of income or expenditure. For instance, Banerjee and Duflo (2008) propose that the middle class consists of those with daily expenditures in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms that fall between 2 and US\$10 per day, while Ravallion (2010) suggests the same minimum threshold but argues for US\$13 per day as the upper threshold because that is equivalent to the poverty line in the USA. Milanovic and Yitzhaki (2002) defined the middle class as those living with a per capita income of US\$12–50 per day at 2005 PPP even as Kharas (2010) decided that US \$10 to 100 per day in PPP expenditures best captures this class.¹⁴

In this paper, the Zambian middle class are primarily defined according to the absolute approach. The reason for this is threefold. Firstly, a relative measure fails to always capture the degree of economic security that middle class status should otherwise signify, especially when an economic shock occurs that would shift the overall income distribution and therefore would alter those who are considered part of this class group. Secondly, one of the paper's main research questions is to understand whether a particular element of being middle class influences democratic behaviours and attitudes. Thus, while income measures alone clearly do not represent an entirely accurate definition of the middle class, the behaviours of a middle class defined in terms of absolute income can therefore be compared to alternative conceptions of the middle class including education and employment status. Thirdly, in much of Africa, including Zambia, the income distribution

¹³Of course, there are also a broad range of sociological views on who belongs to the middle class.

¹⁴Others combine absolute and relative approaches. Birdsall (2010) proposes that the middle class refers to those with an income falling between US\$10 per day in 2005 PPP terms and less than 95 per cent of the income distribution in their own country. Lopez-Calva and Ortiz-Juarez (2011) also use US\$10 per day in PPP as their lower threshold, but they arrive at this cut-off by determining through regression analysis on Latin American data that this is the level where individuals have only a 10 per cent probability of falling into poverty. The justification for their underlying approach is that those who are firmly in the middle class should resist falling back into poverty even when the macroeconomy performs poorly.

Table 1. Distribution of Zambians across income-based classes

Class category [in 2008 US dollars purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita per day]	Shares (%) of total population	Share (%) of voting eligible population
Poor (US\$0–2)	80.7	75.9
Lower class (US\$2–4)	9.5	11.6
Middle class (US\$4–10)	7.8	9.5
Upper middle class (US\$10–20)	1.8	2.6
Upper class (above US\$20)	0.2	0.4

Source: Zambian Governance Survey (ZGS).

N = 15 027; shares are weighted. ‘Eligible’ includes those who were 18 years old as of 2008 and Zambian citizens.

is still highly skewed towards the lower end of the income distribution, meaning that relative measures are effectively still capturing the poor.¹⁵

In determining the income cut-offs for Zambia’s middle class, I predominantly follow the absolute approach adopted by the African Development Bank (AfDB). In estimating the growth of Africa’s middle class between 1990 and 2010, the AfDB (2011) delineated a lower and upper middle class, corresponding with those who live on US\$4 to 10 and US \$10 to 20 per day in 2005 PPP, respectively. The AfDB (2011) classified those between US\$2 and US\$4 per day as the ‘floating middle’, but those in this category are designated as the ‘lower class’ in this paper. Because US\$2 per day is very close to the international poverty line, it is questionable that someone living immediately above this threshold belongs to the middle class.

The distribution of Zambians within each threshold was determined based on the monthly income range into which household heads reported that their income fell.¹⁶ The midpoint of the range was calculated and converted from Zambian kwacha into US dollars in 2008 PPP terms to reflect the year in which the data were collected. This in turn was converted into a daily income level and was divided by the size of the household.¹⁷ This approach results in a broadly similar distribution across thresholds as the AfDB (2011) reports, which uses consumption and expenditure data instead.

As seen in Table 1, a majority of Zambians are still living on less than US\$2 per day. Yet approximately 9.5 per cent were living on more than US\$4 per day in 2008. By contrast, in 1991, 8.5 per cent of the population were living above this line.¹⁸ Because the Zambian population has grown by about four million over that period, this is equivalent to an almost 500 000 increase of Zambians living within that income category.¹⁹

¹⁵For instance, in Zambia, the income range of those between the second and fourth quintiles ranges from US \$0.12 to 1.98 per day in 2005 PPP.

