

1. Projects



Covid-19, lockdown and mobility

Finished research

Begin: June 2020

End: June 2020

The Covid-19 crisis represents a unique occasion to analyze our system of hypermobility and its limits. Lockdown measures and their impact on travel reveal the extent to which our regular lifestyles are dependent on the ability to move quickly, far and often, which goes against people's aspirations to live slower, more localised lives. What role did mobility play in the scale of this crisis and the responses to it? This report, which is intended to be regularly updated, collects in one place all the Forum's publications about this subject to date.

Research participants

- Mobile Lives Forum
- Tim Cresswell
- Matias Echanove
- Aurore Flipot
- Vincent Kaufmann
- Christian Licoppe
- Alexandre Rigal
- Nicolas Senil
- Rahul Srivastava

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

Describing and analyzing the social impacts - present and future - of lockdown measures on the lifestyles and movements of French people is an essential step in understanding the changes at work. Conducted among a representative sample of 1,500 people of the French population, the Mobile Lives Forum's survey shows that the lockdown gave people the opportunity to discover different lifestyles and gave rise to certain aspirations for travelling less.

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

"Lockdown", by Vincent Kaufmann

The lockdown measures implemented throughout 2020 in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, while varying from one country to the next, implied a major restriction on people's freedom of movement for a given period. Presented as a solution to the spread of the virus, the lockdown impacted local, interregional and international travel. By transforming the spatial and temporal dimensions of people's lifestyles, the lockdown accelerated a whole series of pre-existing trends, such as the rise of teleworking and teleshopping and the increase in walking and cycling, while also interrupting of long-distance mobility. The ambivalent experiences of the lockdown pave the way for a possible transformation of lifestyles in the future.

"Lockdown", by Vincent Kaufmann, April 2021



Analyses and opinion pieces by the Mobile Lives Forum

While contemporary lifestyles are structured around the ability to travel often, quickly and far, the lockdown has introduced an unprecedented constraint that has temporarily interrupted the usual spatial and temporal deployment of our activities. While digital tools are serving an important role in making these measures bearable, they can't compensate for this limitation of travel on their own. All dimensions of our lives have been disrupted: home life, social life, consumption, work, family life, leisure activities, holidays, etc. Indeed, the lockdown is revealing our dependence on mobility.

"Covid-19: "The crisis allows us to radically reinvent our mobilities", April 2020

The lockdown is revealing the limits of our lifestyles, pace of life and environments, May 2020



The critical approach to social science research

Critical analyses of the hypermobility system and its effects became sharply relevant during the lockdown period: mobility was at the heart of the crisis. Ivan Illich's notions of "counter-productivity" and Tim Cresswell's concept of "turbulence" proved to be particularly useful in describing the links between the magnitude of the pandemic and the characteristics of the modern transportation system.

Alexandre Rigal, On global counter-productivity. The critique of mobility and the coronavirus crisis, April 2020

Tim Cresswell, "Mobility: the lifeblood of modernity and the virus that threatens to undo it", March 2020



Observing the phenomena at work and learning lessons for the future

Observing and documenting the consequences of the health crisis and lockdown can reveal some lessons worth taking away from this global experience.

Before the crisis, video communication was relatively marginal, but during the lockdown, most people adopted it with disconcerting ease (this itself has become a subject of interrogation). Yet, video-communication still seems to be thought of and used as a last resort, that people mostly employ when co-presence can't be achieved. How can we understand, beyond subjective impressions, how people's interactions are different in both cases? Meanwhile, in cases where video-presence becomes a satisfactory alternative, it forces us to question our mobility practices and invites us to rethink the political norms that govern our interactions.

Christian Licoppe, Video-communications, videoconferencing and the lockdown, May 2020



The lockdown in India caused a humanitarian catastrophe that could have been avoided: several million people suddenly left the cities for the hinterland, sometimes without resources or means of transport. These workers and their families, who are often considered migrants, lead lives that are split between the city, where they can find work, and their village of origin, which is sometimes over a thousand kilometers away. Their mobility is invisible to statistics, and now is the time to recognize it in order to improve their living conditions.

Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava, One foot in the city, one foot in the village: the invisible mobility of urban workers in India, May 2020



Survey on rural mobility during the lockdown

Le confinement et sa privation stricte de déplacement ont conduit de nombreux Français à vivre et s'organiser différemment, en particulier dans l'espace rural où la mobilité est une ressource cruciale. Cette enquête, qui s'inscrit dans un projet plus large, a visé à saisir l'impact de cette situation inédite. Comment les habitants des territoires ruraux ont-ils vécu la restriction des déplacements ? Le confinement a-t-il, comme cela a été le cas pour les citadins, favorisé l'émergence de nouvelles aspirations en termes de rythmes de vie et de mobilité ?

Aurore Flipo, Nicolas Senil, *Rural mobility during the lockdown*, June 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.

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Lockdown

The lockdown measures implemented throughout 2020 in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, while varying from one country to the next, implied a major restriction on people's freedom of movement for a given period. Presented as a solution to the spread of the virus, the lockdown impacted local, interregional and international travel. By transforming the spatial and temporal dimensions of people's lifestyles, the lockdown accelerated a whole series of pre-existing trends, such as the rise of teleworking and teleshopping and the increase in walking and cycling, while also interrupting of long-distance mobility. The ambivalent experiences of the lockdown pave the way for a possible transformation of lifestyles in the future.

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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.

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Teleworking

The remote performance of a salaried activity outside of the company's premises, at home or in a third place during normal working hours and requiring access to telecommunication tools.

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To cite this publication :

Mobile Lives Forum et Tim Cresswell (26 June 2020), « Covid-19, lockdown and mobility », Préparer la transition mobilitaire. Consulté le 17 May 2025, URL: <https://forumviesmobiles.org/en/project/13358/covid-19-lockdown-and-mobility>.



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Other publications



[Saudi Arabia: How is Mobility Being Transformed in the Oil Kingdom?](#)

Aniss Mouad Mezoued, Mobile Lives Forum



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Javier Caletrío



[Geopolitics and electric vehicles: the rise of climate protectionism](#)

Xabier Gangoiti, Graham Parkhurst



Can universities learn to leave behind air travel?

Tamara Ben Ari, Parke Wilde

- 1 <http://urbz.net>
- 2 <http://urbz.net>
- 3 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/project/2020/04/23/survey-impacts-lockdown-french-peoples-mobility-and-lifestyles-13297>
- 4 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/lockdown-13664>
- 5 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2020/04/22/covid-19-crisis-allows-us-radically-reinvent-our-mobilities-13283>
- 6 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2020/05/14/lockdown-revealing-limits-our-lifestyles-pace-life-and-environments-13301>
- 7 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2020/04/22/global-counter-productivity-critique-mobility-and-coronavirus-crisis-13284>
- 8 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2020/03/18/mobility-lifeblood-modernity-and-virus-threatens-undo-it-13266>
- 9 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2020/05/13/video-communications-videoconferencing-and-lockdown-13298>
- 10 <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/2020/05/19/one-foot-city-one-foot-village-invisible-mobility-urban-workers-india-13304>
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