

## 1. Research notes



# Time, leisure and mobility

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Begin: March 2022  
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This report aims to contribute to the Mobile Lives Forum's research on mobility and rhythms of life from the standpoint of leisure and to open new research avenues. This report, which combines elements of a summary, an analysis, and some surprising discoveries, questions the concept of leisure as a social activity in its relationship to time and travel. Of general scope, it probes a part of the literature that mixes the sociology of time, leisure, and mobility. It combines existing concepts and attempts an exploratory study on the importance of mastering one's time, especially leisure time and free time, in the construction of well-being, through the idea of "rhythmic capability" and "discretionary free time."

Research participants

- Benjamin Pradel

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Here, this work is put into perspective considering current events and the Mobile Lives Forum's goal to launch a new cycle of discussions on rhythm and time. It was updated in 2021, by including results from the research project called "Leaving/returning: how people remotely manage their homes," <sup>1</sup> as well as by adding Part 5: "Lockdown, travel and leisure" on the lockdown periods, during which our relationship to time was disrupted, the very notion of free time was rethought, and inequalities in terms of rhythmic capability were particularly salient.

## 1. Leisure time, between alienation and liberation

"Do, I beg of you, as soon as ever you can, turn your back on the din, the idle chatter, and the frivolous occupations, and give yourself up to study or recreation. It is better, as our friend Attilius once very wittily and very truly said, to have no occupation than to be occupied with nothingness." (The Letters of Pliny the Younger, Book 1, Letter 9, "dominating time")

Leisure time can be defined positively as the "free disposal of one's time," according to Le Grand Larousse dictionary, or negatively as the "empty time left over from our duties," according to Diderot's Encyclopédie. In short, leisure is presented as an amount of time that is freed from constrained times, regardless of how the individual makes it free. The Western formalisation of leisure is based on this behavioural representation of a free time that is spent by individuals doing freely chosen activities.

However, free time is not just leisure time. Dominique Meda points out that the main duality is not between work and leisure, as many hasty interpretations of the figures may try to make us believe, but rather between several uses of time (Meda, 2004). She distinguishes between professional time, parental time, domestic time, rest time and leisure time.

The question of leisure is far from being resolved and there surely aren't enough categories to understand what leisure is for some and not for others. This imprecision of the concept "points to the need to seriously work on the conceptualisation of leisure, which has become one of the major fields structuring our societies" (Croizat & Fournier, 2005). Let's provide an overview of some approaches to leisure time.

### a. Leisure time: a free time between domination and emancipation

**Leisure time, a time relative to work.** Leisure time has long been approached as non-working time. This negative way of defining it, in relation to what it's not, finds its roots in a sociohistorical approach. Indeed, leisure time is something that has been progressively differentiated from so-called productive activities since the industrial revolution. Considered the same as free time, it emerged as a category by the progressive reorganisation of non-working time according to the increasing centrality of industrial time (Pronovost), in line with the theories of E.P. Thompson (1979, 1988). Work is the central, pivotal time, around which all other activities (religious, family, civic, etc.) are arranged in the free time left over and considered as leisure activities. Ideally, "Everyone is free to occupy the hours between work, sleep and meals as they please, not to waste them through excess and laziness, but so that, freed from their work, they

can indulge in some good occupation of their choice." (More, [1516], 1987). The question of how one chooses to invest one's free time is central but not a given.

Leisure time in relation to the concepts of non-constrained time or non-working time refers to this approach in its relation to working time as the pivotal and dominant time.

**Leisure time, a time related to specific activities.** Another approach to non-working time has emerged thanks to the pioneering work of Joffre Dumazedier, based on time-use research. Rather than making it a mere derivative of work, the aim was to study the nature, content and meaning of leisure time. Time-use research that illustrated the steady decrease in time spent at work showed that this time was almost exclusively reallocated to social, personal, and family activities. Dumazedier then attempted to describe the characteristics and uses of leisure time, which then took on a liberating, disinterested, hedonistic and personal character (Dumazedier, 1966), among a spectrum of other time periods outside of work that covered more or less constrained activities (eating, education, household chores, sleeping, etc.). Following Dumazedier, Alain Chenu's work showed that the increase in leisure time stalled (Chenu and Herpin, 2002) and analysed how time was used in France based on time-use surveys (Chenu, 2003). What is relatively certain is that "free time, whether we devote it to our family, our friends, our holidays, our leisure [...], has undoubtedly become a major reference time in modern developed societies" (Viard, 2002).

Leisure time, relative to the concept of liberating time, personal time, hedonistic or disinterested time, refers to this approach in its relation to activities that are considered as being specific.

**Leisure time, a false freed time.** Marx analysed leisure time as a necessary time for the reproduction of the working labour force in the capitalist mode of production - a time controlled and instrumentalised by the ruling class to increase the workers' productivity. Neo-Marxist movements in the 1970s also saw leisure time as being a dominated and commercial time, diverting the workers' attention from their actual submission to the power structure. In this context, leisure time is defined in relation to work and is at play in power struggles for class domination. In industrial societies, and then later in consumer societies, leisure time would therefore be falsely liberating, even if it allows people to act with a sense of free will in their own self-formation (Rauch, 2003).

Leisure time, in relation to the concept of a regulated or instrumentalised time controlled by the production system, must be reappropriated by the individual, in a free and creative way, to enjoy it as a time that is truly outside of work and detached from it.

The challenge is then to emancipate leisure time from this link to an economic model of production and to lead people towards a free use of their own time, outside of any relationship of domination. Baudrillard in particular, when criticising this analysis of leisure time as being "subjugated" to working time, argued that free time itself could no longer be used for anything else than for a consumption that turned the wheels of the productive apparatus.

"It is insufficient to say that leisure is 'alienated' because it is merely the time necessary to reproduce labour power. The alienation of leisure is more profound: it does not relate to the direct subordination to working time, but is linked to the very impossibility of wasting one's time. [...] Thus, everywhere, in spite of the fiction of freedom in leisure, 'free' time is logically impossible: there can only be constrained time. The time of consumption is that of production. It is so to the extent that it is only ever an 'escapist' parenthesis in the cycle of production. [...] Leisure is constrained in so far as, behind its apparent gratuitousness, it faithfully reproduces all the mental and practical constraints which are those of productive time and of a subjugated daily life." (Baudrillard, 1970)

Today, leisure time is one time among others, and it must be maximised in a quantitative and qualitative approach to free time (the two being of course linked) for proactive individuals in the use of their time. However, the quantity of 'free' time outside of work, invested in so-called leisure activities, differs in quality depending on the conditions in which this free time emerges.

Leisure time could then also be understood relative to another category of time that is almost nominalised and invested theoretically, but not so much empirically, which is lost time, this empty time which, like a weak signal, seems to be regaining a certain value today, in a society of packed schedules that exhaust the mind.

## **b. From leisure time to discretionary time: available time for others?**

A promising avenue seems to be the notion of "discretionary time": "The amount of time that is not contingent on the necessities of life (sufficient income, domestic work, personal care and childcare) that an individual can dispose of at discretion" (Goodin et al., 2008). It refers to the possibility for individuals to be masters of their time schedules, balancing between constrained rhythms and freer rhythms. With discretionary time, we can think of the individual and reflexive control of rhythms in the organisation of everyday life. It is a resource to slow down or accelerate, to interrupt or continue the arrangement and internal dynamics of social times. It restores control over the rhythm of life. It is used as an indicator of individual freedom.

It is then a matter of **transposing free time into discretionary time**, according to the importance of non-professional obligations. Because there are constrained times other than work, and they vary according to the importance that individuals give to them in structuring their daily lives. These times can have various purposes: civic (voting), family (household chores), religious (rituals), school (taking children to school) or even vital (sleeping, eating). There are also times within times: the constrained time of home-work commutes can be seen as free time if the commuter can use it to work, rest, read, etc. Discretionary time therefore requires being free to invest one's so-called free time, requiring it to be sufficiently removed from the constraints of other activities that it is truly one's own time, to be arranged, separated or invested relatively to one's social obligations. "The flexibility of schedules has paved the way for differentiated arrangements of free time. This 'time to oneself' is poking more and more 'holes' in professional time. In this challenge, inventing one's own lifestyle seems essential for those who want to escape 'constrained time'." (Rauch, 2003)

Controlling time in its organisation (schedule) and activities (sequence) therefore represents a component of one's ability to use existing resources to turn them into well-being; and this freedom to realise oneself is called a "capability" (A. Sen). This capability is relative and unevenly distributed. It is a skill built by various factors: dependence on loved ones, degree of control over everyday life, attitude towards existence (Sauvain-Dugerdil and Ritschard, 2005). This discretionary dimension of time thus makes it possible to highlight the "differential benefits of free time" according to categories of population. Some may be in a position to enjoy it more than others by, for instance, being able to buy time from others to fulfil non-professional obligations. The wealthiest buy other people's time to take care of certain tasks (cleaning, ironing, childcare, preparing meals, etc.) that others simply can't avoid, as they may spend their free time searching for a second job, or doing household chores (mainly women).