¹⁶This corresponds to question slq6 in the survey questionnaire: ‘What is your total monthly income from all sources?’

¹⁷Although expenditure data are often used in the African context, this is often because income data are difficult to obtain, and a great deal of consumption smoothing occurs in low income households. In other areas of the world such as Latin America and Western Europe, income data are more readily available (Milanovic & Yitzhaki 2002). The advantage of ZGS is that income data are provided.

¹⁸This was estimated using PovCalNet’s database (<http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm>) with a poverty line of US\$4 in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms. The comparison is not perfect because PovCalNet’s figures are based on consumption, rather than income, and its PPP base year is 2005 rather than the 2008 used here. Nevertheless, it gives some idea of the growth in this constituency.

¹⁹See the World Development Indicators database for population figures, <http://datbank.worldbank.org/>

Because the sample of those in the ‘upper middle class’ category is considerably smaller than the US\$4–10 per day sample, the lower and upper middle class categories are combined into one ‘middle class’ grouping in Table 2 and in the subsequent statistical analysis. Those falling within this middle class category possess a number of characteristics that correlate with prominent conceptions and empirical analyses of the middle class (Banerjee & Duflo 2008). For instance, Table 2 highlights that the middle class have, on average, fewer children and more years of schooling compared to their poor and lower class counterparts. They also tend to have greater familiarity with mobile phones and are more likely to pay income taxes. Poor Zambians are overwhelmingly concentrated in subsistence farming. By contrast, middle class Zambians work in the private sector and for the central government, while over one-fifth of their lower class counterparts are self-employed.²⁰ Notably however, even among the middle class, only half of this constituency toils in the formal sector. Moreover, while the middle classes overwhelmingly reside in urban areas, so too do two-thirds of the lower class.

The latter points emphasize that unlike in other regions of the world, various aspects of the middle class are not always uniformly correlated in Africa. For example, rapid urbanization in Africa frequently has been driven by ‘push’ factors in rural areas rather than large scale industrial growth in urban centres (Annez et al. 2010; Myers & Murray 2007). Consequently, there is a dualism to urbanization whereby cities house both the country’s wealthier citizens and low-income informal sector workers. In addition, policies that have promoted greater access to education including the removal of primary and secondary school fees have not necessarily been met with increased job opportunities or by extension, higher incomes.

This is particularly relevant in Zambia where increasingly it has been secondary-educated and even tertiary-educated youth who are without formal employment and therefore surviving on meagre incomes (Resnick & Thurlow 2014).

4 MODEL SPECIFICATION AND FINDINGS

4.1 Political Participation

In order to examine various behaviours and attitudes of Zambia’s middle class, the degree of political participation among this constituency is first examined. This is estimated with three logit models. In the first model, the dependent variable is a dummy variable capturing whether a respondent voted in the country’s October 2008 by-elections, which involved selecting the president, in the wake of president Levy Mwanawasa’s death. The sample was restricted to only those who were deemed eligible to vote in those elections. Eligibility was determined by including only those respondents who claimed that they were Zambian citizens and 18 years of age or older at the time of the survey.²¹ Because the survey did not

²⁰These employment and income categories largely correspond to the findings of Zambia’s 2008 Labor Force Survey [Central Statistical Office (CSO) 2010]. As in many African countries, the private sector is bifurcated in Zambia with about 50 per cent of those in this sector earning US\$3 or less per day and about a quarter earning US\$6 or more per day (CSO 2010: 91). The reason for this is that a large proportion of those in the private sector are essentially self-employed and engaged in informal activities related to trade and retail. A sizeable share, however, are formally employed including in such industries as finance, insurance and construction where incomes are much higher.

²¹While being a Zambian citizen of 18 years or older determines basic eligibility, Zambians need a national registration card (NRC) and a voter registration card. Zambians are supposed to obtain the NRC at the age of 16 years.

