



## **Not barbarians : Transnational mobility and Rootedness of Upper Middle classes in European Cities**

**Alberta Andreotti**

Department of Sociology, University of Milan-Bicocca: [alberta.andreotti@unimib.it](mailto:alberta.andreotti@unimib.it)

**Patrick Le Galès**

Sciences-Po, CNRS Centre d'Études Européennes: [patrick.legales@sciences-po.fr](mailto:patrick.legales@sciences-po.fr)

**Francisco Javier Moreno Fuentes**

Institute of Public Goods and Policies (IPP-CCHS), Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC): [j.moreno@cchs.csic.es](mailto:j.moreno@cchs.csic.es)

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[wppoleville@gmail.com](mailto:wppoleville@gmail.com)  
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## Résumé :

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### Abstract:

Some authors suggest that "mobilities" are the distinctive feature of late modern societies and represent a new social cleavage between a mobile élite and the people who are locals. In such discourses, there is the assumption that the transnational or global society, as it is in turn defined, entails a process of de-territorialisation of individuals, and mainly of the mobile élite. The article based on a comparative empirical research analyses the dynamics of transnationalisation and the dynamics of rootedness of upper middle classes managers in four European cities: Paris, Madrid, Milan and Lyon. Our hypothesis is that European urban upper middle classes are developing 'partial exit' strategies, playing at different scale levels to organize and defend their interests without disinvesting on the local scale. The study adopts a micro-level perspective, looking at the individual experiences, strategies, motivations, values and narratives of 480 managers in the four cities.

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Once upon a time, a professor at the London Business School, R. Angel, impressed and amused by his former students, wrote a '*New Barbarian Manifesto*'. The author offered a few tricks to young and aspiring middle class high tech workers. One key lesson to survive the information age, he suggests, is to take advantage of collective goods and services where they are, but to avoid investing in any long term resources and in local places, and go private and temporary for as many services as possible. In this sense, New barbarians are transnational mobile rational actors behaving like free riders in cities where they pass<sup>1</sup>. The paper, based upon an empirical comparative research argues that this representation of free floating transnational free riding middle classes does not correspond to the profound rootedness and limited mobility of managers based in four European cities.

### **1) How is mobility central to the understanding of contemporary societies, class and social differentiation ?**

The question of mobility raises questions both about the social structure of national societies and about the life strategies of individual actors (Kennedy, 2010). Some social theorists, notably John Urry, have suggested that 'mobilities' are the distinctive feature of late modern societies under increasingly globalised conditions. This author suggests that the classical idea of the nation-state-society is dead and with it also the classical sociological concepts of class, reproduction and territory. Sociology should, in this account, go beyond societies, focusing on 'the diverse mobilities of people, objects, images, information and wastes and on the complex interdependences between, and societal consequences of these diverse mobilities' (Urry, 2000: 187). These mobilities are understood as crucial flows beyond the territory of each society and are related to many different spheres: work, housing, leisure, religion, family relations, criminal gain, asylum seeking and so on. Other authors think that societies, particularly European societies, are changing dramatically under globalisation processes of which mobility is considered an important element, and suggest the making of a global or cosmopolitan society despite costs and emotional costs associated to mobility (Elliott and Urry 2010). These social theorists of globalisation emphasise the fact that flows, transactions, and the strategies of individuals and collective actors are being reshaped directly on a global scale. Giddens, in his classic essay on the 'Consequences of Modernity' (1990), explains that social relations are becoming more and more *disembedded*, detached from socio-spatial references at the individual level, while at the macro level traditional institutions are becoming more and more detached from the local-national context and have been replaced by global ones. Beck argues that society is no longer attached to a territory and claims for a shift of paradigm in sociology: from a nation-state centred approach, to a cosmopolitan perspective since 'a new kind of society and personal life are in the making' (2000: 81).

Those discourses rely upon the implicit assumption that this transnational, global or cosmopolitan society, as it is in turn defined, entails a process of de-territorialisation of individuals and organizations. This means that individuals and organizations are less, or even not at all, attached to their local or national territory, in favour of a more global belonging and articulation of interests. Mobility can be analysed in different ways and in particular as a capital which may play a role in the making of class.

In this account, highly mobile persons, migrants or upper middle classes, are supposed to be the first to experience those changes and who can take most advantage of it. There is now a very important literature on transnational migration (Guardino and Smith for instance). These people are often referred to as a new global elite of business people who is part of transnational or global networks and is escaping from communal obligations and participation in associational and political life, locally as well as nationally.

Two different interpretations of this new de-territorialized global elite have been put forward. On the one hand, a description of individuals unable to form lasting attachments and commitments to place and others, unwilling to pay tax and to participate to a community for which one feels obliged to make sacrifices. On the other hand, and from a completely different theoretical framework, we find a description of these de-territorialized individuals as a new transnational capitalist class (Sklair, 2001; Harris, Robinson, 2000, Beck, 2000; 2002 ). Sklair defines it as 'an international bourgeoisie: a socially comprehensive category, encompassing the entrepreneurial elite, managers of firms, senior state functionaries, leading politicians, members of the learned professions ... plus the media, culture, consumption' (1995: 62; 2000). In both cases, mobility appears as a new social cleavage which oppose the classical categories of *Locals* and *Cosmopolitans* with the first ones closed in their local dimension, bound to the territory, and the latter being part of a global world, detached from the territory. In this vein Castells writes 'elites are cosmopolitan, people are local' (1996: 415). This, it is argued, may have serious consequences for civic life and social cohesion (Gustafson, 2009). In both interpretations the threat is evident, even though as a result of opposite processes: middle classes are eluding national and local constraints to obtain personal or collective advantages.

