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‘We are (the) Middle Class’ The new Turkish middle class: identification, behaviors and expectations

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Abstract. This article aims to identify and characterise the Turkish middle class. Our objective is to improve its description by implementing a clustering method combining an economic and a sociological approach. Using the Income and Living Conditions Survey (2014), we first identify the middle-class on the basis of an income interval. We then use information about employment and education to characterise the heterogeneity of this middle-income class. The distinctive behaviors and aspirations of four middle class groups are explored in depth by using the results of original qualitative field research carried out among middle class households from two contrasting regions.

Keywords. Social stratification, Income distribution, Middle class, Turkey, Clustering methods.

JEL. O15, D13, E25.

1. Introduction

The growth and sustainability of the ‘middle classes’ are important stages in the development nations. Because demand from them contributes to the expansion and scaling up of the domestic market, they contribute to GDP growth (Matsuyama, 2002; Banerjee & Duflo, 2008). Socially, their emergence breaks the dualism and antagonism between a vast mass of poor people and a small elite that holds wealth and power. It also reveals the potential for upward mobility between strata of society. This expansion is therefore expected to contribute to the construction of national consensus, to political stability and, by extension, to the

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strengthening and generalization of democratic aspirations (Lipset, 1959; Easterly, 2001; Loayza *et al.*, 2012).

Yet this 'middle class' is a transdisciplinary concept whose use and definition remain largely controversial. From the income-based economic approach to the sociological approach based on social status, from the subjective approach based on class consciousness to the managerial approach based on consumer habits, the term is often used in an imprecise and sometimes confused manner.

The scientific community's growing interest in the role of the middle class in economic development as much as the country's recent economic, political and social history has raised interesting discussions of the subject in relation to Turkey. The topic has been discussed from different perspectives showing that Turkish middle class has both secular and conservative elements, is well-educated, emerged after the 80s for its most conservative part and adopts free market values (see for instance Balkan & Öncü 2014; Keyman, 2012; Kravets & Sandikci, 2014; Öncü & Balkan, 2016; Rutz & Balkan, 2010; Uner & Güngördü, 2016; Şimşek, 2005; Yılmaz, 2007). But the concept of middle class has been rarely considered in a multidimensional way in that literature. This paper aims to identify and characterize the Turkish middle class(es) from a multidimensional perspective, then analyze their behaviors and aspirations.

Even if the term 'middle class' is very often used in today's Turkey, the phenomenon remains rather vague. In the big cities, the profound transformations in Turkey's economic and social structure since the beginning of the 1980s have led to the emergence of a highly educated population, working in the tertiary sector, integrated into global networks and tending to distinguish itself through new consumer behavior. This emerging population was the first to become known in Turkey as the 'new middle class' and it has become a particularly popular subject of study in social science literature. The more recent period, however, has seen the emergence of another very different social group, in turn called a 'new middle class', made up of a new conservative bourgeoisie that formed after the AKP (President Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party) came to power. To summarize, the expression 'middle classes' seems to cover very contrasting realities that it is important to study.

In Turkey, the term 'middle class' refers to a social category that has long been neglected or misapplied or highly politicized. The historian Feroz Ahmad (2009) shows that both before and after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, successive regimes wished to promote the rise of a 'Turkish bourgeoisie'. The first studies on the middle class as such date back to the 1990s. They examined the impact of the great changes that have taken place in the transition to the export-oriented market economy in the period of T. Özal (Kozanoğlu, 1992) and the 'cultural war' between social groups whose socio-economic status has consequently risen or collapsed (Gürbilek, 1999; Öncü, 1999; Bali, 2002 and Şimşek, 2005). More work was thereafter undertaken to examine other dimensions of the phenomenon,

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such as the quantitative extension of the groups designated as ‘middle classes’ and the internal differentiations of this group. Some focus on the issues of status, income and cultural and consumer practices of the middle class and their becoming political actors in their own right, mainly following the events of Gezi in 2013 (Yörük, 2014; Keyder, 2013, Saraçoğlu, 2014, Gürcan & Peker, 2015, Yörük & Yüksel, 2015)¹. From a more Marxist viewpoint, other work deals with the precariousness and downgrading of the middle class as a result of recent liberal transformations in the country (Kurtuluş, 2012).

Thus, the basic idea is that the Turkish middle class should be much more understood as a flow of individuals than as a stock of households. This explains, among other things, the difficulty in identifying its profile, as well as the strong differentiation between this type of middle class and those established in the industrialized countries for which it was more feasible to reason in terms of stock. Nevertheless, the Turkish political, economic and social landscape has undergone considerable change in recent years, prompting us to reconsider what has become of the middle classes in today's Turkey and to question their homogeneity, behaviors and aspirations.

In this paper, the identification of the middle classes will be based on SILC (Survey on Income and Life Conditions) data collected by Turkstat (the Turkish Statistical Institute). The baseline year is 2014 and the survey covers approximately 23,000 households. Our goal is to reveal their potential heterogeneity and describe their main socio-economic characteristics. To do this, a sequential method has been adopted, combining an economic approach (based on income) and a sociological approach (mobilizing information on employment and education). The idea is, first of all, to delimit a middle class on the basis of income. It is not a question of precisely identifying the size of the middle class (given the lack of an international consensus on the choice of the monetary range), but rather delimiting a set of individuals located in the middle of the Turkish income distribution (i.e. a ‘middle-income set’). The second stage consists of mobilizing more qualitative information on employment and education in order to identify the different components of the ‘middle class’ set defined in the previous step. This is to highlight the potential heterogeneity of the ‘monetarily-defined’ middle class. This second step involves a mixed classification procedure that is applied to the middle class defined in the previous step. The variables then considered describe the level of education, the socio-professional category, the status in employment, the type of employer (or the institutional sector) and the possible multi-activity of the household head. The groups identified can then be characterized from complementary socio-economic variables. Finally, these quantitative results are supplemented by a systematic analysis of the behaviors, aspirations and expectations of the Turkish middle class. To this end, twenty-five semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted on the basis of a questionnaire adapted to the specificities of the Turkish situation

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and to a population chosen to cover all the different middle classes 'revealed' by the quantitative analysis. For this stage, households were surveyed in 2017 in Istanbul and Gaziantep, in order to capture as well as possible, and from two very different areas of the country, the diversity identified in the middle-income class during the previous stage.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section contextualizes the analysis and reviews the literature on the identification and definition of the Turkish middle class. The third section describes the statistical methodology and the data and comments on the results of our clustering process. The fourth section explores the distinctive behaviors and aspirations of the previously identified groups by using the results of our original, qualitative field research. Finally, the fifth section concludes in dealing with the specific characteristics and internal differentiation of the Turkish middle class.

2. The middle class in Turkey: contextualization, emergence and characteristics in the literature

2.1. Economic context

In October 2017, Turkey officially had nearly 80 million inhabitants, to which must be added three million Syrian refugees. The country is on track to complete its demographic transition and align with 'western' demographic behaviors, particularly in urban areas. The country is now officially more than 90% urbanized, even if the urban 'ambiances' are very different, ranging from small and medium-sized towns – whose middle class is reduced to a few officials and entrepreneurs – to the largest cities characterized by more visible and diversified middle classes. The urban / rural divide is clear in Turkey. It results from development policies that are too focused on the cities to the detriment of small towns. It finds its clearest expression in the considerable importance of Istanbul, which not only concentrates consumption, but also culture and the private media. This contributes to a division of the population into isolated subsets, despite the dynamic of socio-economic climbing fueled by a common belief in promotion through education. While the tradition of the centralized state has existed since the beginning of the Turkish Republic, since the 1990s there has been a renewal of the elites and coalitions of interests that govern the country. A conservative bourgeoisie, which does not subscribe entirely to the founding values of the Republic, has taken control of the state apparatus and part of the economy. The purges that took place in the aftermath of the failed coup of the night of July 15-16 2016 struck part of this new bourgeoisie but did not call into question the changeover that led to the emergence of new entrepreneurial classes, produced by urbanization, rising educational and living standards, rising domestic consumption and opening up of the economy through exports.

