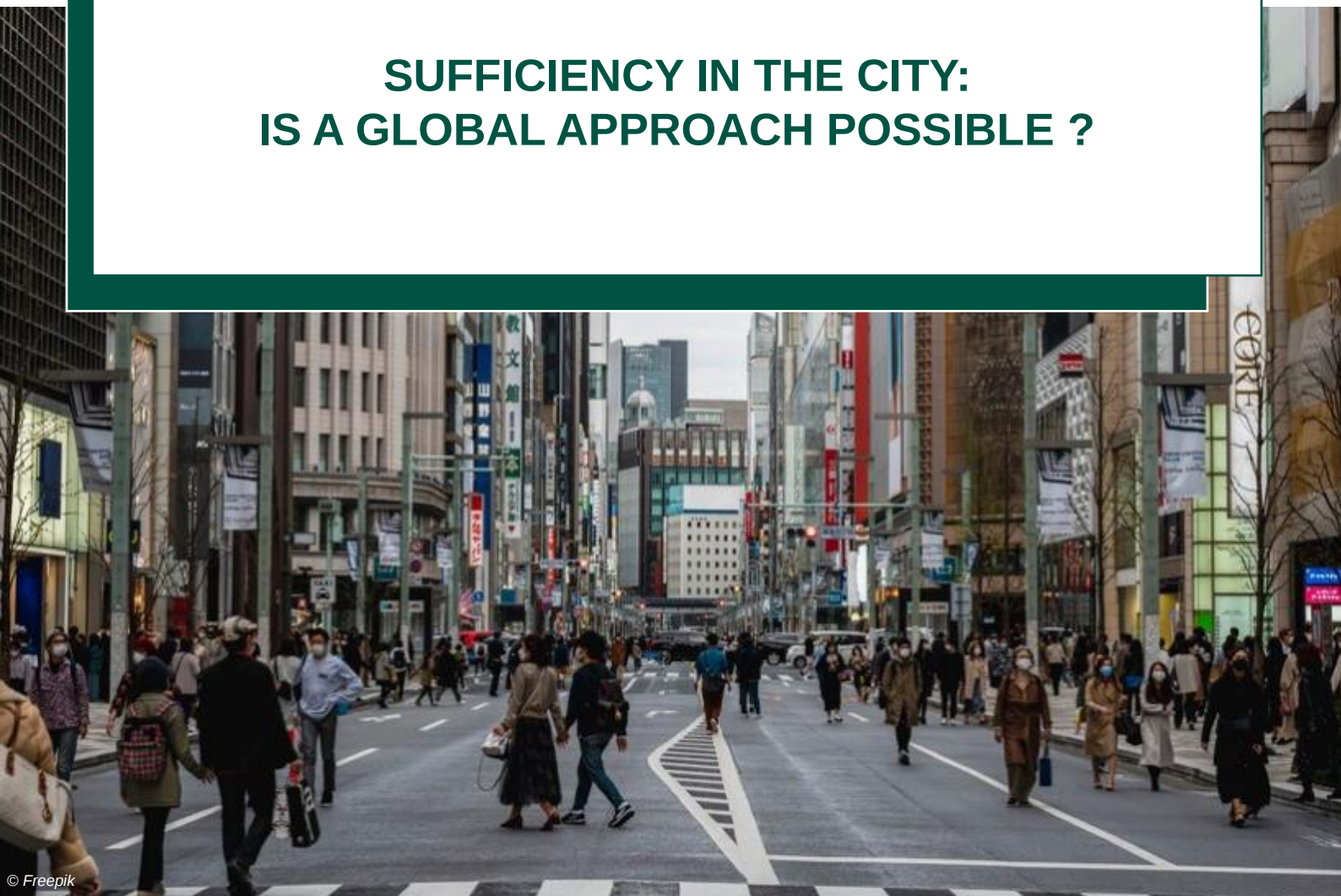


urbanistik

by JCDecaux

**SUFFICIENCY IN THE CITY:
IS A GLOBAL APPROACH POSSIBLE ?**



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PART 1

**Sufficiency, a shifting
definition, debated,
and often blurred**

REMINDER OF THE CONTEXT

The notion of sufficiency has fully entered the public debate in France in 2022, with the energy crisis that the European continent has been through. At that time, it appeared to be a mandatory solution to avoid disruptions in energy supplies.

It could thus be experienced as a constraint rather than seen as a long-term paradigm. However, a look at the past teaches us that sufficiency is a subject that has never ceased to be at the center of the philosophies that have structured our societies.

Sufficiency leads to a questioning of our needs and is synonymous with temperance and self-limitation. It therefore contradicts our value system inherited from the consumer, linear and extractive society. By going beyond energy sufficiency alone, it is important to understand why this notion is an essential part of the solutions to the climate crises. Since its purpose is to ensure happiness, sufficiency also leads to a redefinition of development indicators, so that they become objectives defined in a concerted and operational manner.

We will see in the note that follows this one that the territorial level will then appear as the privileged level to place sufficiency as the guideline of public action; and the most appropriate to make it desirable. Through the social, equality and prosperity issues it underpins, sufficiency is a powerful lever for change to shape fair, resilient and sustainable territories.

Finally, when the publication of a third part, concrete examples will propose action pathways that start from the reality of the territories to deploy political plans focused on the right needs.

SUFFICIENCY'S DIFFERENT TYPES



THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDIVIDUAL NOTION THROUGHOUT HISTORY (1/3)

The notion of sufficiency as of today, is the result of several centuries of definition by successive schools of thought.

It is first interesting to broaden the analysis to the terms of frugality, asceticism, temperance and moderation, to avoid translation biases and to understand the debate around the desire for wealth, to which sufficiency is attached.

Long before our era, many texts asserted that happiness is not found in material possessions. With caution, courage and justice, temperance is the fourth cardinal virtue advocated by Aristotle. Virtue is itself characterized by the philosopher, as the golden mean between deficiency and excess: it is not innate and needs to be practiced regularly.

Thus, far from the current image of the Epicureans, for Epicurus, "Satisfying oneself without any profusion" is a way to access happiness and to better savor abundance. He proposes a typology of pleasures, the first being natural and necessary, the second natural non-essential and the third neither natural nor essential.

Giving importance to the second and third pleasures is a mistake according to him. On the other hand, they must not be denied but be aware of their risks. Seneca will then say, that "Poverty can be changed into wealth through frugality."

Buddha, on the other hand, experienced opulence, then strict asceticism, and finally concluded that a monk must avoid both extremes ; it gave rise to the search for the "Middle Way," which largely echoes the modern definition of sufficiency.

The man who is not satisfied with less, will be content with nothing

Épicure

Shamil Muzheidov © Pexels

Christianity and many religions appropriated this refusal of the material.

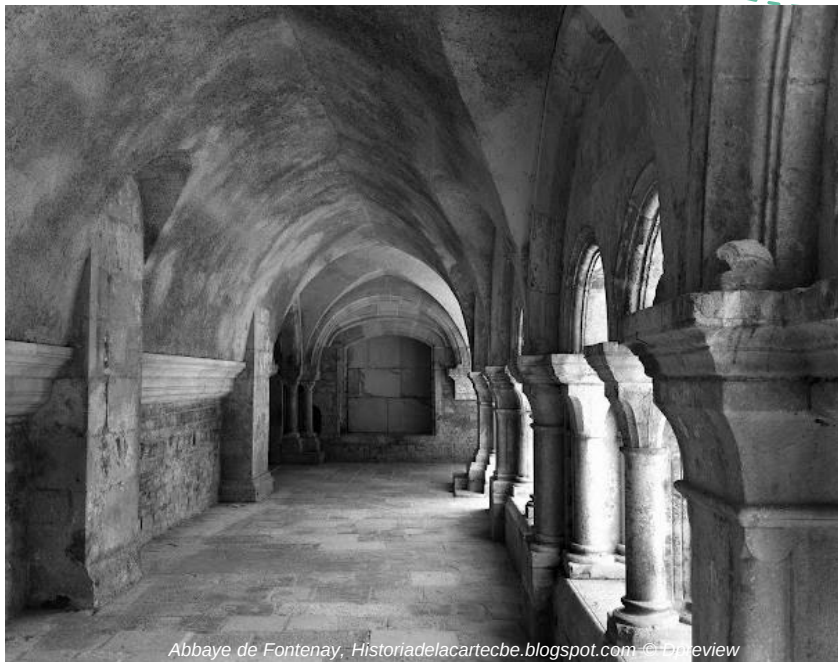
In 1979, Pope John Paul II made St. Francis of Assisi the saint of ecology, he who took up the cardinal values of Aristotle and is now known for its rejection of material wealth.

Saint Francis of Assisi, by "embracing Lady Poverty," introduced a new dimension to the concept of sufficiency, considering that renunciation contributes to a better life through the equality it implies among humans. If wealth seems reprehensible for the Franciscans, it is more regularly, and especially from Athens, the desire for wealth in itself, which is opposed by the thinkers of sufficiency.

Encouraging sufficiency was certainly a means for the Church to maintain the conditions of life and order in premodern societies.

These developments of temperance, in societies where temporal power was directly justified by the spiritual, were global guidelines, and could easily find their application through the poverty of the people.