Finally, discretionary time is also organised according to our social obligations binding us to others. The times we spend with relatives are important in the quality of the organisation of leisure time, in that they actually correspond to moments of "well-being." **This issue of well-being is central to the question of temporalities because it is linked to a rhythmic organisation whereby it seems important to control one's free time individually while maintaining collective synchronisms that allow for social life.** Synchrony with others can be constrained by a common obligation to perform a collective activity (work). It may be considered more flexible in social relations, while remaining partly determined by other people's schedules. This scheduling constraint leads to negotiation and temporal adjustments to enable a meeting. This refers to Simmel's concept of a "rendez-vous" or Giddens' concept of a "social occasion," which both result from an individual's availability and willingness to join a situation of co-presence. In this context where leisure is seen as an organiser of social ties, as well as being organised by them, it would then lead to the production of "mobilities of sociability" (Ramadier, Petropoulou & Bronner, 2008) or "mobilities of freely living together" (Godard, 2006). Leisure mobility seems to be less a "transit mobility" (mobilité de transit) than a "relinking mobility" (mobilité de reliance), to use Georges Amar's terminology (2010): the former aims to cross space and cover distances as quickly as possible from point A to point B while avoiding any contact, friction, danger, in order to save as much time as possible; the latter relies on the creation of social ties, relationships throughout time and space, allowing people to encounter territories and places, with time being more experienced and interesting.

Mobility is therefore at the heart of the negotiation and confrontation process mediated by individual temporal strategies (Nowotny, 1992) that allow people to deploy leisure activities as a medium for social interaction. In this vein, the synchrony that people look for in or via mobility can be a source for improving travel (Munch, 2017) and its comfort. For example, meeting your co-workers on the commuter train back home is a reason for distraction at the end of the day, guiding modal choice (Pradel, 2014): playing cards, exchanging jokes. Mobility is as much a tool for organising synchrony as it is a synchrony in itself, in that it organises encounters and interactions.

### c. The concept of "rhythmic capability"

Discretionary time is invested, according to individual availability, in entertaining activities that generate well-being. Individuals are, however, unequal with regards to this discretionary time because not everyone has the same amount of free time "to oneself." Furthermore, control over this free time requires having certain dispositions and abilities that people do not possess in equal measure. **The idea of a "rhythmic capability" to analyse how big or small the possibilities are for a person to organise their social times, is an avenue worth exploring.** Let us therefore offer a definition. Rhythmic capability relates to the effective ability for individuals to choose various combinations of functioning, allowing them to organise their daily life in support of their life project in a given territory. Amartya Sen also directly makes the link between "well-being" and "capability."

Rhythmic capability explores the hypothesis of the importance of capital (in terms of accumulated resources) and skills (in terms of dexterity to use these resources) in the controlled and chosen organisation and coordination of one's own rhythms with those of the individuals, activities and practices that make up the daily organisation of social life. For example, generally speaking, households with a higher cultural capital, i.e. over-employed individuals with a university degree, are better organised and manage to use their time better than those with fewer qualifications. Since defining priorities over time is a means of reducing complexity, having the power and ability to prioritise provides control (Nowotny, 1992). Conversely, less qualified households that are subject to high time pressure find it much harder to organise their lives, either because they lack the cultural and technical means to juggle an ever-changing schedule, or because their schedule is one they did not choose and they do not have the opportunity to organise themselves (Michon, 2014). In this context, access to mobility and individual motility seem to play a large part in how much control people have over the organisation of their time. On the other hand, as Dumazedier points out, discretionary time has certain requirements, first and foremost being the expression of individuality. It can be understood as a new constraint forcing the individual, in this specific time, to deploy a rewarding self-image via socially valued activities.

If we think back to Amartya Sen's idea of "well-being" as deriving from the "power to be or to do" (capability), we can explore **rhythmic capability, inversely, as the "power not to be or not to do,"** thus redefining free time as: "What you could easily not do if you did not want to." The rhythmic capability to enjoy a leisure-filled free time would then be expressed in an individual's ability to reclaim free time, for their well-being, either from constrained periods of time ("what I can want to do"), in the middle of constrained time ("what I can do despite constraints") or in opposition to constrained time ("what I don't want to do").

But rhythmic capability is also part of a collective structure of time that acts on this capability, and also on the individual's temporal organisation choices, even if they possess total rhythmic freedom. Indeed, collective rhythms are rhythms of socialisation, and individual time cannot be thought of outside of a shared structure of time. **Collective rhythms are produced by individuals synchronising with each other at a specific, socializing moment.** To completely disengage from these synchronisations is to isolate oneself completely. Life in society requires moments of synchronisation performed by individuals (meals with friends), groups (companies), legislation (labour code), states (national celebrations), etc. On the one hand, the structuring nature of collective rhythms at all scales on individual rhythms can be understood as a holistic approach to social phenomena. But it can also be understood as an interactionist approach where synchronisation is a basic form of how societies are organised and how the social individual is constructed. And finally, it can be understood as a form of domination where collective rhythms emanate from "time givers" - including in the way the calendar is divided, for instance - who impose themselves on individuals in their desire for social integration.

### d. Mobility, an "interval" for lost time?

Beyond rhythmic capability, the modalities of how a certain form of social pressure to invest free time can exert itself on different populations could then reduce one's freedom to organise one's own time. Leisure mobility would then be constrained by social pressure. A distortion could then appear between one's motility (ability to move) and travel aspirations (amount of travel) in responding to this social pressure and create forms of frustration. The growing number of leisure activities for personal development, culture, sports, but also mobility (tourism, travel, excursion, etc.) can fuel this race to express individuality. Could the increase in leisure mobility be linked to how this discretionary time is filled up? To how this free time is spent on leisure which then becomes a growing reason for travel? **Travel would then become a way of gaining extra personal value, an "extra time" between leisure and work, regardless of how it is invested.**

"Rest, relaxation, escape and distraction are, perhaps, 'needs': but they do not in themselves define the specific exigency of leisure, which is the consumption of time. Free time is, perhaps, the entire ludic activity one fills it up with, but it is, first of all, the freedom to waste one's time, and possibly even to 'kill' it, to expend it as pure loss." (Baudrillard, 1970)

And this freedom to waste time, mechanically, seems less and less available as life rhythms keep getting faster, if we are to believe Harmut Rosa's work. "Technical acceleration should logically imply an increase in free time, which in turn would slow down the rhythm of

life or at least eliminate or reduce 'temporal starvation.' Since technical acceleration means that less time is needed to complete a given task, time should become abundant." (Rosa, 2010) The advent of cars would therefore lead to an increase in free time by allowing people to travel the same distance faster than with any other mode of individual travel. This would be the case if we continued travelling the same distances and at the same frequency. But instead we travel more frequently and further, thus filling up the time that would have been freed by this technological leap. The same logic applies to smartphones. Digital communications could allow us to save free time by avoiding certain trips, and by the late 1990s, some predicted the end of in-person work meetings. However, far from going away, they have tended to increase in number and even in value, now that it's possible to avoid them. This doesn't stop remote meetings from increasingly happening for people who remain constantly connected and connectable, thus further contracting what free time is left over.

But if we give body to travel time itself, why not think of it as the right time for idleness, rest, relaxation, like the new Eldorado of a society that is always looking to fill up all "downtime." **Travel could be seen as an "interval" in the spectrum of temporal strategies one employs to reclaim and control time.** Creating this interval and regaining control over it would be a way of removing it from the packed and saturated social times in order to invest it as a discretionary time. The interval between two places and two actions - i.e. travel - can just as well be empty or full. It structures temporal relationships, it "marks, interrupts, slows down, accelerates, prolongs or delimits the flows of time" (Nowotny, 1992). In our opinion, this concept of an interval is worth exploring further to give discretionary time an empirical basis in the analysis of life rhythms and to think about the "desaturation" of schedules by giving value to the gaps. Many people, when riding on a train, take that time to "daydream" and let their thoughts wander while watching the scenery go by. Those who drive to work use the commute as a time to reflect (Pradel, 2014). As a time in its own right, a sequence in the day, travel can be an interval of free time which is or is not invested with activities that enrich the earlier, more quantitative approaches to leisure mobility.