During the 1990s, the Turkish economy was characterized by very unstable growth, mainly due to high, chronic inflation. This led to very

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high real interest rates that in turn indirectly led to a worsening of public debt leading to the crisis of the late 1990s. According to Gursel *et al.* (2011), the major crisis of 1999-2001 hit the Turkish economy hard, but at the same time, it forced officials to turn their backs on questionable practices so that, surprisingly, emergence from the crisis turned out to be relatively rapid. It was centered on (i) the reform and consolidation of the banking system, (ii) the independence of the Central Bank and (iii) massive support from the IMF in return for a stabilization plan and strong fiscal discipline. Thus, under constraint from the IMF, the policy mix adopted helped to stop budgetary slippage and put the Turkish economy back on the path to growth within a more tightly-controlled budgetary and monetary framework (Gursel *et al.*, 2011).

Turkey was then able to benefit from a strong growth regime (+ 7 to + 8% per year) which continued until mid-2006. This growth was mainly supported by domestic consumption and private investment. This favorable period ended in May 2006 when a sharp depreciation of the Turkish Lira triggered an inflationary spiral that moved the Turkish economy into a weaker growth regime. The sharp contraction in growth in 2008 and 2009, however, has been followed by a very strong recovery since 2010.

In their study of the diversity of emerging capitalist systems, Rougier & Combarrous (2017) classify Turkey in the group of countries that have a model of 'statist resource-dependent capitalism'. In this, Turkish capitalism is distinguished from others by a strong dependence on natural resources and traditional agriculture and by significant public regulation of labor, finance and the productive sector tending to rigidify and segment markets. The authors consider that, within this group, Turkey joins a large number of the major emerging countries that have historically inherited high levels of state interventionism (Algeria, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia).

2.2. Social stratification and the middle classes in Turkey

The history of social stratification in Turkey provides a better understanding of the rather special status of the middle classes in this country. According to Mardin (1967), the Ottoman social structure was fundamentally based on the distinction between rulers (*askeri*) and ruled (*reaya*). This structure lacks a state-independent bourgeoisie. In the author's opinion, the Ottoman-Turkish modernization process involved the transformation of a tribal society into a class-based society. But in this process, the State's role as arbiter prevented the emergence and development of a state-independent bourgeoisie. The bureaucratic elite present at the end of the Ottoman Empire as well as that of the Republican period wanted on the one hand to create a 'national bourgeoisie' (or a new middle class), but on the other hand constituted a major obstacle to its independent emergence. This conflict between the bureaucratic elite and the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie is at the root of Turkey's social and political

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structure. Karpas (2002) also argues that the state's refusal to remove the bureaucratic elite from its founding and modernizing role has always maintained its mistrust of the middle classes. This largely explains the fact that the Turkish middle class appeared rather late, and only in the shadow of the state.

The various institutional studies that have recently focused on the middle class in Turkey (İGİAD, 2015; TUSİAD, 2014) based on public household budget data (TÜİK, Turkish Statistical Institute) consider that the middle classes cover the three central quintiles of household income, excluding the poorest and the richest 20%. The share of income in this constant proportion of the 60% of households at the heart of the distribution increased from 44.8% in 2002 to 50.3% in 2007, then stabilized at 49% in 2011 (TÜSİAD, 2014, p.75). It has since tended to stagnate or even decline, following the successive repercussions of the US subprime crisis. Recent attempts to more fully consider the middle class by incorporating three basic criteria, not only of household income, but also of education and occupation (TÜAD, *Turkish Researcher's Association: Socio-Economic Status (SES)*, 2012) has led to an estimate that the Turkish middle class represents just under 60% of households in the country.

As in many other countries, the consumption of the Turkish middle class is characterized by a very strong demand for new technology, new entertainment and leisure, automobiles and housing². However, it mainly differs from less advantaged classes in terms of education and health (TÜİK, 2016). The middle classes do not only want to stand out in terms of their lifestyle, they also want to mark their differences in the field of education and often prefer private schools for their children, the public education service being the preserve of the children of poor families. The same phenomenon is also noticeable in the field of health. Incidentally, of course, there is the question of how this considerable increase in the consumption of new products and services has been financed, since, as mentioned above, the income of the middle classes has not really increased over the last twenty years. The 2015 report of the Union of Turkish Banks (TBB, 2015) explains this phenomenon by the massive use of credit cards and bank loans. It seems that debt has been the essential driving force behind the development of 'ostentatious' consumption by the Turkish middle class in recent years.

The various factions of the middle classes have been linked to different political parties or movements since the beginning of the twentieth century, depending on the economic and social transformations experienced by the country. Overall, the Turkish middle classes vote for center-left and center-right parties (Yılmaz, 2007). Historically, the center-left People's Republican Party (CHP) is associated with the state, the republican 'establishment', and the urban, secular and highly educated middle-class attached to the ideals of Kemalism³. Yet other factions of the middle classes were represented during the twentieth century by a whole set of center-right parties following the tradition of the Democratic Party (DP). They are driven by

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the success of the trading classes and rural landowners who oppose the allies of the state middle class and the industrial bourgeoisie. The reign of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which began with its overwhelming victory in 2002, can be seen as a major disruption of existing structures. It was associated with the emergence of a new Islamic bourgeoisie that also included large factions of the middle classes that had previously supported center-right parties. Yılmaz (2007) argues that with the disappearance of the center-right parties, party politics is dominated by the conservative AKP and that the CHP has become more nationalist. In this context, there is no viable option for the secular middle classes, which means that they are undergoing a representation crisis. In short, it seems that the Turkish middle classes, rather than instituting or bringing about political change, vote globally for the political organizations that best guarantee and protect their interests, regardless of their political orientations.

3. Quantitative identification and characterization of today's Turkish middle class

3.1. Methodology

This study aims to identify the Turkish middle classes from household survey data, to reveal their potential heterogeneity and to describe their main socio-economic characteristics. The method that has been adopted broadly follows the approach used by Bonnefond *et al.*, (2015) for China. This approach is multidimensional and sequential, combining an economic approach (based on income) and a sociological approach (mobilizing information on employment and education). It is not a question of precisely identifying a size of middle class (given the lack of consensus on the choice of the appropriate monetary range), but rather delimiting a set of individuals located in the middle of the income distribution (i.e. the 'middle-income set'). The second step consists of mobilizing more qualitative information on employment and education in order to identify the different components of the 'middle class' set defined in the previous step. This is to highlight the potential heterogeneity of the middle class. This multidimensional and sequential method of analysis can be broken down into two stages. First, the analysis of the income distribution in the country provides 'guides' for the choice of a relevant monetary range. The identification of the middle class from different monetary criteria informs the choice of a criterion that is both relevant and allows comparison between countries. Second, the implementation of a classification procedure based on variables related to education and employment within the middle class defined in the previous step allows the identification and characterization of clear-cut groups among the "monetarily-defined middle class". Both steps are detailed below.

