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Paolo Chevalier

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# Exploring the Multiple Dimensions of the Residential Choice of the Poorest Long Commuters in Barcelona and in Marseille

Paolo Chevalier - pchevalier@ced.uab.es  
paolo.chevalier@enpc.fr



PhD Candidate at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Université Paris-Est  
Under the joint supervision of Caroline Gallez (LVMT) and Juan Antonio Módenes Cabrerizo (CED)

## Abstract

Low-income earners have a greater potential to be impacted negatively by professional and residential instabilities. Along with the various structural changes, urban sprawl and improvement of speed potentials caused an increase in commuting time. As a result, 5% of the low-income workers in Marseille and Barcelona allocate more than two hours a day to their daily travel routine. These changes may have facilitated the practice of "spatial reversibility", that is to say, to maintain spatial integration within family ties or social networks and, at the same time, commuting out of their life space every day. This paper analyzes the multiple dimensions of the residential choice for long commuters. To address this, a one-week gathering of geolocated data via a mobile application will map the life space of 50 low-income workers. Then, an interview will facilitate the retrieval of retrospective data. An adaptation of the "Ageven" form was made for the purpose of studying family, residential, professional and mobility trajectories as well as the life space along different life cycles. Through a life course approach, it is possible to observe how residential choice may change over time, the circumstances in which a residential mobility occurs, its motives, and its impact on the daily life space.

## I) Context

### Access to Housing

- In Barcelona, housing prices-to-rent have increased by 18.5% and housing prices-to-buy have increased by 19.09% between 2013 and 2016.

- In the Metropolis Aix-Marseille-Provence, a single-parent family earns less than 1,305€/month, they can only afford to live in one municipality of the metropolis: Berre-l'Étang.

### Job Access

- An increase of outsourcing tasks, a need for flexibility, and a new form of labour organization, etc. Workers may feel the need to change their place of work several times throughout the year or/and cumulate various jobs.

- In European metropolises economic activities, residential areas and leisure activities have been progressively dispatched throughout the metropolitan area.

### Access to « Speed Potentials »

- Public transport: The first tramline was launched in 1872 in Barcelona and in 1876 in Marseille. The first metro line in Barcelona opened in 1924 and in Marseille in 1977.

- Private vehicle: in France the rise in car ownership 73% between 1982 and 1995 and 35% between 1995 and 2015. In Spain, car ownership had risen from 25% between 1982 and 1995, and 15% between 1995 and 2015.

## II) Research Question

Is the long commuting pattern of the poorest workers a consequence of the impossibility to access the desired residential location?

### The Multiple Dimensions of the Residential Choice

The choice of residence may vary depending on three different factors, which individuals perceive in different ways:

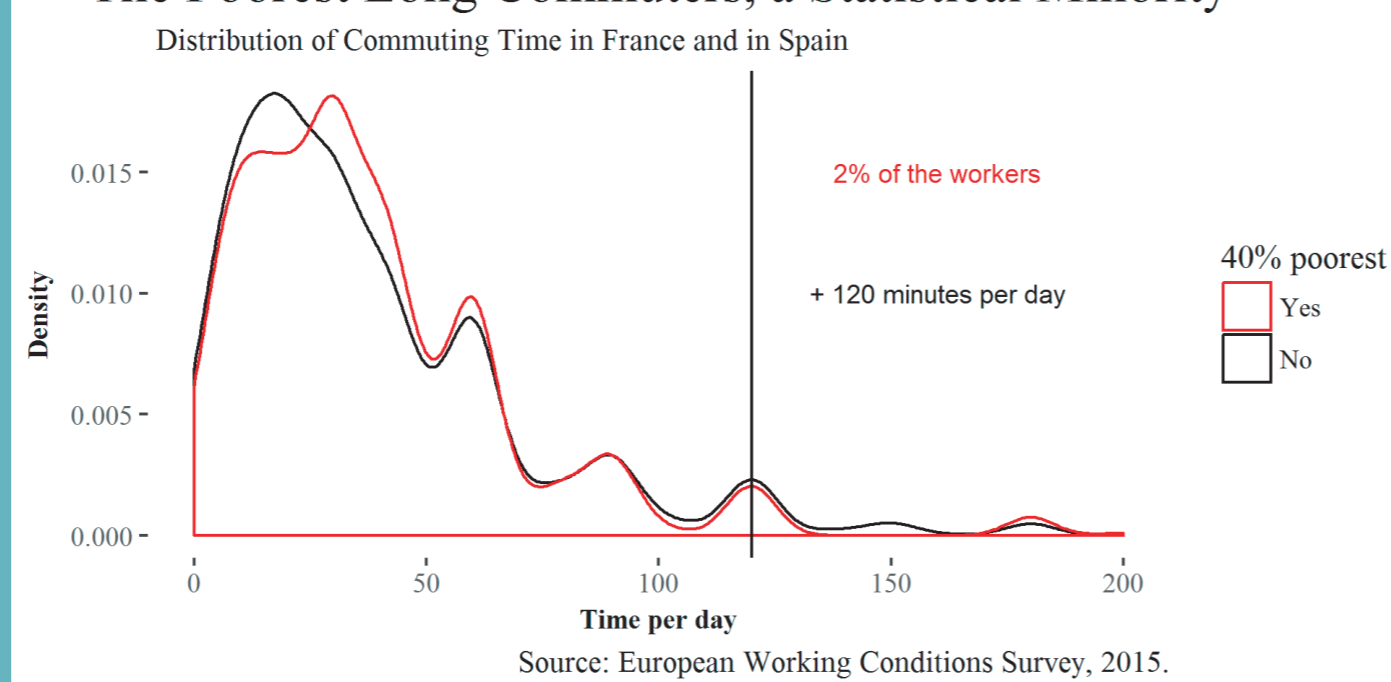
- the localization of their residence,
- the features of their future home
- the housing occupancy status.

