

# To live in a house: a society desire or an inherited way of life?

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# Introduction

The question of the division of the townscape and of the ecological costs of the desire of French people to live in a house is at the politico-media heart of the debates. The upholders of the compact city which would be more thrifty laud a "return towards the center" as if populations had fled at some point city center to take refuge in the outer-suburbs and as if all inhabitants of outer-suburbs were urbans having never lived somewhere else that in apartments before moving.

If such scenarii exist, they concern only a part of the population living in outer-urban. Studies carried out by an American psychologist show the will to live in types of housing environment which are alike from one move to another one.

Our comment is to analyze residential trajectories in the prism of narratives of life to analyze the part of the ways to inhabit which would be passed on by impregnation of a model, from “habitus” acquired within the family circle. To question residential trajectories will also allow us to question what is really transmitted: taste of the property, or way of life?

# Methodology

- Dwelling trajectories were collected through interviews of people living in suburban areas.
- The interviews have been collected in 2002-2003 and 2007 in France in classical suburban areas and in villages whose population is changing.

M. And Mrs Maurer  
live in an old house, 16 km from  
Bourg-en-Bresse

- M. is an executive who works at Bourg,
- Mrs used to work at Oyonnax
- Both spend their childhood in a village, both lived in a house. Their only experience of living in a town was while they were students.
- They want an comfortable house in a rural space.

# Jacques and Florence: live in a house in Vercors

- Florence: teaches in Vercors
- Jacques: executive in Lyon, teleworks 2 days/week
- 3 children: 18, 22, 24
- She has always lived in houses in the south of France except during her studies and while she handled her first position in Paris.
- He has spend his childhood moving from place to place according to his parents financial situation and has lived farther and farther from Paris where he however studied.
- Lives since 20 years in a house in Vercors and hates the mere thought of moving.

# Mr. Et Mme Caron, old house, 16 km from Bourg

- Mr Caron, builder, spend his childhood in a low income suburbs next to Lyon.
- Mme Caron, nurse, spend her childhood in the same suburbs. Her parents rented a summer house in the village where the couple ultimately bought their house.
- They spend 13 years restoring it.

Those cases are only some among many others. What can be stated is that in most couples, one at least of the spouses has lived in a house in suburban or rural areas. If most of the people have lived in a town, most of the time while studying or while starting to work, this stay is only a short stay due to circumstances and the availability of small flats. As soon as it is possible those couples move to other to suburban areas. According to availability, price and negotiation within the couple of the degree of « rurality » desired.

# Conclusion

What is looked for by those couples?

- House seems to be a mean to acquire a financial stability given by ownership.
- Houses are also the places where family life is held together.

Both elements seem important while owning a house.

Where does the taste for house come from?

For most people taste for house is inherited. The origin can be found in a day to day life during childhood or in holiday experience: rented holiday home, family home...

For some others the example from friends the general feeling that a life in a house should be better is also present.

It cannot be said that the influence of family is the only decisive influence, however it is determinant for most of the people met.