



HAL
open science

Mobilities In Climate Action Planning: The Challenges of Considering (In)Justices in France's Current Policies

Jean-Baptiste Frétigny

► **To cite this version:**

Jean-Baptiste Frétigny. Mobilities In Climate Action Planning: The Challenges of Considering (In)Justices in France's Current Policies. Brian Petersen; H el ene B. Ducros. Justice in Climate Action Planning, Springer, pp.277-288, 2021, Strategies for Sustainability, 3030739384. 10.1007/978-3-030-73939-3_14 . hal-03250852

HAL Id: hal-03250852

<https://hal.science/hal-03250852>

Submitted on 12 Dec 2023

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destin ee au d ep ot et  a la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publi es ou non,  emanant des  tablissements d'enseignement et de recherche fran ais ou  trangers, des laboratoires publics ou priv es.

Mobilities In Climate Action Planning: The Challenges of Considering (In)Justices in France’s Current Policies

Jean-Baptiste Frétigny (2021), “Mobilities In Climate Action Planning: The Challenges of Considering (In)Justices in France’s Current Policies”, in Brian Petersen, H  l  ne B. Ducros (eds), *Justice in Climate Action Planning*, Springer, coll. Strategies for Sustainability, 277-288. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-73939-3_14

Post-print version

--

Abstract

Mobilities, a major contributor to climate change, play a key role in climate action planning. In this chapter, through the example of mobilities, I argue that doubt can be cast on the effectiveness of climate planning because of its lack of attention to (in)justices and their various spatial and social dimensions. The chapter focuses on planning in France, where the “yellow vests” movement has illustrated the social and political sensitivity of both climate action and injustices. I carried out a content analysis of documents related to climate action planning and conducted interviews with institutional actors in four urban territories that are considered as pioneers in this field. The chapter shows that (in)justices are overlooked in current policies, questions this recurring invisibility, and reveals the ways in which (in)justices are at play. This neglect can be explained by a technologist prism and an enduring sectorization in policymaking that uncouples environmental, transport-related, and economic and fiscal policies from social questions, strongly compromising climate planning legitimacy and acceptability. The chapter highlights that such framing is deeply related to a disconnect from the complexity of mobility-related practices.

Introduction

France is often viewed as a country where the question of justice has historically received strong attention, especially regarding the welfare system, in line with a political culture that can arguably be associated with a “passion for equality” (Fors   *et al.*, 2013). Does this passion translate into more just climate action planning? Recent tensions regarding mobilities suggest otherwise and shed a very different light from inherited policies on the role given to justice, focusing on the ecological transition. The yellow vests movement, in particular, has shown the social and political sensitivity of both climate action and injustices in the country. In the wake of a widely circulated petition on social media, this grassroots mobilization emerging in October 2018 has been mainly ignited by the progressive increase in the fuel tax, and more precisely its “climate-energy contribution” *i.e.* its carbon component, along other motives of frustration among car drivers, such as a speed limit reduction on rural roads (Boyer *et al.*, 2020). The claims defended oppose restrictions to automobility (including toll rates or new speed cameras), but have been also extended to a variety of related topics that can be understood as an agenda of social justice, such as more direct democracy, through citizens’ initiative referendums, more public services, a fairer fiscality and an improved social welfare system.

As the presence of a high visibility jacket is now mandatory aboard cars, wearing a yellow vest is both an easily accessible object for car owners and a symbol of both automobility and its increased regulation by the State. Massive numbers of protesters demonstrated on the streets of towns and

cities every Saturday, mostly during the winter of 2018-2019 and spring 2019. Surveys suggest that participants were mainly from the working and lower middle classes, residing in urban peripheries and towns, where car commuting is particularly intense (Collectif, 2019). These events have sparked tumultuous and spectacular confrontations with police, as well as degradations or looting of stores, among other infrastructures, notably around the Parisian Champs-Élysées Avenue. Protestors have also occupied multiple traffic circles in urban peripheries, slowing or blocking traffic, as well as various fuel depots. The mobilization has crystallized many tensions, even resulting in injuries and accidental deaths. The political crisis has led to the cancellation of the planned gradual increase in the climate-energy contribution (from €44.60 per ton in 2018 to €65.40 in 2020 and €86.20 in 2022), leaving the carbon trajectory of mobilities into question.