3.1.1. First stage: income distribution analysis and identification of the middle class from different monetary criteria

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The first step is to examine the income distribution in Turkey and compare it to a number of common thresholds. The income indicator used is monthly household income per capita, including all the usual income components (formal and informal earned income, wealth income, transfers, etc.). Most of the intervals used in the literature to identify the middle-income classes are then tested. Indeed, most of the time, in the economic literature the middle class is statistically defined in terms of an income range within which the households or individuals that compose it are located. In general, several categories of approach may be distinguished. The relative approach is to define the middle class as the population in the middle of the income distribution. The relative intervals are most often based on median income (between 75% and 125% of median income), average income (between 1 and 2.5 times average income) or the national poverty line (between 2 and 5 times the poverty line). Relative criteria may also be based on quintiles (namely the three middle quintiles of the distribution). The absolute approach is primarily used for international comparisons. It is based on intervals expressed in PPP dollars (Purchasing Power Parity). Various intervals are constructed from a lower bound of \$ 2 per individual per day (in PPP). The underlying idea is to consider that the middle class starts where poverty ends. The following intervals appear in the literature: 2 \$ -10 \$, 2 \$ -13 \$ or 2 \$ -20 \$. As the Asian Development Bank acknowledges, households with per capita incomes between \$ 2 and \$ 4 PPP per day remain highly vulnerable to a return to poverty in the event of socio-economic shocks and can hardly be considered as members of the middle class (ADB, 2010). This limit has led other authors to use a lower limit of \$ 10. The criteria \$ 10- \$ 20, \$ 10- \$ 50 or \$ 10- \$ 100 are nowadays frequently used. The mixed approach consists of combining an absolute lower bound and a relative upper bound. Birdsall (2010) has suggested a lower bound of \$ 10 and an upper bound corresponding to the 95th percentile of the income distribution: she considers that this upper limit makes it possible to exclude from the middle class households or individuals whose income is essentially derived from wealth.

3.1.2. Second stage: classification procedure and group characterization

In order to study the composition of the middle class in detail, we will first consider an income criterion allowing us to isolate a 'middle-income set' based on a strictly monetary indicator. The income considered here is the per capita monthly income of the household, considered exhaustively (formal and informal earned income, wealth income, public and private transfers, etc.)⁴. In this case, we have chosen the monetary range from US \$ 10 PPP per person per day to the 95th percentile of the income distribution for Turkey. It excludes the poor in the context of an emerging country (Kharas, 2010) while, according to Birdsall (2010: 7), the upper relative limit excludes "that portion of the population within a country whose income is most likely to be from inherited wealth or based on prior or current economic rents (...) and thus less associated with productive and primarily labour activity than for the non-rich". This criterion makes it possible to

isolate a 'middle-income class' representing 75.4% of Turkish households in 2014.

In order to explore the heterogeneity of this 'middle-income class' from a multidimensional point of view, we apply a mixed classification procedure using several variables describing the occupational and educational status of households in the sample under consideration. This improves and expands the purely income-based approach by considering the chief focus of the sociological literature on class structure (see [Bonnetfond et al., 2015](#), p.45-46). More specifically, after analyzing the survey questionnaires, we selected and recoded five variables related to the education and employment of the household head to implement the classification: (i) the highest level of education attained, (ii) the socio-professional category, (iii) the employment status, (iv) the type of employer or institutional sector and (v) the possible multi-activity of the household head⁵.

Based on these five variables, the selected procedure performs a classification of a large set of individuals characterized by their first factorial coordinates created by an initial factor analysis procedure (here a multiple correspondence analysis carried out on the five variables). A first classification is obtained by comparing several basic partitions built around mobile centers, before the stable classes thus formed are aggregated by a hierarchical classification method. Ward's aggregation criterion is used.

The selected partition (the number of groups retained within the middle-income class) results from the analysis of the values of the aggregation nodes and the analysis of the dendrogram (the diagram that synthesizes the successive aggregation stages). Its robustness is controlled by the analysis of two indicators that respectively (i) maximise the marginal improvement of the between to within-cluster variance ratio from one partition to another and (ii) minimise the effect of k-means clustering on that ratio. Based on these criteria, we propose a classification into homogeneous, clearly distinct groups. Finally, in order to characterize them as well as possible, we compare the distributions of the different classification variables mentioned above from one group to another and refine the analysis by comparing the distributions or the averages of a further set of variables, called characterization variables.

3.2. 'Monetary' Identification of the Turkish middle class

The quantitative analysis is carried out using SILC (*Survey on Income and Life Conditions*) survey data collected by Turkstat (*Turkish Statistical Institute*). The baseline survey year is 2014 and the survey covers approximately 23,000 households. Figure 1 shows the monthly per capita income distribution of Turkish households in 2014, as well as the position of the thresholds used to identify the middle-income class. We see that this distribution is right-skewed because of large income inequalities and that the 'poverty line' of 10 dollars PPP per day per capita is very close to the modal value of the distribution.

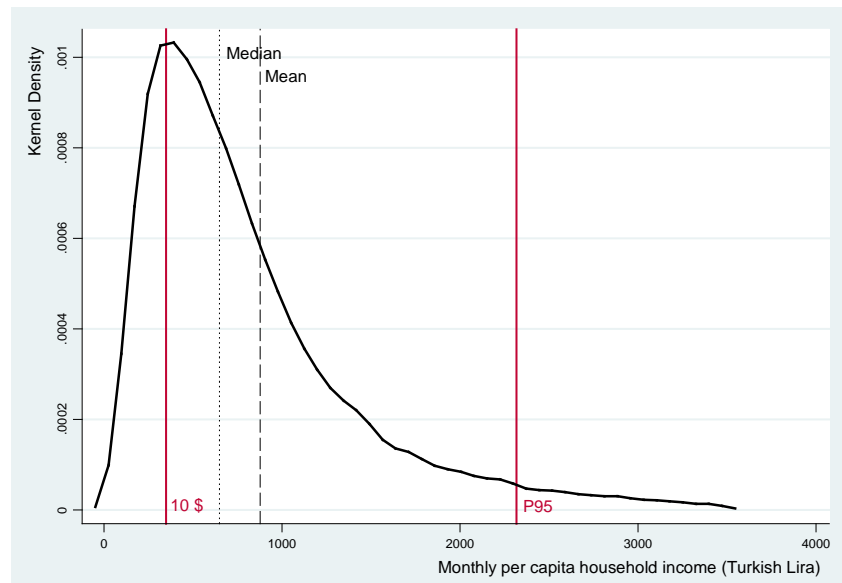


Figure 1. Monthly per capita household income (Kernel density function, Turkey, 2014).

Starting from this income distribution, we measure the size of the middle class on the basis of a set of intervals used in the literature. The weights of the different groups (poor, middle class, rich) for Turkey, for 11 different intervals, are reported in Table 1. The different criteria used produce very disparate results in terms of the percentage of the middle class in the overall population, ranging from 21 to 77% for the year 2014. This is explained by the variety of intervals which, in many cases, overlap only very partially, if at all. This great disparity obviously raises the problem of the choice of the most relevant criterion. It seems imperative to select a lower bound that is neither too low (at the risk of capturing households that are much more ‘poor’ than ‘middle class’), nor too high (in order to be able to include households that are certainly not poor, but which would remain potentially vulnerable to a return to poverty). We have used the range of \$ 10 per day to the 95th percentile of the distribution for the rest of the analysis. It identifies three-quarters of Turkish households as belonging to the middle-income class. This result gives the middle class a slightly higher weight than the estimates produced by other recent studies (see II.2).