Table 2. Characteristics of Zambian class groups

Category	Average number of children	Average years of schooling	Formally employed (%)	Employment type (%)	Use mobile phone everyday (%)	Live in urban area (%)	Paid income taxes in last the 12 months (%)
Poor (US\$0–2)	2.4	6.4	5.4	Subsistence farmer (47.8), unpaid farm worker (12.2)	38.1	23.4	5.3
Lower class (US\$2–4)	2.0	9.3	28.9	Self-employed (22.6), private sector (15)	77.2	66.8	23.0
Middle class (US\$4–20)	1.5	11.2	50	Private sector (20.4), central government (19.5)	90.4	83.4	45.4

Values are weighted and refer only to those respondents in the survey who were 18 years old or older in 2008 and who were Zambian citizens.

ask for the month of the respondent's birth, there was still the possibility that some individuals who were 18 years old at the time of the survey in November and December were not of age at the time of the elections. As such, those respondents who were 18 years old at the time of the survey but who claimed that they did not vote because they were too young at the time of the elections were also excluded.

The second and third models estimate other types of political activism. The second specifically examines participation in a political rally hosted by a political party. Those who attend a rally might be either more politically mobilized or enticed by the promise of cash and in-kind handouts often used by parties to attract rally audiences. In the latter case, the literature on clientelism predicts that poorer individuals would be more likely to attend rallies (Stokes *et al.* 2013). The third model focuses on participation in a demonstration or protest, which signals dissatisfaction with the status quo. Those who might not vote may believe that extra-institutional modes of participation are more effective means of enforcing responsiveness by politicians. For purposes of comparison, these second and third models are also just restricted to the sample of those who were otherwise eligible to vote.

In each model, the income-based class measures discussed previously are included with the excluded category being those who fall below US\$2 per day (i.e. the 'poor'). In addition, a range of traditional demographic variables including age, whether a respondent was a woman or not and whether the respondent lived in an urban or rural locality, were also incorporated. Moreover, the number of years of education completed by the respondent was included, ranging from a scale of 0 for no schooling to 13, which indicated at least 1 year of tertiary education. A dummy is also included for whether the respondent is formally employed or not. Those composed of this category either work for the central government, local government, a parastatal, in the private sector, for a non-governmental organization, an international organization, an embassy or as an employer.²²

Ethnicity remains a relevant factor in shaping Zambians' degree of support for candidates (Posner 2004) and in turn may influence their decisions to go to the polls. Relatedly, partisanship is often found to influence turnout (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000). However, neither ethnicity nor partisan affinity was asked in the ZGS. As a proxy, a dummy is included for whether someone is a resident of a province where 50 per cent or more of the population belongs to the Bemba ethno-linguistic group, which is the group to which Sata belongs. The 2010 Zambian Census was used to identify which provinces met this threshold, and these included Copperbelt, Luapula and Northern provinces. The expectation was that Bemba speakers were more likely to support Sata (who is Bemba) and, having a strong affinity to the PF, would be likely to turnout.

Based on the literature regarding political participation, consideration was also given to a number of additional variables. Specifically, there is a measure for political efficacy, which refers to a 'feeling that political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change' (Campbell *et al.* 1954: 187). This measure is based on whether respondents believed that their vote can influence decision-making in Zambia.²³ Because exposure to the news can increase awareness of political events, policy issues and political parties, voting might be higher among those who access

²²Those categorized as informally employed were self-employed, subsistence farmers, piecemeal workers or household employees. The unemployed included unpaid family workers, the unemployed, full-time homemakers, full-time students and those who stated they were retired or too old to work.

