

1. Projects



Bioregion Ile-de-France 2050

Finished research
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As part of the project Bioregion Ile-de-France, the Institut Momentum explores the hypothesis of an end of the Anthropocene in the Ile-de-France, in rupture with our current lifestyles.

Research participants

- Yves Cochet
- Agnès Sinai
- Benoît Thévard

The project's ambition

Cars are at the heart of a now well-documented system that poses public health problems (accidents, pollution, physical inactivity), consumes and degrades a significant part of the urban and rural territory, and more importantly, contributes to climate change.

The Ile de France region, very densely built and populated, increasingly suffers from repeated pollution peaks and congestion, as well as from its extreme dependence on a production and distribution system that is also itself more and more globalized. Therefore, it presents a particularly interesting case for thinking about moving past our reliance on cars, and more generally, ending our addiction to oil.

However, while more and more people believe that a transition to more desirable and sustainable lifestyles is needed, it is clear that such a goal is not materializing any time soon in public policy, and may only do so when it is already too late. What if our system unexpectedly collapsed? Would a desirable future still be conceivable?

The Mobile Lives Forum asked the Momentum Institute to explore a scenario for Ile-de-France in 2050, breaking away from our current lifestyles and responding to three main hypotheses:

- people acknowledged the problem too late and the current system has already collapsed;
- territories had to find a new form of autonomy in terms of energy supply, food production and modes of transport;
- and all this led to a large-scale demographic decline.

Inspired by the very real example of post-oil communities such as San Buenaventura in California or Bristol and Birmingham in England, Yves Cochet, Agnès Sinai and Benoît Thévard take a systemic and holistic approach to their fictional forecasting: their idea is to transform and reorganize the regional territory around local living environments called bioregions ¹.

To this end, they don't just resort to backcasting. They incorporate several fundamental breakthroughs over the next few years in order to imagine an Ile-de-France region that is almost entirely devoid of cars and that has become more resilient, tending towards a truly viable, sustainable and even desirably human organization.

The big results

The face of Ile-de-France in 2050: a reorganization in Bioregions

Contrary to its current centralized system, the future Francilien society would have gradually organized itself into eight bioregions. They would each be more autonomous territories, drawn up so as to allow their inhabitants to be independent in terms of food and energy, thus limiting the movement of individuals and goods. Instead of having an administrative or political organization that is arbitrarily drawn up (based on infrastructure or economic and political interests), it would be the natural ecosystem that matters, with the aim of limiting dependence on large agri-food industries. Regarding transport, the number of individual vehicles would be divided by 55, meaning that from the five million cars in Ile-de-France in 2015, there would only be 90 000 left in 2050. Animal traction would be redeveloped and secondary rail lines rehabilitated. By 2050, the region's energy consumption would be divided by three and its population halved. Agricultural employment would become the primary source of activity ahead of commercial and public services.

Momentum's recommendations to deal with the collapse in Ile-de-France

If today's society does not change course (economic growth, increased carbon-emitting mobilities, resources consumption, productivism, etc.), there is a very real risk of collapse. To mitigate these risks, or at least the impacts of a collapse in Ile-de-France, there are solutions: Halve the number of inhabitants in the region. Rather than waiting for a forced population decline, we need to organize a deconcentration of activities. This is all the more feasible given that the Forum's survey on "Franciliens' residential mobility aspirations and projects" shows that one in two Franciliens want to leave Ile-de-France.

Gradually reduce the per capita energy consumption to one tonne of oil equivalent, which would mean 2.6 times less than the current national average. Develop a local network of

electricity generation to achieve energy self-sufficiency.

Reduce travel and the number of cars in Ile-de-France from about 5 million today to less than 90 000 by 2050. Open the fields to pedestrian traffic; develop a culture of horse-riding and animal traction. Promote and rehabilitate secondary rail lines in the Ile-de-France region. Promote a new economic system based on local trade, renewable energy and commons management by a bioregional agricultural land establishment and cooperative manufactures.

Promote manual trades and low-tech. Increase the number of agricultural jobs in Ile-de-France, from 10 000 in 2017 to about 1.5 million in 2050. Transform the 600,000 hectares of useful agricultural land in Ile-de-France into polycultures in order to guarantee the region is food self-sufficient. Ensure the continuity of green spaces (“trames vertes”) by inserting urban agricultural parks at city entrances. Develop rationing as a principle of citizen equality and a way of fighting overconsumption

Documents to download

Download the full report (French only)

The Bioregions 2050 project was the subject of a free downloadable publication:

Download the Bioregions 2050 publication (French only)

Notes

1 A bioregion is a territory whose boundaries are not defined by political lines, but by geographical boundaries that take into account both human communities and ecosystems. The term was first defined in the 1977 article “Reinhabiting California” published in The Ecologist by Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann. The first bioregion to be founded is the Cascadia bioregion, encompassing the western states of Canada and the United States, from Alaska to the north of San Francisco. The bioregion invokes the process of long-term co-evolution with the environment in territories that are considered as living beings: a co-evolution balance between urban establishment and environment, a territorial equity between city and countryside.

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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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.

Associated Thematics :

Lifestyles

- Living environments
- Futures
- Proximity
- Crises

Policies

- Paris and Île-de-France
- Ecological transition
- Cities & Territories

Theories

- Art & Science
 - Methods
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