Table 1. Middle class size according to different income criteria (Turkey, 2014)

Criterion	Income range		Poor (%)	Middle class (%)	Rich (%)
	Monthly per capita TRY (2014 prices)	Monthly per capita \$ (PPP 2011, 2014 prices)			
[\$2; \$10]	[TRY70; TRY349]	[\$60; \$300]	0.2	21.3	78.4
[\$2; \$20]	[TRY70; TRY698]	[\$60; \$600]	0.2	53.7	46.1
[\$4; \$20]	[TRY140; TRY698]	[\$120; \$600]	2.7	51.2	46.1

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Table 1. *Middle class size according to different income criteria (Turkey, 2014).*

(Continue)

Criterion	Income range		Poor	Middle class	Rich
	Monthly per capita				
	TRY (2014 prices)	Monthly per capita \$ (PPP 2011, 2014 prices)	(%)	(%)	(%)
[\$10; \$20]	[TRY349; TRY698]	[\$300; \$600]	21.6	32.4	46.1
[\$10; \$50]	[TRY349; TRY1,745]	[\$300; \$1,500]	21.6	68.7	9.7
[\$10; \$100]	[TRY349; TRY3,489]	[\$300; \$3,000]	21.6	76.8	1.7
[75%-125% median income]	[TRY487; TRY811]	[\$419; \$698]	35.5	26.6	37.9
[50%-150% median income]	[TRY324; TRY973]	[\$279; \$837]	18.9	52.2	28.9
[100%-250% mean income]	[TRY876; TRY2,191]	[\$754; \$1,884]	66.0	28.1	5.9
[\$10; P90]	[TRY349; TRY1,719]	[\$300; \$1,478]	21.6	68.4	10.0
[\$10; P95]	[TRY349; TRY2,319]	[\$300; \$1,994]	21.6	75.4	5.0

Note: PPP conversion coefficient (PPP 2011 adjusted to 2014 prices) = 1.163 (Source: World Bank). **Source:** SILC (2014).

In the next step we characterize the three groups initially identified on the basis of this income criterion: ‘poor’, ‘middle class’ and ‘rich’, by the various selected classification variables (Table 2). These classification variables are those that will allow us, in a second stage, to better understand the diversity of this ‘monetarily-defined’ middle class by simultaneously considering the occupational and educational status of households.

Table 2. *Characteristics (classification variables) of household heads belonging to poor, middle class and rich categories (Turkey, 2014).*

	Poor	Middle class	Rich	Whole population
Education				
No education	14.9	8.2	1.1	9.3
Primary education	62.9	47.9	14.0	49.4
Secondary education	21.0	29.2	20.0	27.0
Tertiary education	1.1	14.7	64.9	14.3
Occupation				
No job (retiree, inactive, unemployed)	32.9	39.2	24.5	37.1
Managers, executives	2.0	10.0	52.2	10.4
Intermediate occupations	1.4	7.3	9.0	6.1
Service employees	24.6	19.9	9.1	20.3
Workers	22.2	13.5	1.4	14.8
Farmers	17.0	10.1	3.9	11.3
Employment status				
No job (retiree, inactive, unemployed)	32.9	39.2	24.5	37.1
Paid employees	42.9	40.7	51.4	41.7
Self-employed without employees	22.6	15.8	8.1	16.9
Self-employed with employees	1.2	3.7	15.9	3.8
Unpaid workers	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.6
Institutional sector				
No job (retiree, inactive, unemployed)	32.9	39.2	24.5	37.1
Formal employment	32.9	44.0	65.8	42.7
Informal employment	34.2	16.7	9.7	20.2
Households head with >1 activity				
Yes	6.2	5.3	5.3	5.5
No	93.8	94.7	94.7	94.5

Note: The middle class is defined as households whose per capita daily income ranges from \$10 to the 95th percentile of income distribution. **Source:** SILC (2014).

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Table 2 clearly shows the extent to which the Turkish middle-income class differs from the others. We see that it is mostly in an intermediate position between rich and poor, but that in some respects it approaches the poorest (employment status, education) and in others the richest (institutional sector). However, it is obviously of particular interest to question the diversity of situations within the class itself.

3.3. Typology and characterization of the Turkish middle class

We then isolate households belonging to the middle-income class (about 17,000 of the 23,000 households in the SILC dataset) and investigate its heterogeneity by carrying out the multidimensional classification procedure described above. The results of this classification lead us to identify four distinct groups within the middle Turkish income class. Based on the analysis of the comparative distributions of the classification variables and a set of characterization variables (Table 3 and Table A.1), we can describe these four groups, i.e. these four ‘middle classes’ identified separately in Turkey in 2014.

Table 3. *Characteristics of clusters (classification variables) derived from the mixed classification procedure* (Turkey, 2014).*

	Group 1 (39%)	Group 2 (13%)	Group 3 (31%)	Group 4 (17%)	Whole population
Education					
No education	17.7	6.3	1.5	0.0	8.2
Primary education	54.9	73.6	48.8	10.6	47.9
Secondary education	21.0	17.7	41.8	34.0	29.2
Tertiary education	6.5	2.3	8.0	55.4	14.7
Occupation					
No job (retiree, inactive, unemployed)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	39.2
Managers, executives	0.0	2.2	0.1	56.7	10.0
Intermediate occupations	0.0	0.9	0.0	42.3	7.3
Service employees	0.0	13.9	58.3	0.5	19.9
Workers	0.0	6.6	41.0	0.0	13.5
Farmers	0.0	76.4	0.6	0.4	10.1
Employment status					
No job (retiree, inactive, unemployed)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	39.2
Paid employees	0.0	2.4	84.3	84.1	40.7
Self-employed without employees	0.0	92.4	9.6	5.4	15.8
Self-employed with employees	0.0	2.8	5.2	10.2	3.7
Unpaid workers	0.0	2.4	0.9	0.4	0.6
Institutional sector					
No job (retiree, inactive, unemployed)	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	39.2
Formal employment	0.0	18.3	82.9	94.5	44.0
Informal employment	0.0	81.7	17.1	5.6	16.7
Household head with >1 activity					
Yes	0.0	12.3	8.9	5.7	5.3
No	100.0	87.7	91.1	94.3	94.7

(*) The shaded cells identify the categories that are statistically (at the 5% level) better represented in the group considered than in the rest of the middle class.

Source: SILC (2014).

Retired and inactive middle class (group 1 - 39% of the middle-income class). This group consists mainly of households headed by retirees, who are also generally less well-educated than other middle-class heads of

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households. There are far more female heads of household than in the other groups. These households are, more often than the others, owners of their (relatively small and poorly-equipped) dwellings and are distinguished by a subjective state of health worse than that of the other groups and by a lower appetite than the others for leisure and the Internet. They are relatively small households whose incomes are comparable to those of the entire middle class.

Farmers' middle class (group 2-13%). This group consists overwhelmingly of self-employed and some unpaid workers. Most of them are farmers in informal employment, in the sense of non-registration of the activity with social security institutions. The heads of these households only have, for the most part, a primary level of education and they are more likely than the others to have more than one activity. They are, for the most part, owners of their homes, however, these are less well-equipped than average, their incomes are rather low compared to the average and they are on average older than other heads of households (excluding group 1). They are slightly over-represented in the Black Sea and Eastern Anatolia regions and, like the previous group, have neither the means nor the appetite to indulge in recreation or use the Internet.

