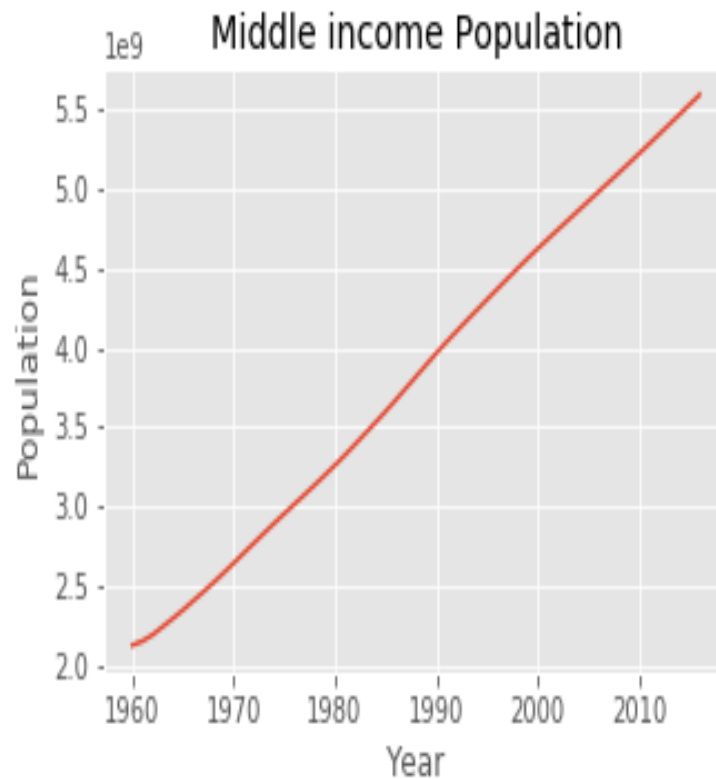


Middle income



The middle class is a class of people in the middle of a social hierarchy. In Weberian socio-economic terms, the middle class is the broad group of people in contemporary society who fall socio-economically between the working class and upper class. The common measures of what constitutes middle class vary significantly among cultures. One of the narrowest definitions limits it to those in the middle fifth of the nation's income ladder. A wider characterization includes everyone but the poorest 20% and the wealthiest 20%. In modern American vernacular usage, the term "middle class" is most often used as a self-description by those persons who academics would otherwise identify as the working class which are below both the upper class and the true middle class, but above those in poverty. This leads to considerable ambiguity over the meaning of the term "middle class" in American usage. Sociologists such as Dennis Gilbert and Joseph Kahl see this American self-described "middle class" (i.e. working class) as the most populous class in the United States, == History and evolution of the term == The term "middle class" is first attested in James Bradshaw's 1745 pamphlet Scheme to prevent running Irish Wools to France. Another phrase used in Early modern Europe was "the middling sort". The term "middle class" has had several, sometimes contradictory, meanings. It was once defined by exception as an intermediate social class between the nobility and the peasantry of Europe. While the nobility owned the countryside, and the peasantry worked the countryside, a new bourgeoisie (literally "town-dwellers") arose around mercantile functions in the city. In France, the middle classes helped drive the French Revolution. Another definition equated the middle class to the original meaning of capitalist: someone with so much capital that they could rival nobles. In fact, to be a capital-owning millionaire was the essential criterion of the middle class in the industrial revolution. The modern usage of the term "middle-class", however, dates to the 1913 UK Registrar-General's report, in which the statistician T.H.C. Stevenson identified the middle class as that falling between the upper-class and the working-class. Included as belonging to the middle-class are: professionals, managers, and senior civil servants. The chief defining characteristic of membership in the middle-class is possession of significant human capital. Within capitalism, "middle-class" initially