Mobilities are among the most prominent contributors to climate change. At the global scale, the transport sector represented 21% of global CO₂ fossil emissions in 2018 according to EDGAR (Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research). In France, transport stands for 31% of territorial emissions, notwithstanding its contribution to international shipping and aviation (CITEPA, 2020). Mobilities therefore play a key role in climate action planning. Through the example of France's tensions regarding mobilities, this chapter questions current policies in climate action planning and argues that their lack of effectiveness is closely related to their inattention to the (in)justices at stake and to their various spatial and social dimensions.

This chapter shows that this situation illustrates a larger issue of democracy, diversity and equity in the processes of climate action planning. Using the three components of social justice identified by Fainstein (2014), the analysis focuses respectively on participation and agency, the recognition of heterogeneous identities, situations and practices, as well as social and spatial redistribution. My argument is that this issue of justice is deeply entangled with the disconnect between current policies and everyday practices related to mobilities, which puts at risk both the acceptability and the feasibility of a carbon transition despite the climate emergency. The analysis of such disconnect, in line with the social practices theory (Shove *et al.* 2012), contributes to refining the identified contrast between theory and practice or principles and consequences of climate action planning (Finn, McCormick, 2011; Marino, Ribot, 2012), while shedding some light on the relationships between justice, policies and practices to which social practices theory has paid little attention.

As climate action planning involves policies well beyond climate plans alone (Bassett, Shandas, 2010), this chapter focuses on a variety of decisions related to mobilities, affecting three identified levers for reducing their carbon footprint: avoiding them, therefore reducing the mobility demand; shifting from high to low carbon mobilities; and improving environmental performance, either by changing the practices involved, through carpooling or carsharing, or through new technologies such as electric cars. This research draws on a content analysis of both national and local action plans on climate and mobilities, as well as related documents. It is also based on 28 interviews carried out between October 2018 and July 2019 with institutional actors, mostly from the public sector, but also from civil society and businesses. To better comprehend the relationships between local and national levels, 12 of them concern nation-wide institutions, while the others regard four specific regions, considered as somehow pioneers regarding climate action planning on mobilities and with contrasted situations. First, the Ile-de-France region --the administrative and urban region associated with the Paris metropolis-- has high densities and high average per capita income that could be favorable to the development of low carbon mobilities. Second, Grenoble --the regional metropolis in the Alps-- is well known for its environmental policies, notably regarding mobilities, with the first ecologist mayor elected for a city of this size in the country and the only existing low-emission zone outside Paris. Third, the Grands Causses regional park --a mid-upland region north of Montpellier, known for its Roquefort

blue cheese production-- is situated at the lower end of the urban hierarchy, with the small city of Millau (22000 inhabitants) and towns in a rural context. The regional park has won multiple calls for projects regarding sustainable mobilities and is often quoted as an example on this topic by national actors. Finally, Réunion Island --an overseas *département* and region in the Indian Ocean-- is mostly populated along its coast, this circular urbanization lending itself to a potential rise in alternatives to private car uses. However, despite less marked inequalities than in other overseas regions, the yellow jackets' movement has been particularly intense there, prompting the inclusion of Réunion Island in this study sample.

The first part of the chapter documents and questions the general lack of emphasis on social justice in the framing of climate-related policies on mobilities. The second part shows how this framing produces an important gap between planning and everyday practices engaged in mobilities, generating tensions on its legitimacy, as illustrated by the yellow vests movement. Finally, it is shown how spatial justice, while the focus of some attention in policy-making, is often conceived of as a binary, in a somewhat stereotypical way, and rarely translated into concrete actions, letting key issues in climate action planning unaddressed.