Industry and service workers and small entrepreneurs' middle class (group 3-31%). This group of households is mainly made up of service industry employees and industrial workers who are wage earners in the formal economy, but it also includes three-quarters of the urban self-employed and nearly half of urban employers. The heads of these households sometimes have more than one activity and are more likely than the others to have completed secondary education. They are more likely than the others to be tenants of their dwellings or to occupy them rent-free. Many heads of these households work in factories, businesses or construction, public administration and defense. Two-thirds of them show a good subjective state of health, but many lack the means to pay for regular leisure activities or an Internet connection at home. This group has the lowest average monthly per capita income of the entire middle class. The heads of these households are younger and their dwellings are better-equipped than those of the two preceding classes.

Employers and executives' upper middle class (group 4-17%). This group of households is mainly composed of managers, employers and intermediate occupations in the formal sector, whose level of education is globally very high. Often tenants of their dwellings, these households display a very good subjective state of health. They mainly work in the sectors of information and communication, finance and insurance, real estate, scientific and technical activities and education. They have more regular leisure time than most others, they are very much connected to the Internet at home and over 60% of them can afford at least one week's annual vacation. They are also far more likely than the others to say that their incomes allow them to make ends meet easily. They have the largest

and best-equipped homes, are relatively young compared to the others, and have the highest income level of all the groups identified.

The four middle classes thus identified and characterized from the strict point of view of the selected variables make it possible to formalize, in a multidimensional way, the diversity and 'divides' existing within the middle-income class in Turkey. The proposed quantitative approach echoes the elements identified earlier in the literature and confirms them in several respects. Thus, we advance and support the idea that most of groups 1 and 4 members (retirees and upper middle-class employers and executives) could be considered as the Turkish 'old middle classes' who are losing ground, and that groups 2 and 3 identify themselves quite clearly with the 'new middle classes' that have been emerging since the early 2000s in urban areas (industry and service workers, small entrepreneurs) and in rural areas (farmers)⁶. The second set of households appears to be a flow of households 'extracted' from poverty since the end of the 1990s, in line with the growth of the export-oriented manufacturing sector. Recent political power has supported the emergence of this 'new' middle class through anti-poverty policies, but has not implemented policies explicitly dedicated to maintaining and sustaining a stock of pre-existing middle class households.

4. Using qualitative analysis to enrich the quantitative conclusions

The quantitative results presented above can very usefully be complemented by a systematic analysis of the behavior and aspirations of the middle class members from semi-structured qualitative interviews. These interviews were conducted on the basis of an interview guide adapted to the specific characteristics of Turkey and to a population chosen to cover all the different middle classes 'identified' by quantitative analysis. Respondents were surveyed in Istanbul and Gaziantep to capture – as well as possible, and in two very different areas of the country – the diversity identified in the middle-income class during the previous stage. The interviews aim to provide deeper knowledge of the middle class in terms of their economic aspirations, their professional and intergenerational mobility, their access to capital, public services and opportunities, their participation in social life, their inclusion in social networks, their demands for social protection, their environmental aspirations and their political preferences and aspirations⁷.

4.1. General characteristics of the respondents

As regards demographic characteristics, the interviews show above all the remarkable fall in the birth rate among the middle classes over the last thirty years. Like the entire population of the country, all the interviewees had at least two children fewer than their parents. More specifically, it is clear that young middle-class couples have significantly fewer children

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than those of the previous generation, especially in Istanbul. Another demographic feature is that the age of marriage of younger generations is later than previous generations, also especially in Istanbul. Finally, it should be noted that the rather rapid aging process of the Turkish population increases the number of single elderly people. They often live in difficult material conditions and only belong to the middle class thanks to the support of their children who have experienced some social advancement (e.g. n°14 and n° 17).

The educational levels of our interviewees ranged from primary school to university and they are particularly well correlated with the socio-economic status of individuals. Interviewees with the lowest levels of education are also usually the oldest, which reflects the massive increase in enrollment rates in recent years. Exceptions to this rule include relatively young individuals pursuing the 'traditional' activity of their parents (n°15, for example) or women from small villages with conservative opinions (n°18). For those interviewees who are employees and tend to belong to the "old" middle classes as defined above, the level of education is the most discriminating factor as regards their socio-economic position. For the others, who tend to belong to the "new" middle classes, the correlation between the level of education and income is also apparent although less marked. In addition, the effects of social progress appear to be at work among the middle classes, since none of the interviewees have a lower level of education than their parents. However, there is a general feeling that the recognized value of diplomas is decreasing, which is linked to the generalization and greater ease of access to secondary and higher education.

By looking at the professional situation of our interviewees, we can clearly distinguish three main categories: employees, the inactive (retired and homemakers) and 'small entrepreneurs' (employers and self-employed). The 'lower' segment of the middle classes is more likely to be blue-collar or white-collar workers with fragile status, low pay and most of the time without any job security. Gaziantep subcontracted workers, aged 29 and 31, earning around 2,500 TRY per month (n°5 and n°8) are good examples of this precarious segment, as is the 39-year-old woman working for 2,000 TRY per month in a hairdressing salon in Istanbul (n°13). During interviews, we also found that employees and retirees formed two fundamental subsets, defining the identity of the Turkish middle classes. While education and social capital are decisive for both income and class positioning, there is a significant difference among pensioners between those in the public sector (*EmekliSandığı*) and those in the private sector (*SSK, Bağ-Kur*). We have seen that some retirees, especially in the public service, were in a relatively comfortable situation and that they owed that to two forms of investment made during their period of work: housing and education. In the retiree sub-group, being a homeowner directly determines the position within the middle class. On the one hand, 'fragile' pensioners are obliged to pay rent with their small pension and on the

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other hand, 'protected' pensioners live in housing that they own and position themselves in the upper middle class segment. Similarly, among retirees, those who were able, when they were active, to invest a large part of their income in the education of their children are now reaping the benefits of their 'investments'. Indeed, it appears that children who, thanks to their high level of education, work for a relatively high salary, offer material support to their parents. The subgroups least likely to talk about their income in detail are the tradesmen, self-employed artisans, and small entrepreneurs. Generally, they are also the group whose world view is the most conservative and traditional in terms of the distribution of social roles between sexes or between generations.

