



## Survey on the impacts of the lockdown on French people's mobility and lifestyles

Finished research

April 2020

The nationwide lockdown instated in France on March 17, 2020 to curb the rapid spread of Covid-19 has caused a restriction of people's freedom that is unprecedented in peacetime, especially on their freedom to move and travel. At the Mobile Lives Forum, we wanted to assess the present and future social impacts on the lifestyles of French people. We found large disparities in individual practices, especially depending on age, but also that people have discovered novel lifestyles, some of which have bred a newfound desire to move and travel less after the end of the lockdown.

---

### Research participants

MOBILE LIVES FORUM

L'OBSOCO (RESEARCH AND CONSULTING COMPAGNY)

---

Contact : [Marc Pearce](#)

## METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted online from April 3 to 8, 2020, among a representative sample of 1,500 people in metropolitan France aged 18 to 75 - including 1,052 people who took part in the 2020 National Survey on **Mobility** and Lifestyles (ENMMV), conducted a year earlier by the Mobile Lives Forum among 13,201 people. This allowed us to compare the evolution of their usual mobility practices before and during the lockdown.

In order to ensure the representativeness of the sample, quotas were established on the overall population surveyed according to the following criteria: gender, age, socio-professional category, region of residence, size of the urban unit of residence, highest academic degree level, work-related mobility and frequency of occupational travel. The data was adjusted to the overall sample of 1,500 respondents and then to the subsample of 1,052 individuals who had already taken part in the 2019 ENMMV Survey. The adjustment of the overall sample is relatively moderate. For 82% of the sample, the weights are between 0.5 and 2 (meaning that a person's weight is neither multiplied nor divided by more than 2). The adjustment of the subsample of former ENMMV Survey participants was somewhat stronger. 68% are within this range of 0.5 to 2 while 16% are below and 16% are above.

## KEY LESSONS

### A lockdown that is strictly observed

More than one in two French people are not going out more than once a week (55%).

More than one in two French people are not going out more than once a week (55%).

more impressively, over one in five French people haven't left their home at all since the beginning of the lockdown (23%)!

Contrary to some reports, the people who left their house to spend the lockdown in another location represent a small minority of the population, and are often very young: only 4% of the population changed homes before the lockdown. However, almost a quarter of French people would have liked to have been able to do so (23%). 17% of the adult population aged 18 to 75 are living alone in lockdown, which represents over 7.7 million people.

### **Very limited traveling during the lockdown... except for work!**

Over a quarter of the labor force (27%) still travels for work. However, 39% of them feel that their job is not related to managing the crisis.

Most trips performed for chosen activities (sport, social activities, etc.) have drastically decreased, while travel for required activities (groceries, accompanying people, etc.) has remained stable or even at times increased.

### **A radical reorganization of daily activities**

Older people go out the most (25% of 65-75-year-olds go out at least once a day) while younger people go out the least (31% of 18-24-year-olds have never gone out). 33% of working people are **teleworking**, which according to INSEE represents a 7% increase compared to before the crisis. For one in four workers, this is a new experience. However, over half the people currently teleworking report enjoying this experience (53%).

### **The experience of confinement: between constraints and opportunities**

Despite the exceptional conditions of this deprivation of liberty, 44% of French people report not minding this lockdown period.

59% even enjoy spending more time at home and in their neighborhood.

44% are relieved by this slower pace and 68% are happy to be able to spend more time for themselves and with their loved ones.

62% enjoy spending less time in transport.

### **Post-lockdown: a likely questioning of lifestyles and living environments**

38% of French people say they have realized that their daily trips out could be shorter and be undertaken by foot or by bicycle.

For 23% of French people, this lockdown period has made them want to relocate (mainly to have more access to the outdoors and to live closer to nature).

This figure rises to 38% in the Paris metropolitan area.

For 18% of workers, this lockdown period has made them realize they want to change jobs (in order to be able to telework more, to find a job closer to home, or a job that is more useful to society).

Finally, after experiencing an unprecedented limitation of their movements, French people are still overwhelmingly in favor of implementing rationing measures, after the lockdown, aimed at limiting travel in order to fight the climate crisis, provided that this limitation is fair and doesn't provide loopholes for the well-off to get around it.

## **WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS FOR THE FUTURE? THE ANALYSIS BY THE MOBILE LIVES FORUM**

With nearly 3 out of 4 French people having been in strict lockdown in their homes for almost two months, the Covid-19 crisis will constitute a major event in French people's lives.

The survey reveals that, after 3 weeks, the lockdown is more or less difficult to bear depending on one's family situation, age or living environment.

### **Living away from the big cities**

Unsurprisingly, it is the inhabitants of large cities and in particular of Paris and its urban region who suffer the most from this situation. They are more likely to live alone (28% compared to 11% on average in France) and in small apartments (28% live in a two-room apartment or studio compared to 5% on average in France) and are far more likely to wish that they could spend the lockdown somewhere other than their own home (39% versus 12% on average in France). They are also more likely to feel constrained by the restricted perimeter of authorized **movement** (53% compared to 43% for cities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants), they appreciate more than others the reduced levels of pollution (53% compared to 46% on average in France) and are more likely to want to relocate after this period (38% versus 11% on average in France). In line with demographic trends <sup>1</sup> and previous studies on the subject <sup>2</sup>, this crisis confirms the problematic nature of densely populated living environments especially in the Paris metropolitan area, and how the lifestyles that people adopt there lack resilience.

