



## Aspirations for mobility and lifestyles

Finished research

Begin: 01 January 2015

End: 01 May 2016

While the question of the sustainability of contemporary lifestyles is the focus of the Mobile Lives Forum's research program, it alone is not sufficient: individuals' aspirations must likewise be taken into account.

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### Research participants

MOBILE LIVES FORUM

L'OBSOCO (RESEARCH AND CONSULTING COMPAGNY)

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### Project goals

A future - however sustainable - can only be considered if it is able to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of the population. Beyond the underlying democratic imperative, the restrictive nature of certain lifestyles and the demands of daily life prevent us from considering what exists beyond the current socio-technical framework, beyond that which we already know.

With this in mind, this large-scale survey on aspirations for **mobility** has built upon two assumptions. The first is that we must debunk the common misconception that people are incapable of any vision beyond their shopping list or the purchase of the latest iPad. Secondly, that people are as legitimate as any experts in discussing the future of the society in which they live.

## Research device

The study was launched in late 2015 by the Forum and conducted by the ObSoCo (Observatoire Société et Consommation) via online panel, in six developed countries (France, Spain, Germany, the U.S., Turkey and Japan), among a sample of more than 12,000 people.

In order to fully understand aspirations, the survey offered respondents a dual perspective, allowing them to project themselves into a future both distant and ideal—a kind of utopian **lifestyle** they aspire for themselves, their children and grandchildren.

The survey accesses this ideal lifestyle by questioning each of its main components: social ties, family life, professional life, residential choice, leisure, holidays, consumption and old age. This approach reveals the underlying role mobility plays in the way individuals reach their ideal.

A second set of questions goes over the same aspirations but in light of environmental issues, in order to measure the potential gap between the sustainable and the desirable. The goal is then to identify levers to activate and obstacles to overcome in order to reconcile the two sides of the equation.

## Early lessons

The findings show similar aspirations in the six countries, revealing a common ideal way of living that is clearly at odds with contemporary lifestyles.

Of particular note, almost half of those surveyed rejected the current spatial dispersion of activities (work, leisure, social and family life) and aspired to drastically reduce their daily commutes.

Furthermore, we can observe that, in all the represented countries, aspirations were consistent with a greater consideration for environmental issues. Moreover, encouraged by collective involvement, people would be willing to change their individual lifestyles even more radically. Given these results, there is reason to hope that we can succeed in developing policies that are in line with more sustainable development while respecting individuals' aspirations.

This study suggests ways to start preparing for this transition and shows that reorganizing lifestyles (in both the personal and the professional sphere) requires a thorough reexamination of mobility systems and regional planning.

## Key results in figures

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### 1 / Proximity and slower pace: key aspirations

In contrast to current lifestyles, a slower pace is a key criteria for achieving this ideal:

74% of respondents feel that the pace of life in today's societies is too fast (80% in France, Germany, Spain, USA);

78% personally would like to slow down (82% in France);

50% say they currently don't have enough time to do everything they need or want to do (60% in France).

Reorganizing lifestyles, but what for?

90% want to spend more time with their families (48% "very important," 42% "somewhat important");

89% want more time for themselves (43% "very important," 46% "somewhat important").

Concerning travel

31% feel it is "very important" to spend less time in transit (33% in France).

When current travel time exceeded 35 minutes, this figure reaches 47%.

Local living: a new approach to mobility

Nearly half the population in the six countries rejects the current spatial dispersion of activities:

44% (42% in France) associate ideal mobility with greater proximity, breaking with the current model;

For 56% (58% in France), ideal mobility is characterized by better access (better transport), in the continuity of the current system.

### 2/ Work: less work and trips, greater proximity and autonomy

While on the whole Westerners have never had so much free time, we find that:

51% want to reduce work time (but with significant differences among the countries: only 29% in France and 40% in the United States, versus 50% in Germany, 60% in Spain, Japan and Turkey);

58% want to be able to freely organize their working time.

The ideal workplace:

48% want to work locally, either at home (30%) or in their neighborhood (18%). In France, 43% share this desire (26% at home and 17% in their neighborhood); Ideally, 32% (40% in France) want to work outside their neighborhood but less than 30 minutes from home;  
13% want to work where they want, when they want (9% in France).

Note, however, that respondents are prepared to make considerable concessions in terms of daily mobility to have the “perfect” job and to continue living in their current home:

23% are willing to commute three-hours a day in order to continue living in their current residential location. This figure reaches 35% if telecommuting two days a week is an option;

49% are willing to relocate;

28% prefer a less-ideal job, but close to home.