Indeed, apart from certain exceptions before capitalism, for a long time, populations had to organize themselves to distribute scarce resources: sufficiency was a condition before becoming a sign of misery.



Abbaye de Fontenay, Historiadelacarteche.blogspot.com - © review



The love of democracy is still the love of frugality. Everyone should have the same happiness and the same advantages, must taste the same pleasures and form the same hopes; something that can only be expected from general frugality.

« De L'Esprit des Lois », Montesquieu

In the democracy of the Enlightenment, sufficiency left the individual sphere to become an issue of equality at the level of society.

Thus, in good democracies, "domestic frugality" opens the door to abundant public spending. Montesquieu advocates limiting **"the desire to have to the attention that is required by the necessary"** and reserving the superfluous for one's country.

It is the concept of finite resources that emerges when Montesquieu advocates frugality for the purpose of equality: a citizen's wealth is only unequal if all others cannot achieve the same wealth due to planetary limits.



Charles de Montesquieu © natrilhadospensadores.blogspot.com

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDIVIDUAL NOTION THROUGHOUT HISTORY (3/3)

It was with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century that the notion of sufficiency was shaken up and questioned.

With the rise of world trade and intensive production, a reversal is created between production and need, and the use of resources that enabled each consumption becomes less visible.

According to the Marxist interpretation, which suggests that production always creates new needs, and that abundance exists only when the consumer is satisfied with what they have, the creation of artificial needs inherent in modern capitalism contradicts abundance, as it drives everyone to desire more and more.

The long movement of entry into modern Western society that followed the Industrial Revolution was accompanied by a decline in spiritualities that advocate sufficiency, in favor of a belief in infinite abundance made possible by new production techniques.

“ **Modern man spends more and more [...] time in production and the continual innovation of one's own needs and well-being.**

Baudrillard

The sociologist Jean Baudrillard, who theorized the consumer society in his seminal work, offers a profound critique of the myth of the society of abundance, particularly the waste it entails.

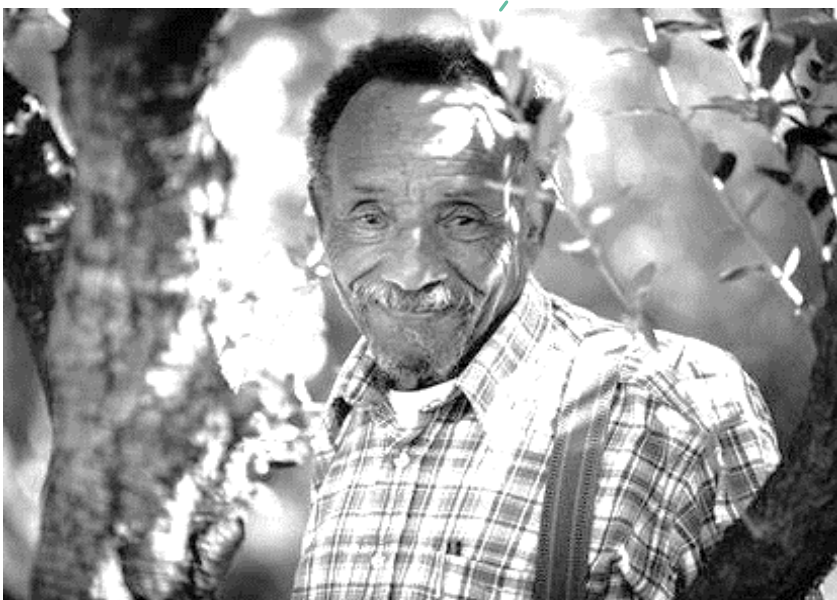
Consumption is no longer intended to satisfy the needs but to differentiate.

Destruction of objects becomes a sign of wealth.

Published in the early 1970s, Baudrillard's work is a marker of the return of sufficiency in the debates, in the more general context of the questioning of the consumer society.



Rotterdam, 2012, Frans Van Heerden © Conocelahistoria.com



Le mouvement Colibris de Pierre Rabhi, Telquel © Franck Bessière

It is only later with Pierre Rabhi and his Colibris movement that the notion of sufficiency was truly popularized in French civil society, and it is important to understand his approach and his process.

Happy sufficiency is a movement of "**declared resistance to excessive consumption**", with a social approach on the inequalities that opulence has induced, according to Pierre Rabhi.

The Colibris movement that he founded now proposes a sufficiency approach that is close to spirituality, with an ethical and societal consideration: *happy sufficiency* is a quest for joy and harmony, which wants to put the economy at the service of humanity, through simplicity.

A CONCEPT ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY AN ADJECTIVE DEPENDING ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Sufficiency, as the capacity for self-limitation of a sometimes-powerful desire, finds its application in many sectors.

Whether it is applied to energy consumption, land use, the use of technology, or material consumption, sufficiency will take different forms, and therefore different names. It also has ways of application that can vary : sufficiency can be structural, dimensional, convivial, or in terms of usage.

It is important to note that the examples of actions put in place to develop sufficiency in the territories do not fall exclusively under one or the other application: these different use cases must be considered in a matrix way, and the borders are highly porous to each other. Carpooling will thus be able to meet the characteristics of sufficiency of use but also convivial, dimensional and energetic sufficiency.

To each his own sufficiency...

Structural sufficiency

It consists in creating, in the organization of space or activities, the conditions for moderation of consumption.

Dimensional sufficiency

It refers to the correct sizing of the equipment, in relation to its conditions of use.

Sufficiency of use

It refers to the proper use of an equipment, with a view to reducing consumption.

Convivial sufficiency

It is a logic of pooling equipment and its use.



Below is a table presenting concrete examples of the application of the concept of sufficiency in mobility, lighting, land and energy, according to its implementation methods.

This makes it easier to understand the collective dimension that sufficiency implies.

	STRUCTURAL SUFFICIENCY	SUFFICIENCY OF USE	DIMENSIONAL SUFFICIENCY	CONVIVAL SUFFICIENCY
MOBILITY HOME/WORK	Development of a public transportation network and cycle lanes	Rational use of car	Use of a car of the necessary size	Carpooling with colleagues
URBAN LIGHTING	Right number and location of light points	Lighting only when using the space thanks to presence detectors	Use of lighting with just the right amount of light	
LAND	Integration of living and working spaces	Discouragement of urban sprawl	Reduction in living and working space	Pooling of urban facilities and production spaces
ENERGY	Decentralized energy network that brings production closer to consumption	Reduction of heating and air conditioning periods in public buildings	Correct sizing of energy-consuming equipments	Sharing equipment with neighbors or friends

THE MYTH OF EFFICIENCY AS A SOLUTION TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS (1/2)

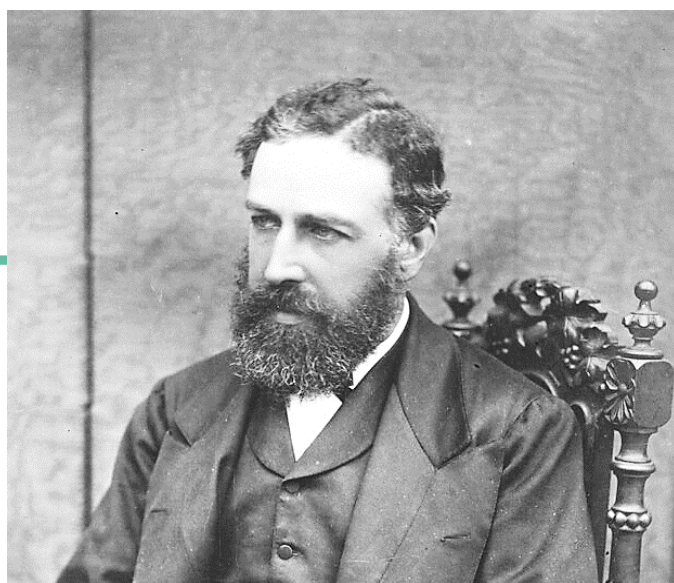


European Environment Agency main building, © Citizendium

A recent report by the European Environment Agency (EEA) indicates that at the global level, there is no decoupling between resource consumption (the material footprint) and economic growth.

Technology alone, even the most efficient and virtuous, appears incapable of meeting the challenge of reducing resource consumption, and must be accompanied by sufficiency measures to be effective.

The approach of seeking efficiency gains to consume less (building insulation, fuel-efficient cars, etc.) is slowed down by the rebound in consumption, which is a well-documented human bias.



William Stanley Jevons, © Laviedesidées.fr

The rebound effect according to William Stanley Jevons

It was the British William Stanley Jevons who first noted this economic phenomenon, in his book "The Coal Question" about the debates on the fear of coal shortages in England in the 1850s.

He proved that despite the improvement in the energy efficiency of the steam engine, the total coal consumption increased: this is "the Jevons paradox". This empirical evidence was taken up, analyzed, and then raised to theory in the 1970s.

The rebound effect is then characterized as soon as efficiency gains are not accompanied in the same proportion by energy consumption gains.

It seems natural to think that when a product becomes more efficient, energy consumption decreases for the same service rendered. A car that consumes less fuel should consume less to cover the same distance. In fact, the rebound effect will reduce energy consumption gains: the driver will go faster and consume as much as before for the same distance or will use his car more often.