The obliteration of social justice in climate-related policies on mobilities

The current national climate action plan --the "low carbon national strategy" of 2020-- epitomizes the lack of references to social justice in such plans, with no specific section or emphasis given to it, and a very sparse use of the terms justice, equity and inequalities. In striking contrast with the idea of a "passion for equality" in public policies, this obliteration can be explained by the persistent thematic and institutional segmentation of policymaking. The department in charge of the environment, planning and transportation, despite being renamed in 2017 the department for "Ecological and solidarity transition", has struggled to identify and make room for social objectives, even introducing some level of confusion, as the interview with one of its senior civil servants shows: "'Solidarity' was a welcome political injunction ... Spontaneously, in the department, people said: 'that's the social economy' ... [Solidarity] was [also] associated with the positive spill-overs of environmental transitions policies and the new jobs such policies could generate ... For many people, it was the spin-off of green growth". It is meaningful that the adjective "solidary" was dropped in the new name for the department in 2020. Public actors involved in mobilities policies have only tenuous relationships with the institutions in charge of social policies. The Agency for an ecology transition, which is the governmental operator financing public or private environmental projects, is an exception, as it animates arenas on which public agendas social justice appears. For example, it intervenes in the national monitoring for energetic precariousness, which mostly entails conducting surveys, and participates in the inclusive mobility lab. The latter has the status of foundation, and while its primary aim is not decarbonization, as it rather focuses on facilitating mobility for access to jobs, it does tend to incentivize the use of low carbon mobilities. These are, however, rare and small-scale initiatives.

Such invisibility of social justice is largely echoed in local plans, be they climate action plans (so-called "territorial climate-air-energy plans") or mobilities plan. Grenoble's climate plan does not mention the notions of justice, equity, inequalities or solidarity. Saint-Denis' plan, which covers the capital city in Réunion Island and its suburbs, occasionally mentions the notion of just transition, as does Paris' plan, where it is more emphasized, while the Grands Causses' plan aims at "solidary territories". When mobilities are mentioned, it is either to address already existing measures, such as social fares for public transport, or offer a hasty appraisal of their social effects, such as the idea that "shared mobility could help strengthen social links by increasing interactions between Parisians, particularly the most isolated, such as senior citizens" (Paris, 2018:74). As climate plans cover a wide range of themes, actors tend spontaneously to refer to mobilities plans as more detailed instruments for climate action. In

such plans, issues of power relationships are considered in very fragmentary ways. If Grenoble's plan points out gender inequalities, mentioning for instance the "mom taxis" phenomenon, others pay little attention to the diversity of (im)mobile citizens. Interviews suggest that actors deal with the few items they consider as compulsory steps when writing these plans, such as disabilities or low-income housing projects: "I am a little less familiar with issues of territorial cohesion. We were asked to work on this for the plan's environmental assessment. ... We redesigned maps to identify how the planned transport offer would affect the accessibility [of housing projects], so it was more about territories than publics" (planner producing Ile-de-France's mobility plan).

Moreover, actions aiming at low carbon mobilities are rarely evaluated. Planners highlight the difficulty of assessing the success of individual programs, corroborating studies insisting on the challenge it represents at the local scale (Lucas, Pangbourne, 2012). Documenting and questioning the social effects of these programs is nevertheless often probed at best by anecdotal evidence: "we have an idea of [the social impact of our policies] because we have direct contact with people renting [for instance our] bicycles. The population is very eclectic, we've got a bit of everything. It's not just the executive who's shifting. And there are more low-income people using our car-sharing system. That was unexpected" (Grands Causses regional park planner).

In this context, the yellow vests movement has confirmed concerns for social justice, as expressed by various interviewees, that are hardly surfacing in the public agenda. They are related to workers' professional reorientation in affected industries or to people in a situation of energetic precariousness: "for us it is slightly frustrating because for months we've been telling the government that its policies are not immune to social protests and that we're fully aware that fuel price increases can affect the poorest more. That is why we suggested aids such as energy vouchers ..., bonuses for shifting to other means of transport or replacing cars ... This issue is all the more burning that we are advocating a ban on internal combustion vehicles in city centers"(Climate Action Network, NGO member). The social sustainability of existing plans and policies is thus particularly lacking, engendering two main consequences for climate action planning of mobilities: difficult policymaking to deal with practices engaged in mobilities and a crisis of legitimacy.