## 2. Measuring leisure mobility

### a. Some figures on leisure, free time and mobility in France

To analyse leisure time, the OECD only takes into account people who are working full time. The figures do not include students, the unemployed or housewives. Available time ultimately corresponds to what is left over outside of work. No work, no leisure time? Or rather only leisure time? In the total available time, there's sleep time (the French are among the biggest sleepers, with about 8h30 of sleep per day) and time spent eating (here too, France leads the way with over two hours a day). In the total available time, the OECD also includes time spent on "domestic work," i.e., on household chores or childcare. Thus, the actual leisure time (playing sports, taking part in cultural events, visiting friends, watching TV or listening to the radio) is more specific than the available leisure time. The difference between actual and available leisure time also questions the idea of free time. **Often, leisure time, available time and free time have an ambivalent relationship.**

Leisure can be analysed by time averages, as in the 2014 CREDOC <sup>2</sup> study of free time, defined as time spent on leisure, sociability, meals, crafts, gardening and childcare, as opposed to physiological times (sleep, washing), work, studies and household chores which are considered constrained. The survey shows that in France, free time increased by 47 minutes per day between 1986 and 2010, going from 7h19 to 8h06 per 24hrs. Conversely, time spent on sleep and washing decreased by 12 minutes, time spent at work or school by 25 minutes, and time spent on housework by 23 minutes. Transport time is treated separately. It is, with free time, the only one to increase, by 17 minutes a day.

Free time can also be analysed through the lens of household budgets. Free time is then directly linked to the leisure budget which also increases. According to the same CREDOC study, this budget represented 8.1% in 2012, compared to 6.5% in 1959. If the sharp increase in constrained expenses - especially related to housing - has an impact on the leisure budget (which is highly sensitive to the economic situation), these figures still place the French as being average among European countries, close to the level of leisure spending in Sweden, Norway, Finland, the United Kingdom or Germany, where this budget represents about 10% of the household budget.

Other approaches are telling, emphasising how important leisure and free time have become, such as Jean Viard's work, organised in large aggregates at the scale of a person's life. In 2002, people had to work for 9% of their lifetime and 16% of their waking lifetime to access their pension, which represented 67,000 hours, when taking into account average life expectancy, the 35-hour week and 42 years of service. The time spent in studies represents 30,000 hours. Viard then points out that we have gone from 100,000 available hours in the nineteenth century (excluding sleep and work, that he considers constrained time) for a worker or peasant with a life expectancy of 500,000 hours on average, to "about 400,000 hours for oneself, one's family, one's free time, one's culture, one's commitments and travels" for a life expectancy of about 700,000 hours (Viard, 2014). According to his calculations, we earned back 200,000 hours by increasing our life expectancy and 100,000 by decreasing our working time <sup>3</sup>. He claims that of these 400,000 hours of free time, 100,000 are absorbed by television - without specifying how much is spent on specific screens (televisions, smartphones, computers, etc.).

Finally, free time is set aside in mobility surveys which, outside of work and study, focus on leisure as a reason for travel, finely analysed and compiled by Viard, Potier and Urbain (2003). The share of leisure as a reason for chosen mobility increased by 28 percentage points between 1976 and 1980 and 1981 and 1990, and then later by 27 points between 1981 and 1990 and 1991 and 2000. In a quarter of a century, leisure-related travel increased by more than a quarter. In urban areas in particular, the time spent on leisure travel increased in Rennes by 66.1% between 1990 and 2000, in Lyon by 31.9% between 1985 and 1995, and in Bordeaux by 82.1% between 1990 and 1998. In Île-de-France too, the average number of daily trips per person (aged over six) on a weekday for leisure purposes has increased; the average range in kilometres of leisure-related travel has increased across all modes of travel; and the number of trips made for leisure reasons has also increased while the duration remains stable. As for non-daily travel, 64% of French people leave their home each year for at least one week, including 20 to 30% who do so more often. 16% have never gone away from their home. The average duration of trips away is 21 days, which means that 50% of holidays are spent at home. 70% of trips are made by car, and over three quarters occur within France.

To this quantitative data, Jean Viard adds a qualitative dimension and claims that it is in "the dilation of time with few constraints that the temporal revolution is occurring." **As such, we have entered "a society of 'active' free time activities,** as alternatives to professional hyperactivity and as counterpoints to the free time of inactive rest, of relaxation, of the tired person." This is a central change to develop the idea of individuals who are proactive in filling their free time, moving away from the traditional idea of constraint.

But **the amount of free time invested in leisure says nothing about the quality of the leisure.** Hence the importance of adding another dimension: the "time for oneself" that is actually available. Hence the importance also of analysing how each individual has different specific opportunities to free up time for themselves. Hence, finally, the point of having a subjective and sensitive approach to the idea of constraints, and to each person's abilities to escape them, or transform them through play for instance, or keep them at bay

via distraction. From there, what leisure activities divide up the time, if we put forward the idea that distraction can be inserted into gaps that are hard to capture statistically?

## **b. Leisure mobility and activities at destination**

The distinction between free and non-free time made in the CREDOC survey, however, classifies the time spent on mobility separately. This is not without consequence when looking at leisure mobility because most of these activities of free time are confined to the domestic space and therefore don't produce leisure mobility. Still, we could argue that a walk around the house is a form of mobility, but then we enter considerations that are too qualitative.

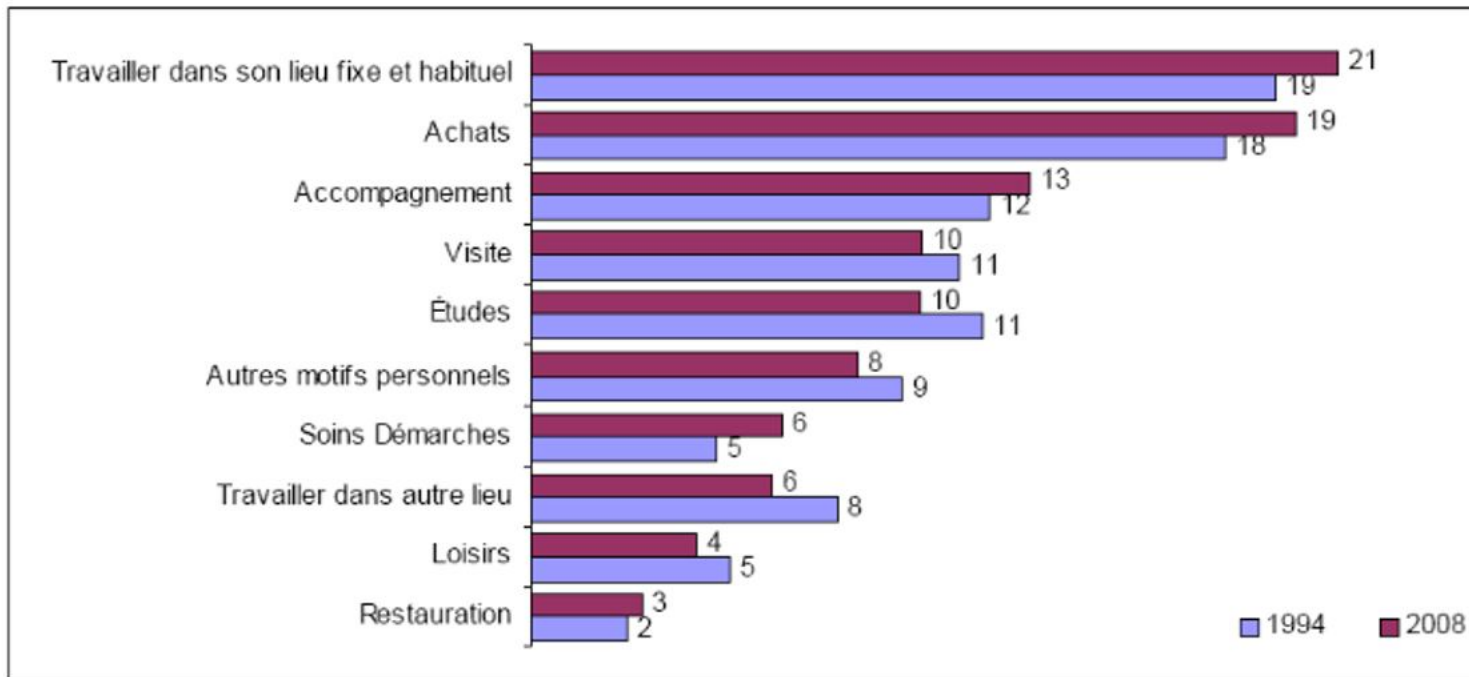
However, the statistical treatment of leisure mobility in the origin/destination surveys considers leisure as a reason for travel, thus relating to a non-work activity. Leisure mobility is considered by INSEE, in the National Transport Survey (ENTD, 2008), as a subset of passenger transport. It concerns all the trips performed by people whose leisure activities are not confined to their own home and thus generate leisure-based traffic. In INSEE's nomenclature, it falls under private travel and the reasons are distributed as follows:

