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The Decline in Car Use. A Long-Lasting Effect? French and Canadian Young Adults' Relationship with Mobility

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Introduction

- A qualitative comparative research between French and French Canadian youths aged between 16 and 35 years.
- A statement of a decline in the interest of car use in both countries can be made.
- A statement that can be made in most eastern european countries. Identified possible reasons are:
 - Period of youth has been extended
 - Favourable attitudes to new technologies
 - A more pragmatic relationship to car.

Questions

- Presentation aims to understand the consistence of the change observed by focusing on the older of those young adults: are those changes going to be consistent over time or not?

Methodology

- A mixed method investigation
- 50 interviews (25 in each city) of youths aged from 16 to 35.
- A diversity principle was applied in term of:
 - Residence location
 - Transportation
 - Situation
- Interviews dealt with:
 - Everyday mobility
 - Travel practices
 - Consumption practices



Automobility as a social norm

- Driving license is still obtained as soon as possible:
 - In Montréal whatever the territories
 - In Lyon in the suburbs.
- Downtown Lyon:
 - The driving license is obtained later
 - Parents influence their children choices and oblige them to get it
 - Youth claim to have other priorities like their studies
 - Couples avoids having two cars when they tend to live in well deserved areas in public transportation even after the birth of the first child.
- To get the driving license doesn't mean that the youths start driving a car and even less have a car on their own.



- Ownership of a driving license
 - A different issue according to territories
 - A gender issue
 - An income issue in France but not only
- Getting a driving license does not involve car use
- In France and to a lesser extent in Québec, few young people have permanent access / individual to a car after obtaining a license
- Owning a car is :
 - associated with costs and subject to financial decisions
 - viewed by urban as a constraint
 - Useful to go to work in some places but not necessary for leisure
- Young people do not have frequent access to a car are just as mobile and autonomous
- The driving license is viewed especially in France as a "diploma" more than a passport to autonomy or mobility

Youth and ecology

- France
 - Few political claim of being “ecological ” but a strong awareness of climate change
 - The urban environment plays in favor of a change of behavior which goes along with the fact that most youth lived in family where there is only one car
 - More surprisingly suburbans behavior is also changing
 - Behavior doesn’t change radically after child birth
- Québec
 - Use of public transportation and bikes are more related to a political claim
 - Utility of car and driving license is not questioned by the younger interviewees.

Changing social norms among older young people

- Dual car ownership and car use are still linked to:
 - Residential location
 - Work location
 - Presence of children
- However can be noticed a growing awareness for:
 - Car pollution
 - Car costs
 - Alternatives transportation possibilities are looked up like carpooling for leisure activities

Exemple of changing the norm: becoming a cyclist

- A primary socialisation to cycling, during which they became accustomed to this activity. As in the totality of cases observed, use of the bike does not tend to come about in adulthood without the individual in question having learnt how to cycle during their childhood.
- The changeover to cycling on a daily basis during adulthood is facilitated by this first stage of socialisation, but the elements that really trigger it are the fact of living together as a couple and environmental awareness, but also—and this factor is crucial—a genuine fondness for this mode of transport.
- The importance of sensory feelings and emotional body memories in daily routines and as a driver for choosing some social practices.
- The enduring adoption of this habit does not generally occur in the absence of these elements, which generate positive feelings: hence the significant role of pleasure—and therefore the senses—that accounts for this developing usage and its subsequent persistence once new practices have been adopted.

Effects of socialisation: enduring practices

- Car socialisation is often seen as a barrier to changes but:
 - Socialisation to public transport is also a barrier to change
 - The importance of the environment needs also to be stressed
 - A low level of socialisation to car disincentivise the adoption of new habits

Conclusion

- Despite different political and economical contexts a similarity of changes
- A more pragmatic use of the car even among the older youths
- The variety of the types of socialisation seized to change the transportation modes
- Those other types of socialisation can constitute a barrier to adopt an automobility
- Therefore for the analys of change it is important to take into consideration:
 - The various socialisations of a person
 - The life cycle of the individuals
 - Public policies