Consequences for climate action planning: a struggle with injustice in practice(s) and a crisis of legitimacy

A key consequence of this social eclipse concerns the participatory dimension of policymaking and therefore of procedural justice (Fainstein, 2014). While local authorities are familiar with public consultations, which are compulsory for climate action or mobilities plans, the national government has used them only recently. The "national convention on mobilities" organized in fall 2017 was an unprecedented exercise, since transport policymaking is usually averse to such practices (Banister *et al.*, 2011). Intended to prepare a new framework law on mobilities, the convention included 60 local public workshops, an online platform with 3000 contributions, as well as working groups involving hundreds of experts from the public, private or civil society spheres. Nonetheless, less than one year after this broad consultation, the yellow vests movement expressed a vigorous criticism of national policies.

This paradox can be explained by various factors. First, in the convention, more heed has been paid to expert proposals rather than to public workshops. The workshops themselves might have been affected by the sociodemographic attendance bias usually attached to them, as observed through participant-observation. Moreover, the gap between the proposals made by the convention and the ensuing governmental arbitrations resulting in the bill has often been highlighted and criticized in interviews. Finally, the lack of cross-sector approach in the bill itself has also played a role as the bill

did not include various aspects of mobilities and climate policies, such as the fuel tax raises that had already been decided.

In the aftermath of the yellow vests' crisis in early 2019, the *Grand Débat National* ("great national debate") was held, as a major public consultation to more broadly address the ecological transition, fiscal policy, democracy, and public services. The consultation produced 2 million online contributions and 10,000 town hall meetings. In its wake in 2019-2020, a citizens' convention for climate was created. Its 150 randomly selected members formulated various proposals to meet France's 2030 emissions reduction target, which are yet to be taken into consideration by the government. The national convention on mobilities, the *Grand Débat* and the citizens' convention for climate have been visible in the public debate, even if their influence on climate action and mobilities planning is still unclear. These various but also, to some extent, repetitive processes of consultation show the difficulty public authorities have to cope with the challenges of climate, mobilities and participation, as they struggle to engage in more inclusive policymaking, attuned to a large variety of actors and their everyday practices.

Climate action planning indeed tends to overlook the complexity of practices attached to mobilities, such as automobilities, key in the development of the yellow vests movement. This neglect is related to the technologist prism of such planning, also attested in other countries (Cresswell *et al.*, 2017), prioritizing the shift to low emissions cars, with purchase bonuses and priority lanes on highways. Beyond their multiple environmental rebound effects, these cars are unaffordable for many, with no low-end vehicles in the existing offer, a lack of charging stations in social housing residences, and no used car market: "If you want to unlock the situation, you need to consider helping beyond the new car market. ... Prices for diesel vehicles will collapse, nobody will want them anymore and the same will follow with other internal combustion vehicles... It's not at all conducive to a fleet change: if you can't sell your vehicle you keep it" (department of Ecological transition senior civil servant).

This enduring logic of personal equipment also makes it harder to effect a cultural change about the cost of what the one-person car practice entails. Indeed, interviews largely attest to its underestimation as users tend to focus on the most visible fraction of expenses, related to fuel price, as the yellow vests movement showed. Such conception, obliterating the costs of acquisition, maintenance or insurance attached to car ownership, distorts the appraisal of car-sharing cost. The 150 euros security deposit to access the car-sharing scheme is for instance a major obstacle for hospital staff in the Grands Causses' town of Saint-Affrique, who perceive it as "a lot of money for a second car" (Saint-Affricain federation of municipalities planner), while car ownership is estimated by regional park planners at 6000 euros per year. The burden that car ownership represents for low-income citizens does not always enter public actors' equation regarding, for instance, the anticipated increase of cars per capita on Réunion Island: "In La Réunion, we have an individual car equipment gap compared to continental France... and this gap will be bridged" (regional authority planner). Despite the intensity of the yellow vests movement on the island, which has shown the limits of the single-person car model, this interviewee considers the dynamic as legitimate and welcome, showing how dominant policies gloss over perverse effects of automobility on vulnerable people. Busy carpool areas on the island, official and unofficial, show the success of alternative practices. Informal carpooling, however, faces difficult recognition at the local and national scales. For instance, La Réunion's regional authority regrets the limited use of apps. Nationwide,