It is possible that these multiple transnational mobilities and networks of individuals (with the possible consequences of de-territorialisation) might indeed be a growing feature of the everyday lives of European citizens, and of upper social strata in particular, though these remain empirical questions to be investigated. S.Mau for instance has shown for Germany the gap in transnational mobility in favour of the most educated (Mau 2010), which is also coherent with Fligstein 's findings on the making of Europeans (2009) or Medrano's research on class and Europeanization (2010). This question is particularly interesting in Europe as the sociology of Europe and European cities has shown at length the remaining strength of territorialisation dynamics and cities in European societies (Kaeble, 1987, Bagnasco and Le Galès, 2000, Le Galès, 2002, Kazepov, 2005, Therborn and Le Galès, 2010).

However, as Hannerz (2003) or Burrawoy (2005) suggested, does it make sense to study mobility without thinking about local lives or localities ? Part of the literature on mobility focuses on change, new developments which may be crucial ....on the long term but may be explained or mediated by rootedness. In order to avoid the illusion of change, researchers who are exploring this dimension through empirical research all point to this dynamic : mobility makes sense in relation to rootedness, locality and local lives (Savage and al.. 2005, Mau, 2010, Kennedy, 2007). Mau even shows that the immobile part of the German population is also becoming transnational as it deals with migrants (2010).

It is the combination of mobility and rootedness which has to be studied in order to understand the process of mobility. Following Savage's argument (2005: 207), it is the fixity, the rootedness in the local context that often allows access to other dimensions that might be mobile such as patterns of leisure, work, sociability, schooling. Furthermore, the concept of *local* must be better defined as the increasing mobility has altered its meaning, which is now more and more affected by global processes (Kennedy 2010). In this respect, Michael Savage and his colleagues make a fine contribution with the concept of 'elective belonging'. These authors make the hypothesis that the increased mobility and the capacity to use different territorial scales opens the field of the possible for individuals in terms of belonging and of negotiating their involvement in a given space. The meaning of belonging differs according to the different social groups though. To immobile persons it can be non-conscious and general rootedness in a certain space, to mobile upper middle-classes it may be a matter of free choice. In the study of middle classes in Manchester, Savage and his colleagues explore how different social groups apply practices of 'elective belonging' to exactly mean deliberate decisions about where to live and whether to participate in specific local social networks (Savage et al. 2005). Upper middle classes, having economic, social and human resources, can choose how to promote and articulate their interests at different territorial scale levels.

This article follows this path of trying to analyse at the same time dynamics of transnationalisation and dynamics of rootedness within neighbourhoods and cities. It is based upon an exploratory comparative empirical research. It explores the extent to which upper middle classes of some European cities are mobile, inserted in transnational networks, and are adopting transnational practices while being rooted in their local and national contexts. We have insights that educated middle classes are more likely to be mobile (some evidence see Mau 2010, Favell and Recchi, 2009). Our hypothesis is not just about mobility : European urban upper middle classes are developing 'partial exit' strategies that make necessary to simultaneously study their dynamics of transnational mobility *and* urban rootedness. This means looking both at the mobility experiences of individuals, and at the fixity to the place of residence – states, cities and neighbourhoods –, analysing how individuals are part of social networks, take part in activities, and demand services at the different territorial scales.

## **2 Transnationalism and rootedness: the 'partial exit' of upper middle classes' hypothesis**

Statistics about residential mobility of Europeans do not support the idea of a strong geographical mobility of the population of this continent. Only 1,5 to 2% of Europeans move each year to another country, a proportion which is growing very slowly over time, and one that remains among the lowest in the world (3% at the global level, ILO). Moreover, if 7.2% change houses every year (while more than 16% do so in the US), half of them stay in the same area in which they were already living. Mobility conceived this way seems to be an interesting by marginal feature of the European society in the making. Favell and Recchi, (2009) provide figures showing both the limited systematic transnational mobility within the EU and the importance of limited mobility.

Mobility is far from being an evenly spread phenomenon among the European population. In addition to the small groups of retired people who spend part of the year in their houses abroad in search for milder climates, and a quite visible, although not necessarily large, group of young people living abroad as part of their educational trajectory, the ones experiencing mobility are mostly the upper social strata while the rest of the population remains practically immobile (Gustafson, 2009). Beyond the somehow simplistic media depiction of those upper social strata as a super élite of highly mobile managers and professionals spending their time shuttling between global cities and airport v.i.p. lounges (only for frequent flyers), we aim at analysing the actual balance of transnationalisation and rootedness of those well to do sectors of European societies. In this sense, a revamped analysis of the classic cleavage *Locals- Cosmopolitans* that many authors use to depict these groups may still prove useful to analyse whether European upper strata are effectively inserted in global or transnational networks, and to what extent they are becoming, in fact, more de-territorialized. This explains two methodological choices : the choice of cities, the choice of upper middle classes.