This deferral can take the form of a more intensive use of the product that is more efficient: this is the direct income effect, or an increase in consumption in another area, which is also energy-intensive: this is the indirect reinvestment effect.

Direct income effect

Increasing the efficiency of a product lowers its price and leads to greater consumption of that good (or the service it provides). This is the example of the car that consumes less, or the public lighting switched to energy-efficient LEDs, which are therefore used more often. It should be noted that this direct income effect can lead to a substitution effect: since the car costs less to use, its owner will use it instead of the less polluting means of transport he used before.

Indirect reinvestment effect

The savings from the lower consumption of resources are used to consume other goods just as, if not more, consumers of resources. This is the case, for example, of a household that will greatly reduce its energy bill by good insulation and an efficient boiler, and that will use the saved money to take a plane trip to a distant destination.

THE MYTH OF EFFICIENCY AS A SOLUTION TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS (2/2)

These individual consumption biases are also reflected in the behavior of businesses and their production.

Efficiency gains in the productive apparatus (productivity gains) do not typically result in producing the same quantities at lower prices (reduced cost), but rather in producing more quantity for the same costs.

On a macroeconomic scale, there can also be a multiplier effect of the rebound effect: in energy, a decrease in overall demand due to efficiency gains can lower prices, facilitating the development of energy-intensive sectors of the economy.

On a global scale, the rebound effect cancels out more than 50% of the energy efficiency gains achieved.

Source: Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, Paul E. Brockway, Steve Sorrell, 2021.



Infographie sur l'effet rebond, © L'iglou

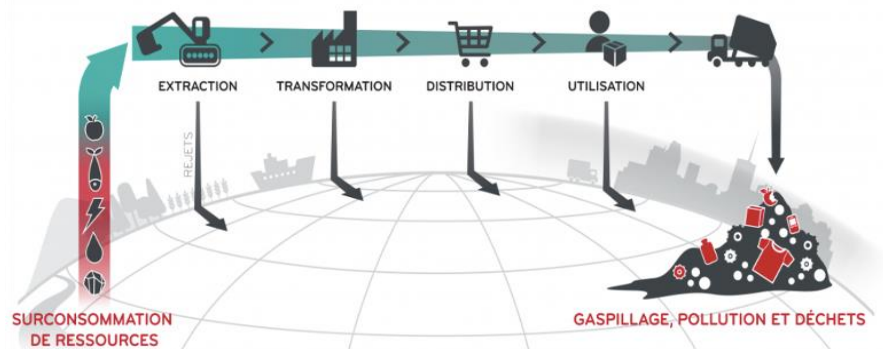
The rebound effect explains why the **French Agency for Ecological Transition (ADEME)** considers that sufficiency should be addressed in a more systemic way in the management of the ecological transition.

Indeed, by considering all the externalities of a measure, the rebound effect can guide local authorities towards measures that are less "effective" in the sense of direct gains, but which have a limited rebound effect, rather than a very effective policy that will have a very strong rebound effect that will totally cancel out the gains in efficiency.

WHAT GROWTH IN A SUFFICIENT WORLD ? (1/2)

The notion of sufficiency, with the aim of limiting consumption to what is strictly necessary, naturally lies at the heart of questioning the relevance of economic performance indicators in development analysis.

Since the Meadows Report of the Club of Rome in 1972, the questioning of the coherence of a world economy turned towards infinite growth in a context of finite resources on the planet arises in intellectual circles and the population.



L'économie linéaire, © Institut National de l'économie circulaire

In countries that have already reached a certain level of wealth, an increase in GDP does not necessarily imply an increase in perceived well-being, according to the "Easterlin paradox".

Supporters of questioning GDP as a development indicator also denounce the fact that it has gone from being a tool at the service of an objective (monitoring the creation of added value in a territory in the service of happiness), to an end in itself in general policies, without questioning its consequences.

Since economic growth and resource consumption remain correlated, growth, **even green growth, continues to consume the planet's resources and carries with it contradictory injunctions.**

The only way to reduce our footprint seems to be to reduce our consumption. But the latter will naturally imply a reduction in production, and therefore in the wealth produced, and in GDP.

WHAT GROWTH IN A SUFFICIENT WORLD? (2/2)

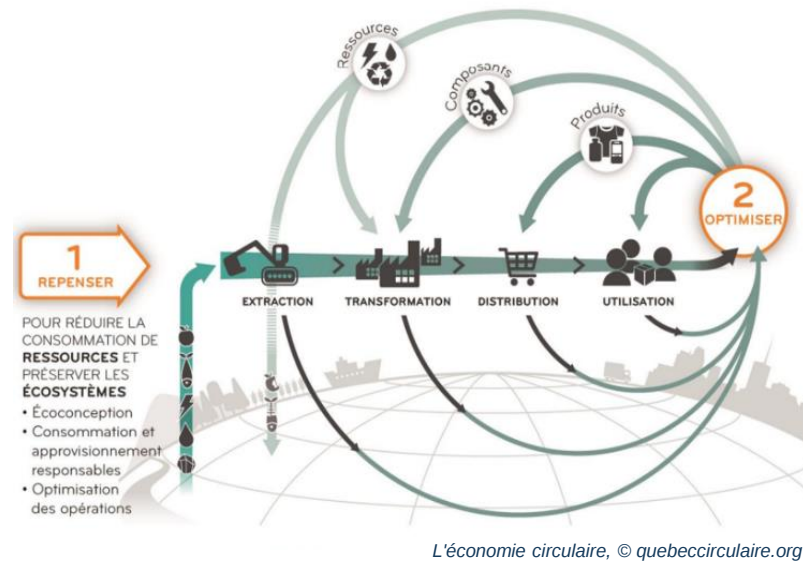
ADEME has imagined scenarios for development of France in 2050 that have sufficiency as a guiding principle and which would not necessarily lead to economic decline.

In this foresight exercise, the government agency has imagined the possible and achievable conditions for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, among which **the economy of sustainability and repair**, for example, takes on a more prominent role.

The economy of functionality and cooperation (EFC)

– which prefers to sell a service directly rather than an object that will carry out this service punctually and individually – is another of the necessary conditions for implementing sufficiency on a national scale. Sufficiency also demands a focus on the appropriate scale, both for production and decision-making.

This does not entail isolationism for each country, but simply producing what can be discerningly done in France and therefore relocating some industries by producing differently, ideally through low-tech innovations or decarbonized production methods.



Sufficiency invites us to move away from short-term concerns, encouraged by society and international competition. It commits society to sustainable development, which is not synonymous with degrowth but with a new direction of consumption. In doing so, it leads to a change in our production and our business models, to move from a linear economy to a service-based economy.

DON'T BUY THIS JACKET



Campagne de publicité "Don't buy this Jacket"
© Patagonia, Black Friday 2011

Some companies have already realized the value of a simpler and/or low-tech deployment: Patagonia encourages its customers to repair their technical clothing to keep them for as long as possible, especially since its 2011 "Don't Buy This Jacket" advertising campaign, which created a shockwave in the advertising world.

Danone, for its development in emerging countries, has developed an experiment via a joint venture with the Grameen micro-credit bank, founded by Mohammed Yunus: Grameen Danone Foods. They have built a small local factory, which allows them to source their milk from local farmers, leaving a large part of the process hand-made and employing local women for door-to-door distribution.

In France, ADEME has created a course to support manufacturers and large companies in the implementation of offers that are faithful to the expectations of the EFC. These steps prove that sufficiency, in addition to being beneficial for the planet, carries with it a great social dimension and is not synonymous with degrowth.



REMINDER: WHAT IS LOW-TECH?

The low-tech approach aims to meet the essential needs of humans on Earth, using the least amount of technology, and creating as few negative externalities as possible, from manufacturing to the use of its innovations. Its first ambassador, the Low-tech Lab, describes the use of technology as low-tech according to three main principles : useful, accessible and sustainable.

It is often based on the rediscovery of old "common sense" techniques, when sufficiency was constrained or when electricity did not exist. But it is important to understand that the low-tech approach is above all a desire to define oneself artificial constraints (cutting oneself off from existing infrastructure, for example) that will objectify imperceptible limits of the planet on an individual scale. It is a question of forcing one's environment to a certain idea of what would be materially and ideologically sustainable.

Finally, the low-tech approach aims to allow citizens to reappropriate the technique, which has become much more complex with the use of new technologies, responding to the aspirations of citizens gathered in "Fab-Labs" and workshops repair services, which have been spreading in France and around the world for many years.

WHAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER

Sufficiency is therefore a notion that has its roots in ancient philosophies and that has found today concrete applications, which go beyond energy sufficiency alone.

It is experiencing a resurgence in light of the current ecological crisis, proposing an alternative growth ideal focused on long-term sustainability and the equitable satisfaction of needs, complementing advancements in efficiency.

TO BE CONTINUED... IN THE NEXT PART

In the second part, you will discover that sufficiency is a lever identified for responding to crises, at the national and local levels, but that the conditions for its consideration in a global manner are still to be built.

PART 2

Moving from emergency sufficiency to a sustainable sufficiency project

THE NEED FOR STATE WIDE POLITICAL WILL

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE SOBRIETY APPROACH, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF ENERGY, TECHNOLOGY AND LAND



© Christian Hartmann / Reuters

The French government is showing a strong desire to include sufficiency in its transition process. Indeed, although sufficiency depends largely on the adoption of moderate individual behavior, it is only by politicizing it that the conditions for change can be created, to make it desirable and to trigger systemic transformations.