Leisure
7.71 Activity with an association, religious ceremony, gatherings
7.72 Going to a leisure centre, amusement park, fair
7.73 Eating or drinking outside the home
7.74 Visiting a historical monument or site
7.75 Seeing a cultural show or sports event (cinema, theatre, concert, circus, match)
7.76 Going to exercise or play sports
7.77 Going for a walk without any specific destination
7.78 Going to a place to take a walk, vacations, changing residence and "Other private reasons"

Relative to the other reasons for travel in the INSEE nomenclature, we can highlight some surprising elements. First, travel can sometimes be considered as a leisure activity in itself, in the category called "Going for a walk without any specific destination." This recreational nature of the movement, considered here through the idea of wandering or strolling dear to Walter Benjamin, will later be one of our points of inquiry. Then, when extra-local mobilities are aggregated, the "Leisure" reason disappears in the "Business" reason: "travel originating from home and that has, as a reason, anything that isn't fixed work or school or university, that is to say both non-fixed work, shopping and groceries, personal or professional affairs, etc." "Business tourism" questions the dichotomy of leisure, work and travel. Finally, the "Visit" reason ("Visit to relatives" and "Visit to friends"), as well as the "Shopping" reasons, are not included in the "Leisure" reasons but in separate categories, which is a choice that may be re-examined.

Categorising the different reasons is necessary and we are not experts. They perfectly reflect the major changes in leisure mobility, but a non-statistician will struggle to find them disaggregated and analysed in such a way. In the many articles of the National Transport Survey (ENTD, 2008), the focus is on daily travel as well as, within daily non-work-related travel, on trips related to shopping or studies. With regards to leisure, studies overwhelmingly focus on long-distance mobility and tourist trips. It is hard to find data-based analyses on the various specific reasons for leisure: how are mobilities relating to "associative activities" organised? How frequent is mobility "without a specific destination"? Who are the individuals who most often "eat outside home"? Can we identify socio-demographic variables that explain more regular "visits to friends"? It's also hard not to think about the interplay between the various reasons and how they are experienced according to different categories of people.

## Graphique 4 : Répartition des activités motivant les déplacements (déplacements selon le motif à destination en excluant les retours au domicile) (en %)



Champ : déplacements locaux un jour de semaine ouvré des individus âgés de 6 ans ou plus résidant en France métropole hors retours au domicile.

Figure 1 : SOeS, INSEE, Inrets, national transport surveys 1994, 2008.

As the analysis above shows, leisure is a separate category from "Visits" or "Shopping." Yet, the boundary between leisure-related mobilities is not always obvious.

- "Visiting relatives" or "Visiting friends" - which is not classified in the leisure category - can be a leisure activity in itself, in the sense of a distraction. It can also be a strong source of leisure if one is visiting friends to play boardgames or go on a forest hike, for example. The entanglement of activities makes it difficult to identify leisure time.
- The "Shopping" <sup>4</sup> reason is not classified in the leisure category. Indeed, it is sometimes considered as its own segment, but as the recreational value of shopping increases, "shopping" can obviously also be considered a leisure activity (CIPRA). <sup>5</sup> Here, it is the meaning given to the reason that is not captured by the analysis and that transforms the act of shopping into leisure.
- Let's also highlight the increasing complexity of travel chains and the multiplication of travel reasons during the same home-work sequence through the following testimony: "I go back to Crolles from 4:30 pm to take my youngest daughter to judo. With the second, the older one, we do 2 things. First, shopping, and second, we go to the library to pick up books. And at 5:30 p.m., we go to pick up my second daughter" (Pradel, 2015). How should we categorize the reason for this trip? And who should we consider to give it meaning: the father who is driving or his daughters?

These category choices nevertheless feed a large part of spatial geography analyses demonstrating that the increase and evolution of mobilities related to leisure and tourism now further complicate the spatial location of individuals and accentuate the dissociation between production and consumption places in the life of households (Lejoux, 2007). These destination-reasons are also the basis for economic geography studies on the growing importance of the "face-to-face economy" and the spending of "transient consumers" (Ruault, 2014) on a territory's wealth. Here, leisure and shopping mobilities are both considered as flows that should be captured as much as possible, seeing as a territory's wealth is no longer defined solely by the wealth produced and redistributed within it. This approach is a response to Laurent Davezies who, in 2004, argued that most analysts have underestimated the territorial impacts of the dissociation between working time and leisure time, and the latter's importance in understanding how urban areas function.

The choice of categories therefore is not neutral in the analysis of leisure mobility and its territorial impact. However, these new analyses of leisure mobility struggle to renew the fine reasons for the activities to which they refer. In 2002, Patricia Lejoux, in an article called "The mobilities of free time" already admitted: "The study of these spatial mobilities [of free time] isn't easy because, since they are emerging practices, we don't yet have adequate statistical tools to apprehend them. Analyses are therefore dependent on existing data. Thus, we won't be able here to examine day trips because the surveys held since 2002 by the Ministry of Tourism don't yet provide usable data (Bernardet, 2003)."

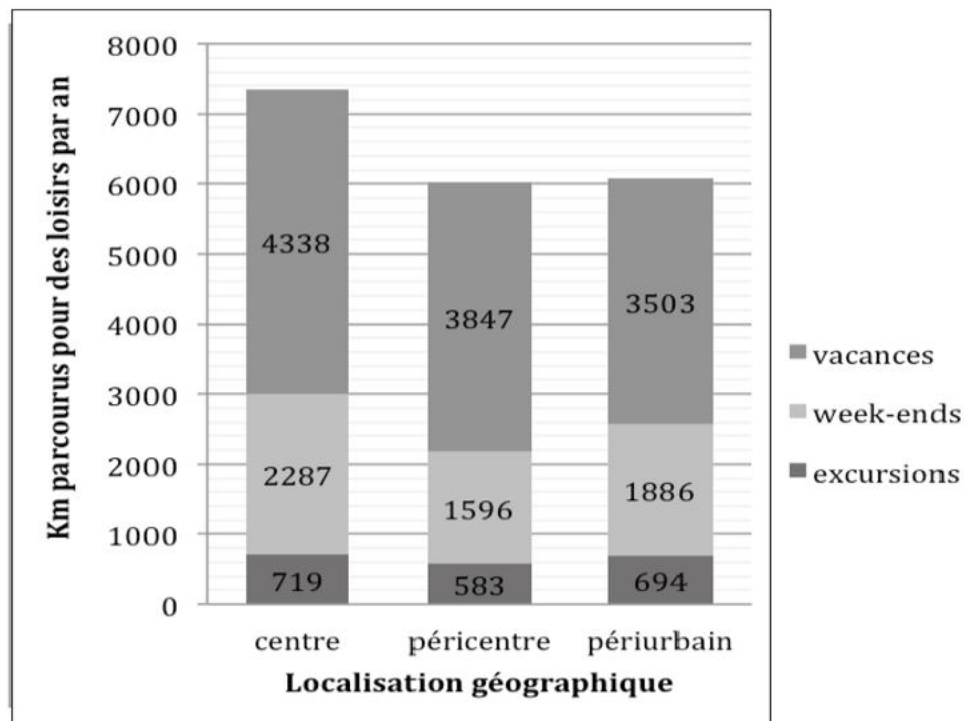
Walking or cycling, for instance, as travel modes that are sources of leisure, are not taken into account by these surveys. However, mobilities are also a place for new recreational practices. What matters in such instances is what is reported by the respondent, as this defines the meaning of the activity at the destination and therefore the main reason for the trip, but also what activities they engaged in while travelling. **We can then question the nature of leisure time, its greater volatility or its very fine grain which is at the heart of activities that aren't considered leisure, or even its emerging capacity.** More broadly, is it possible, beyond leisure, to think about uninvested free time? And in leisure activity, can we not think of moments that are outside this framework and thereby blurring temporalities - like work becoming more prevalent at home, or interpersonal relationships appearing during working time?

This temporal entanglement adds complexity to the approach based on the "uses of freed times" (Boulin), through the capacity for variable uses of these freed times, in the sense given by each individual to the activities of the freed times, or even in the evolution of the very nature of freed times which, for instance, can be found during travel. **A comprehensive approach is to explore people's**

**inclination for a "modalisation of the experience framework" (Goffman, 1991) towards leisure.** Modalisation is "a set of conventions by which an activity endowed with a meaning in the application of a primary framework [here, shopping in a business], is transformed into another activity that takes the first as a model but that the participants consider different [shopping in a business becoming a hobby]" (Goffman, 1991, p. 52). If Goffman uses play as an example in his works, it is no accident. **We can often modalise a trivial, daily, activity into a recreational activity by giving it new purpose in terms of amusement and entertainment, and by transforming its context.** Transforming travel time into a recreational space-time is a modalisation that many travellers implement every day. This modalisation is more or less easy to deploy depending on the situation, for example in terms of how busy a train is, available Wi-Fi connection, personal fatigue, etc. Here, rhythmic analysis can be adapted to the modalisation of the frame, by drawing attention to the instances and recurrences of passing from one activity to another, or from one cognitive disposition to another with regards to the same activity in quantitatively homogeneous and statistically continuous sequences of time, including travel.