*Choice of cities : Paris, Milan, Madrid, Lyon*

We have some close connections with Mike Savage and Tim Butler and we discussed the research with them. Their own research on London and Manchester overlaps with ours and sometimes we have used similar questions. We therefore have an interesting background of research on British cities. However, one of us as argued in the past that European cities are an interesting category (Le Galès 2002). We there chose the other more globalised cities in Europe, i.e. Paris, and a series of other European cities; Sadly, our funding did not allow us to choose more than four cities. Because of the exploratory nature of the research we concentrated on cities we could compare and we knew better, ie Madrid, Milan and Lyon.

*Choice of upper middle classes.*

This category of upper middle class is quite large, and covers different social groups in relation to economic, financial, human and social capitals, thus therefore in terms of status and prestige. There is a long debate on those groups (for instance Goldthorpe, 1982, Butler and Savage, 1995, Bagnasco 2008, Martin 1998, Pinçon-Charlot 2000). For the purpose of our comparative research, we chose the category of managers, restricting the focus of our analysis to individuals working as employees (either in the public or private sector), and leaving therefore aside those professionals and entrepreneurs that in fact belong into the same social strata. Three other criteria were retained to define more precisely the group we chose, and in order to make our interviewees more comparable: 1) level of education, selecting individuals with at least a university degree, and most often at master's level; 2) autonomy in their jobs, meaning the capacity to manage time, and the contents of their work; 3) responsibility at work, for example, coordinating a team, or

deciding upon the careers and salaries of other workers. All the interviews conducted in the four cities (Paris, Lyon, Milan, Madrid) and twelve neighbourhoods fulfilled these criteria.

It is clear that in this regard our interviews have an important bias, as we only focus on those managers who never left, or decided to come back, and therefore our sample does not include some of the most transnationally oriented individuals who still did not come back (some of which will never actually return). Nevertheless, our choice is justified by our interest in focusing not only on the dimension of 'exit', but on the combinations of transnationalisation and urban rootedness.

For details see Andreotti, Le Galès, Bonnet and Moreno Fuentes, 2008, 2010

Our upper middle class managers contrast in quite interesting ways with the group of Eurostars studied by Favell (2008). While the Eurostars opted to continue living in a European country different to their own (at the time of the interview), our own interviewees either never resided in a foreign country for a significant amount of time, or at some point decided to return to their own country after spending some time abroad. Generally coming from the same socio-economic milieu, and facing relatively similar life opportunities than Favell's informants, our interviewees represent in many cases their complementary opposites (same profile with different choices in relation to their degree of transnationalisation). In some occasions they constitute the exact same group in a different stage in their personal and professional trajectories (returned to their country of origin after having finished their period as expatriates).

One possible way for this social group to promote its interests is to put into practice 'exit' or 'partial exit' strategies (Bartolini 1998, 2005), both at the national and at the urban level. One way individuals can choose to 'exit' from their nation state is to physically migrate, but this remains a relatively rare and extreme option, as we have seen, involving many costs (even in a Europe with all the barriers to free movement down) as Favell has shown in his study on the 'Eurostars' (2008). Alternatively they can choose to 'partially exit' in a variety of ways: in terms of consumption, friendships, job strategies, housing, children's socialisation and education, or financial investment. Thus, individuals belonging to these social groups may for instance choose to send their children to an transnational school or university (an 'exit' option), or to avoid national public services (ie: health services), but to use some others or to participate in national political associations. Clearly, the aggregation of these personal choices has very important consequences at the collective level, affecting the way public services function. The opportunity for 'partial exit' allows these individuals to (re)-negotiate their own position within the national social structure, for example, to protest against or escape high level of taxation, locate property or income outside the nation state, and actively campaign for a reform of the educational or health systems. Individuals can also choose to 'exit' from one dimension and not from another, creating a complex mix of choices which has to be analysed at different *scales*: local/urban, national, European, or transnational/global. Individuals can, for example, 'exit' from national public health systems but engaging (voice) in the local *place*, being it the city or the neighbourhood. As it is well known from the urban literature, urban elites partly define who they are by *place* (the street, the neighbourhood, the district, the city, or the urban region) they choose to live in. One way to 'exit' from the local level is to choose to live in segregated places (ie: secession, gated communities).

Conceptualised in this way, some social groups (upper middle classes and middle classes) within cities have a certain capacity for 'exit', which can be exercised either against the city or against the national society of which it is an integral part. In contrast, other groups have neither the resources, nor the potential, to escape their city or their district. Education, mobility, travel, occupational networks, and various social bonds give the former the possibility of 'partial' (or temporary) 'exit' from the social constraints associated with public life in a city. In order to understand the dynamics of change (mobility and fixity), we thus cross-reference the transnational dimension with the local-urban one. The transnational dimension is high when individuals adopt transnational practices and are inserted in transnational networks. The local dimension is high when individuals join local services and are inserted in local networks (formal and informal ones). Exit strategies are the results of the combination of these dimensions.