²³This corresponds to question s4q15 in the survey.

the news more often (e.g. Delli & Keeter 1996; Verba *et al.* 1995). As such, a news index was included that combines whether a respondent accessed the news via the television, radio, newspaper or internet at least a few times a week. Retrospective assessments of the economy have long been considered an important motivator for individuals' decision to vote (Lewis-Beck 1988; Tufte 1978). Therefore, a dummy variable was included for those who believed that economic conditions in Zambia were 'good' during the previous 12 months.²⁴

The findings in Table 3 illustrate that as is typically found in the literature (Resnick & Casale 2013), older Africans are more likely to vote than their younger counterparts. In addition, those who believe their vote will make a difference and who regularly access the news were more likely to participate in the 2008 by-elections. Evaluations of the broader macroeconomy play a key role as well, with those having positive assessments more likely to vote and participate in political rallies but not more likely to engage in demonstrations. As expected, being a member of a Bembaphone province increased a respondent's propensity to vote, and such individuals were also more likely to have participated in a demonstration. Yet there was no effect on engaging in a political rally.

More importantly, the findings illustrate that class categories are not significantly correlated with voter turnout when compared to the 'poor' base category. Notably, though, some non-income variables that have some association with the class categories do exhibit strong impacts. For instance, those who are more educated and formally employed were correlated with a higher probability of turning up at the polls in 2008. More educated Zambians were also more likely to engage in demonstrations. Those living in urban areas were less likely to vote, reflecting findings elsewhere that show rural Africans tend to vote more than city dwellers because they may be mobilized by traditional leaders or by handouts from incumbents (Bratton *et al.* 2005; Kuenzi & Lambright 2011). Likewise, they were less likely than rural dwellers to participate in political rallies. Even though Table 2 illustrated some correspondence between the income class groups and other characteristics such as education and employment, the mean variance inflation factor for the model is 1.24, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern, and that these different measures of class are not conveying the same information.²⁵

These findings are largely confirmed in the 'income models' whereby the class thresholds are replaced with a log of a respondent's daily per capita income in PPP terms.²⁶ While the findings for the other variables remain robust, higher levels of daily per capita income do have a significant association with a lower propensity to vote. However, from a substantive perspective, the magnitude of the coefficient is almost negligible.

4.2 Political Trust

While turnout captures a one-off engagement with the democratic process, political trust reflects more long-standing assessments of how well major political actors and institutions represent citizens' interests. Table 4 presents the findings for the political trust model based on ordinary least squares regression (OLS). Political trust is based on an index that

²⁴Specifically, this category included those who described Zambia's economic conditions over the previous 12 months as 'fairly good, good, or very good'.

²⁵A variance inflation factor of 1 suggests that no two independent variables are correlated.

²⁶Only income from US\$0 to 20 per day was included in order to make the analysis commensurate with the one on class whereby the upper threshold for the upper middle class grouping was US\$20 per day.

Table 3. Logit analysis of class and political participation

Variable	Class model			Income model		
	Turnout in 2008 elections	Participated in political rally	Participated in demonstration	Turnout in 2008 elections	Participated in political rally	Participated in demonstration
Age	0.039*** (0.004)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.008)	0.039*** (0.004)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.003 (0.008)
Women	-0.058 (0.075)	-0.471*** (0.078)	-0.535*** (0.172)	-0.047 (0.075)	-0.472*** (0.078)	-0.541*** (0.174)
Level of education	0.029** (0.013)	-0.018 (0.014)	0.113*** (0.041)	0.035*** (0.013)	-0.019 (0.014)	0.109*** (0.040)
Urban	-0.402*** (0.090)	-0.549*** (0.090)	0.001 (0.207)	-0.359*** (0.092)	-0.582*** (0.093)	-0.077 (0.203)
Lower class ^a	-0.172 (0.111)	-0.148 (0.116)	-0.031 (0.251)	—	—	—
Middle class ^a	0.040 (0.121)	-0.011 (0.123)	0.335 (0.244)	—	—	—
Log per capita daily income	—	—	—	-0.070** (0.035)	0.012 (0.037)	0.151* (0.023)
Engaged in formal employment	0.236** (0.110)	-0.162 (0.108)	0.183 (0.217)	0.288*** (0.110)	-0.180* (0.108)	0.148 (0.216)
Political efficacy	0.435*** (0.084)	0.137 (0.088)	-0.234 (0.197)	0.483*** (0.076)	0.131 (0.088)	-0.250 (0.196)
Access the news ^b	0.508*** (0.105)	0.485*** (0.111)	0.283 (0.300)	0.437*** (0.084)	0.475*** (0.112)	0.233 (0.303)
Positive evaluations of macroeconomy	0.221*** (0.072)	0.244*** (0.074)	0.143 (0.163)	0.231*** (0.072)	0.242*** (0.074)	0.139 (0.161)
Live in Bembaphone province	0.187** (0.073)	-0.067 (0.076)	0.403** (0.167)	0.193*** (0.073)	-0.064 (0.076)	0.402** (0.167)
Constant	-1.678*** (0.203)	0.200 (0.197)	-3.990*** (0.499)	-1.805*** (0.210)	0.222 (0.206)	-3.817*** (0.518)
Number of observations	4774	4051	4050	4774	4051	4050
F	18.46	12.13	8.88	23.29	16.23	10.58
Probability > F	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Analysis based on Zambian Governance Survey (ZGS) 2008 data. Significance levels: ***1 percent, **5 percent, *10 percent

