From mobility to access. A case study in Bordeaux.

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NB. This is a copy of the prepared presentation to accompany the slides which are available only in French.

This presentation leans on a study led within the framework of an internship of Master's degree in town planning, the initial object of which was to look at the innovations of service of mobility for the precarious.

The trainee realized at first a state of the art to define the precarious in the mobility. He then led a case study in Bordeaux to observe how territories analyse this question and which answers they bring it to.

Are innovative services set up and which roles do the various public and private actors identified in this domain play?

This work developed our reflections and has led to a project where the thesis always centred on the innovations on territories, but widens the scope of the mobility in the management of access disparities to urban resources.

Let me quickly pass on the links between fuel poverty and mobility. In France the definition of fuel poverty was limited for a long time to energy cost in housing or the home. 'Mobility' as a variable began to be gradually perceived as a social problem due to the stagnation of income and global increase of travel. The notion of "global energy vulnerability" was introduced to include both these variables. Are territories uneven in front of this global vulnerability? Are peri-urban areas the most affected territories?

We notice that something emerges in the schedule of the local public politics, through for example the implementation of tools of costs' simulation (residential cost calculators?) or observatories of mobility. In Bordeaux, advisers realize "mobility diagnoses" for the new inhabitants of the territory. The Social Observatory of Lyon set up a methodology of location and support for the households who fight against double fuel poverty.

So we can observe new structures and experimentations and a stake holders game which makes local complications.

Many studies were carried out these last decades to define who are the precarious in mobility; the goal for the trainee was to identify the main controversies in France today in the definition of the subject.

In academia and in public action the dominant approach perceives the mobility as a necessity and the lack of mobility as a source of new inequalities. There would be two sorts of barriers to mobility:

- Some individual barriers like insufficient financial resources, learning disabilities, psychological barriers, social constraints,
- Some territorial barriers like the distance in the public transport network or a restricted modal choice.

But studies also showed recently that poor people operate strategies of mobility, on one hand, and that on the other hand a lot of precarious suffer on reality from too much mobility or from a "forced mobility", owning for example to a worsening of accessibility conditions. Or we think about people who have to do several jobs in a day. In this perspective daily mobility is not a good indicator of social inequalities.

The recent book by Jean-Pierre Orfeuil and Fabrice Ripoll, "Access and mobilities: the new inequalities" shows well the controversy.

Jean-Pierre Orfeuil attempts to highlight the social differences of mobility and to analyse the weight of these differences in the access to employment and to the urban friendlinesses. Fabrice Ripoll proposes a critical discussion of the notion of mobility, his scientific and political uses and the social consequences of a positive valuation of the mobility in the contemporary societies.

But Orfeuil recognizes that the access to an increasing number of activities, especially activities mobilizing a little qualified staff, involves a capacity of mobility the main shape of which is the personal use of a car. He calls for a renewed approach to the politics of arrangement which puts an end to the spiral according to which the improvement of the conditions of travel by the investments of transport increases the needs for mobility for all. But he doesn't develop the reasoning. Nevertheless in a context of ecological transition, these forms of dependence in the mobility of the poorest question the durability of politics directed to the facilitation of the travel's conditions.

To move beyond the questions of definitions, which are rather complex in the academic field, the trainee went on the ground to understand how the main stake holders in a territory define themselves the subject and what kind of responses they bring to it.

He chose Bordeaux, which is a dynamic territory demographically, with its growth marked by a strong urban sprawl. There's a major road, the Garonne, which is a physical, social and symbolical barrier, with the lower classes living rather in the East of it.

Then he tried to build an indicator of precarity in mobility in order to read the map of the territory. He built it by aggregation of varied criteria: the income of households, the number of single-parent families, the number of lower class people, the number of unqualified persons, the number of over 75 years olds…

We can see on this map that the precarious in mobility are unevenly distributed on the metropole area. There are four main areas: on the West towards the sea, in pink, we have the easy residential municipalities, little concerned by the precariousness. In yellow, mobile but ageing municipalities. In green, vulnerable municipalities and in blue municipalities concerned by the precarity in mobility. We don't see it on this map but he made another map on which we can see that the green and blue municipalities are directly served by the tramway.

The trainee led then interviews with the local institutional stake holders in order to understand which representations they have from the subject and which could contribute to resolving the problem. Public authorities are so historically focused on an infrastructural and tariff approach to mobility. The public transport network in the metropole, in particular the tramway, was built according to a social logic of opening up of the popular municipalities.

The tariff lever is illustrated by the social price list then by the united price list.

In both cases the purpose is to lower the territorial and financial barriers in mobility.

The associative and private sectors are trusted with the care of solving the other identified barriers, such as individual skills barriers.

The action seems to be sectorized between the public actor centred on the environmental purpose of the sustainable city, and the associative actors who take care of the

individualization of mobility's response in order to facilitate the social integration. And it's most of the time through the facilitation of the car use.

So, the question is how to build a politics of mobility which would be at the time inclusive and sustainable. People involved in mobility in Bordeaux evoke some tracks: for example to pass of the infrastructural investment in the development of services or to improve partnerships between the stake holders of the mobility in Bordeaux.

The people interviewed identify certainly the potential of mobility of the innovative services such as the digital platforms of mobility, the applications on smartphones as well as the soft modes of travel. But they also seem to stay on a dominant reading of a failing supposed mobility because of individual barriers (cost, personal skills…).

Thank you for your attention.