#### Diagramme 1

This simple diagram gives rise to four potential social profiles. At one extreme we can find the '*Nomads/Barbarians*' who are very mobile, interact at the transnational level, do not invest on the urban fabric and adopt exit strategies. This profile recalls the 'New Barbarians' described by R. Angel (2000). At the other extreme, we find the '*Local Immobiles*' who are anchored on their local context, do not develop 'exit' strategies, and do not play on different scale levels. The '*Self-segregated*' put into practice exit strategies from the local context (for instance living in 'gated communities', or not using public services at all) but are not inserted in transnational networks, they are retreated in their private social life which remains anchored to the traditional national context.

The *Mobile and rooted* are inserted in transnational networks and play exit strategies in certain fields (partial exit strategies), though they remain locally rooted : they invest resources and time in their local and sometimes national context. They try to get the best of both worlds.

Within this framework, we bring some evidence against the hypothesis of the rise of a new *transnational de-territorialized capitalist class* or the rise of *new de-territorialized Barbarians*.

### 3. Measuring mobility

The study adopts a micro-level perspective, looking at the individual experiences, strategies, motivations, values and narratives of upper social strata living in four European cities: Lyon, Madrid, Milan, and Paris. The approach is qualitative and the sample is not intended to be representative, yet through this sample clear and revealing behavioural patterns can be identified. A total of 120 semi-structured in depth interviews were carried out in each city, for a total of 480 interviews.

#### Choice of neighbourhoods

The choice of neighbourhoods was based on two criteria: location and social structure. The classic centre-suburbs dichotomy discussed in the urban literature raises the question of whether there exist



differences or similarities in respondents' strategies, whether we can identify what David Lockwood used to call 'the urban seeking', versus the 'urban fleeing' middle classes (1995). For this reason, two neighbourhoods within the limits of the city and two outside the city in the residential suburbs were selected. The other variable orienting the selection of the neighbourhoods was social structure, as always discussed in the urban sociology literature. In each metropolitan context, we thus identified two neighbourhoods with the highest concentration of upper social strata, and two neighbourhoods with a mixed social composition, one each in the city centre and in suburbs, respectively. For each metropolitan city, we have: one highly homogenous neighbourhood in the city centre and one highly homogeneous in the suburbs; one neighbourhood with mixed population in the city centre and one with mixed population in the suburbs. In this paper we do not deal with the specific urban questions and we do not enter into details of centre-periphery cleavage

Interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire including both closed and open questions allowing interviewees to express their ideas on all issues. The grid of the interview was structured around the following five themes: 1) working career; 2) residential career; 3) sociability; 4) daily practices (i.e., use of city and neighbourhood services and neighbourhood, cultural consumption practices, frequency of going out, where and with whom, etc.); 5) representations, attitudes and values using the classical survey questions of the European Social Survey and Eurobarometer.

In terms of work, we asked questions about experiences abroad lasting more than six months, the availability to move, the related reasons and in which countries respondents are available to move. For residential trajectories, questions were asked about the choice of the city and the neighbourhood where they are living. The open questions allow understanding whether the place of residence is a voluntary choice, or whether it is a passive one, how individuals perceive the neighbourhood and their neighbours, and how they appreciate it and invest on it. As far as sociability, attention was paid on family ties, on friends and neighbours characteristics and where these are located. This is crucial to understanding the dynamics of transnationalisation – and Europeanization in particular – considering both the extent to which these relations remain national and local, and the extent to which they are transnational. As far as the formal relations questions referred to the effective participation in local, national, European or transnational associations and political parties, initiatives and public services.

The analysis of *daily practices* focused on the European or transnational dimension of consumption, (e.g., watching foreign TV channels, listening to foreign radio, reading foreign newspapers) travel practices (e.g., how many times do the respondent fly per month, where and for how long; how many journeys abroad in the last year for professional and non professional reasons, where and for how long, knowledge of foreign languages, etc), internet practices (access wifi, use of internet and transnational conference calls). Within this section, attention was also paid to educational strategies for children, for example: the choice of private or public school; national or international schooling, why, where the school is located; foreign languages studied; other foreign study experiences.

Finally, as far as attitudes and values are concerned, the focus was on the own self-perception in relation to the different levels of political and territorial aggregation of identities; the support for the EU integration process.

#### **4. Transnational mobile versus immobile : the two worlds of managers' mobility within a virtual global world**

The managers we studied clearly situate themselves within a globalised world. The use of internet, being connected to the net for long periods of time, and the consumption of transnational mass media is widespread among our interviewees. Most of them get involved in international conference calls and e-mailing for professional reasons. They also watch foreign TV channels (such as the CNN or the BBC) partly to improve their English, partly to have a different point of view on the news. Some of them read also regularly international newspapers<sup>2</sup>. Most of them speak English and half of them another language. In other words, these people feel part of the 'global' world, and they are part of professional transnational networks. However, the analysis of real mobility provides a different story.

In relation to mobility the analysis of our empirical evidence shows a complex picture which does not allow us considering our interviewees as one homogeneous social group, not even within the same city. More interestingly, it shows that half of our population is more or less not involved in practices of transnational mobility.

Our managers cannot be defined as having a transnational lifestyle *tout court*. An important part of the respondents in the four cities had an experience abroad longer than six months for professional or study reasons. Compared to the rest of the population this figure is significant.