When looking at one of these three factors, localization, households may rank multiple criteria: the geographical position within a national, regional or local space; housing density; the size of the municipality or the urban area; the distance from the city-centre; the perception and the value of a district, etc. (Grafmeyer, 2010). Therefore, when choosing a place of residence and depending on their economic resources, people must prioritize which criteria they value the most.

### The 3 criteria to be considered as a poor long commuter in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona and the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolis are:

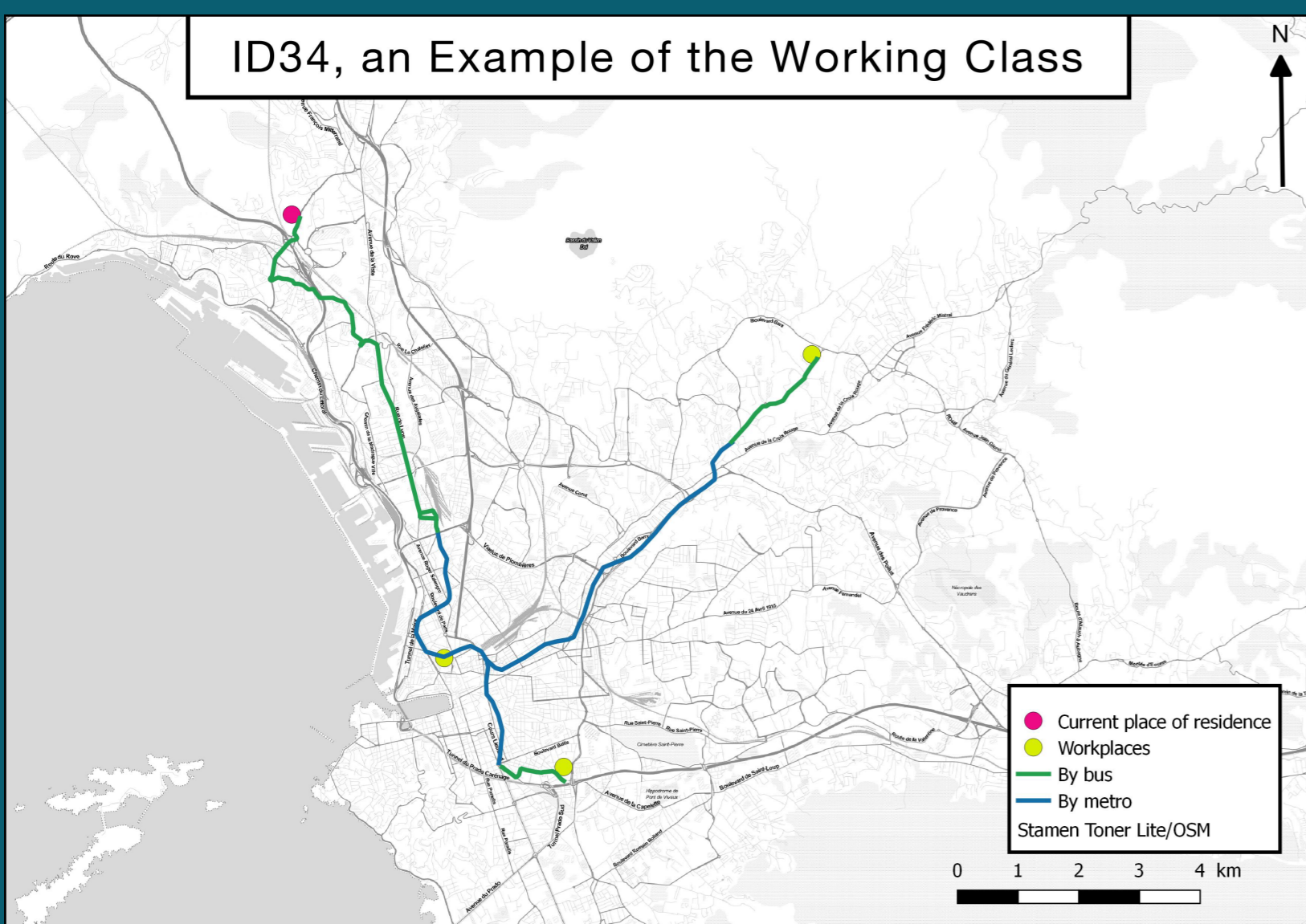
- Being part of the 40% poorest inhabitants within one's place of residence
- Commuting more than 2 hours a day
- Do not use a professional vehicle to commute