referred to the bourgeoisie and the petite bourgeoisie. However, with the impoverisation and proletarianisation of much of the petit bourgeois world, and the growth of finance capitalism, "middle class" came to refer to the combination of the labour aristocracy, the professionals, and the white collar workers. The size of the middle class depends on how it is defined, whether by education, wealth, environment of upbringing, social network, manners or values, etc. These are all related, but are far from deterministically dependent. The following factors are often ascribed in modern usage to a "middle class": Achievement of tertiary education. Holding professional qualifications, including academics, lawyers, chartered engineers, politicians, and doctors, regardless of leisure or wealth. Belief in bourgeois values, such as high rates of house ownership, delayed gratification, and jobs which are perceived to be secure. Lifestyle. In the United Kingdom, social status has historically been linked less directly to wealth than in the United States, and has also been judged by signifiers such as accent (Received Pronunciation and U and non-U English), manners, type of school attended (public school), occupation, and the class of a person's family, circle of friends and acquaintances. In the United States by the end of the twentieth century, more people identified themselves as middle-class than as lower or "working" class (with insignificant numbers identifying themselves as upper-class). The Labour Party in the UK, which grew out of the organised labour movement and originally drew almost all of its support from the working-class, reinvented itself under Tony Blair in the 1990s as "New Labour", a party competing with the Conservative Party for the votes of the middle-class as well as the working-class; which were their traditional group of voters. By 2011, almost three-quarters of British people were also found to identify themselves as middle-class. == Marxism == In Marxism, which defines social classes according to their relationship with the means of production, the "middle class" is said to be the class below the ruling class and above the proletariat in the Marxist social schema. Marxist writers have used the term in two distinct but related ways. In the first sense it is used for the bourgeoisie, the urban merchant and professional class that stood between the aristocracy and the proletariat in the Marxist model. However, in modern developed countries, some Marxist writers specify the petite bourgeoisie – either owners of small property who may not employ wage labor or laboring managers – as the "middle class" between the ruling and working classes. Marx himself regarded this version of the "middle class" simultaneously as exploited workers and supervisors of exploitation. Pioneer 20th century American Marxist theoretician Louis C. Fraina (Lewis Corey) defined the middle class as "the class of independent small enterprisers, owners of productive property from which a livelihood is derived." Included in this social category, from Fraina's perspective, were "propertied farmers" but not propertyless tenant farmers. Middle class also included salaried managerial and supervisory employees but not "the masses of propertyless, dependent salaried employees. Fraina speculated that the entire category of salaried employees might be adequately described as a "new middle class" in economic terms, although this remained a social grouping in which "most of whose members are a new proletariat." === Social reproduction === According to Christopher B. Doob, a sociology writer, the middle-class grooms each future generation to take over from the previous one. He states that, to do this the middle class have almost developed a system for turning children of the middle-class into successful citizens. Allegedly those who are categorized under the American middle-class give education great importance, and value success in education as one of the chief factors in establishing the middle-class life. Supposedly the parents place a strong emphasis on the significance of quality education and its effects on success later in life. He believes that the best way to understand education through the eyes of middle-class citizens would be through social reproduction as middle-class parents breed their own offspring to become successful members of the middle-class. Members of the middle-class consciously use their available sources of capital to prepare their children for the adult world. The middle-class childhood is often characterized by an authoritative parenting approach with a combination of parental warmth, support and control. Parents set some rules establishing limits, but overall this approach creates a greater sense of trust, security, and self-confidence. In addition to an often authoritative parenting style, middle-class parents provide their children with valuable sources of capital. Parents of middle-class children make use of their social capital when it comes to their children's education as they seek out other parents and teachers for advice. Some parents even develop regular communication with their child's teachers, asking for regular reports on behavior and grades. When problems do occur, middle-class parents are quick to "enlist the help of professionals when they feel their children need such services." The middle-class parents' involvement in their children's schooling underlines their recognition of its importance. == Professional-managerial class == In 1977 Barbara Ehrenreich and her then husband John defined a new Marxist class in United States as "salaried menial workers who do not own the means of