### c. Leisure mobility apprehended in periods outside work

If leisure mobility can be defined according to the activity at destination, it can also be apprehended from the time budget it is a part of. The definition process is then reversed, since it is no longer the activity that defines leisure mobility, but the time outside work that it is a part of. Time for mobility outside working time then determines leisure mobilities. This is particularly true for quantitative analyses in certain works (Nessi, 2012) where it seems that leisure mobilities are considered as those performed during excursion times, weekends and holidays, thus separating them from daily non-work-related and leisure mobilities that are discounted.



**Auteur : 6T Bureau de recherche**  
**« Incidences du rapport au cadre de vie sur la mobilité de loisir » - Echantillon : 2030 ménages âgés de plus de 30 à 45 ans avec enfants**  
**Recueil de données : Alyce Sofreco, Enquête téléphonique Paris/Rome 2010/11.**

Figure 2 : average kilometres travelled per year for leisure mobility, according to geographical location in Île-de-France, by an actively working individual (Nessi, 2012).

This methodological choice can be contested, but it turns out that the constrained activities - that is to say those related to work or studies - are much less numerous on weekends than during the week. They account for 40% of trips made on weekdays, compared to only 8% on Saturdays and 4% on Sundays. Shopping, which oscillates between leisure and constrained activity (see previous part), generates more travel on weekends, especially on Saturdays (29% of trips made on that day are for shopping).

Déplacements hors travail	Hommes		Femmes		Tous actifs	
	Jour trav	Jour non trav	Jour trav	Jour non trav	Jour trav	Jour non trav
Achats	0,16	0,60	0,25	0,68	0,20	0,64
Affaires personnelles	0,46	1,17	0,61	1,25	0,53	1,22
Loisirs	0,21	0,34	0,19	0,27	0,20	0,30
Total hors travail	0,83	1,11	2,05	2,20	0,93	2,16

Source : D'après EGT, 2001 ; Massot *et al.*, 2006.

Figure 3 : Non-work-related travel in 2001, based on whether or not the person worked that day or not, and according to gender (Massot *et al.*, 2006).

However, according to the table above, considering non-work time during the week as being automatically devoted to leisure activities is unsatisfactory. Indeed, on working days, private activities performed outside the home are mainly related to managing daily life, in particular to everyday shopping and ferrying children around. Leisure has little room there. These results reflect the limited leeway workers have to schedule private activities on workdays. Leisure travel on workdays mainly involves going to the restaurant during the lunch break (Aguilera, Massot, Proulhac, 2010). Consequently, leisure and visits represent only 16% of activities on workdays compared to more than a third of trips on Saturdays and almost half on Sundays <sup>6</sup>.

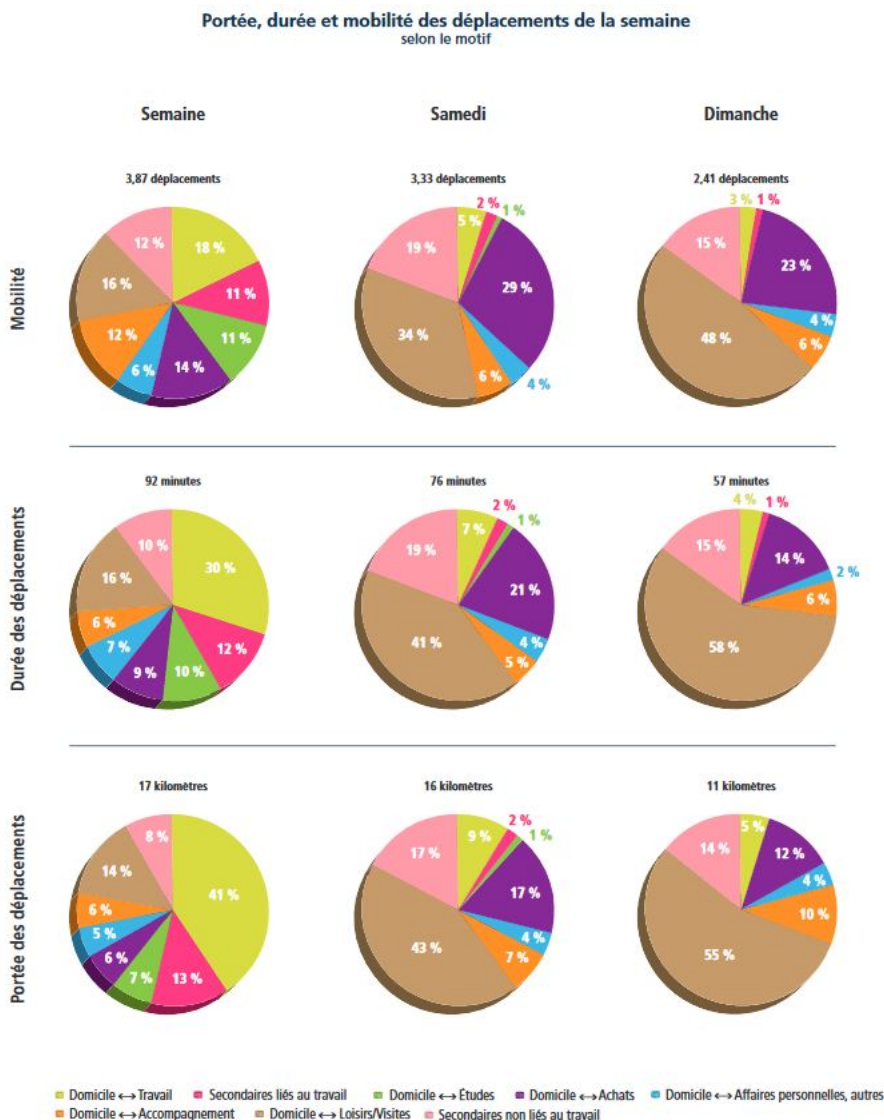


Figure 4: Global transport survey: weekend trips. Mobility in Ile-de-France, n°20, January 2013.

From this convergence between time outside statutory work (holidays, weekends) and so-called leisure activities, we can see that the time budget outside of work is less constrained and more open to shared "free time" activities. The choice of modes of travel in these

temporalities then changes. If the flow structure remains the same, the modal share of public transport according to connections decreases on Saturdays and even more so on Sundays. In Île-de-France, for radial travel between Paris and the suburbs, or exchange trips between inner and outer suburbs, the modal share of public transport is halved on Sundays, in favour of cars (EGT, 2013).

The slightest constraint in schedules and the desire for a certain temporal freedom when travelling (including being in sync with relatives) may explain the preference for taking the car. Consequently, **the available time budget outside work that is invested with leisure activities would favour the use of cars as an instrument of personal freedom, not so much for the trips themselves but for controlling their tempo (leaving and returning when desired) and how they match up with others (being able to reach a given place at a desired time, thus avoiding the constraints of public transport times and service points).**

Depending on whether the trip occurs in a more constrained or free time, depending on the meaning associated with the use of certain modes, depending on whether this mode allows the person to do something else during the journey (see below), leisure as an activity and a way of being is finely articulated with mobility. Hence the importance of comprehensive approaches to mobility as a sequence of activity and a place-moment in its own right, that further blurs the boundaries between social times. **On the one hand, travel becomes a leisure in itself, and on the other, it is filled with leisure activities.**

### 3. From leisure mobility to mobility as leisure

#### a. Leisure mobility: getting around, a recreational activity

Tourism-related travel can be seen as part of a leisure time that includes the activities at the destination, but also the transport time - considered as an integral part of that overall time sequence. Just like travel time can be included as an integral part of working time in weekday mobility statistics, **"tourism involves transport seeing as it is a type of leisure based on travel" (Wackerman, 1993).** However, tourism can be defined as "a system of actors, practices and spaces that help individuals find 'recreation' through travel and temporary dwelling outside the places of everyday life" (Knafo and Stock, 2003, p. 931).