### The Poorest Long Commuters, a Statistical Minority



## IV) Results

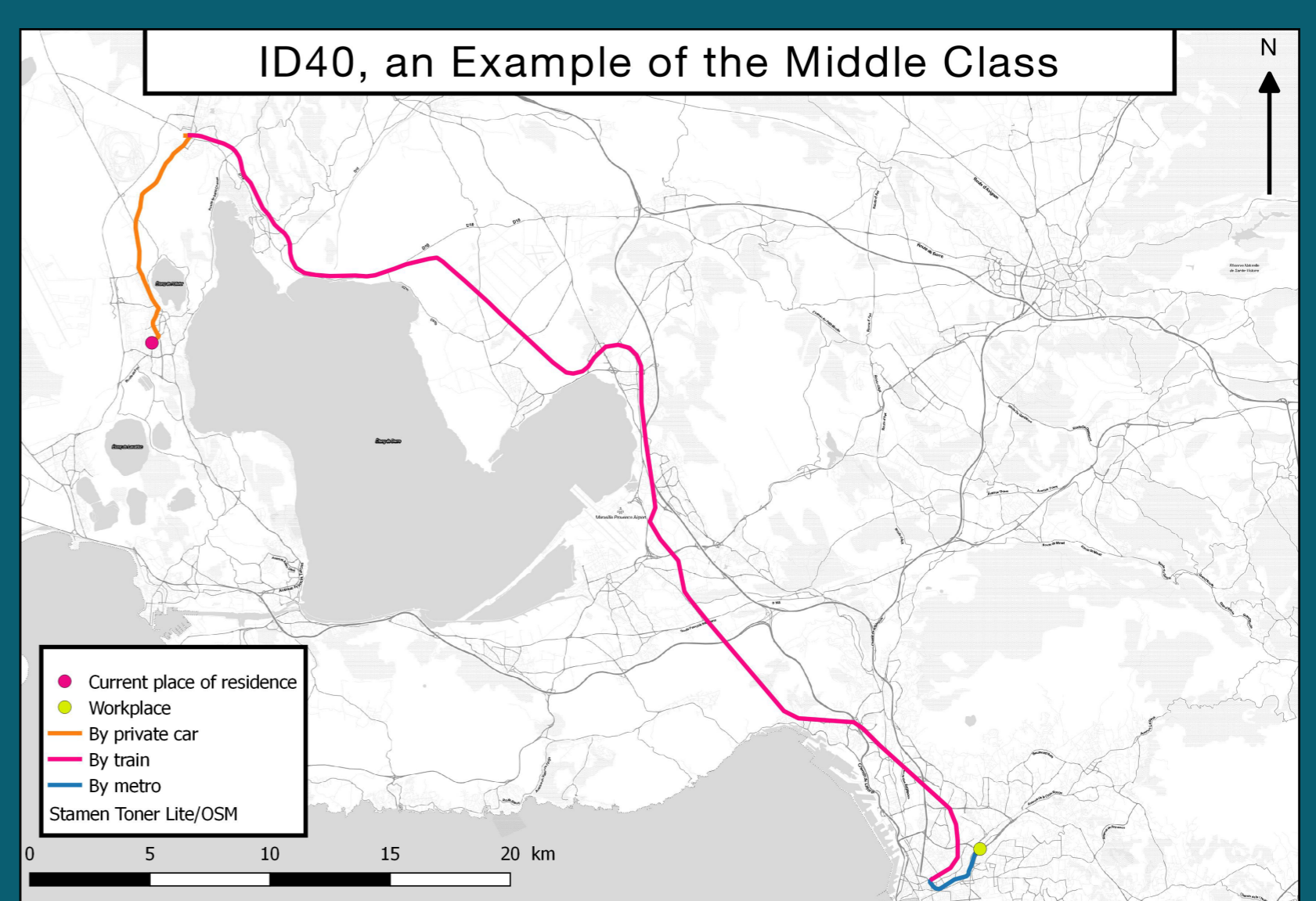
### ID34, an Example of the Working Class



**For the middle class**, the adoption of speed potentials increases the distance from the workplace and the place of residence in order to live in a dwelling that corresponds to the requirements of members of the household.

**For the working class**, using the concept of residential choice may overstate the reality of their residential trajectories. Long commuting is a consequence of the little leeway they have to choose their place of residence and the need to commute between different workplaces during their working day (on average, the individuals of the sample commute between 2, 74 workplaces).

### ID40, an Example of the Middle Class



## III) Data and Methodology

On the one hand, through a life course approach, it is possible to observe how the residential location may change over time, the circumstances in which a residential mobility occurs, its motives, and its impact on the daily life space. On the other hand, to keep up with the current daily routine of 50 individuals and in order to observe how the residential location structured the daily mobility of these individuals, a one-week gathering of geolocated data via a mobile application, Modalyzer, was conducted.