production and whose major function in the social division of labor...(is)...the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations"; the Ehrenreichs named this group the "professional-managerial class". This group of middle-class professionals are distinguished from other social classes by their training and education (typically business qualifications and university degrees), with example occupations including academics and teachers, social workers, engineers, managers, nurses, and middle-level administrators. The Ehrenreichs developed their definition from studies by André Gorz, Serge Mallet, and others, of a "new working class", which, despite education and a perception of themselves as being middle class, were part of the working class because they did not own the means of production, and were wage earners paid to produce a piece of capital. The professional-managerial class seeks higher rank status and salary, and tend to have incomes above the average for their country. Compare the term "managerial caste". == Recent global growth == In February 2009, The Economist announced that over half the world's population now belongs to the middle class, as a result of rapid growth in emerging countries. It characterized the middle class as having a reasonable amount of discretionary income, so that they do not live from hand to mouth as the poor do, and defined it as beginning at the point where people have roughly a third of their income left for discretionary spending after paying for basic food and shelter. This allows people to buy consumer goods, improve their health care, and provide for their children's education. Most of the emerging middle class consists of people who are middle-class by the standards of the developing world but not the rich one, since their money incomes do not match developed country levels, but the percentage of it which is discretionary does. By this definition, the number of middle-class people in Asia exceeded that in the West sometime around 2007 or 2008. The Economist's article pointed out that in many emerging countries the middle class has not grown incrementally, but explosively. The rapid growth results from the fact that the majority of the people fall into the middle of a left-skewed bell-shaped curve, and when the peak of the population curve crosses the threshold into the middle class, the number of people in the middle class grows enormously. In addition, when the curve crosses the threshold, economic forces cause the bulge to become taller as incomes at that level grow faster than incomes in other ranges. The point at which the poor start entering the middle class by the millions is the time when poor countries get the maximum benefit from cheap labour through international trade, before they price themselves out of world markets for cheap goods. It is also a period of rapid urbanization, when subsistence farmers abandon marginal farms to work in factories, resulting in a several-fold increase in their economic productivity before their wages catch up to international levels. That stage was reached in China some time between 1990 and 2005, when the middle class grew from 15% to 62% of the population, and is just being reached in India now. The Economist predicted that surge across the poverty line should continue for a couple of decades and the global middle class will grow enormously between now and 2030. Based on the rapid growth, scholars expect the global middle class to be the driving force for sustainable development. This assumption, however, is contested. As the American middle class is estimated at approximately 45% of the population, The Economist's article would put the size of the American middle class below the world average. This difference is due to the extreme difference in definitions between The Economist's and many other models. In 2010, a working paper by the OECD estimated that 1.8 billion people were now members of the global middle class. Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report 2014, released in October 2014, estimated that one billion adults belonged to the middle class, with wealth anywhere between the range of \$10,000-\$100,000. According to a study carried out by the Pew Research Center, a combined 16% of the world's population in 2011 were "upper-middle income" and "upper income." === Russia === In 2012, the middle class in Russia was estimated as 15% of the whole population. Due to sustainable growth, the pre-crisis level was exceeded. In 2015, research from the Russian Academy of Sciences estimated that around 15% of the Russian population are "firmly middle class," while around another 25% are "on the periphery." === China === A study by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) estimated that 19% of Chinese were middle class in 2003, including any household with assets worth between \$18,000 and \$36,000. === India === According to a 2012 study by the German Development Institute, the middle class in India constituted 8% of the population in 2012. === Africa === According to a 2014 study by Standard Bank economist Simon Freemantle, a total of 15.3 million households in 11 surveyed African nations are middle-class. These include Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. In South Africa, a report conducted by the Institute for Race Relations in 2015 estimated that between 10%-20% of South Africans are middle class, based on various criteria. An earlier study estimated that in 2008 21.3% of South Africans were members of the middle class. A study by EIU Canback indicates 90% of Africans fall below an income of \$10 a day.

The proportion of Africans in the \$10-\$20 middle class (excluding South Africa), rose from 4.4% to only 6.2% between 2004 and 2014. Over the same period, the proportion of “upper middle” income (\$20-\$50 a day) went from 1.4% to 2.3%. According to a 2014 study by the German Development Institute, the middle class of Sub-Saharan Africa rose from 14 million to 31 million people between 1990 and 2010. === Latin America === According to a study by the World Bank, the number of Latin Americans who are middle class rose from 103m to 152m between 2003 and 2009. == Middle-class shares by income and wealth == The American middle class is smaller than middle classes across Western Europe, but its income is higher, according to a recent Pew Research Center analysis of the U.S. and 11 European nations. The median disposable (after-tax) income of middle-class households in the U.S. was \$60,884 in 2010. With the exception of Luxembourg – a virtual city-state where the median income was \$71,799 – the disposable incomes of middle-class households in the other 10 Western European countries in the study trailed well behind the American middle class. The numbers below reflect the middle, upper, and lower share of all adults by country by net wealth (not income). Unlike that of the upper class, wealth of the middle and lowest quintile consists substantially of non-financial assets, specifically home equity. Factors which explain differences in home equity include housing prices and home ownership rates. According to the OECD, the vast majority of financial assets in every country analysed is found in the top of the wealth distribution. ^ *1: (Middle class and above) - (Middle class) ^ *2: 100 - (Middle class and above) == See also == Lower middle class Upper middle class American middle class African-American middle class British class system Occupational prestige Social environment Disenchantment Rational-legal authority Normalization (sociology) Iron cage Habitus (sociology) Cultural determinism One-third hypothesis' Middle-class squeeze Dominant culture Cultural hegemony Cultural imperialism The Media Elite Other: Bourgeoisie Classlessness The Lonely Crowd Status paradox of migration Illustrado Producerism Xiaozi Middle Class Millionaire Essex man Little Englander Worcester woman Deep England == References == == External links == Beazley reaches out to 'middle Australia' NOW on PBS: Middle Class Insecurity Are politicians listening to middle-class families on the edge of economic collapse? Contains estimates on the size of the middle class in various countries Contains estimates on the size of the middle class in Latin America and other countries Contains Contains estimates on the size of the middle class in Africa, based on various definitions