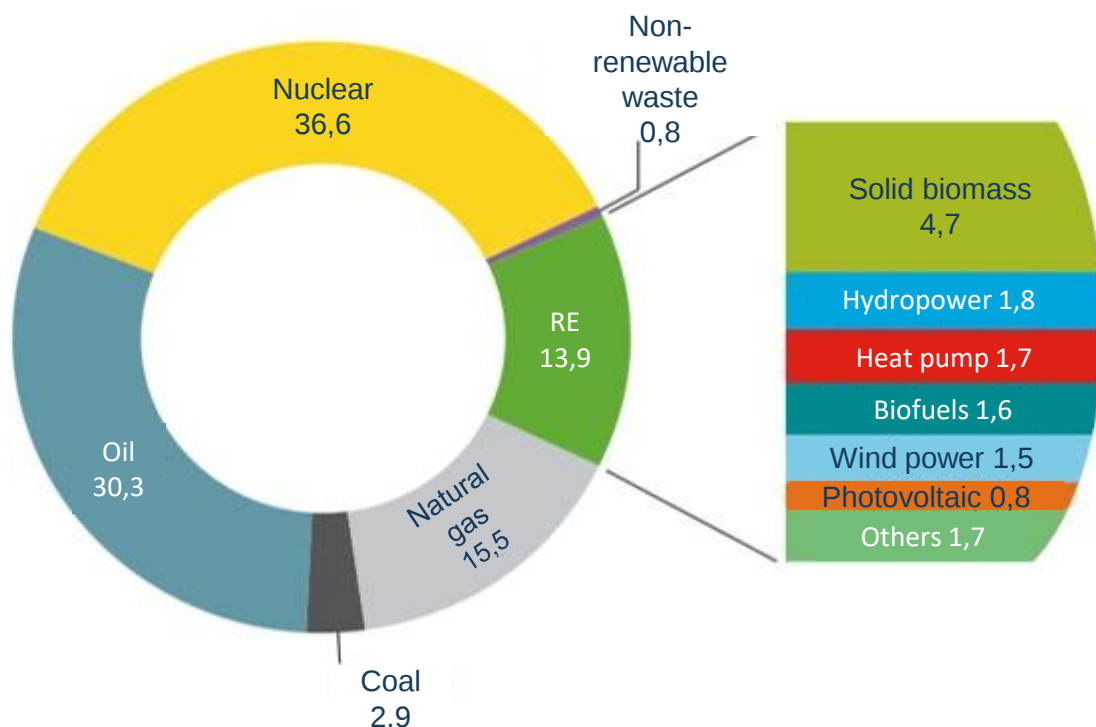
In France, sufficiency is formally identified for the first time in Article 1 of the 2015 Energy Transition for Green Growth (TECV) law as a means (in the same way as efficiency) to control energy demand and thus achieve the objectives set by the French State in terms of reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

From 2016 onwards, and following the Paris Agreements, which aim to "keep the increase in the average temperature of the planet below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels", many legal transcriptions are made at the national level, in which sufficiency is sometimes part of the process.

In August 2021, the law on fighting climate change and strengthening resilience to its effects was adopted: it was supposed to take up the substance of the proposals of the Citizens' Climate Convention (CCC).

But where the CCC "mentioned the term 'sufficiency' more than 30 times in its report and in various areas, it now appears only twice in the Climate and Resilience Act. Indeed, sufficiency is mentioned only in its application to digital technology: for a less use of digital technologies in uses, and in its application to land (the Climate and Resilience Law sets a target of Zero Net Artificialisation (ZAN) for 2050).

Distribution of primary energy consumption in France, percent (not adjusted for climate variations)



Chiffres clés - Édition 2023, Service des données et études statistiques, Ministère de la Transition énergétique



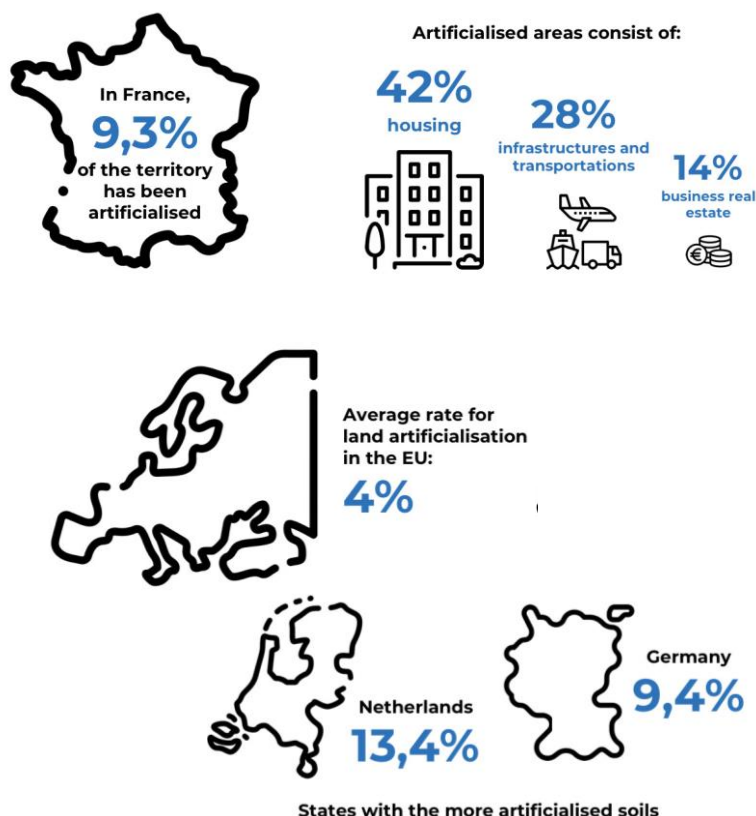
SUFFICIENCY IN FRENCH CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The BBCA (Low Carbon Building) and HQE (High Environmental Quality) standards mention this in parallel with efficiency performance. The BBCA Label introduces the notion of sufficiency very early in building design processes, since it mentions "reasoned construction", the intelligent mixed use of materials and sufficiency of design, and values "kg of CO2 not emitted".

The 2018 Elan law had many measures, which promoted sufficiency in various sectors: the territorial revitalization operation (ORT) is based on a global project, which makes it possible to intervene in a concerted and transversal way on housing, urban planning, commerce, economy, social policies, etc.

This law facilitates the transformation of offices into housing, shared accommodation and intergenerational housing in particular responding to an aspiration for sufficiency of use.

THE ZERO NET ARTIFICIALIZATION (ZAN) OBJECTIVE



Land artificialization is defined as "the lasting alteration of all or part of ecological functions of a soil, in particular its biological, water and climatic functions, as well as its agronomic potential by its occupation or use" (Art. L.101-2-1, French Urban Planning Code).

The notion of the ecological function of soil is new here and this law therefore refers to the soil no longer as a surface, but as a volume to consider, with all its beneficial properties.

This measure will directly affect local authorities, to which is delegated the responsibility of no longer artificializing land by 2050.

The ZAN must be implemented in a cascade in local urban planning documents, in particular in the context of the SRADDET (planning, sustainable development and territorial equality plan), PLU (Local Urban Plan) as well as municipal maps.

The ambition of the ZAN is to make the city on itself: by putting an end to urban sprawl, the recycling of available space will have to be prioritized, naturally leading to a densification of cities.

© Surfrider foundation, according to a study led by Teruti Lucas

The densification of cities is **synonymous with structural sufficiency, since it will contribute to bringing habitats closer together, refocus shops and activities, or at least halt the movement away from services and homes**. It may also have the effect of **bringing nature into the city**, since artificialization is net, "renaturation", which involves reusing construction waste to create green spaces, is **also encouraged**.



The year 2022, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, was marked by an energy crisis, unseen in half a century in Western Europe. Rising gas prices and the desire to limit imports from Russia have caused energy prices in Europe to skyrocket.

For France, this crisis has come on top of difficulties encountered on the French nuclear fleet, drastically reducing the country's ability to produce electricity to meet the needs of its territories. Faced with the threat of a blackout for part of the population, the need to reduce energy consumption throughout the country has become imperative, and the implementation of an energy sufficiency plan on a national scale has become essential. Sufficiency is presented by the government as the only possible alternative, to avoid power cuts. Unveiled at the beginning of October 2022 by the Prime Minister, the energy sufficiency plan proposes to act in many sectors and to make the State exemplary in this area.



Sufficiency is a simple concept: chosen savings rather than cuts.

Elisabeth Borne – Prime Minister, octobre 2022

The great novelty of this plan is that, even though most of the levers of sufficiency are in the end consumers' hands, the responsibility is shared. The measures are divided into 9 sectors: the State, companies, establishments open to the public, industry, housing, transport, digital technology, culture and sports and finally local authorities.

Sigmund, © Unsplash

Among the key measures, limiting heating to 19°C in winter in all administrative and tertiary buildings open to the public, is the one that allows the greatest energy savings (22 TWh/year).