^aThe base category is the "poor."

^bThis is based on an index described in the text of the paper.

Table 4. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) analysis of class and political trust

Variable	Class model	Income model
	Political trust index	Political trust index
Age	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Women	0.010 (0.014)	0.009 (0.015)
Level of education	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.006** (0.013)
Urban	-0.143*** (0.017)	-0.143*** (0.019)
Lower class ^a	-0.040* (0.022)	—
Middle class ^a	-0.118*** (0.023)	—
Log per capita daily income	—	-0.033*** (0.007)
Engaged in formal employment	0.011 (0.021)	0.012 (0.021)
Access the news ^b	0.027 (0.020)	0.003 (0.022)
Positive evaluations of macroeconomy	0.142*** (0.013)	0.131*** (0.014)
Live in Bembaphone province	-0.082*** (0.014)	-0.051*** (0.014)
Constant	2.083*** (0.033)	2.120*** (0.037)
Number of observations	5085	4343
Probability > F	0.000	0.000
R-squared	0.08	0.09

Source: Analysis based on Zambian Governance Survey (ZGS) 2008 data. Significance levels: ***1 percent, **5 percent, *10 percent

^aThe base category is the “poor.”

^bThis is based on an index described in the text of the paper.

collectively captures respondents’ level of trust in the executive, parliament, the Zambian Electoral Commission, the judiciary, political parties and the police. Higher values on the index represent higher levels of trust. The index was derived from aggregating respondents’ views on these six institutions according to a scale ranging from 1 (‘no trust’) to 3 (‘a lot of trust’). The scale reliability coefficient from the Chronbach’s alpha is 0.789, indicating that these six items are all essentially measuring the same underlying, latent construct.

Aside from political efficacy, which is specifically about voting, all of the same variables used in the political participation models are also used in the trust model. The assessments of economic performance are retained because citizen perceptions of government effectiveness in these areas have been found elsewhere to influence political trust (Mishler and Rose 2001). Therefore, Zambians’ assessments of how well their government has handled corruption are also included here. Some studies have suggested that the media can play an important role in shaping political trust through, for example, televised broadcasts of politicians acting uncivil to each others (e.g. Mutz & Reeves 2005). Others claim that mass media does not impact trust (Newton and

Norris 2000), or that its effects are solely limited to interpersonal rather than political trust (Moy & Scheufele 2000). The media index was therefore retained as a control variable in the trust models. Whether someone is from a Bembaphone province was also included given that during the time of the survey, the MMD had been viewed as sidelining Bembas from key political institutions (Sishuwa 2011), a perception on which Sata tried to capitalize.