Table 1 : Respondents with an experience abroad of more than six months by city<sup>3</sup>

Paris (and its residents) appears as comprising more upper middle classes with experiences abroad and we assume it reveals its more central role in transnational network, a node well integrated in the net, with more opportunities to offer (or sometimes to impose) to their employees. Madrid and Milan appear second in the ranking, while the respondents in the city of Lyon appear to lag behind. In part, the fact of having had an experience abroad is also related to the dimension of the company respondents are working for: the larger the company the higher the chances to have had this experience. The women we have in our survey present lower percentages of experiences abroad compared to men. Once again, the city of Paris presents the highest percentage (45,5%), and Madrid the lowest (21,7%).

Table 2: Respondents with experiences abroad by gender

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<sup>2</sup> All of them read national newspaper on a daily basis.

<sup>3</sup> The figures are based on the analysis of two third of our data base

The managers we interviewed are very clear on the importance and the dynamics of globalisation, but their experience reveals holes and strong points. Basically, having a six months professional experience abroad means working mostly in New York, Paris (for non Parisians), London, Brussels and, to a lesser extent in UK, European and North American cities, also South American cities in Madrid. Only few respondents have worked somewhere in Africa or Asia (notably Japan or China). Mapping these geographical places does not really return the image of the globe, but mostly that of its North Western hemisphere. Paris and London are key destinations for Milanese upper managers.

The narratives of these managers stress the importance of their experience abroad, and those who already had some experience of living abroad are the ones who declare to be more available to move again. Yet, they do not forget the difficulties in adapting to new countries and habits, above all when the whole family is involved. In this respect our accounts largely coincide with Favell's (2008) vivid description and analysis of the difficulties and joys experienced by expatriates.

In the four cities the experience abroad is conceived as a way to improve the job position within the internal – national and local – labour market. They are not always enthusiastic and this constraint is well illustrated by the interview with a Parisian manager :

“The career trajectories of managers require more and more often an experience abroad. We nearly force them, but that remains under a voluntary logic. We must manage all that. Today we do not appoint a CEO if they do not have experience abroad”(int. 5 woman-X-P).

According to the specific profile of our interviewees we observe how their transnational experience was not planned as a permanent move, and how the instrumental dimension of their internationalisation was part of their professional strategies for a future career within the local context. This result can be considered a preliminary clue contrasting with the de-territorialization hypothesis. If this hypothesis was true, the national and local contexts should not have been considered the most important social spaces where career strategies have to be played, and interviewees should have imagined their job career jumping from one country to another one. On the contrary, following the accounts of our managers, transnational mobility practices are highly related to national and local territory, they do not imagine themselves ‘today here and tomorrow wherever’. Tomorrow for them is always in ‘my hometown’, to recall a famous song. Furthermore, for the majority of those we interviewed, the preferred option is to stay where they are, except for short trips and not to leave abroad. As one Milanese interviewee puts it pretty bluntly :

‘if the company asks me to go abroad for a period, and this is the shortest way to make career, I go... otherwise I don't move’ (int. 11, man,Milan). .

Questions about the aspiration to mobility reinforce the contrast between managers who do not want to go abroad, those who are potentially available to move and the small group available to move without any conditions.

Interestingly the “immobile” group give very contrasted reasons for not moving : family reasons, language gap... Also, and that is clear in particular in Paris, those who have reached high hierarchical level do not want to bother anymore. The second group comprises managers who, if asked, might go abroad under two conditions: a limited period abroad and a favourable country, which mainly means Western European countries, the United States and, only in very few cases China. Africa, South America, Australia, and the Middle East are almost never mentioned. This is a major contrast with the Savage and co study of Manchester where Europe was hardly mentioned by contrast to Australia or New Zealand.

In our sample, these profiles are almost transversal to the hierarchical positions and life course. There are managers with high responsibility who are not likely to move, and young interviewees not willing to move (mainly in the Milan case), as well as older ones available for an experience abroad. Much depends however on the kind of work they do: engineers building infrastructures or working in the energy field, for instance, are more likely to have spent a period abroad and to be available to move, whatever their age. Finally, those who already had an experience abroad are more inclined to accept to move again. Some of the narratives of these people underline the importance of such an experience, even though they do not forget to point out the difficulties to adapt to new countries and habits, above all when the whole family is implicated in the experience. In some cases the interviewees point this experience as the reason to explain the breaking down of their marital relation. By contrast, those who have not lived such an experience are less inclined to do it. The combination of the two variables (experience abroad and availability to move) shows two polarized groups : the immobile who have not had an experience abroad and do not intend to have it, and the nomads who had this experience and are still available to do it.

The measure about professional experience abroad has been added to the measure of professional and personal trips abroad. Basically, the results are very similar. Our managers mainly go for short trips in London, Paris, Madrid, Barcelona or New York, and in other European capitals. They also declare to know at least one foreign city quite well. Most of those cities they state to know well are located in Europe, with a prevalence of London, immediately followed by Paris. Prague appears as the city more mentioned in Eastern Europe. American cities are mentioned by one third of the respondents with a prevalence of New York, Los Angeles, Boston and Chicago. Several interviewees mentioned some South American city like Buenos Aires, Bogota, or Caracas where they spent some times for professional reasons, while very few mentioned some Asian cities, to witness the ‘old western world’ orientation.