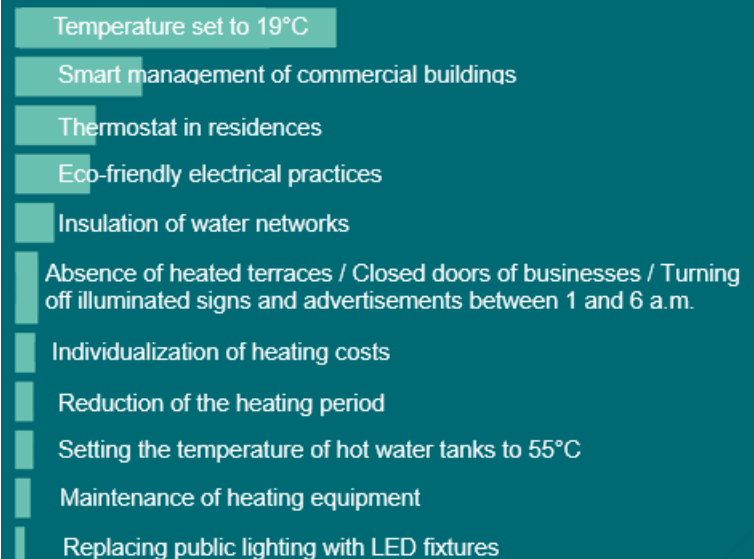
Initial analyses indicate a 12% drop in cumulative electricity and gas consumption between August 2022 and June 2023 compared to the same period in 2018-2019 (pre-Covid).

The decrease is 15% for the building sector alone in 2022 and the overall result represents an 8.5% decrease in GHG emissions for France over this period, without penalizing growth but allowing real savings.

At the level of local authorities, 92% of them have lowered the heating and installed temperature regulation systems and 76% have reduced the heating period. Even if the management of public lighting has not waited for the sufficiency plan, it is important to note that the replacement of lighting points with LEDs and adaptive lighting allows cities to reduce the amount of their lighting bill for an equivalent service. The switching off of illuminated advertisements between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. pursues the same objective, without altering the messages transmitted or the quality of the audience for advertisers.

Energy savings potential (gas and electricity) in 2024 related to the resource-sufficient plan in France

0 5 10 15 20 25 (TWh/year)



The energy saving objectives set by the government. sufficiency Plan, Government, October 2022

2022 AND THE ENERGY CRISIS: AN EMERGENCY UNDERGONE (2/2)

If the results of this sufficiency plan are encouraging one year later and the effort seems to be continued (the plan was initially set for a period of 2 years), some experts remain cautious about the reasons for this success: the voluntary involvement of all, or the constraint of inflation and rising energy prices? Similarly, the sufficiency plan does not concern fuel consumption, which fell by only 1.7% last year, even though it is the leading GHG emitting sector in France. Nevertheless, **the 2022 episode has made it possible to bring the notion of sufficiency into the public debate** and to make everyone aware that energy is not acquired and as abundant as it seems.

The adoption of smugness measures has made it possible to realize the source of energy that seems to be possible to save thanks to sufficiency: it would be a third of current consumption, according to the NégaWatt association, by implementing 55 targeted actions. In fact, some efforts have been made at different levels of society in terms of energy, but **it is difficult to say today that they have led to a real social project, with sufficiency as a guideline.**

CITIZENS' APPROPRIATION OF SUFFICIENCY AT THE TERRITORIAL LEVEL



WHAT INDICATORS FOR A SUFFICIENT CITY? (1/2)

As stated in the previous section, an ambitious sufficiency policy is not limited to energy sufficiency alone, which would aim to save energy through efficiency gains, without taking into account negative externalities and the rebound effect.

It is necessary to broaden the view and to consider sufficiency in a resolutely systemic approach.

Indeed, the notion is philosophically constructed with the aim of achieving – or at least approaching – happiness. The question now arises of the political application of sufficiency: how to measure it and, above all, for what purpose? The application of sufficiency to achieve the objective of "happiness" seems difficult to appropriate by politicians and society alike, given its dependence on personal criteria, over which politics cannot have control. While the first limitation of GDP is that it does not calculate the negative impacts of the creation of added value on a territory, the alternative composite indicators that have been created are also the result of trade-offs between elementary indicators, in their choice and weighting. Faced with the subjectivity of the question of well-being, attempts to create global indicators seem to stem from different philosophies in their approach to the good life.



By studying the different indicators developed (an inventory of 101 indicators was carried out by the UN in 2014), 3 approaches are identified by ADEME to define the good life...

The dominant approach

It links the good life to people's ability to get what they desire and seems ill-suited within the framework of sufficiency.

The subjective approach

It defines the good life through individual experiences of people and their declared satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

The normative approach

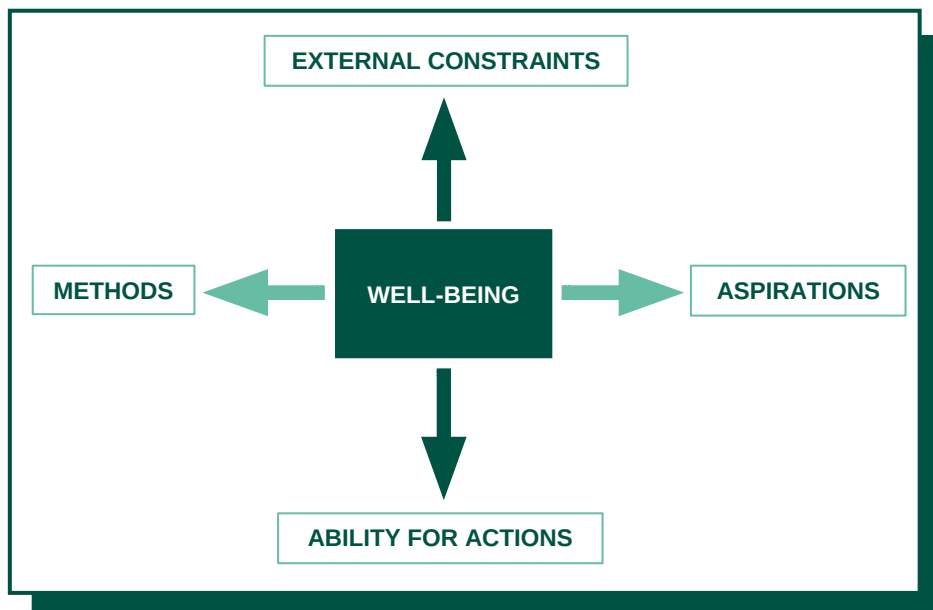
It is popularized by the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen, with an objective list of ideals or goods defined by religious, philosophical, or ideological systems.

One method to resolve these limits is to make the social dynamics of territories visible and to stimulate a collective discussion on "what matters". Unlike the creation of global indicators, the approach consists of starting from the wishes of the populations in the territories to create dashboards of elementary indicators, as well as a synthetic measure, ensuring a link between the second and third approaches to well-being. Through a "Bottom-up" approach, these methods make it possible to reconcile the subjectivity of individual conceptions of well-being and the normativity required for the concrete use of indicators.

© Unsplash

WHAT INDICATORS FOR A SUFFICIENT CITY? (2/2)

Sufficiency policies according to the well-being objective



The objective of territorial sufficiency policies is therefore to improve the well-being and quality of life of citizens. The latter is certainly subjective, but above all dependent on the territorial offer: by aiming more at well-being than growth or competitiveness on a collective scale, **it becomes possible to collectively create quality of life measures that can be appropriated by the population and by politicians.**

Supported by the French collective FAIR (Forum for Other Wealth Indicators) via its manifesto translated into 27 languages, **this approach to indicators proposes to move from a society of "having a lot" for a few to a society of sustainable well-being for all**, which territories will be able to appropriate for their sufficiency policies.

This redefinition of objectives will inevitably result in changes in governance, for more local citizen participation, more monitoring of public actions by the population and therefore a revitalization of public life at the local level.

Much remains to be done to develop the use of these approaches, which are focused on good living, for the purposes of observation, evaluation and management of public action. However, these alternative indicators are struggling to gain traction, particularly in the face of the lack of consideration given to the political process that should underpin their development. However, some cities, such as Amsterdam and its application of the Raworth's donut or Grenoble, which has integrated the method of the Indicator of Sustainable Territorial Well-Being (IBEST), are showing the way towards new methods to involve the entire territory (to be followed in Part 3 for more details).

THE RIGHT SCALE FROM AND IN THE CITY (1/3)

By understanding the ways in which sufficiency is applied (customary, structural, dimensional and user-friendly), several scales of change emerge

1 Practices

Concrete gestures of sufficiency at the level of a natural or legal person, whether through abstention, substitution, reuse, proper sizing, repair, etc.

2 Actions

Incentives for the adoption of sufficiency practices, through awareness-raising, promotion, facilitation, support, taxation, etc.

