



Living in the Mobility Transition

Ongoing research

This study, conducted under the direction of geographers Tim Cresswell and Peter Adey, explores the way 14 countries depict the future of mobilities and the mobility transition policies they are envisaging. Over a period of two years, the project will give way to a joint publication and a conference on mobility transition policies.

Research participants

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The research

In keeping with John Urry, we are currently witnessing the challenging of carbon dependent mobile lifestyles. Given CO₂ emissions and the predominance of fossil fuels in the current mobility system, a transition towards low-carbon mobilities appears both necessary and desirable. Within the scope of this project, the shift from a mobility system based largely on oil to a low-carbon one is called the mobility transition. What form is this transition taking in the world today? Through which actors and rhetoric is it implemented, supported or hindered?

That is the question that led Tim Cresswell and Peter Adey - along with an international team of five post-doctoral researchers - to explore the mobility transition through the mobility policies of 14 countries around the world (from South Africa to North America, Southeast Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America ¹). These countries were chosen to represent different geographies, stages of development, types of governance

and levels of commitment to tackle global warming.

The researchers investigated these mobility policies according to the theoretical framework developed by Tim Cresswell: for him, mobility results from a combination of physical movement (going from point A to point B), the meanings given to this movement (imaginaries, standards) and how it is practiced. Their goal was to:

- Consider the meaning given to contemporary and future mobility practices in the framework of public policies implemented at the national, regional and urban levels;
- Question representations of mobility in 14 different national contexts;
- Explore the changes being envisaged in terms of mobility;
- Determine in what ways these changes are associated with new forms of movement and new infrastructure plans ;
- Identify the ways in which changes in mobility practices are facilitated, challenged or negotiated.

These policies have been studied at both national and international level (through UN and EU policies). The gray literature on each country has been studied, and looked at in combination with interviews with key mobility players at three levels:

- International: what commitment to tackle global warming at the international level?
- National: what national policy relative to mobility?
- Regional and/or local: what local initiatives with regard to the mobility transition (from local authorities, businesses or civil society)?

The project, now in its final phase, is focusing on comparing the situations in the fourteen countries studied and, on this basis, proposing elements for an optimal mobility transition policy. The project will result in a publication that will bring together its theoretical and political conclusions, the 14 national reports and 43 case studies within it, the positions of international institutions (the UN and EU) and recommendations for a mobility transition policy.

First results

To date, the research has not succeeded in identifying a coherent mobility transition policy nationally or on a more local scale. Various initiatives in this direction have nonetheless been identified, such as: financial incentives in favor of soft, collective and shared mobility; raising public awareness through the development of a new imaginary of mobility; the involvement of activist groups in promoting the adoption of new policies by local and national governments; public-private cooperation in the development of new working arrangements, such as teleworking and co-working spaces in Holland, South Korea and New Zealand designed to reduce commutes.

While national situations remain mixed, we observed widespread use of market

mechanisms in keeping with a liberal logic (individualized economic incentives and the marketing of sustainable mobility solutions).

But these policies are being met with resistance and facing difficulties in their implementation. Some of the issues include: the primacy of short-term economic growth objectives over longer-term environmental issues, the resistance from the automobile culture and industrial sector, strong dependence of certain economies on oil and/or the international transport of goods, trouble converging the goals of different policies (town planning, transport, housing, energy) and divergence or conflict between national and local policies.

Find out more about these first results in the video interviews with Tim Cresswell and Peter Adey.

Notes

1 Brazil, Canada, Chili, Great Britain, Kazakhstan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, The United Arab Emirates.

Mobility

Broadly, the word mobility can be defined as the intention to move and the realization of this movement in geographical space, implying a social change.

More

Lifestyle

A lifestyle is a composition of daily activities and experiences that give sense and meaning to the life of a person or a group in time and space.

More

Movement

Movement is the crossing of space by people, objects, capital, ideas and other information. It is either oriented, and therefore occurs between an origin and one or more destinations, or it is more akin to the idea of simply wandering, with no real origin or destination.

More

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Disciplines : **Humanities**

Transport mode(s) : **All modes of transport**

¹ <mailto:pierre.gaudino@sncf.fr>

² <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/mobility-450>

³ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/lifestyle-1756>

⁴ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/movement-460>

⁵ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/prospective>

⁶ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/etudes-comparatives>

⁷ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/politiques-publiques>

⁸ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/representations>

⁹ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/modes-vie>

¹⁰ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/disciplines/sciences-humaines>

¹¹ <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/modes-transports/tous-modes-transport>