Erika Polson has traveled from Paris to Singapore to Bangalore to study the emergence of a new generation of expatriates and business travelers that uses location technologies such as meetup.com and internations.org to find drop-in communities in global cities around the world. Polson argues that a new ‘global middle class’ is forming through the shared identities, social connections, and global knowledge that participants accrue through these new social practices. An assistant professor in the Department of Media, Film and Journalism Studies, Polson spent six years researching these practices for her new book, *Privileged Mobilites: Professional Migration, Geo-Social Media, and a New Global Middle Class* (Peter Lang, 2016).

In the book, Polson claims that as international corporations have ramped up “workforce globalization”, young professionals increasingly move abroad alone—meaning they arrive in foreign cities with a need to tap into a local social life. Taking advantage of the location-awareness abilities of mobile technologies, social entrepreneurs have created groups in hundreds of cities that bring foreigners together in face-to-face gatherings with just a few clicks.

To gather ethnographic data for her book, Polson utilized the online social media platforms herself to participate in events and interview other members in three key global cities. While she sometimes found herself in strange situations, she mainly felt comfortable with the research, even when it meant arriving alone to a party in a foreign city where she’d never been before. That is the point, Polson explains: “The new global middle class has created a common way of socializing with each other in public spaces, so that the vibe and the routine become rather familiar from one geographic site to the next... it’s not frictionless, by any means, but for mobile professionals these technologies become a ‘key’ to quick – if rather superficial – local connection.”