The findings in Table 4 indicate a number of key points. Firstly, there is a significant association between class and trust such that those belonging to the middle classes are more likely to distrust Zambian institutions than the poor. However, high levels of mistrust are also correlated with those who live in urban areas, suggesting that suspicion of political institutions is tied to both monetary and non-monetary aspects of class. The causal mechanisms in this regard could be twofold. Those living in urban areas may have greater interaction and awareness of how such institutions operate than their rural counterparts because most of the relevant national institutions are located in major cities, particularly Lusaka. Those with higher income could also be more invested in how public institutions function if they contribute taxes to support these institutions are targeted more for bribery by the police and/or offer campaign contributions to parties and Members of Parliament (MPs). By having a financial interest in these institutions, they are more likely to have first-hand experience with how they function and give them greater scrutiny, supporting Birdsall's (2007) assertion that the middle class provides more institutional oversight because their individual interests and assets are more at stake.

Secondly, those living in a Bembaphone province are less likely to trust institutions. By contrast, those who had a positive assessment of the incumbent MMD's handling of the economy demonstrate greater trust in their political institutions. This is not surprising given that those with a better assessment of their government's performance would be more likely to appreciate those institutions representing the political establishment.²⁷ When class groupings are replaced with a direct measure of daily per capita income, these findings remain unchanged.

4.3 Values

A final set of estimations examines two models relevant for understanding whether the Zambian middle class possess a distinct set of values. While a wide range of issues would ideally be included, the ZGS questionnaire only allows for a small set of topics to be probed. One relates to whether a respondent agrees with the concept of *lobola* (bride price), which is the practice in much of southern Africa whereby a man pays the family of his prospective fiancée in exchange for her hand in marriage. While this is a long-standing cultural tradition, it has become increasingly controversial. On the one hand, some claim that it commercializes women, particularly in urban areas where cash, rather than the traditional practice of exchanging cattle, is more prominent (Kamukwamba 2012). On the other hand, some believe it offers a form of social protection for vulnerable women such as those who fall pregnant, and surveys have found that women see *lobola* as strengthening marriage and therefore insist husbands should pay it (Heeren *et al.* 2011).

²⁷The trust models do however exhibit a low *R*-square, indicating that there are many other determinants of trust beyond those included here.

Table 5. Logit analysis of class and values

Variable	Class model		Income model	
	Support lobola	Maintain death penalty	Support lobola	Maintain death penalty
Age	0.021*** (0.005)	0.004* (0.002)	0.021*** (0.005)	0.004* (0.002)
Women	0.379*** (0.123)	-0.322*** (0.065)	0.372*** (0.123)	-0.323*** (0.065)
Level of education	0.050** (0.020)	-0.013 (0.011)	0.047** (0.020)	-0.014 (0.011)
Urban	0.891*** (0.167)	-0.254*** (0.076)	0.868*** (0.162)	-0.258*** (0.079)
Lower class ^a	0.124 (0.228)	-0.091 (0.102)	—	—
Middle class ^a	-0.446** (0.204)	-0.107 (0.107)	—	—
Log per capita daily income	—	—	-0.047* (0.056)	-0.023 (0.030)
Engaged in formal employment	0.255 (0.216)	-0.014 (0.099)	0.204 (0.216)	-0.024 (0.098)
Live in Bembaphone province	-0.547*** (0.123)	-0.146** (0.064)	-0.543*** (0.123)	-0.144** (0.064)
Constant	1.353*** (0.260)	-0.252* (0.134)	1.125*** (0.220)	-0.273* (0.141)
Number of observations	5670	5688	5670	5688
F	10.1	8.85	10.57	9.99
Probability > F	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Analysis based on Zambian Governance Survey (ZGS) 2008 data. Significance levels: ***1 percent, **5 percent, *10 percent

^aThe base category is the “poor”.

^bThis is based on an index described in the text of the paper.