The rest of the world is far, far behind. Again, our research points to two very different groups : those managers who have travelled with varying intensities and destinations during the year previous to the interview (about 50% of them) , and on the other hand those who have not travelled abroad at all during that time (the remaining 50%).

In order to contrast the four cities, we have tried to provide a graphic representation of key indicators.

## Diagramme 2 : Graphic representation of the differences between the cities

The comparison of different types of mobilities of our managers (in terms of duration and destination) shows that half of our respondents who have not lived an experience abroad have not travelled the year before the research either. By contrast to the discourses about globalization and mobility of upper middle classes, a significant part of our sample of managers hardly show any sign of transnational mobility. This group – that we label ‘the Immobile’ – is transversal to the hierarchical and life course positions and more important in Lyon. There seems to be senior managers with very high responsibilities in their corporations and institutions who are not likely to travel, and young managers who are not willing to move. This last profile is more relevant for the Milanese contexts than for the other cities, where the youngest do not appear at all in the immobile profile. Interestingly the interviewees in Paris seem less mobile than their colleagues in Milan and Madrid, as they are supposed to be the more globalised managers of our sample. Yet, one possible explanation could refer precisely to this more central role of Paris in the global capitalist networks, as it could be the case that they need to travel less because they already are in one of the main nodes for European multinationals.

Despite the narratives of the managers we interviewed in our four cities, a large fraction of them do not travel so much, if at all. It seems to us that these results question some taken for granted ideas about mobility, or mobilities, of the upper social strata of the population. Transnational mobility cannot be considered as a simple cleavage between ‘upper middle class’ and ‘low class’, or between an ‘élite’ and the ‘people’.

### **5 Managers are not barbarians, they are deeply rooted in their cities.**

The empirical material generated in our research highlights that most of our managers are very well rooted in their local context.

A first sign of rootedness emerges from the analysis of how these managers select their neighbourhood of residence, ie in relation to family networks. Is money the name of the game as argued in the gentrification literature ? Not really. In all four cities, even though to a different extent, a clear reason given by the managers of our sample to explain the choice of neighborhood is the presence of other family members (often the parents) in the area. In all cities a significant part of our managers (about 20%) live in the same neighbourhood, or close to that of their parents, and sometimes even in the same area where they grew up themselves. In Milan this was a rather expected result, given the familistic Italian feature of the residential arrangements: statistics for the general population stress that 28% of the population live within 1 km from their parents, and the majority of the population within 16 km from them. What is more interesting for this city is that our sample not only presents the same features of the rest of the population, but it shows very well the pervasiveness of the family structure, even when they enjoy a relatively comfortable economic situation. Our managers have enough economic (but also human and relational) resources to actively choose their place of residence, though, in several cases, their choice seems obliged, something that has occurred without their willingness, as this quote clearly shows, and we have examples of this in the four cities:

‘I had this apartment from my family, you know, my parents had bought it several years ago, next to them. It is large and comfortable, it was an obliged choice, the house was there...’(int. 5, woman, Milan).

The possibility of living somewhere else is not even considered very seriously. To all the managers born and still living in Milan, mobile as they may be, the neighbourhood where their parents live is the most attractive,

despite the price or the location within the city. Once the parents are not alive any longer, the attachment to the local area becomes a sort of 'inherited belonging', in the sense that our managers feel part of that neighbourhood because they know it quite well, and in most of the cases, they do not want to leave it. When the intention to move is expressed, it is to change for a larger apartment, but preferably in the same area, and even in the same street. A quite different pattern can be identified for the managers who moved to Milan for educational or professional reasons from other Italian regions. These people are more mobile on the urban space, selecting first the neighbourhood according to the proximity with university or work, and then, when they discovered the city and its facilities, according to the relation between price and prestige of the neighbourhood.

The status of Paris and Madrid as national capitals as well as important economic centres within the economies of their countries, convert these cities in "escalator urban regions" (to use the metaphor used by Savage and his colleagues to describe the London South East). The case of Paris is also marked by the role played by the most elitist universities in those processes of upward mobility. In the case of Madrid a less important, although similar, role was played by certain universities offering specific degrees which could not be studied anywhere else in Spain, thus favouring the arrival of students from other parts of the country, many of which then stayed working this city. This factor transforms the scenario for the residential strategies of a share of our managers who settled in these two cities for professional reasons.

Nevertheless, the case of Madrid emerges as quite similar to that of Milan, with proximity to family networks as a key element in the process of selecting an area to reside for a relatively large share of our managers. Quite surprisingly also in the city of Paris, where about half of our interviewees come from different French provinces outside of Paris, family still structures the residential patterns of almost one third of the respondents.

A second sign of rootedness is the use of public and private services (transport, schools, health, social services, libraries, sport facilities) in the neighbourhood, and in the city more in general. With some exceptions, there is no clear pattern of retreat, or strong signs of abandoning the public sector. Quite the opposite, the narratives of many of our informants stress the importance of public services and the fact that those services should have higher quality and serve their needs better. In that sense too (and with nuances) our managers are not openly and clearly retreating or disinvesting from the city. Nevertheless, some important differences emerge between, and within the cities. In Paris, our respondents emphasise more their participation in city life, as well as in social events in the neighbourhoods, while the vast majority declare to use the local equipments, schools, public transports, and in general the public services on a very regular basis. This pattern reflects in any case the more or less homogeneous social composition of the neighbourhood, so that in areas with a higher presence of upper middle classes the use of the public services by our managers is higher than in those areas with a slightly more mixed population (where there is a higher degree of recourse to the private sector notably in the education sector).