3 Thematic policies (or action programmes)

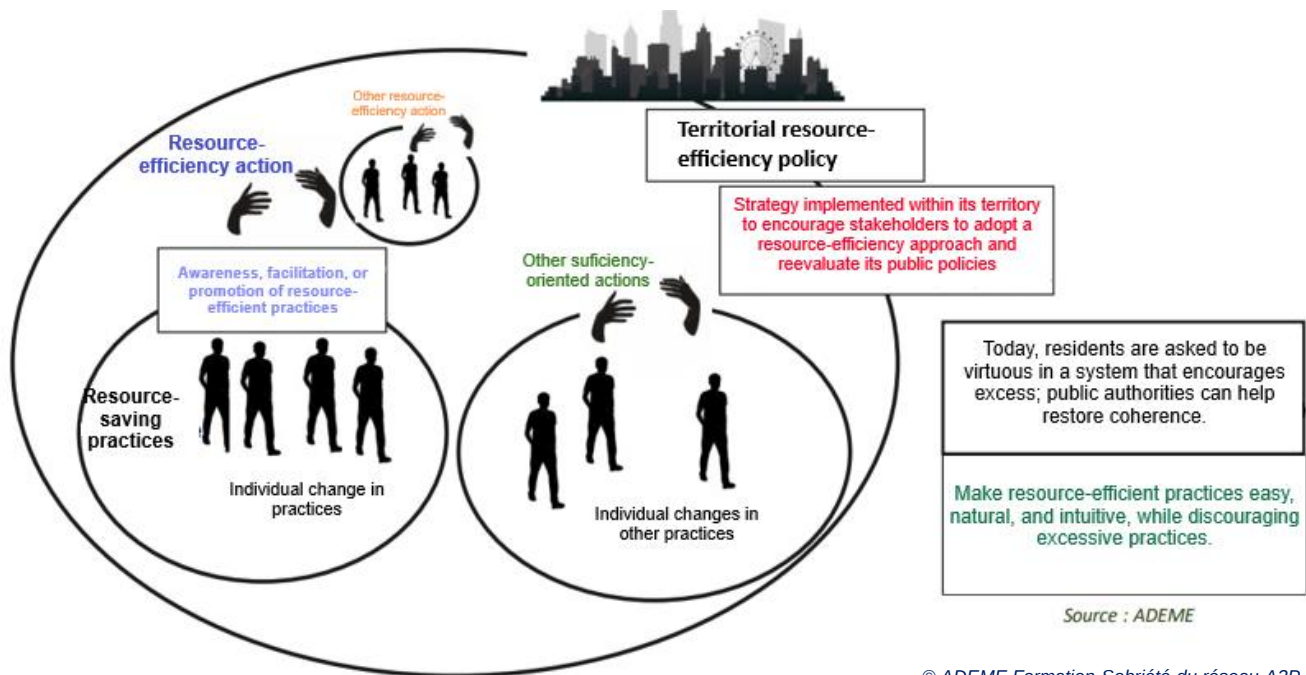
Grouping a set of sufficiency actions around a theme (energy, territory, mobility, etc.), allowing the implementation of a territorial policy of sufficiency.

4 Global (or territorial) sufficiency policies

They will constitute a strategy that irrigates the lower scales, by bringing together several thematic sufficiency policies, and by creating a territorial system of sufficiency to facilitate the gesture and action of sufficiency.

THE RIGHT SCALE FROM AND IN THE CITY (2/3)

Presentation of individual and collective sufficiency actions



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CATEGORIZATION HIGHLIGHTING THE INHERENT FRAGILITY OF SUFFICIENCY

In this categorization, sufficiency ultimately depends on the individual actors and their practice. But it also proves **that local authorities, in addition to setting an example by implementing internal actions, must act within their own field of competence and scope of responsibility, in order to implement actions that will reduce the flow of resource consumption on their territory.**

Local authorities have the capacity to act on the consumption of the actors and inhabitants of their territory, particularly with regard to energy management, waste prevention, economic development, mobility, urban planning, water, etc. In this approach based on consumption flows, one challenge will be to reduce resource extraction and external resource inputs. The implementation of a territorial sufficiency policy will therefore necessarily be close to circular economy policies, or permacircular, and the notion of bioregion (detailed on the following page).

First of all, in order to understand the different levers available to local authorities to facilitate and to trigger a movement of sufficiency in their territory, it is necessary to understand the categorization of individuals' consumption practices (or gestures), depending on whether they are sober or not.

In an increasing order of sufficiency, individuals can accentuate drunkenness (use of more means than is necessary to meet a need), change nothing, improve environmental performance (effectiveness), improve efficiency of use, substitute with another practice or abstain.

These various sufficiency actions at the individual level will be more or less facilitated by local authorities, via the 4 levers of sufficiency (structural, dimensional, use or user-friendly).



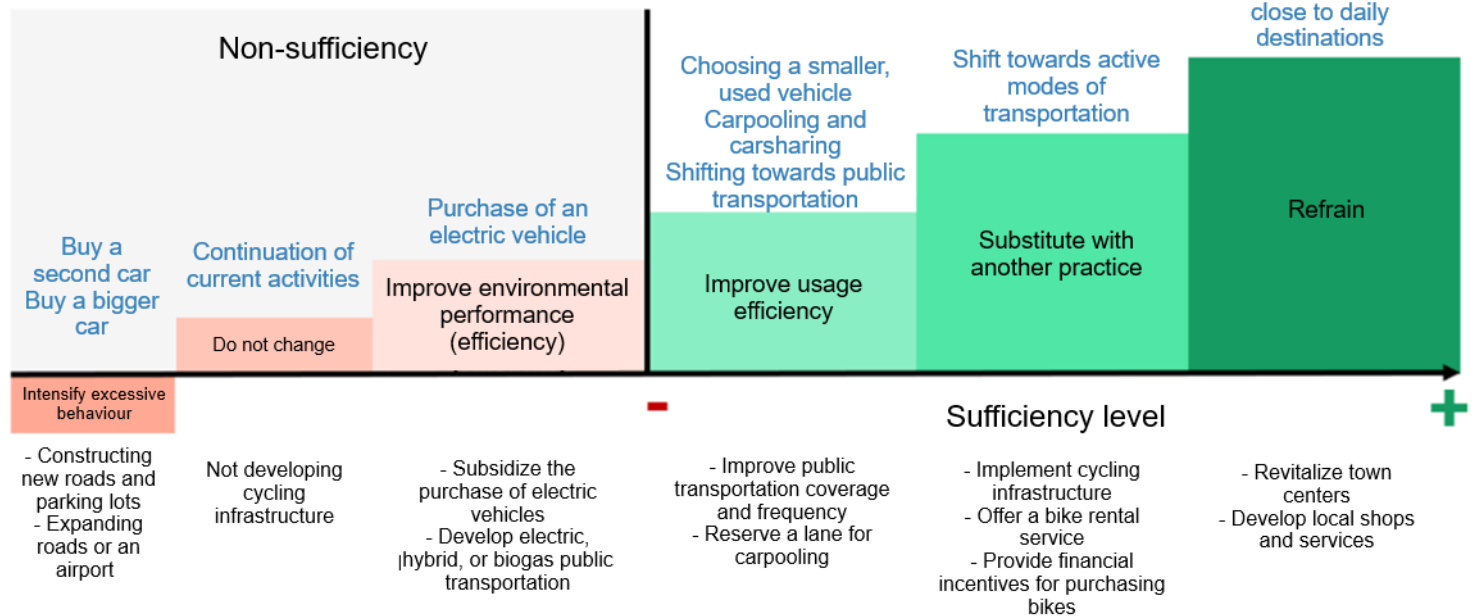
A global policy of sufficiency can be applied to all public policies, through a construction that will be based on questioning the needs of the citizens, to change their practice, with the aim of reducing the environmental impact or public spending.

Structural sufficiency immediately appears to be the most appropriate, since it consists in creating the conditions for moderation of our consumption through the organization of space and therefore of our activities. But a local authority will also be able to act directly on the sufficiency of use, dimensional or user-friendly, through all the skills it benefits.

Analysis grid of practices from a sufficiency perspective

In blue: individual resource-efficiency actions

In black: territorial resource-efficiency actions led by a community



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Above, the relationship between individual actions and territorial actions of sufficiency, through the example of mobility, shows concretely that the global and territorial policy of sufficiency will be able to act through the provision of solutions that encourage the substitution of conventional practices by sober gestures (parking and bicycle rental, repair spaces, biomass heating network or public transport, etc.), by supporting target audiences towards sufficiency solutions (awareness-raising, support for experimentation, technical or financial incentives, free transport, etc.) and finally the limitation of the possibilities of excessive behaviors (reduction of car lanes and streets, prohibition of expansions on arable land, etc.).

This last point is the one that can most directly impact our habits and it underlines that these three levers must be complementary and implemented simultaneously.

The political acceptance of certain measures depends on it, but also on their real effectiveness, so as not to create a windfall effect of the sufficiency of some, which would facilitate the excessiveness of others. Similarly, according to ADEME, awareness raising is important but produces little effect in isolation.

At the same time, the limitation of excessive practices will be seen by some as an attack on their individual freedom, revealing the need for an alternative and a global multi-thematic project.



WHAT IS THE BIOREGION?

Bioregionalism proposes a reflection on the scales at which territories should be organized. Freeing itself from traditional administrative borders, often disconnected from geographical realities, it advocates respect for the natural characteristics of our environment: watersheds, ecosystems, natural reliefs, etc. The bioregion, defined by its natural geographical footprint, becomes the main place of production of the goods necessary for the life of human communities. A certain sufficiency takes place, the result of a global balance between human communities and ecosystems (fauna, flora, water cycle, etc.).

