

Expatriate Managers: A New Cosmopolitan Elite? Habitus, Everyday Practices, and Networks

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Project Description

The project considers a social figure that has increasingly become an object of attention in recent times, whenever questions of economic globalization, the development of transnational social spaces and questions of social inequalities on a global scale are discussed: the expatriate manager. Notwithstanding the growing interest in global assignments and the figure of the global manager in the International Business and Management Literature, little is known to date of how expatriates deal with the *exacting* demands in their everyday work and life at their places of assignment. Under which circumstances do globally mobile managers develop a cosmopolitan habitus – if at all? How do they arrange their everyday life? What kind of networks do they establish in order to cope with the professional and private challenges connected with a global assignment? And last but not least: Are there differences in the ways in which expatriates deal with the challenges of a global assignment connected with their national origin or with their place of assignment (home country and host country effects)? These questions are addressed by a systematic comparison of two different groups of expatriate managers from different national business cultures – German managers and US American managers - at three different locations of assignment (Germany, USA and China), which are differently positioned in global constructions of cultural difference. This project - taking a critical look at the 'strong' theses concerning the 'global manager' as protagonist of a new global elite (Sklair, Kanter) – aims at an in-depth study into the processes of structuration of the lifeworlds and of (re-)shaping of the habitus of expatriate managers abroad.