there were many discussions on carpooling [at the convention on mobilities]. The risk we saw was [the tendency] to favor digital and cost-based solutions, that would benefit from traffic and parking incentives and would be easier technologically to promote. Informal carpooling between colleagues, families, etc. wouldn't have been eligible for these incentives, which

bothered us precisely because we don't want people to use apps but to carpool (federation of local transport authorities, sustainable mobilities manager).

These examples show how policies tend to be out of touch with one key dimension of practices, *i.e.* their informality.

Another missed opportunity for tackling the difficulties that the yellow vests pointed out comes out of the disconnect between land-use planning and the framework law on mobilities, adopted in December 2019 and mostly devoted to transport. This divide relates to the sectorization of the administration, where one department's leadership only oversees the preparation of one bill. In justification of this separation, a civil servant in the transport section of the Ecological transition department, who has been involved in the writing of this law, argues that work with more cross-sector aspects (involving the land-use planning administration), would have weakened the scope of the law. Arbitrations between administrations are indeed seen as a mechanism for reducing the ambition of the law: "[urban sprawl] is indeed the issue at stake with yellow vests today [commuting by car from remote peripheries]. ... To my mind, it is at the very heart of the current situation and we didn't deal with it in the bill ... By promoting carpooling [in it], in a way, we're encouraging urban sprawl... We couldn't deal with everything in the bill and we would have had a hard time dealing with it." Such policymaking compromises climate action planning and its inclusivity at various scales by missing the interlocking practices of car use and access to resources (work, recreation, etc.), that can be near or far from home, therefore leaving unaddressed the key issue of regulating mobility demand. The recent implementation of the Grands Causses' governmental employment agency away from public transport, to the regret of the regional park's interviewee, is another illustration of these aporia and puts into question the very practices of policymaking.

The limited reach of adopted measures compared with the breadth of interdependent practices involved in mobilities' footprint raises issues of unfair transition, undermining the legitimacy of current policies. Deprived of a redistribution mechanism, which would have required favorable arbitration from the powerful Department of the Treasury, the congestion charge that cities could have implemented, was ultimately dropped from the bill in November 2018 because of its denunciation as unfair for commuters in remote urban areas in the context of the yellow vests movement. Moreover, major environmental footprint differentials related to individual income levels and associated lifestyles and consumption practices based on mobilities are mostly silenced in climate action planning. The almost exclusive framing on local mobilities, forgetful of large-scale, high carbon mobilities, generate tensions with yellow vests and environmental NGOs criticizing the exemption of kerosene as an unfair scheme benefitting the most affluent. The omission of air transport in national climate action planning, where only improvements of engine technologies are envisaged, is echoed in urban planning. While Paris positions itself as an ambitious pro-climate city, involved in the C40 world network of voluntarist metropolis, its climate action plan does not address the contradiction of comforting its attractiveness as one of the first world urban destinations for tourism, which often relies on air transport. A last striking example concerns the failed inclusion of "paratransit" in the framework law on mobilities. It is identified as "social transport" that is delivered by non-profit organizations to specific publics, such as the elderly or people with disabilities. Because of the cost involved, local authorities in charge of mobilities have indeed been reluctant to include this sector in their competences and integrate related needs in the equation of sustainable planning. For instance, a Grands Causses' planner admits that the existing demand-responsive-transit for the elderly is hardly advertised for financial reasons. It therefore creates an asymmetry between those aware of its existence and possibly using it, and others.

By not taking into account the variety and interdependence of practices attached to mobilities, local and national authorities tend to sideline even more the principles of social justice in climate and mobilities planning, severely undermining the legitimacy and implementation of policies. On the other hand, more attention has been paid to spatial justice, even if its framing and concretization raises multiple questions.