Without advocating autarky, **the bioregion seeks a certain autonomy for the territories, allowing for more sufficiency and local democracy** (reconciling inhabitants, producers and consumers). It appears as a solution to recover the natural riches and specific know-hows of the different territories, based on the reappropriation of the awareness of the territory, local cultures and knowledge, thus approaching the low-tech movement, applied to a region..

SUFFICIENCY AS A RESILIENCE ISSUE THROUGH THE REAPPROPRIATION OF TERRITORIES AND TECHNIQUES BY CITIZENS

Beyond the energy and therefore money savings made by local authorities, a more sufficient society will be more resistant to crises, since it is less dependent on technology and resources outside its territory.

Sufficiency also achieves a **desirable goal of social justice**, since by reversing the social norms imposed by the largest consumers, it can discourage unnecessary energy expenditure and thus guarantee a decent standard of living for all. Sufficiency can **encourage physical activity and the consumption of healthier and more local products**, leading to a better quality of life and aiming for "better living".

Social ties are also strengthened thanks to sharing, a peaceful environment and a longer relationship with time

The resilience compass

The implementation of a policy of sufficiency at the heart of the functioning of the community implies therefore a change in the assessment of needs and the means of meeting them.

It also requires the support of all actors of the territory, to multiply the impact of the actions undertaken and to build policies, which are generating real enthusiasm.

Local authorities must pass through a phase of identification of key players, which can be:

- in favor of sufficiency;
- solution providers;
- relay actors: associations, professional federations, neighborhood collectives, consular chambers, local authorities, companies, etc.

By identifying the right relevant actors for each theme, the local authority will be able to mobilize them effectively and systemically on each subject. ADEME offers local authorities an identification grid for actors, dividing them among those who:

- contribute to the narrative of sufficiency in the theme;
- raise awareness or support the adoption of sufficient practices;
- provide a sufficiency offer.



It is therefore important for **the local authority to play a consultative role with each actor, in order to establish a coherence of actions**. In doing so, the development of sufficiency schemes will be accompanied by a **certain revitalization of the territories**, by bringing together actors who were previously unaccustomed to working together. Finally, **it may be useful to identify the actors who engage in excessive actions, to understand their context, anticipate, and try to align their interests with sufficiency**.

Understanding in advance which stakeholders have a business model that could be challenged by sufficiency policies is also essential to build a coherent intervention strategy.

Taking into account the multiplicity of actors and the difficulties encountered by the most precarious citizens, who are already suffering from unintentional sufficiency, will also make it possible to respond to the challenge of equality of sufficiency. Robust local economic systems and a rational use of technologies can generate sustainable jobs that cannot be relocated, which maintain the wealth produced in the territories for the benefit of local populations.



WHAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER

By encouraging moderation in consumption, sufficiency seems able to offer another ideal to populations, with the prospect of prosperity, which would not be synonymous with material overabundance.

To this end, local authorities are privileged actors in the transition of territories and in the democratic reinvention that sufficiency implies. In the third and final part of this dossier dedicated to sufficiency, you will discover concrete initiatives at the local level, which place sufficiency at the heart of their policies

TO BE CONTINUED... IN THE NEXT PART

In the third and last part you will discover that sufficiency can be used as a guideline for urban projects.

This approach will allow it to benefit from significant credibility and a promising status.

PART 3

Sobriety as a guideline for urban projects

OVERVIEW OF COMMITTED PROJECTS



Revegetation project for the street of la Chapelle in Paris, ©Sortir à Paris

As seen previously, many measures can fall within the scope of sufficiency: for example, all large-scale French cities have begun to transition their public lighting stock to an adaptive system, describing it as a sufficiency approach. Nevertheless, these one-off initiatives, which affect only a small scale of change or a single competence of the community, do not constitute global sufficiency policies capable of changing behavior in the long term or can even lead to a rebound effect.

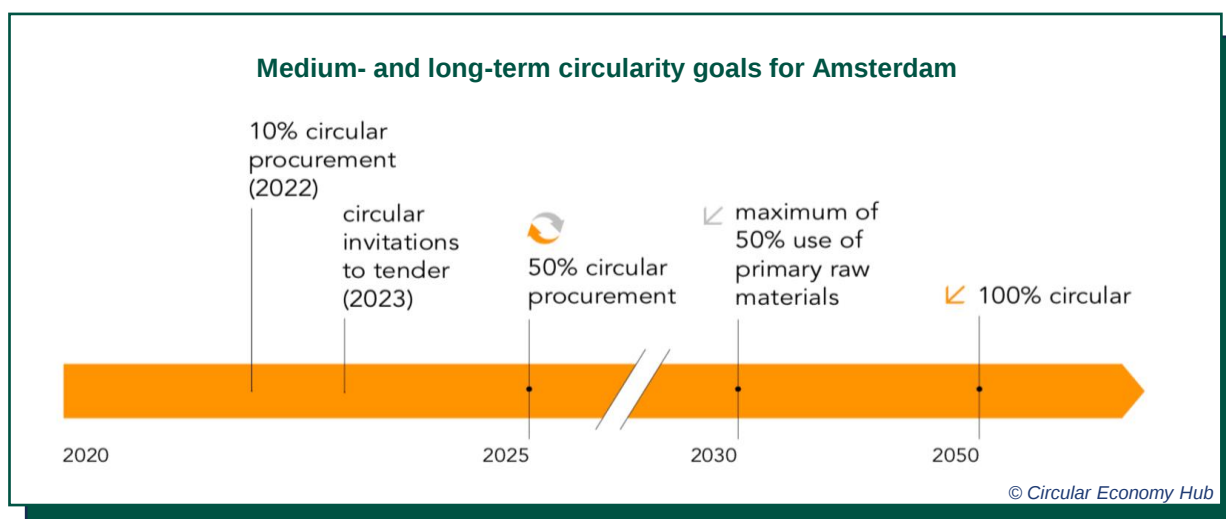
Some cities have embarked on **ecosystem policies of sufficiency, focused on a part of society** (food, energy consumption, or urban development, for example) **or as a guideline for all territorial action.**

Finally, **sufficiency is often achieved by obliquity**: it is not sought directly or words are not put on it. Thus, many ambitions for sufficiency are hidden in actions, which do not display it as such in their local political agenda but which take it into account as **a powerful lever for resilience and ecological transition.**

These political plans, which include sufficiency as a lever for change, all ensure that the populations of the territories concerned are engaged to prove that they meet the aspirations present in the territory and limit the rejection of the measures. This citizen consultation makes it possible to draw up an inventory as close as possible to the expectations of the populations and to report on the reality of the territory. From this inventory, areas for improvement and/or an action plan to adapt cities to climate change are defined, including sufficiency measures. Some cities set concrete objectives of sufficiency, others create alternative development indicators, which make it possible to move away from the extractive pattern of resource consumption and propose another reading of public policies, focused on needs. The examples gathered here have the particularity of presenting global approaches, which touch on more than one sector and propose systemic solutions, linking social, economic and political relationships.

AMSTERDAM – THE DOUGHNUT MODEL (1/2)

On April 7, 2020, the Amsterdam City Council declared that it wanted to base its strategy on Kate Raworth's Doughnut business model. The goal of this post-COVID recovery plan is to make the city's economy fully circular by 2050, starting by halving the use of raw materials in 10 years.

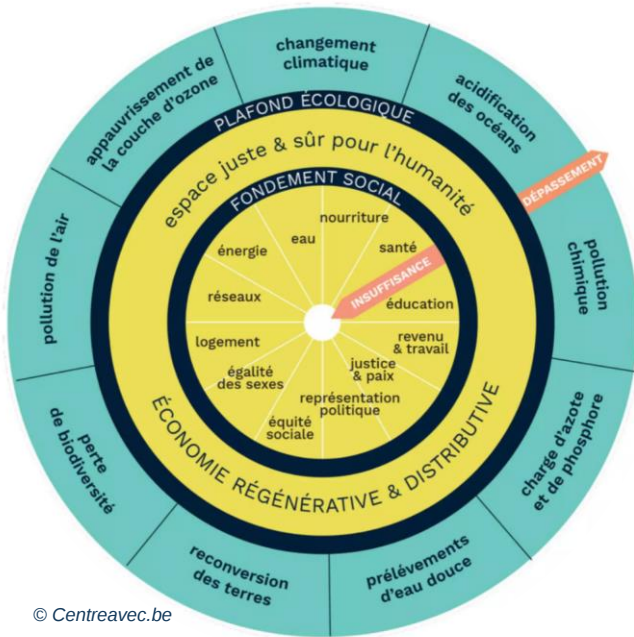


The "Amsterdam Circular 2020-2025" programme was based on the observation that the city's strategy was organized in silos that were too hermetic, which did not form a system. With the help of the NGO Circle Economy and Raworth's organization, the Doughnut Economics Action Lab (DEAL), the city was able to develop a holistic vision of the circular economy, broken down into relevant and measurable strategic directions. Three value chains have been declared priorities: construction, biomass and food, and consumer goods.