A second topic examined here is whether respondents believed that the death penalty should be maintained. Zambia is one of only a handful of countries where capital punishment is still legal, and between 2007 and 2012, 91 people were sentenced to death.²⁸ However, no one has been actually executed in the last 10 years, and increasingly human rights groups and lawyers in Zambia have advocated abolishing the law.²⁹ The traditional demographic variables were retained including whether someone lives in a Bembaphone province. *A priori*, this latter variable can at least play a role on conceptions of *lobola* because the practice is less significant among this ethnolinguistic group than it is among, for example, the Tonga (Taylor 2006).

The results in Table 5 indicate that the middle class possess different values than the poor on issues related to gender. They are less likely to agree with the concept of *lobola*; in fact, their odds of supporting *lobola* are 70 per cent lower than those of the poor.³⁰ At the same time, more educated Zambians are more likely to support the practice, potentially because those who are better educated receive a higher price (Heeren *et al.* 2011). Urbanites are also more likely to agree with the custom, which might reflect rural

²⁸<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/mar/29/death-penalty-countries-world>

²⁹<http://www.irinnews.org/report/49826/zambia-fight-to-abolish-the-death-penalty>

³⁰This odds ratio is calculated from the exponentiated coefficients.

resentment that marriage is not possible without *lobola* in rural areas (Heeren *et al.* 2011) and therefore requires a certain degree of wealth before a family can be established. For the death penalty, the middle class are less likely than the poor to support the death penalty, but, unlike for urbanites or those who are better educated, this relationship is not statistically significant. These findings again highlight that different measures of class do not necessarily operate in the same way and substantially vary depending on the outcome of interest.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Positive economic performance in Africa over the last decade and the growing number of citizens with greater purchasing power offer new opportunities to re-examine the salience of class in the region. Drawing on a long-standing literature examining whether the middle class is critical for democracy, this paper focused explicitly on Zambia. Having experienced an economic resurgence in recent years, Zambia is now considered a middle-income country, and its urban areas showcase a variety of shopping malls and new housing complexes that reflect the growth in the middle class. Relying on a unique source of survey data that combine information on both incomes and political behaviour, this paper is one of the first to examine this constituency's degree of political participation, trust in political institutions and cultural values.

Three notable findings emerged. Firstly, when class is measured using thresholds based on absolute income, which is an approach that is advocated by a substantial share of the literature (e.g. Banerjee & Duflo 2008; Kharas 2010; Ravallion 2010), Zambia's middle class appears to be relatively apathetic in terms of their political participation. But they are more distrusting of political institutions than the poor and more likely to oppose the concept of *lobola*. In other words, they may have strong views and values but are not especially inclined to act on them disproportionately more than any other class by going to the polls or heading to the streets.

Secondly, the measurement and conceptualization of the middle class make a difference depending on the outcome of interest. Much of the existing literature does not specify what exact characteristics of the middle class are supposed to influence democratic attitudes and behaviours. This paper showed that when an income-based measure of class was used, there can be divergent outcomes from other qualities that are typically associated with the middle class such as education, urban residency and formal sector employment. Those who are formally employed just like those with a positive assessment of the macroeconomy might have a greater bias in the status quo and turned out to vote in 2008 to reaffirm support for the then-incumbent MMD. By contrast, urbanites as a group, which encompasses a large share of informal sector and unemployed, might have not only less faith that elections will make a difference but also receive fewer short-term handouts from parties than rural dwellers to turn up at the polls. As noted earlier, the link between measurement and outcomes might be even more important in Africa where the region's development trajectory has meant that not all good things (e.g. education, urbanization, employment and income) go together.

Thirdly, the class categories used here, which follow those specified by the AfDB, do not result in categorically different findings than if log income per capita (in PPP terms) is used as an alternative. This suggests that there might not necessarily be a middle class particularism in Zambia but simply that as people become wealthier, they are more likely

to have different levels of trust in institutions and values. In other words, following the findings of Lopez Calva *et al.* (2011) for Latin America, the difference may be between wealthier Zambians and the poor instead of the middle class and everyone else. Thus, for the time being, it appears that the numerical expansion of the middle class has not necessarily translated into the solidification of a middle class consciousness and identity.

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