Tourism is similar to leisure in its recreational dimension, and the mobility sequence is an integral part of that. While there are several types of travel and travellers, "transport is always an integral and key part of the tourist experience. Transport is even sometimes at the heart of this experience, as in the case of cruises and bicycle tourism" (Bigras, Dostaler, 2013). Just like the increase in cycling routes, the boom in motorhome sales - these "habitable vehicles" (+8% of sales between 2016 and 2017) - seems to show the importance of mobility as an activity included in the time budget devoted to leisure. **Increasingly, mobile housing has something to do with a recreational practice that generates well-being because it reflects a way of life where movement, synonymous with freedom, is valued as such.**



Figure 5: Whether travel is daily or leisure-related, it should be considered as an activity in itself and, more and more often, as an experience that is turned into a recreational mode.

But leisure mobility can also be part of a time budget that is rather meant for work. For instance, "business tourism" <sup>2</sup> is an interesting category, as it's a hybridisation between leisure time and work-related mobility, or rather the integration of the former into the latter. Business tourism is tourism carried out within the framework of professional activity: conventions, conferences, symposia, seminars, workshops, trade fairs, team-building events (motivational meetings for an organisation's employees) (Bazin, Beckerich, Delaplace, 2010). It implies a trip that's over 24 hours, with at least one night away from home. If the trip is motivated by the professional activity,

this activity departs from the daily workspace and can be coupled with integrated recreational activities that, for some, can even be a motivation for taking part in the trip according to its location, the local amenities and available activities.

Beyond tourism, **sports such as walking, cycling, or jogging also reveal the integration of mobility and leisure.** This approach can be exported to the scale of daily mobility where commuting can become a leisure activity in itself. This is especially the case for active mobilities. For some, cycling gets in the way of leisure time because it does not allow the cyclist to engage in what they consider to be a leisure activity, unlike sitting on a bus for example. For others, however, cycling is a leisure time that allows them to relax, even when going to work (Daguzé et al.). This dichotomy between leisure cycling and transport cycling can also apply to walking: on the one hand, "leisure-walking" (strolling, wandering, hiking, trekking, etc.) is chosen and performed for itself, and on the other, "travel-walking" is functional and "remarkable in how absent it is from representations, yet omnipresent in everyday life" (Monnet, 2015). **And yet, for most people who walk or cycle to work, this is a moment of leisure, relaxation and well-being that is found inside the budget of constrained time, thereby blurring the strict boundaries between leisure practices and travel practices.**

**The recreational dimension of travel, connected to well-being, finds its importance in people's modal choices.** Active mobilities should not only be analysed from the standpoint of efficiency in relation to other modes of travel (speed, capacity, frequency), but as activities that go beyond the simple fact of allowing geographical movement. As such, the determinants of mobility such as age, health or personal values (sports, ecology, etc.) come into play even more significantly.

## **b. Mobility as time for leisure: driving or not driving**

The space-times of travel can no longer be considered only as being empty. They are potential places of activity and fully "inhabited." Trains (Lanéelle, 2005), airports (Frétiigny, 2013) and suburban buses (Pradel et al., 2014) are places of social and leisure activities. Indeed, air travel can either be experienced as "a constraint, an imposed time or, on the contrary, as a magical timeless moment. With the constrained time being "lost" in an economic sense, the trip will rob the traveller of their discretionary time, to the detriment of their leisure time or useful working time" (Bergada, 2009). However, leisure has this property of being able to emerge in various time budgets that are generally defined by the activities at destination. Similarly, the temporal delimitations of activities in fixed sequences miss the interweaving of leisure times with travel times: reading on a train during a business trip, playing an online game on a Smartphone while commuting on the subway, listening to music when driving to the shops, etc. Mobility is a "chamber that separates and connects" (Pradel, 2014) that can be "inhabited" with leisure. It no longer belongs only to the time of the activity and doesn't refer to it entirely. In the Time Use Survey <sup>8</sup>, INSEE includes in professional activities the work-related journeys that can be time devoted to anything other than work (telephone exchanges, podcasts, daydreaming, etc.). **The destination alone does not determine the nature of the trip for the individual. Considering mobility as a sequence of activity in itself shifts the parameters for analysing social times.**

We could call "discretionary leisure time" those recreational and entertainment times that emerge at the heart of times that are traditionally understood to be constrained and exclusive. Regulating the use of personal messaging, social networks or online games in the context of working time is an issue for companies. The generalisation of smartphones and the improvement of network connection in public transport (Adoue, 2016) is allowing travel time to be transformed into other types of times. More generally, all kinds of screens (smartphones, tablets, televisions, computers, etc.) provide a category of mobile entertainment that can be used almost anywhere. The development of "**mobile entertainment**" as a source of leisure is telling in itself with regards to the new relationships they allow people to have with travel time. On the one hand, we find social media apps that are based on videos or pictures. They are the most downloaded Smartphone apps (Instagram, Tik Tok, Likee, YouTube, Snapchat, Netflix) <sup>9</sup>. They provide entertainment on the go for many users who consume images, enjoy posting videos and commenting on them. Some of these videos are only meant to be fun and aim to generate the most "likes." On the other hand, there are specific gaming apps (Angry Bird, Clash of Clan, Candy Crush, etc.). Despite losing some traction compared to the first group, they still have a special place on smartphones, especially since some of them offer a social element by allowing people to play online, to meet via their avatars or exchange goodies. Subway Surfer, a game released in 2012, was downloaded over 1.2 billion times by 2020. These apps are also the ones where people spend the most money.

These games, which are available on mobile devices (mobile phones, smartphones, personal assistants, tablets, mobile digital media players), have seen a rapid development over the past 10 years and form a video game entertainment universe associated with transport time. It isn't uncommon to find articles listing, for example, "Ten free games to pass the time in transport." <sup>10</sup> This definition does not include video games played on dedicated systems (portable consoles), but they are also multiplying. **The portability of home consoles enables the portability of leisure time into travel time, just as the connectivity of smartphones with cars allows a continuity of applications (music for example) from the home to the car.** For instance, Nintendo's website advertises its portable console like this: "Play your favourite games anywhere, anytime and with anyone thanks to the Nintendo Switch." And the ability to play together on the same console reinforces the social aspect of a transport time turned into leisure time. Among the diverse profiles of video game players, Minassian and Boutet (2015) pinpoint the nomads, who occasionally play videogames on their smartphones, playing in short bursts that are not too time-consuming. These "nomads" are mainly young adults under the age of 35, often students or highly educated workers, executives or higher intellectual professions. They are also mainly urban dwellers, especially Parisians, who often use public transport.

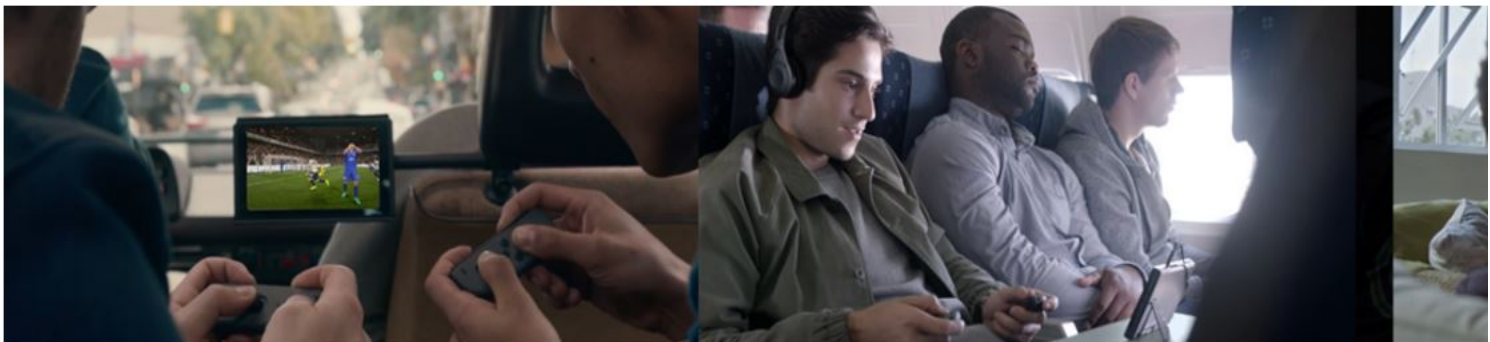


Figure 6: The portability and connectivity of games and video game consoles forces us to reconsider the continuity and temporal boundaries between the places and practices of everyday life. (Nintendo Switch advertising image).