In Milan the participation in neighbourhood activities is almost non existent, while interviewees use the services mixing the public and private sectors according to their needs. Meanwhile, in the case of Madrid a relatively intensive presence in the public space (parks, gardens, etc.) is combined with a strategic use of public

services (almost homogeneous use of private chartered schools, private health for primary and specialised care and public healthcare for hospital treatment). This ambivalent relationship with the city and the neighbourhood is confirmed also by the results on the participation to local (as well as national and transnational) associations. In all four cities our managers do not take part in the activities of neighbourhood associations or other kinds of social organisations (practically none in Milan and Madrid, less than one in ten in Paris). These findings show that our managers are not formally engaged in civic or political local activities, they do not seem to put into practice 'voice strategies', at least not in the traditional local public arenas.

However, as we have seen, our managers use the public services in the neighbourhood and in the city. In this sense, they use the services, they think they are important, they are even available to engage in the services if they (or their children) are using them (e.g. schools), but they do not actively organize and exert their 'voice', with the exception of schools in particular in the French case.

Other behaviours seem to go in the direction of participation, even though in a rather private way. The majority of all respondents declare to be rather interested in politics, to have voted in the last elections, to have discussed of policy matters in the last month, and to be in favour of processes of change in their country and Municipality pointing to meritocracy, despite their different political belonging. These managers seem to have a selective use and participation of the local social context according to their interests and needs. They are aware of the possibility and chances the local context (neighbourhood and city) offers them, and they are open to take advantage of them, though they are less available to actively engage unless they are personally involved.

Selective strategies stem out also from the analysis of the sociability sphere of the interviewees e.g. the informal relations with friends and neighbours<sup>4</sup>. In all four cities our managers have a lively social life in the city, respondents declared to have several friends who they visit regularly, almost on a weekly basis and their relations are quite long lasting, for some of them on average twenty years. Most of the friends live in the same city, even in the same neighbourhood. Not surprisingly, in all cities respondents have a quite homogeneous social network with friends having the same educational and professional degree. These features are extremely clear in Milan: respondents' social networks present high density, long lasting relations which date back to childhood and a strong rootedness in the social and territorial local context.

In the Paris case, respondents' social networks are more varied and open, with the case of Madrid and Lyon in between. These findings apply to all interviewees, both the highly mobile and the immobile. Our results on this point differ substantially from those of Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst for Manchester, and Butler for London.

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<sup>4</sup> To investigate the relational network, four dimensions were considered in the questionnaire: friendship, neighbourhood relations, the hierarchical positions present in the respondents' network and families. For the first two dimensions, the name eliciting method was used. For each named person, all socio-economic characteristics were asked (sex, age, place of birth, place of residence, marital status, education, profession, length of the relation, where they met).

These authors report that their respondents do not have many contacts with their best friends and do not share with them regular activities, as they are also likely to live in other cities, relations with friends remain more abstract than real, disembedded from time and space, quite the opposite of what we actually find among our informants. Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst write that 'maintaining friends require the persistence and the ability to be abstracted from time and space so it can endure over these two dimensions' (p. 242). The dimension of persistence and investment is clearly evident in our cases, as well as time and space, though in a different way. While time and space need to be abstracted in the Manchester cases because friends live in other cities, the relations reported by our respondents, and mostly in the Milanese case, are very well rooted in the local physical and social space.

This vivid social life is not shared with neighbours, and this is so in all cities: our respondents have very limited interactions with their neighbours. They do not invite them for dinners or for a drink and they hardly exchange a service. Minimum interaction (saying hello and asking for some salt) is the general rule. Relationship between neighbours is mostly at low ebb and there is no obvious difference between the cities. The weakness of neighbour relations appear to be independent both from the length of residence in the neighbourhood, and from the house property, so that interviewees living in the same building for very long time do not report stronger contacts. It is not even the case of closure towards neighbours differing from respondents' socio-economic characteristics as respondents have the perception to be on economic average of all residents. These managers are very well rooted in their local context, but in a selective way : in a classic way, neighbours compete with friends for time and attention, and friends are chose.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Our results provide some elements to respond to the questions we have raised.

Firstly, the information provided by our interviewees reveals that these managers are not all that internationally mobile, although the frequency of virtual transnational practices is relatively widespread, both among the most and the least mobile. We therefore identify a group of managers that can be defined as transnational on a virtual basis (using mostly technology to transcend the boundaries of their living environments), who do not actively develop 'exit' strategies from their national sphere. On the other hand, there is another group using technology and the net as well, but experiencing more transnational practices in their real life. This group seems to put into practice 'partial exit' strategies.