Spatial justice in climate action planning on mobilities: key challenges beyond stereotyped readings

With the unprecedented use of peripheries in their mobilization and their occupying of traffic circles, the yellow vests have brought to the forefront issues of spatial justice. Their movement has legitimized an already binary reading of spaces widely used by institutional actors, between “dense” and “less dense” spaces. The latter are considered, in the federation of local transport authorities for instance, as “[spaces] hard to define, where we know that public transit service is challenging ... [*i.e.*]: rural spaces, urban peripheries where the car dominates and where we feel that there is something to be done so that we don’t miss the [decarbonation]” (federation’s sustainable mobilities manager). The framework law on mobilities makes the creation of local mobilities authorities mandatory, *i.e.* bodies that depend on local authorities to structure the mobility offer, in spaces that have been excluded so far, such as a large part of the Grands Causses area beyond its main city and suburbs. However, the future of these areas remains uncertain, as their financial resources are unspecified, suggesting persistent limits for fair and efficient climate action planning. In the absence of compensation mechanisms, the current uniform declination of national decarbonation targets in climate action plans in these spaces needs to be questioned. Indeed, if effective, the homogeneous application of these national targets, could mean more restrictions for low- and middle-income areas with already low-emitting lifestyles, where access to resources is already challenging. While Grands Causses regional park planners engage manifold actions that are instrumental in decarbonizing mobilities, the carbon goal is relativized and its difficult acceptability emerges: “We never speak of decarbonation ... Even if our discourse ends up talking about carbon neutrality..., it’s not our primary approach. ... We’re aiming for a discourse that is neither punitive, nor guilt-tripping.”

Thus, this binary understanding of spatial justice seems more of a discourse category rather than action. This conceptualization also faces serious limitations and recalls the opposition between a “central” and a “peripheral” France (Guilluy, 2014), which has been heavily criticized by scholars, including with regard to its relevance for understanding the yellow vests movement (Delpirou, 2018). Indeed, the diverse territorial situation and segregation encompassed calls for going beyond this univocal and to some extent stereotyped divide. One risk is to downplay the significance of social justice by suggesting that this spatial dichotomy could well address these challenges, while missing the social heterogeneity of places. It is also problematic to amalgamate rural spaces--which represent 4.5% of France’s population--with heterogenous urban fringes (in the rural-urban transition zone), where 30% of the population resides, and the remainder two-thirds inhabiting city centers and suburbs. As these proportions are hardly ever mentioned, the risk is also to overestimate the proportion of places where decarbonizing mobilities is particularly challenging, leaving open the possibility of softer or differed transition actions in non-disadvantaged situations, in a context where the effective achievement of decarbonation targets cannot be taken for granted. Moreover, part of everyday public action operates beyond this divide, as urban *intercommunalités* (a grouping of municipalities adding a layer of governance) and their respective local authorities regulating mobilities often incorporate various urban fringes and rural spaces in their jurisdictions. More nuanced territorial and justice approaches are therefore required to address climate action planning, financial equity, the uneven part played by civil society, and its empowerment.

State or European Union support for innovative actions by local authorities raises issues of spatial justice as it is territorially selective, relying on the systematic use of calls for projects. It tends to transform certain places into innovation niches and models, to the risk of neglecting the diffusion of actions to other places. The Grands Causses regional park exemplifies how early participation in these calls and obtention of funding for projects have cumulative effects. It is easier to succeed in submitting time consuming applications in response to new calls for projects when you can capitalize on previous experiences. In 2003, the regional park obtained funding for coordinating various public transport networks that encourage a modal shift. In 2007, it was able to implement its first carpooling initiative. It also benefitted from two generations of “positive-energy territories” program dating back to 2015. Other regions, where politicians or planners were less engaged, cannot capitalize on such path-dependency. This limits the scale of transition to existing niches. The absence of budgetary equalization between local authorities is also a challenge for financing actions when economic activity is low, such as for local governments in the southeast of Réunion Island: “it’s complicated for [the local government] to finance an increase in the frequency of our bus lines ... You take all [existing plans]: you will find plenty of projects, but as long as you have [on our busiest line] at best one bus every 20 minutes, [a poor performance for transportation networks of this size due to the lack of funding] I’m a little skeptical [about the translation of these projects into reality]” (Semittel transport operator manager).