The space of mobility is a place for these portable and connected forms of entertainment, from social networks to video games, which reshape mobility routines. "Digital devices contribute to the current transformations of daily life by allowing actors to master fine-grained temporalities and spatialities, which they implement throughout the day and within the places they inhabit or pass through" (Minassian, Boutet, 2015). While mobile video games and social networks are largely absent from studies on leisure time and mobility, we should not forget that mobility is also invested by other, and older, recreational activities. During family travels, people often invent shared games to pass the time; some keep reading their bedside book when commuting, thus resuming a cultural escapism from the bedroom to the public space with a certain continuity. Children have always played games when in transport and people have always listened to radio shows or music when driving their cars. Meanwhile, for over 10 years now, remote interactions, whether synchronous or not, enabled by social media apps, have been reinventing entertainment and changing the travel experience itself, which before felt more like a contained period of time that was disconnected from both ends of the trip. **While this aspect is subject to more and more attention, the entertainment function offered by these applications dedicated to networks or play is however marginal in mobility research, whereas leisure, as a form of distraction, can serve to change how one experiences a trip by making it much more acceptable, and even pleasant. Maybe this is a lever we could rely on to encourage changes in modal choices.**

**In these approaches to an "inhabited mobility" that is potentially gamified and entertaining, an important distinction must be made between drivers and passengers.** For suburban car drivers, commuting is a time they invest with activities that can be similar to leisure: listening to a podcast programme, music, learning a foreign language, calling friends, etc. (Pradel, 2014). Passengers have even more opportunities for recreational activities. Perhaps here we can find an alternative explanation for the growth of carpooling, which is also a socializing opportunity for users. Some choose to take the bus or the regional trains (TER) to free up free time to enjoy relaxing activities that can't be done while driving: knitting, reading, playing games, etc. Being a driver or a passenger changes the quality of the travel time and one's ability to reclaim it for something else, and this dichotomy supports a new relationship to mobility: "Among youths aged 14 to 17, cars have become, in a sense, unfashionable[...]. When you're driving, you can't do anything else. You can't watch a show or send WhatsApp messages. As a result, driving is a waste of time" (Kaufmann, 2018, Le Temps).

While users do not necessarily try to minimise their commuting time, they do seek to avoid travel times that are unappropriable, because they are not practical or flexible. Furthermore, it appears that quality of time and speed of time are linked: when travel time is appropriable, it passes quickly, when it isn't, it passes slowly and is like a long waiting time. Comparing travel times therefore influences modal choice in relation to the form and content of this time. "If the majority of respondents prefer to take a car rather than public transport, it is as much for the flexibility and quality of time provided by this means of transport as for its speed" (Kaufmann, 2002).

**Autonomous vehicles could reinforce this dimension of offering a highly appropriable travel time, especially for recreational activities.** They would offer more space and their occupants would not always need to look ahead. Entertainment technology such as video screens could be used so that passengers do not get bored during long journeys. Already, manufacturers are working on windows that, by opacifying, turn into display screens, allowing passengers to watch movies and play games. What passengers are "able to do" during their journey must be considered as an increasingly important determinant of mobility.



Figure 7: Driving or not driving, will autonomous cars offer a space for recreation, thereby reconfiguring how we relate to roads and to commuting?

**We may then raise the issue of new inequalities based on transportation possibilities. Not everyone is equally able to access a travel situation where they can sit still and be free to pay attention to whatever they want.** For certain peri-urban populations, car dependence deprives them of this possibility due to a lack of adequate transport infrastructure. And public transport itself has variable comfort levels, whether in terms of interior facilities or affluence at rush hours, which can influence how easy it is to engage in **on-board recreation**. Beyond that, there is the question of people's control over their schedules, which impacts their ability to use these modes of transport (train, bus), as well as over their budget, for choosing these recreational activities.

Here, we return to the issue of functional travel to give it a qualitative value, not in terms of geographical efficiency, but in terms of comfort, for allowing a situation of well-being via the practice of fun or entertaining activities, or simply being recreationally idle. But, in a bid to preserve temporary intervals of downtime, should we perhaps protect mobility from the current urge to fill it up and saturate it with connected activities and imposed social interactions? The name "Blablacar" (the name of a French carpooling company) evokes this importance of talking when carpooling. Another example is the SNCF's campaigns to encourage TGV passengers to connect. Like Baudrillard who wanted to preserve the emptiness of downtime in the face of a consumer society attempting to fill it up, even during transport, perhaps mobility could be considered as a special parenthesis that people want in order to safeguard some "lost time"?

Mobility and travel time could offer both a physical separation and a psychological separation from the places of constrained activities. While the first separation is fairly straightforward, the second fluctuates according to the individual's attention to their obligations and to how they occupy their journey with other activities (Pradel, Soichet, 2020). This possibility for people to fluctuate their attention constitutes a form of "presence to mobility" that begins when crossing the doorstep, and which is consubstantial with the status of being absent. This presence to mobility can then become the basis for a time that is more free. For some, taking the plane allows them to be absent from their obligations and disconnect completely from everyday life, creating a bubble in which to indulge in entertainment, including watching "bad" movies and playing on their smartphones (Minassian, Boutet, 2015). For some, driving their car alone can also offer a parenthesis for calm and quiet, or for solitary distraction (singing along to a song at the top of their lungs). On a large scale, this can explain why people keep driving cars, far beyond a rational distance-time calculation (Pradel, Soichet, 2020). **The pleasure of driving could in itself be seen as a leisure activity, and cars would then be the last place where one can finally find some alone time to do nothing but drive.**

## 4. Rhythmic capability and discretionary free time: ways of mastering time?

It seems important to make discretionary time a tool for controlling the rhythms of life and, as such, to accompany individuals to allow them to clear some free time "for themselves" in the organisation of their daily lives. More than the amount of free time that they have, the value of discretionary time lies in people's ability to use it to balance their rhythms. **Spending discretionary free time on leisure activities that seem increasingly volatile** with mobile devices, points back to this qualitative approach to time and, beyond that, to its possible appropriation to generate "well-being." Here, we come back to an idea that is sometimes subsumed by the quantitative approach to leisure, or by the activities-at-destination approach, by reopening the question of distraction and fun, related to well-being and highly relative to the individual. Leisure is difficult to grasp as a source of well-being, but it gives the act a strong meaning for everyone. Playing games, whether digital or social, is very close to the idea of leisure, and is also an emerging mode of action, particularly in transport.

**Having fun and seeking distraction, as activities that allow people to "escape", can and should, in our opinion, be reinvested as objects of research, without losing sight of theories of social domination, but without making them the only frame of reference either.** Being distracted from everyday life, from its constraints, is not necessarily being distracted from a system of domination, but rather looking for peace of mind and escape from the contingencies of life, which is something that is highly subjective in the quest for well-being. Fun is also a concept that is scarcely investigated. Having fun in the sense of a pleasant distraction, of a recreational pastime, occupying one's body or mind, can subjectively qualify the activity in situ and then open up leisure time right in the heart of constrained times. Thus, fun can emerge in the heart of working time (a leaving party, a joke among colleagues, etc.), as well as in the heart of constrained travel. In the same way, work can re-emerge in these same travel times, whether materially (reading an email on a Smartphone) or - and this is harder to analyse - depending on the mental disposition of the individual at any given moment (thinking ahead about work tasks while on the way there).

**Entertainment and distraction lead to thinking about the feeling of pleasure and well-being, or of displeasure and discontent, the temporal grain of which is microscopic.** These feelings can be brief but have great consequences on how we perceive the context, time and place where they emerge and on which they are partly dependent. There's a reason why employers are trying to make work more recreational and even fun... However, these feelings can be strongly linked to the principles of mobility when we think, for instance, of how travel can be a place of rest, relaxation, and lost time with high added value, just as much as it can be a stressful, pressurised, unpleasant time. Some research shows that there are correlations between social or professional mobility and well-being, but few studies explore, beyond the matter of travel comfort, the significance of appropriating mobilities as a possible means of temporal control, impacting individual well-being (Pradel, Soichet, 2020).

As we saw in the first part (I.c), Amartya Sen connects well-being with the implementation of "capabilities," or "the power to be or to do," which depends on the real freedom that individuals have to carry out the life project they have chosen according to their preferences (Forsé and Parodi, 2014). The life project, in its daily organisation, relies heavily on travel and the pleasure or displeasure that it can generate. **Treating travel as a central element of well-being makes us hypothesise that viewing leisure time in the broad sense - and even more so free time or lost time - as a source of well-being, is fundamental in analysing the role of mobility in social well-being. What we must then study is the individuals' ability to free themselves from constraints in a practical and symbolic way to regain some freedom.**

From there, we saw that there could be another heuristic approach by considering capability as the "power not to be or not to do." Free time would then be defined like this: **"what we could easily not do if we didn't want to."** Here, discretionary time is defined as the ability to remove oneself from a dominating and constrained time. Mobility could be one of those moments to get away from work in the middle of a workday, a space for recreational idleness, a parenthesis that must be preserved. It serves both as a break from what came before and an antechamber for the activities at destination; and as such, it can also come with its own constraints (Pradel, 2014). Caught between obligation time and free time, between serious time and entertainment time, travel time could be thought of as an interval to be spent on intermediate activities, or as a time that is truly "for oneself" where doing nothing is acceptable.