4.2. Changes in living conditions between generations

The interviews revealed a fairly high level of intergenerational social mobility, especially in Istanbul. It appears that there are three ways that interviewees rise up the social scale compared to their parents in terms of education, income and standard of living. The first involves spatial mobility and the transition from a rural to an urban setting, especially for interviewees from Istanbul. This transition has often been carried out in several stages: firstly, the newly urban households have solved their housing and work problems by resorting to mutual assistance, helped by bonds of common geographical origin or family ties. By accepting precarious and low-wage jobs, they were able to make initial savings in order to become owners, often of self-built housing (*gecekondu*) and to provide education for their children. In this way, the second generation was able to rise to a higher socio-economic position than that of their parents. During this process, the links of common origin, abundantly mobilized by the parents' generation, have lost their importance. For example, among the interviewees in Istanbul, only one said that they belonged to a 'country' association (n°15). However, it must be emphasized that the transition from a rural to an urban setting does not always involve a complete break with the former. This is particularly true for a city such as Gaziantep whose hinterland is characterized by intense agricultural activity. The urban middle classes in Gaziantep have not broken with the villages and small towns whence they come. Some people who live in the city actually continue to farm in their home village. Despite recurring talk of the death of agriculture, new urban dwellers have not abandoned it and sometimes even earn most of their income by pursuing an agricultural activity often intended for consumption by their families. As related in several of the interviews conducted in Gaziantep, the preservation of a link with the village of origin provides resources that are still important in coping with the economic difficulties inherent in city life (n°7, n°9, n°10). Even households with higher incomes are still marked in their way of life, their values and their systems of standards by the rural world from which they come and which they tend to perpetuate in the city. The second lever of social mobility is education, whose benefits are, in fact, linked to the first

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lever –rural-urban transition – since education is the main catalyst of social change and modernization in Turkey. The fact that almost all of our interviewees insisted that they gave primary importance to education demonstrates this clearly: the middle classes firmly believe in the principle ‘If you study, you will have a better life’, whose validity they have experienced in their own lives, whether they have succeeded or not. For them, ‘better education’ means ‘a better job’, in other words ‘better income to live better’. Indeed, although the Turkish education system is far from perfect and today the fact of having a degree no longer offers an absolute guarantee, given the substantial influx of graduates onto the job market, we found that no interviewee really questioned the validity of the close relationship between education and social mobility. The third way to ensure social mobility, even if it is less widespread and more random, is marriage. As we were told explicitly, women in particular can experience immediate social mobility by marrying a man who is richer and more educated than them (n°18, n°19, n°20 and n°25). This mode of social mobility, even if it is uncertain and often hazardous, is recognized as one of the rare opportunities for urban settlement and social advancement offered to women in rural areas.

Urbanization and social mobility mean, one way or another, adaptation to life in large cities and to the dominant national culture. In the biographical narrative they supplied, some of the interviewees provided information on forms of voluntary assimilation experienced by their parents of various ethnic origins after having ‘immigrated’ to Istanbul. The life stories of three of our interviewees are edifying in this respect, two of Arab origin (n°12 and n°13) and one of Bosnian origin (n°16). All three spoke of the connection between the immigration to Istanbul of these people from different ethnic groups, their social mobility and their ‘Turkification’. During this process of social change, education and occupation play a central role. For example, the state civil service seems to have played the same integrating role as the *devşirme* under the Ottoman Empire, leading to ‘Turkification’ by a relativisation of ethnic and cultural allegiances specific to the family environment. However, each family experienced this process of ‘becoming Turkish’ in its own way and at its own pace. Thus, for a 67-year-old woman born and raised in Istanbul, but from parents of Arab origin (department of Siirt), assimilation did not prevent her from proudly referring to her origins in her dietary or domestic practices (n°12). Another woman (n°14), a 71-year-old widow, however, told us that she had ‘forgotten’ her Arab and Kurdish origins over the years. These women are also very keen on the Turkish modernizing progressivism that they have made their own.

4.3. Socio-economic behavior of the families interviewed

Contrary to the view held by many experts and institutions on the alleged conspicuous consumption behavior of the middle classes, household interviews revealed rather modest behavior in terms of

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expenditure. Consumption patterns were expected to be different between the four middle classes. However, the consumption practices of all interviewees appeared to be rather frugal and economical, since most of their expenditure was on food and they were careful to limit it. For example, interviewees who had not broken their regular links to the countryside, especially in Gaziantep, made an effort to reduce their food expenditure in the city by obtaining provisions from the villages (n°5, n°7, n°8, n°9, n°10). In addition to food and clothing, the few interviewees who spoke about vacations and travel were relatively well-off retirees and educated employees with higher than average incomes (n°3, n°12, n°21, n°23, n°24). Social role also seems to be closely related to expenditure, in the sense that men are almost always responsible for any major expenditure, whatever its purpose. Most of the households interviewed try to save, by hoarding for the least well off, by buying a house or land or by subscribing to an individual retirement plan (n°11, n°13, n°23, n°24, n°25), or even by investing in the stock market or other funds (n°13 and n°21).

As far as indebtedness among the Turkish middle classes is concerned, first of all the use of credit cards has become generalized. The increasing use of credit cards (revolving credit and/or cash reserves) in Turkey, whose fundamental characteristic is to increase 'expendable' income, has ensured the self-financing of households marked by a history of very high inflation. Indeed, for most of the interviewees the credit card is essential:

'We are all in the same situation: we borrow, we have credit cards, we are full of debts. We do not stop paying off our debts; we repay again and again. This is the picture. Everyone, from the most modest to the wealthiest, without exception, everyone is in debt' (n°15).

This method of financing consumer spending seems to be largely favored by the middle classes. With regard to the use of bank credit – another dimension of middle-class indebtedness – the interviewees have very different attitudes. The oldest people are generally characterized by very strong reservations and apprehensions about indebtedness and credit (n°2, n°9, n°12, n°22, etc.). In this case, the lack of information about how credit works seems strongly linked to a rather low level of education. Other people only borrow exceptionally, for large purchases (house, car), but evoke fears related to the instability of interest rates. The last group reveals the existence of middle-class households living in a permanent spiral of debt and for whom borrowing is the only strategy for survival or the maintenance of a certain level of consumption (n°1, n°4, n°6, n°11, n°15, etc.). Members of the middle-class make a clear distinction between credit used to acquire durable goods and housing, considered as a form of saving, and other credit, described as *'that used by people who cannot spend without going into debt'* and considered as an indication of economic weakness.

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4.4. Participation in social and political life

In the households where we conducted our interviews, 'free time' activities were almost non-existent, with only a few interviewees referring to trips or visits to family members outside the city of residence or sports activities. Overall, the life of the middle classes is divided between home and work. Children are at the center of life. Expenses, savings, the use of free time or plans for the future all revolve around children. The social and political life of the interviewees also seems rather limited. Only three people were members of a political party or association of regional/immigrant compatriots (n°13, n°15, n°18).

The absence of social and political life and the relative lack of participation in public activities reflect the fact that the home is the most important space in the life of the Turkish middle classes. Women clearly occupy a key position within this domestic space. From our interviews there is a generalized feeling of boredom and confinement among middle-class women. There is still strong pressure on women – from both their family and the social environment in which they find themselves – about whether or not to continue their education on the one hand and on the issue of marriage on the other hand. We found during the interviews that arranged marriages and early marriages were still common practice, especially in families of rural origin. When women were working before getting married, it was their husbands who made the decision about whether the women could continue to work after marriage. In this sense, the decision as to whether a woman works or not often seems to be the sole responsibility of husbands and families. However, there is ambivalence about whether women should do paid work outside the house. In the lower segments of the middle classes, women's work is considered a necessity. In low-income households, the search for extra income for the family explains the fact that both parents work, especially in Istanbul. As suggested implicitly by some interviewees, the opinion that 'if the husband's income is correct, he will not make his wife work' predominates. In the upper middle-class segments, on the other hand, women who graduate from universities consider that professional life is necessary for self-fulfillment (n°23). Because of the pressures they experienced during their childhood and youth, women are inclined to have a more liberal approach to educating their own children. This change in the standards of child education is one of the markers of the growing influence of women in middle-class families in today's Turkey. It is also expressed through a relative rebalancing of how domestic tasks are shared in the households where men and women are active. Patriarchal behavior, however, remains very pronounced among older households, small tradesmen, craftsmen and farmers. Finally, care and supervision of dependent individuals, traditionally provided by women, tend to be outsourced by the middle classes. Middle class households are increasingly resorting to the paid services of a live-in carer.