The strength of civil society is yet another factor of inequality. The technology-dominant framing in the field of climate and mobilities planning has led to the role of civil society being often underplayed in interviews or existing plans. The contribution of participatory planning to public policies is often overlooked as well as actions that nonprofit organizations develop at the junction of climatic and social aims where they pay more attention to everyday practices. For instance, cycling schools in Grenoble’s working-class neighborhoods function as tools of empowerment for women, especially of immigrant background, allowing them to “go for a ride on Sundays”, accompany children, look for a job, “do some shopping” at the same time as “it helps develop the image of cycling practices in the city and in ... what is called the estates [of housing projects]” (member of ADTC, a non-profit organization of public transport and active mobility users). The success of what is described as a “very rich ecosystem” of cycling schools, in which other actors such as bike stores take part, is in striking contrast with its counterpart in a region such as Réunion Island, where the network of nonprofit organizations tends to be particularly thin when it comes to low carbon mobilities. On the island, public transport users, beyond the center of the capital city, are systematically identified in interviews as a “captive clientele” comprising the most fragile fractions of Reunionese society. Thought by operators as a tool of advocacy for public transport, users’ committees have become arenas where such subaltern voices seem hardly heard. One such arena is the committee for the “yellow buses” circling the island:

[in this bi-monthly committee] local authorities also need to take their share of responsibility ... because some people wait two or three hours before they can get into a bus. If a vehicle is added, it instantly fills up... Imagine the tension for drivers or people at stations ... We told [frustrated] people: ‘we pass on the message’. We’ve passed on the message for two years and nothing has happened (Transdev Outre-mer manager, operator coordinating the network).

In the south-east of the island, participation is also tenuous: “We have just set up a users’ committee for [our network] Alterneo, which is still modest. I’d say that it is the corollary to our captive clientele today. As they don’t have a choice, they eventually resign themselves. There is no self-organized representation of users” (Semittel transport operator manager). At the scale of the island, this lack of public transport grassroots movements raises issues about social justice and the empowerment of

subalterns. It is encapsulated in a spatial justice challenge generated by the differential involvement of civil society compared with other regions on mainland France. This entanglement of spatial and social justices needs to be further explored in climate action planning.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how forgetful climate-related policies on mobilities are about issues of both social and spatial justice in France, despite a strong political mobilization such as the yellow vests movement and a general political culture that primes attachment to equality and stresses the welfare system. Lack of democracy, diversity, and equity in current planning turns out to be striking, which in return provokes a crisis of legitimacy in climate action planning and prompts a revision of its ambition. Various factors have been identified to explain these tensions such as the persistent sectorization of policymaking and planning, as well as the prevalence of a technologist prism. This prism can be related to an economic growth paradigm, thought to be provided by the growth in travel (Givoni, Banister, 2013), and could well operate a diffusion of neoliberalism through climate planning as observed in other countries (Cresswell *et al.*, 2017). But these tensions are also produced by the difficult attunement of public action to the numerous practices associated with mobilities, their complexity and informal dimension. If planning emphasized civil society actors and their empowerment actions, in particular at the locale scale, the gap could be filled more easily. Engaging a fairer climate action planning is also about engaging cultural transitioning (Sheller, 2012) in planners and decision makers' practices themselves, in addition to citizens'. Because of their major interdependence and the challenges of spatial justice, national and local planning issues should be studied together—along with their failures—since decarbonization goals play out at both scales. France's territorial emissions between 2015 and 2018 have indeed exceeded the target that had been set, with 80% of the surplus being attributed to structural motives, of which almost half relate to transport—and therefore to mobilities (CITEPA, 2020). In order to reach the major aim of justice per se, but also get a grip on carbon trajectories, it is imperative to address the quasi invisibility of justice at both the national and local scales, whether in climate action planning discourses or concrete actions.