Hence the importance of a **"discretionary free time"** that can be turned into a "discretionary leisure time" (DLT) that emerges from an individual's tendency to seek pleasure by freely engaging in a chosen activity that provides distraction and/or fun at different timescales. This time can be cleared from constrained times ("what I may want to do"), at the heart of constrained times ("what I can do despite everything else") or against constrained times ("what I don't want to do"). For example, this DLT has the power to colour mobility and, conversely, mobility has the power to free up some DLT. First, the grain of this discretionary leisure time, just like that of the psychological inclinations at a given time to seek fun and detachment from constraints, can be eminently fine, registering at the scale of a moment or doubling with activities (listening to music at work), or it can be thicker, at the scale of a year and more exclusive (going on vacation). On the other hand, this DLT can be cleared within mobility time, by a controlled mobility that allows the individual to avoid their obligations by freeing up moments of free time to be invested.

Controlling and being able to free up this DLT wherever one sees fit, by mastering one's spatiotemporal system relative to one's needs, obligations and means, would be a reason of well-being in the organisation of one's rhythm of life.

## 5. Lockdown, travel and leisure

The idea that collective emancipation and individual well-being depend on people's ability to control their rhythms of life, both in the organisation, succession and nature of their activities, takes on a special colour in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic that has disrupted people's lives. Rhythmic capability is now limited by the temporal restrictions that are put in place to curb the spread of the virus. The government reinforces its role as the master of time, imposing rhythmic constraints on everyday activities and limiting spatial practices. Rhythmic freedom is restricted with curfews, lockdowns, and limited time outside. With schools or classes closing down and teleworking imposed, schedules become more constrained, imposing rhythms that are hard to negotiate. The authorised travel perimeters around the home and inter-regional travel dictate the organisation and urgency of daily activities. The health rules imposed for over a year prohibit almost any activity other than work and compress those remaining in congruous spaces, yet no society can cope only with work (PUCA, 2021).

Given the time constraints imposed by these collective rules, the ability to clear unconstrained time is all the more rare and therefore valued, insofar as it enables people to distance themselves, physically and psychologically, and distract themselves from the here and now, to desaturate the compacted rhythm of everyday life. **With health in mind, people seek to escape the imposed temporal and spatial straitjacket by finding ways of moving bodies and minds.** This can be seen in the renewal of leisure as an observable distraction, for example, in the growing number of joggers and walkers around the home, the explosion of video game console sales, the

rise of online gyms and video-on-demand platforms, or the demand for opening bookstores and cultural venues. Leisure then directly links to the need for movement, understood also as a distraction from everyday life, the real, the banal and the constrained. **Through leisure, the individual seeks a choreographic mastery on imposed rhythms.**

Since all the places, forms and times devoted to leisure are disrupted, the notions of distraction (in the sense of turning away from the ordinary) and fun (in the sense of entertainment) have become goals to preserve well-being. It is not easy to find time for oneself by creating distraction and fun at the heart of these constrained rhythms. "Rhythmic capabilities" are unevenly distributed. For example, executives have more control over their activity schedule (including entertainment activities) than workers. Mothers, who overwhelmingly take children to their leisure activities, while possessing a high level of education, see their rhythmic capability reduced, with the overall time that they can devote to leisure becoming even lower. During the first lockdown, children's leisure time increased, mainly via screens, especially for children from working-class households and whose parents teleworked (Berthomier and October, 2020). And while some found distraction in digital entertainment and screens, others tried hard to free up some time away from the omnipresent "anytime, anywhere" digital world that replaced face-to-face work, social relations and education (PUCA, 2021).

The current context invites us to rethink leisure time through distraction as the ability for individuals to add a recreational and volitional colour to a certain number of activities, at any time of the day, and to thereby create a rhythmic break. Entertainment, which is often disregarded as a way of diverting attention from society's power structures, could also be generated by individuals seeking to deploy distracting activities in the organisation of their life project. Distraction and entertainment allow us to question a little differently the mechanisms by which leisure time and free time emerge. They provided the opportunity to create a healthy break in the constrained rhythms of daily activities during the pandemic.

If free time is part of the framework of collective time, it seems to us that the idea of linking the notion of "leisure" to entertainment and distraction needs to be reconsidered today, given the emergence of new recreational practices and the entanglement of temporalities. Entertainment and distraction lead to thinking about the feeling of pleasure and well-being, or of displeasure and discontent, the temporal grain of which is microscopic – as pleasure can be fleeting – and the emergence of which is dependent on people's ability to make them happen. Here we touch upon the field of psychology or psychosociology by stopping at this point of the thought process. But if we consider that leisure time depends on the "rhythmic capabilities" that individuals have to bring about entertainment in the fabric of social times, it can then emerge right in the heart of constrained activities (or in their arrangement) and be a factor of well-being: it can be the small victory while playing Candy Crush or a joke that makes everyone laugh while stuck on a packed commuter train... As such, the space-times of travel, whether constrained or chosen, represent an opportunity to bring about recreation and breaks in the daily rhythm. Mobility can enable people to clear some leisure time, and it can be considered as a leisure activity or be a time in which recreational practices emerge.

This "rhythmic capability" of individuals thereby deploys the idea of leisure time from their degree of freedom to make any situated activity, even in motion, a moment of fun and distraction. It is then the free time as time to oneself and time of choice that appears as a basis from which leisure can unfold. Free time would thus refer to a double capacity. The first capacity corresponds to a person's ability to free themselves quantitatively from constrained times. As such, the constraint of the lockdown may have appeared for some as an enforced opportunity to slow down their activities (especially work-related) and devote more time to themselves and their loved ones (FVM, 2020), especially around recreational and cultural activities. Free time would then refer to "what you can easily not do if you don't want to." The second capacity corresponds to the almost psychological and cognitive ability to extract oneself from a dominant time, via distraction from constrained activities. Free time would then refer to "the ability to easily divert one's attention if desired," to give oneself the possibility for free action and intention.

Having the ability to clear time for chosen activities and to divert one's attention would form the basis of free time (whether spent on leisure or not), representing the possibility to master part of one's rhythms of life. Thus, travel time could be thought of as an interval where diverting one's attention is facilitated or even accepted by how individuals in motion are socially represented, as symbolically outside any place of constrained activity. However, connectivity on trains and soon in airplanes, or even in autonomous cars that enable a redistribution of the driver's attention, reduce this possibility and transform these representations. Travel has become a space of activity in itself which, if we are not careful, resaturates daily life a little more. Already, transport time is considered by some companies as working time.

This need for immanent leisure times, discretionary free times, which can emerge at any moment, revealing a (relative) ability to master one's rhythms of life and therefore one's well-being, is especially visible in people's reactions to the closing down of leisure and cultural places (theatres, restaurants, gyms, cinemas, etc.). Sports, video games, movies, radio, collective games, reading, manual activities, gym, yoga, DIY - all these activities have invaded indoor spaces and other authorised places, to release the pressure of constrained times. Imposed external constraints and authorised distances are giving rise to new constrained space-times that can be opportunities to slow down and find some time for oneself or some free time, even within a busy family environment. Control over this additional time harks back to the issue of controlling time as a matter of well-being, which is threatened however by the rise of teleworking. **Could lockdown times and travel times be experienced, structured, and organised as "intervals" (Nowotny, 1992) of additional time where individuals could have the opportunity to find time for themselves and even do nothing?**

Housing is called into question by these leisure practices, and local public spaces are celebrated while trips are no longer reference times for everyday life. Yet, until recently, these travel times were opportunities for an additional time for oneself, and were seen as space-times in which to defend leisure and free time, or at least a time to oneself while in motion. **In times of lockdown, going for a walk around the house became the preferred leisure mobility for many French people, making travel, with no other purpose than to get moving, a matter of daily distraction...**

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## Notes

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3 We refer the reader to the book Éloge de la mobilité. Essai sur le capital temps libre et la valeur travail [In Praise of Mobility. Essay on the capital of free time and labour value] for more details on the feminisation of work, the transformations of couples or the decrease in working time.

4 Like visiting friends, the "shopping" reason can be one part of a time sequence that generates a single trip, but with different activities in the same location, like shopping malls, which have stores for preferred goods, supermarkets for "necessary" purchases and play areas for recreational activities.

5 <http://www.cipra.org/fr/dossiers/4/>

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## 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.

[En savoir plus](#) x

## 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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## 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.

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## Motility

[En savoir plus](#) x

## 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.

[En savoir plus](#) x

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### Associated Thematics :

#### Lifestyles

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- [Diversity of lifestyles](#)
- [Leisure & tourism](#)
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#### Policies

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