5. Conclusion: specific characteristics and internal differentiation of the Turkish middle class

Globally speaking, the Turkish middle class has a number of specific aspirations that distinguish it from the rest of society. Among them, home ownership is a very important distinction, especially in large cities where rents are high. In both Gaziantep and Istanbul, home ownership is the greatest aspiration of tenant households. According to the TÜİK (2016) survey on consumer spending, households spend most of their budget on housing and rent. In times of economic hardship being a homeowner is thus an important source of income for households. The homebuying process is a buffer mechanism that reduces the fragility of some middle class households. Similarly, the demand for security, especially housing, is a good marker of middle class membership –whatever the family’s ideological persuasions. Car ownership is also a clear marker of middle class membership, irrespective of how much the vehicle is used. Sending children to private schools is also tending to become widespread as a distinctive sign of middle class membership, especially among couples with young children. Access to private health insurance systems is another discriminating feature, although reserved for the upper middle class segment. The possession of ‘high-tech’ devices is not so much a distinctive element of the middle class as their use (time spent on the Internet and ability to ‘understand’ and use digital technologies). The final distinctive element is taking vacations. Whether returning to their place of origin, visiting a family member, or staying at a seaside hotel or abroad, vacations are a distinctive feature of belonging to the middle class who can generally afford this type of expenditure. It should be noted, however, that in overall terms, the Turkish middle classes appear quite fragile and vulnerable. ‘Compelled’ to display their membership of the middle class by some forms of more or less conspicuous consumption, they are often identified as the ‘indebted classes’ or as the ‘middle classes on credit’. They can be considered to be more clearly positioned at the acquisition stage (‘consumer mentality’) than at the conservation stage that characterizes the more established middle classes.

The internal differentiation within the middle classes in Turkey, is frequently suggested to be ‘secular’ vs ‘conservative’ (Yılmaz, 2007). For example, Rankin *et al.* (2013) identify a group of ‘engaged provincialists’, who are taking a critical stance with respect to the emerging global culture and advocating traditional, conservative values. According to these authors, 30% to 40% of the national population is associated with average income and education and support for the role of religion in public life. This model could be very widespread among the new Islamic middle class.

The ‘secular’ vs ‘conservative’ divide broadly corresponds with the distinction made above in our quantitative approach between groups 1 and 4 (retired and upper middle class employers and executives) on the one hand and groups 2 and 3 (industry and service workers, small

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entrepreneurs and farmers) on the other. Our interviews, however, led us to identify two different dynamics in the subset of “conservative” middle classes. The first tends to produce middle classes that are on the fast track of change and modernization. Such change is initiated through consumption patterns, but then quickly affects the ‘world view’, for those with a high level of education and even for some of the others. The other dynamic at work in this group is that of strengthening the conservative identity. These households want religious values to extend to all areas of social life. This ‘conservative-religious’ dynamic, however, does not seem to concern many households when compared to those following a path of change and individualization.

One of the salient features of today's Turkish middle class is undoubtedly its strong political polarization. There is such a division that the interviewees, depending on their political position, strongly applaud or criticize developments in recent years in such important areas as education, health, social security, taxes, corruption and security of property and people. The cleavage between the secular ‘old middle classes’ and the conservative ‘new middle classes’ appears to be particularly profound in this respect, for example with regard to taxation, educational reforms and corruption problems.

In fact, to understand the Turkish middle class and its role in the country's economic, social and political dynamics it is necessary to go beyond a definition limited to a statistical group of ‘neither rich nor poor’ households. The approach proposed in this paper aims to reveal all the complexity and diversity of the households comprising this set of ‘people in the middle’. Our multidimensional quantitative measurements, supplemented by qualitative interviews, reveal significant diversity coupled with strong polarization within the Turkish middle class. These factors will obviously affect the ways in which the middle class is likely to influence the economic, social and political dynamics, particularly through the structure of consumption, private and public investment in education, the expansion of the formal wage system, the development of social protection and the consolidation of democracy. Even more than its size, it is nevertheless the structure of the middle class and its homogeneity that probably have the most significant effects on the development of economic and social regulation practices in developing countries ([Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006](#)). Thus, the obvious lack of homogeneity in the behavior and aspirations of the middle class is likely to limit the expected positive effects of the emergence of a homogeneous middle class in Turkey.

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Notes

- ¹ The "Gezi uprising" protest movement began on May 28, 2013 in Istanbul and was compared in terms of its scale and the nature of its demands to the "Arab Spring". The protests spread to other cities across the country with anti-government claims from various backgrounds.
- ² Since 1990, and even more so since 2000, there has been a proliferation of gated communities on the edge of large cities (closed and secure estates offering almost total privatization of institutions and services), which is one of the symbols of the presence of middle class in the city (Pérouse, 2004; Pérouse & Danış, 2005).
- ³ Kemalism is the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey. As it was implemented by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, it was defined by sweeping political, social, cultural and religious reforms designed to separate the new Turkish state from its Ottoman predecessor and embrace a Westernized way of living, including the establishment of democracy, secularism, state support of the sciences and free education, many of which were first introduced to Turkey during Atatürk's presidency in his reforms.
- ⁴ Monthly income has been computed from an annual measurement in order to avoid the impact of the irregular nature of income receipt from economic activities such as construction and agriculture.
- ⁵ It should be noted that the choice of these variables was also constrained by the need to ensure the comparative scope of the results insofar as this work is part of a broader comparative study on Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Turkey and Vietnam.
- ⁶ The "old" and "new" middle class terminology is, however, debatable. Indeed, Group 4 is also often described by Turkish researchers as "new middle class" because of its strong international connections and its high level of income and consumption. It must also be emphasized that in Turkish scientific literature "new" also means Western, Westernist, or Westernized.
- ⁷ The methodological details of the qualitative approach are reported in Appendix A.2. The authors warmly thank DidemAsliDanis (University of Galatasaray), BurakGürbüz (University of Gaziantep) and Jean-François Pérouse (French Institute of Anatolian Studies, Istanbul) who conducted the qualitative field study and analyzed its results.

Appendices

Table A.1. *Characteristics of clusters (characterization variables) derived from the mixed classification procedure* (Turkey, 2014).*