References

- Banister, David, Karen Anderton, David Bonilla, Moshe Givoni, and Tim Schwanen. 2011. "Transportation and the Environment." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 36: 247–270.
- Bassett, Ellen, and Vivek Shandas. 2010. "Innovation and Climate Action Planning: Perspectives from Municipal Plans." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 76 (4): 435–450.
- Boyer, Pierre C., Thomas Delemotte, Germain Gauthier, Vincent Rollet, and Benoît Schmutz. 2020. "Les déterminants de la mobilisation des Gilets jaunes." *Revue économique* Vol. 71 (1): 109–38.
- CITEPA. 2020. "Gaz à effet de serre et polluants atmosphériques. Bilan des émissions en France de 1990 à 2018." https://www.citepa.org/wp-content/uploads/Citepa_Rapport-Secten_ed2020_v1_09072020.pdf.
- Collectif (Collective on yellow vests survey). 2019. "Enquête in situ par questionnaire sur une mobilisation en cours : une étude sur les gilets jaunes." *Revue Française de Science Politique* 69 (5–6): 869–92. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rfsp.695.0869>.
- Cresswell, Tim, Peter Adey, Jane Yeonjae Lee, Andre Novoa, Anna Nikolaeva, and Cristina Temenos. 2017. "Living in the Mobility Transition. Final Report." Paris, Londres et Boston: Forum Vies Mobiles, Royal Holloway University of London, Northeastern University. <http://owncloud.forumviesmobiles.org/index.php/s/rg05afXv5p6vIcG>.

- Delpirou, Aurélien. 2018. "The Color of France's 'Yellow Vests.'" *Books & Ideas*, December. <https://booksandideas.net/The-color-of-France-s-yellow-vests.html>.
- Fainstein, S. (2014). *The Just City*. *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 18(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12265934.2013.834643>
- Finn, Donovan, and Lynn McCormick. 2011. "Urban Climate Change Plans: How Holistic?" *Local Environment* 16 (4): 397–416.
- Forsé, Michel, Olivier Galland, Caroline Guibet Lafaye, and Maxime Parodi. 2013. *L'égalité, une Passion Française ?* Paris: Armand Colin.
- Givoni, Moshe, and David Banister, eds. 2013. *Moving towards Low Carbon Mobility*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Guilluy, Christophe. 2014. *La France périphérique : comment on a sacrifié les classes populaires*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Lucas, Karen, and Kate Pangbourne. 2012. "Transport and Climate Change Policy in the United Kingdom: A Social Justice Perspective." In *Transport and Climate Change*, edited by Tim Ryley and Lee Chapman, 2:287–312. *Transport and Sustainability* 2. Emerald. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S2044-9941\(2012\)0000002014](https://doi.org/10.1108/S2044-9941(2012)0000002014).
- Marino, Elizabeth, and Jesse Ribot. 2012. "Adding Insult to Injury: Climate Change, Social Stratification, and the Inequities of Intervention." *Global Environmental Change* 22 (2): 323–398.
- Paris. 2018. "Paris Climate Action Plan. Towards a carbon neutral city and 100% renewable energies." <https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2019/07/24/1a706797eac9982aec6b767c56449240.pdf>.
- Sheller, Mimi. 2012. "The Emergence of New Cultures of Mobility: Stability, Opening and Prospects." In *Automobility in Transition? A Socio-Technical Analysis of Sustainable Transport*, edited by Frank W. Geels, René Kemp, Geoff Dudley, and Glenn Lyons, 180–202. *Routledge Studies in Sustainability Transitions* 2. New York: Routledge.
- Shove, Elizabeth, Mika Pantzar, and Matt Watson. 2012. *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How It Changes*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Acknowledgments: This work draws on the results of the DécaFmob project, carried out with Caroline Bouloc, Pierre Bocquillon and Laure Cazeaux. It has been co-financed and scientifically followed by the Mobile Lives Forum. The Mobile Lives Forum is a research and prospective institute created by SNCF.