### **A reorganization of lifestyles and new priorities**

The study more generally reveals that the current constraints imposed on French people's lives have also been an opportunity for them to experience a radical reorganization of their lifestyles. Thus, a surprisingly high proportion of the French are relieved by the slowdown caused by the crisis (44%), and are happy to be able to devote more time to themselves and their loved ones (68%). The time saved from daily trips they aren't performing anymore (and no longer want to perform) or from decreased workloads (which is experienced as a relief for many) allows them to devote more time to leisure and (re)engage in everyday domestic activities (cooking, DIY,...) all the while consuming less.

### **Young people most eager to travel less**

Another surprising finding is the reaction of younger generations. Young people are often believed to be more mobile, more flexible, more urban and leading more intense lifestyles. It is taken for granted that this is not only necessary and in their interest, but also that they want to live up to the standards of Western life. Instead, the survey shows that it is young people who mostly want to travel less, to slow down, to spend their time differently, to get closer to their loved ones and live in an environment that is closer to nature.

### **Teleworking: a forced transition from theory to practice that has gained some supporters**

The lockdown has also been an opportunity to experiment with full-time teleworking, for a significant proportion of workers (33%), up from 7% before the crisis. Despite the fact that this experience isn't always carried out in the best conditions (unsuitable workspace, children at home, etc.), half of the people concerned report experiencing it positively (53%), whether because they have fewer commutes or because they can now organize and pace their lifestyles differently. These results suggest that teleworking could increase significantly in the months and years following the Covid-19 crisis. This is even more probable since, as we know, choosing to telework can allow people to move to new living environments, as it makes longer commutes more acceptable when they are less frequent, and this enables people to settle further away from work <sup>3</sup>.

### **Towards a reduction in carbon-emitting travel**

Last but not least, the lockdown is an opportunity more specifically to question the place of mobility in our lifestyles. Whether for themselves or to respond to climate issues, French people are reporting a desire to be able to reduce their travel. After three weeks of lockdown, 38% of French people say they have realized that they can use active modes more often. Walking and cycling also appear to be major solutions to avoid overcrowding in public transport when the lockdown is lifted.

As they endure a restriction of their mobility that would have been unimaginable just a few weeks ago, a majority of French people (53%) are still in favor of introducing rationing measures to limit travel in order to combat the climate crisis, but only if the rules are fair

and don't allow the well-off to get around them.

## SURVEY REPORT TO DOWNLOAD

[Download the survey analysis report \(in French only\)](#)

[Download the document for presenting the survey results \(in French only\)](#)

---

### Notes

- ① Report on territorial cohesion, ANCT, 2018.
- ② [Survey on people's desire to leave Ile-de-France](#), Mobile Lives Forum, 2018; [2020 National Survey on Mobility and Lifestyles](#), Mobile Lives Forum, 2020; [Post-Car Ile-de-France](#), Mobile Lives Forum, 2019.
- ③ [2020 National Survey on Mobility and Lifestyles](#), Mobile Lives Forum, 2020

### Mobility

For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.

[More](#)

### Teleworking

The remote performance of a professional activity away from the company by means of telecommunication tools, at home or in a telecentre.

[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](#)

---

Keywords : [enquête](#), [confinement](#), [covid-19](#), [ralentissement](#), [Lifestyles](#)

Disciplines : [Social sciences](#), [Prospective studies](#)

Transport mode(s) : [All modes of transport](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> <mailto:marc.pearce@sncf.fr>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/sites/default/files/editor/rapport\\_enquete\\_confinement\\_mobilite\\_et\\_modes\\_de\\_vie](https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/sites/default/files/editor/rapport_enquete_confinement_mobilite_et_modes_de_vie)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/sites/default/files/editor/enquete\\_confinement\\_et\\_mobilite\\_avril2020\\_forum\\_vies\\_](https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/sites/default/files/editor/enquete_confinement_et_mobilite_avril2020_forum_vies_)

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/project/2018/04/18/survey-desire-leave-ile-france-12409>

<sup>5</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/project/2019/01/07/national-survey-mobility-and-lifestyles-12797>

<sup>6</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/project/2017/02/27/post-car-ile-france-3523>

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/project/2019/01/07/national-survey-mobility-and-lifestyles-12797>

<sup>8</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/mobility-450>

<sup>9</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/teleworking-12891>

- <sup>10</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/movement-460>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/enquete>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/confinement>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/covid-19>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/ralentissement>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/modes-vie>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/disciplines/sciences-sociales>
- <sup>17</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/disciplines/prospective>
- <sup>18</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/modes-transports/tous-modes-transport>