### **3 / Even more radical societal changes to meet environmental challenges?**

According to the study, 86% of people are aware of the alarming environmental situation.

In a context where society as a whole is reorganized to face pressing environmental challenges, people say they are prepared to consider further changes to their lifestyles:

75% are willing to reduce their travel and live more locally;

60% are willing to give up their car and forego plane travel;

76% agree to consume less;

85% agree to use objects for a longer period of time;

75% agree to buy locally-produced goods, or make things themselves (71%).

Degrowth to meet environmental challenges:

39% of respondents feel "a radical shift in how the economy and society are structured, resulting in less production and less consumption", is the best way to meet environmental challenges;

32% think that "the adoption of international regulations imposing strict limitations on companies and consumers" is the best way to meet this challenge;

29% count on "[the acceleration of] scientific and technical progress to find innovative solutions".

While a paradigm shift is favored by younger respondents, the older generations tend to put their faith in scientific and technical progress.

## 4 / Research reports

Survey summary - OBSOCO 2016 (in French only)

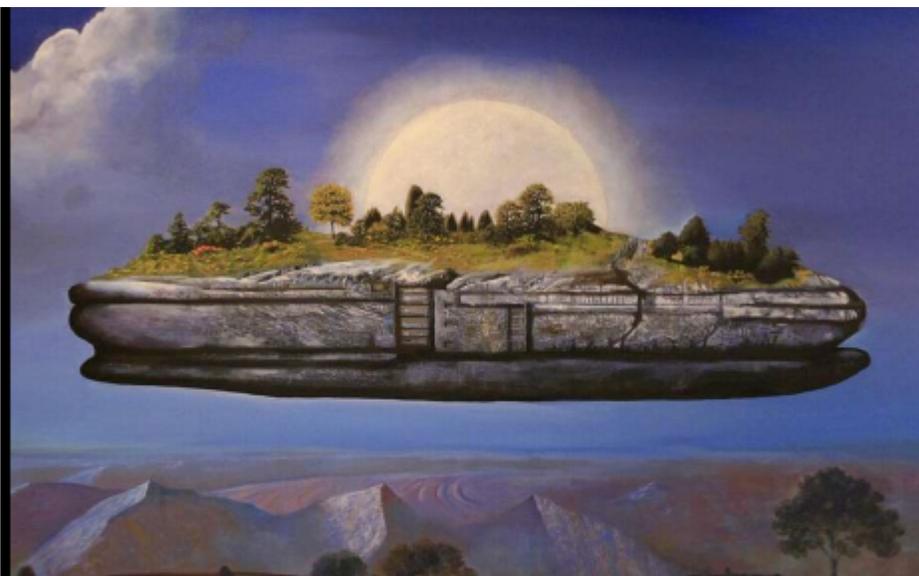


### **Modes de vie et mobilité**

*Une approche par les aspirations*

Phase quantitative

Preliminary report - OBSOCO 2016 (in French only)



### **Modes de vie et mobilité**

*Une approche par les aspirations*

Phase qualitative

### Sylvie Landrière's conference presentation (Mobile Lives Forum)



#### 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

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Keywords : **Forecasting, Lifestyles, aspiration**

Disciplines : **Humanities, Social sciences, Urban studies, Prospective studies**

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/01/04/request-data-files-12288>

<sup>5</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/19/flying-less-movement-12600>

<sup>6</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/19/flying-less-movement-12600>

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/18/constructed-scarcity-and-mobility-austerity-towards-mobility-commons-12630>

<sup>8</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/18/constructed-scarcity-and-mobility-austerity-towards-mobility-commons-12630>

<sup>9</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/17/robert-smithson-and-gold-rush-12614>

<sup>10</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/17/robert-smithson-and-gold-rush-12614>

<sup>11</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/16/future-london-sustaining-unsustainable-book-review-12627>

<sup>12</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2018/07/16/future-london-sustaining-unsustainable-book-review-12627>

<sup>13</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/prospective>

<sup>14</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/modes-vie>

<sup>15</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/aspiration>

<sup>16</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/disciplines/sciences-humaines>

<sup>17</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/disciplines/sciences-sociales>

<sup>18</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/disciplines/urbanisme-architecture-et-paysagisme>

<sup>19</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/disciplines/prospective>

<sup>20</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/modes-transport/tous-modes-transport>