Secondly, no evidence of de-territorialization emerges, we do not find evidence of the emergence of a new transnational capitalist class putting into practice collective strategies to escape national constraints, or new barbarians acting as free riders. Most of the managers we interviewed do feel part of a virtual global society, but the organisation of their life is strongly territorialized within the neighbourhoods of the European cities we studied. About half of our informants have had some experience of mobility, most of them travel (although not that much) and they have extensive networks of friends and families close to home. Those who have some long term



experience of mobility living in a foreign country are happy with the experience, yet happy to come back. A good deal of our respondents spend some time and resources in foreign countries, they maintain friendships there, and have strong views on the making of a virtual global society, although this applies more to the education and future prospects of their children than to themselves. Here we therefore find evidence of European cities type of territorialisation we anticipated.

The profiles of managers emerging from our empirical findings fit only one partly within the analytical diagramme we used. We did not find “ Barbarians” though some evidence of ‘partial exit’ strategies and individualized behaviours are present, these strategies are played both at the transnational and local level (vertical axis of the diagram). The *Mobile Rooted* is the most widespread profile among our mobile and transnational managers.

Strong differences between groups in the different cities are also visible. National social structures, of course, still matter. The managers we interviewed in Paris display a distinctively more transnational pattern, and are more present in the *Mobile Rooted* profile. The Milanese managers seem to be more polarised with on the one hand the *Mobile Rooted*, with ‘partial exit’ strategies, and on the other hand the Local-Immobile or Self Segregated who are profoundly rooted, almost bounded, in the local context. In the Madrid case ‘partial exit’ strategies are widespread but in different combinations, so that in some occasions it combines trends towards more transnational orientations with selective participation at the urban and local level, while in other cases the ‘exit’ strategy from the national sphere is very weak or non-existing (only virtual at most), but the strategic behaviours towards the urban and local dimensions are clearly there.

Across the cases, elements of a European upper middle class in the making seem to appear among the younger generations, and especially in the strategies developed regarding their children.

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Table 1 : Percentage of respondents with an experience abroad of more than six months by city <sup>5</sup>					
	<b>Cities</b>				
	<i>Paris</i>	<i>Lyon</i>	<i>Madrid</i>	<i>Milan</i>	<i>Total</i>
Experience abroad	57.4	38.5	42.4	42.6	43.8
No experience abroad	42.6	61.5	57.6	57.4	56.2
Total	100.0 (N. 61)	100.0 (N. 117)	100.0 (N. 66)	100.0 (N. 108)	100.0 (N. 352)

Table 2: Percentage of respondents with experiences abroad by gender			
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
Experience abroad	47.1	36.8	43.8
No experience abroad	52.9	63.2	56.2
Total	100.0 (N. 238)	100.0 (N.114)	100.0 (N. 352)

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<sup>5</sup> The figures are based on the analysis of two third of our data base

Diagram 1

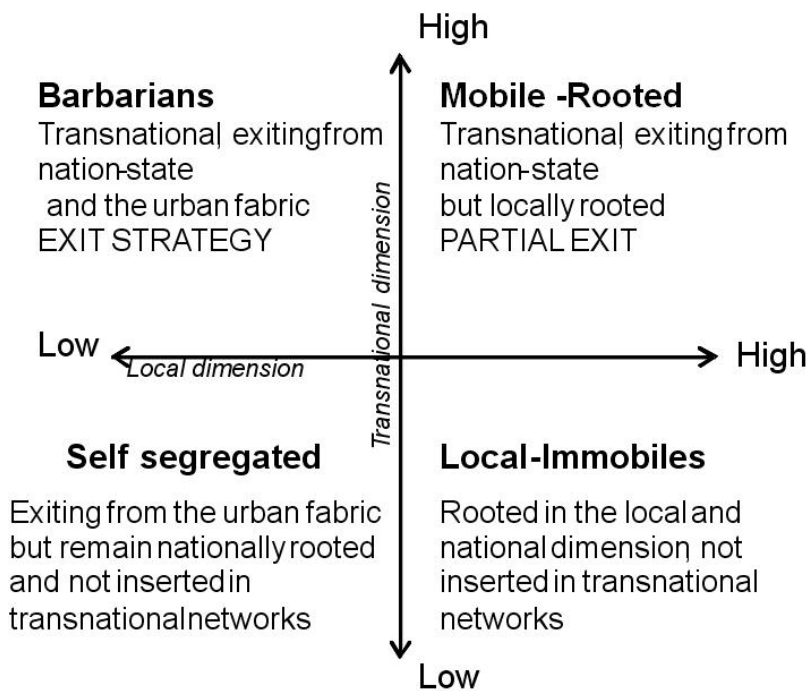


Diagram 2: Graphic representation of the differences between the cities

Legend:

*Living abroad* = percentage of interviewees who had an experience abroad longer than six months

*Business Travel (>4 trips)* = percentage of interviewees who did more than 4 trips abroad for business the year before the interview

*Leisure Travel (>4 trips)* = percentage of interviewees who did more than 4 trips abroad for leisure the year before the interview

*Flight* = percentage of interviewees who flew the month before the interview

*Watching foreign TV* = percentage of interviewees who watch foreign TV

*Well known cities* = median of the number of cities the interviewees declare to know well

*Foreign friends* = median of the number of foreign friends the interviewees declare to know

*Joining local associations* = percentage of interviewees who join some local associations