	Group 1 (39%)	Group 2 (13%)	Group 3 (31%)	Group 4 (17%)	Whole population
Household head main economic activity					
No job (retiree, inactive, unemployed)	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	39,2
Agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing	0,0	75,9	2,3	0,8	10,6
Mining and quarrying	0,0	0,0	1,5	0,8	0,6
Manufacturing	0,0	2,9	25,1	13,7	10,5
Electricity, gas, steam, water supply, sewerage etc.	0,0	0,6	1,1	1,6	0,7
Construction	0,0	1,9	11,8	3,7	4,5
Whole-sale and retail trade	0,0	9,3	17,4	9,7	8,2
Transportation and storage	0,0	3,6	9,0	3,8	3,9
Accommodation and food service activities	0,0	1,7	6,3	4,3	2,9
Information and communication	0,0	0,2	0,2	1,9	0,4
Financial and insurance activities	0,0	0,1	0,3	2,3	0,5
Real estate activities	0,0	0,1	0,0	1,1	0,2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0,0	0,1	0,3	4,6	0,9
Administrative and support service activities	0,0	1,0	7,2	1,8	2,7
Public administration and defense	0,0	0,0	10,0	19,2	6,4
Education	0,0	0,1	2,0	19,8	4,0
Human health and social work activities	0,0	0,0	2,1	5,7	1,6
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0,0	0,4	0,3	0,8	0,3
Other social, community and personal services	0,0	2,1	3,0	4,4	1,9
Region					
Istanbul	9,5	2,7	12,2	11,7	9,9
Marmara	17,5	18,8	19,2	15,5	17,8
Aegean	15,6	18,8	15,8	14,0	15,8
Ankara	5,9	2,6	6,5	8,2	6,1
Central Anatolia	11,0	10,8	10,8	10,4	10,8
Mediterranean	13,0	10,3	11,4	10,9	11,8
Black Sea	14,3	19,9	11,5	11,9	13,7
East Anatolia	7,9	11,7	7,2	10,5	8,6
South Anatolia	5,4	4,4	5,5	6,8	5,5
Gender					
Male	63,3	92,7	94,9	93,4	82,0
Female	36,7	7,3	5,1	6,6	18,0
Tenure status					
Owner	73,6	79,2	49,9	49,0	62,8
Tenant	13,5	7,1	27,5	30,1	19,8
Lodging	0,2	0,2	2,5	7,0	2,1
Other (rent-free accommodation)	12,7	13,5	20,1	14,0	15,3
Household can afford to pay for leisure regularly					
Yes	7,7	4,8	14,7	38,2	14,7
No, cannot afford it	11,9	10,9	18,6	7,7	13,1
No, other reason	80,4	84,3	66,8	54,1	72,2
Internet connection					
Yes	24,4	17,8	47,3	76,6	39,5
No, cannot afford it	12,5	15,7	18,1	5,2	13,4
No, other reason	63,1	66,5	34,5	18,2	47,1
Household can afford to pay for annual holiday					
Yes	29,1	31,6	30,2	61,5	35,3
No	70,9	68,4	69,8	38,5	64,7
Ability to "make ends meet" with total monthly income					
With great difficulty	10,4	6,8	8,9	3,7	8,3
With difficulty	31,4	27,8	31,6	18,5	28,8
With some difficulty	39,1	32,5	35,6	35,9	36,6

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Table A.1. *Characteristics of clusters (characterization variables) derived from the mixed classification procedure* (Turkey, 2014).*

(Continue)

	Group 1 (39%)	Group 2 (13%)	Group 3 (31%)	Group 4 (17%)	Whole population
Fairly easily	12,9	23,2	17,1	25,7	17,7
Easily	5,7	9,1	6,4	15,0	8,0
Very easily	0,6	0,6	0,4	1,2	0,6
Subjective general health status					
Very good	2,4	5,7	9,5	14,1	7,0
Good	33,7	51,3	66,3	70,1	52,2
Fair	35,6	30,8	18,9	13,3	26,0
Bad	25,1	11,8	5,1	2,4	13,3
Very bad	3,2	0,5	0,2	0,2	1,4
Mean of quantitative variables					
Household size	2,62	3,52	3,64	3,56	3,21
Number of rooms available to the household	3,41	3,52	3,49	3,78	3,51
Size of dwelling	100	103	105	120	105
Household global monthly income (TRY)	25327	30812	31036	46031	31325
Per capita monthly income (TRY)	872	805	766	1161	880
Age of household head	61,7	54,4	41,3	40,3	50,8
Household asset score (15 items)	10,5	10,2	11,4	12,6	11,1

(*) The shaded cells identify the categories that are statistically (at 5% level) more represented in the group considered than in the rest of the middle class. For quantitative variables, shaded (italic) cells identify the means that are significantly higher (lower) than those of the whole middle class.

Source: SILC (2014).

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A.2. Methodological notes on the qualitative approach

In situ qualitative interviews were conducted in Istanbul and Gaziantep, a large city in the south-east of the country. A total of 25 interviews were conducted: 15 in Istanbul and 10 in Gaziantep. According to official census figures, Istanbul is the most populous department in Turkey with more than 15 million inhabitants, while Gaziantep department, with 2 million inhabitants, ranks 8th. Given the population of these two departments, it is clear that these 25 in-depth interviews cannot claim to be in any way representative, which explains the absence of any quantified elements in the comments that follow. However, these interviews provide valuable material to help capture the differentiation and nuances that exist between the different Turkish middle classes as identified in the previous step. The following analysis aims to show these and to try to explain them. The main characteristics of the individuals interviewed are shown in the table below.

Table A.2. *Main characteristics of the individuals interviewed during qualitative household interviews (Turkey, 2017)*

Interview number	Gender	Age	Region	Urban / Rural	Marital status	Household size	Education	Occupation	Employment status	Household monthly global income
1	M	53	Gaziantep	U	Married	5	Primary	Truck driver	Employer	TRY5,000 (est.)
2	M	60	Gaziantep	U	Married	5	Tertiary	Retiree	Inactive	TRY6,000
3	M	46	Gaziantep	U	Married	5	Tertiary	Plumber (wife doctor)	Self-employed	TRY10,000 (est.)
4	M	40	Gaziantep	U	Married	4	Tertiary	Manager of family business	Employee	TRY7,000
5	M	29	Gaziantep	U	Married	3	Secondary	Subcontractor worker	Employee	TRY2,500
6	M	34	Gaziantep	U	Married	3	Tertiary	Banker	Employee	TRY8,000 (est.)
7	M	62	Gaziantep	U / R	Married	5	Primary	Retiree + farmer	Self-employed	TRY3,300
8	M	31	Gaziantep	U	Married	2	Tertiary	Subcontractor worker	Employee	TRY2,350
9	M	48	Gaziantep	R	Married	6	Primary	Farmer	Self-employed	TRY3,000
10	M	75	Gaziantep	R	Married	13	Primary	Retired farmer	Inactive	TRY2,600
11	M	49	Istanbul	U	Married	5	Secondary	Civil servant	Employee	TRY8,800
12	F	66	Istanbul	U	Married	2	Secondary	Housewife	Inactive	TRY5,000
13	F	39	Istanbul	U	Single	4	Secondary	Haidresser	Employee	TRY6,000
14	F	81	Istanbul	U	Widower	1	Primary	Housewife	Inactive	TRY2,500
15	M	38	Istanbul	U	Single	3	Primary	Restaurateur	Self-employed	TRY6,000
16	F	31	Istanbul	U	Married	3	Secondary	Assistant Accountant	Employee	TRY3,000
17	F	60	Istanbul	U	Divorced	1	Secondary	Model maker	Inactive	TRY1,700
18	F	36	Istanbul	U	Married	4	Primary	Housewife	Inactive	TRY9,000 (est.)
19	M	66	Istanbul	U	Married	4	Secondary	Owner of a clothing store	Self-employed	TRY6,000
20	F	50	Istanbul	U	Married	4	Tertiary	Housewife	Inactive	TRY6,500
21	F	68	Istanbul	U	Married	2	Tertiary	Retired	Inactive	TRY13,000
22	F	43	Istanbul	U	Married	4	Secondary	Daily Housekeeping	Self-employed	TRY4,000
23	F	36	Istanbul	U	Married	3	Tertiary	Expert in foreign trade	Employee	TRY4,000
24	M	34	Istanbul	U	Single	4	Tertiary	Programmer	Employee	TRY8,000
25	M	31	Istanbul	U	Married	2	Tertiary	Civil servant	Employee	TRY3,500

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