Based on the theory of the **Doughnut**, in which the floor constitutes a social minimum and the ceiling the ecological limits, **the city places the articulation between the social and the ecological at the heart of its action.**

AMSTERDAM – THE DOUGHNUT MODEL (2/2)

The Doughnut Theory (graph in French)



A participatory process was set up to engage widely in the development of this policy: workshops marked each stage of its construction and monitoring. More than 50 agents from different departments of the city and region of Amsterdam, as well as a hundred or so various local actors (NGOs, companies, experts, in connection with the three priority value chains) were mobilized to take a "selfie" of the city. This first step in the process is to understand what makes the city of Amsterdam today and how it could be prosperous. Prosperity is the central desire of the approach and is expressed at 4 levels in the following questions:

- What does it mean for the people of Amsterdam and its region to be prosperous?
- What does it mean for the city of Amsterdam to be prosperous in its natural region?
- What does it mean for Amsterdam to respect the health of the planet?
- What does it mean for Amsterdam to respect the well-being of all the world's inhabitants?

This portrait of the city then led to the definition of 17 axes, which stem from the Doughnut vision of the economy of the city and its region. Still today, a collective of citizens, companies and universities is following and communicating on the concrete progress of this new political trajectory: the Amsterdam Donut Coalitie.

In concrete terms, after only three years, many initiatives have been launched thanks to the involvement of various actors. In construction, 8,000 new low-CO2 housing units have been created, 40% of which are social housing, to address the housing crisis and a materials passport has been set up, to promote the use of more sustainable materials.

To change consumer habits, second-hand shops have been set up, as well as clothing or tool rental services and "repair cafés". More and more businesses in Amsterdam have adopted the "True Price" label, which shows the monetary price of a product associated with its social and environmental costs. A short and ecological market, the planting of a food forest and a surplus management project have a direct impact on the inhabitants' food consumption. The Doughnut theory is also introduced into the city's teachings.



The case of Amsterdam appears today as an example to follow: the agglomeration that gave birth to modern capitalism may now be proposing a **new model, based on prosperity, rather than on growth as an objective.**

The DEAL (Doughnut Economics Action Lab) now lists 24 other cities (or regions) that have embarked on an approach based on the Doughnut theory, following the Amsterdam model.

It is interesting to note that initiatives are taking shape in countries that do not have the level of development of the Netherlands, such as Malaysia (Ipoh), Brazil (Sao Paulo), Chile (El Monte) or Colombia (Santiago de Cali), as well as in cities of different sizes (from Mexico City to the small English town of Cornwall).



LIÈGE – THE FOOD-LAND BELT

The issue of food consumption in Liège, in a simple and therefore local way, is a completely different approach, since the initiative comes from an association, created in 2013.

The Liège Food-Land Belt (CATL) is a project led by citizens of the region, who have laid the foundations for a reflection and an action plan, so that the local share of food consumed in the Province of Liège grows significantly.

The strategy was co-constructed during an open forum, which brought together 180 people in November 2013. With the aim of promoting meetings between professional players in the food chain and consumers, workshops and working groups have identified seven major projects, broken down into an action plan.

This initiative then led to a collaboration with the public authorities of the city of Liège in 2016, making the theme appear as an important axis of the City District's Project.

Thus, new food cooperatives have been created (with the contribution of capital by volunteer citizens), collaboration has been initiated with universities around Liège, new local farmers' markets have been created, as well as an annual "Nourrir Liège" festival, bringing together several tens of thousands of people around the regional food transition project.

The City has carried out an inventory of its land and two market gardeners have been able to benefit from a 10-year lease, to carry out their sustainable agricultural project and feed the city's consumption.

The city's canteens have switched to organic and local food to meet demand, and the city is supporting the creation of a complete Liège food chain, from farmers to consumers, including the distribution network.

TOWN-COUNTRY ALLIANCE ON FOOD TRANSITION

By creating this alliance, in which the countryside feeds the city and the city supports local agriculture, the initiative has enabled the city to take up the subject of the food transition and to take charge of the levers it has at its disposal to influence the consumption, savings and investment of its citizens.

It has been able to bring its expertise to that of the founders of the Food-Earth Belt, by positioning itself to respond to the various calls for projects and find new funding for the approach.

This first experience of circularity gave rise to a second one, which the city also intends to support: the Energy/Ethics Belt. Its aim is to create a new ecosystem for the production and consumption of energy in a short circuit, between installations in the countryside and consumption in the city, via Citizen Energy Communities, increasingly promoting the appropriation of the territory by its inhabitants.



**Ceinture
Aliment-Terre
Liégeoise**



IBEST seeks to **quantify social well-being according to sustainability thresholds**, which are supposed to define a minimum acceptable level of quality of life, within the limits of environmental and natural resource constraints.

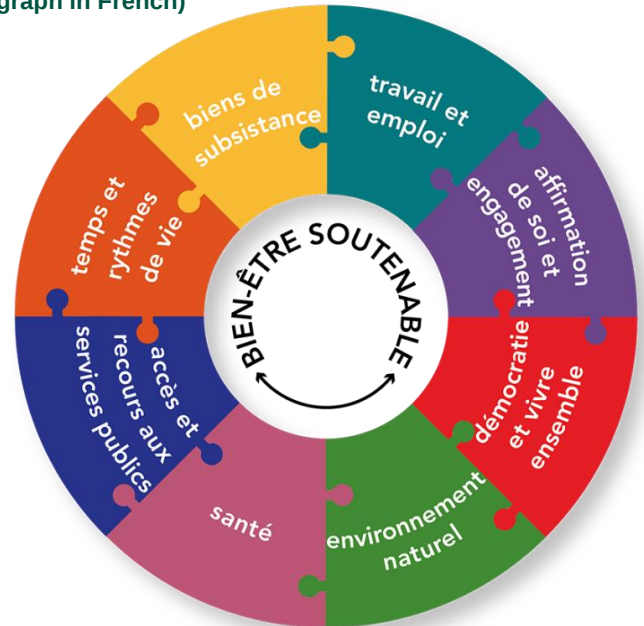
It therefore responds to the same aspiration as **Raworth's Donut**, with a different method, since it is totally "bottom-up" and the **evaluation criteria are defined by the participants concerned**.

Led by the MSIP (Strategic Mission and Public Innovation) of the Grenoble Metropolis, the citizen consultations are organized around 2 questions. This method uses a quantitative approach (survey sent to 1,000 people) and a participatory qualitative survey in parallel:

- What are the building blocks of well-being for participants?
- What state interventions would influence these elements?

The results of the primary survey and the consultation of civil society were synthesized by the group of researchers, in order to group them into eight dimensions that make up well-being and structure the index: **work and employment, assertiveness and commitment, natural environment, democracy and living together, access to public services, time and rhythms of life, sustainable access to livelihood goods and health.**

IBEST : Indicators of Territorial Sustainable Well-Being (graph in French)



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Grenoble, ©reddit.com

The IBEST is now a tool for the observation and evaluation of public policies and complements the existing dashboards in the Grenoble metropolitan area.

It guides the evaluations and design of urban projects, **providing a means of cross-referencing public policies through a global approach to people** (a citizen is considered in all his interactions and not only as a transport user, for example).

The urban renewal project in Villeneuve (Grenoble district) was monitored thanks to IBEST, to measure its impact on the inhabitants, the territory and the environment.

The 8 criteria constitute a grid for questioning new project leaders about urban space:



The objective is to define a collectively defined sustainability threshold to say what is fair in terms of living well, by asking the question "What is enough?".

Beyond its concrete application, the IBEST has served to produce scientific knowledge, to make a plea for the use of alternative wealth indicators and more broadly, to the socio-ecological transformation of territories, implying sufficiency to the extent necessary.



Green avenues – Park Street (looking West). Concept by B. Smart & M. Pullinger, City of Sydney

The City of Sydney has an ambitious plan to define its trajectory between 2030 and 2050, after an initial Sydney 2030 plan.

It has been established by taking into account the opinion of citizens since 2018, via a survey of 5,000 people, 33 events, 12 information sessions with communities, some of which are in foreign languages, workshops with young people and children and with the cultural and nightlife community, the first inhabitants of Australia, and the city's businesses.

With NewDemocracy, a jury of 43 people was randomly chosen to represent the population in a meaningful way. They worked for 3 months to recommend to the City of Sydney the concepts that should be implemented to achieve the "Sustainable Sydney" desired by 2050.

The jury identified 9 concepts, which then led to the 10 strategic directions of the 2030-2050 plan

1. Responsible governance and management	2. A leading player in terms of the environment	3. Public places for all
4. Design Excellence and development	5. A city for walking, Bicycles and transport	6. A Fair City and inclusive
7. Resilient and diverse communities	8. A cultural and creative life	9. An innovative transformed economy

To achieve these aspirations, which emanate directly from the population, many concrete objectives prove that sufficiency has its place in the broader framework of this master plan of urban policy.

Per capita water consumption will be reduced to 170 liters per person per day (French average of 150L/ per inhabitant/per day), and **non-residential consumption**, which depends on the city, **by 10% (per m²)**. The waste produced per person will be reduced by 15% and 90% of all the city's waste will be recycled and recovered.

In terms of **land sufficiency**, the city wants **40% of the city's surface** area to be planted and for new social housing to be created, close to employment areas and a 10-minute walk from daily needs. The city also sets a **target for 90% of workers in the city center to get to work by public transport, by bike or on foot**.

Finally, all these measures must **increase the sense of belonging to one's community and social interaction of the inhabitants**.

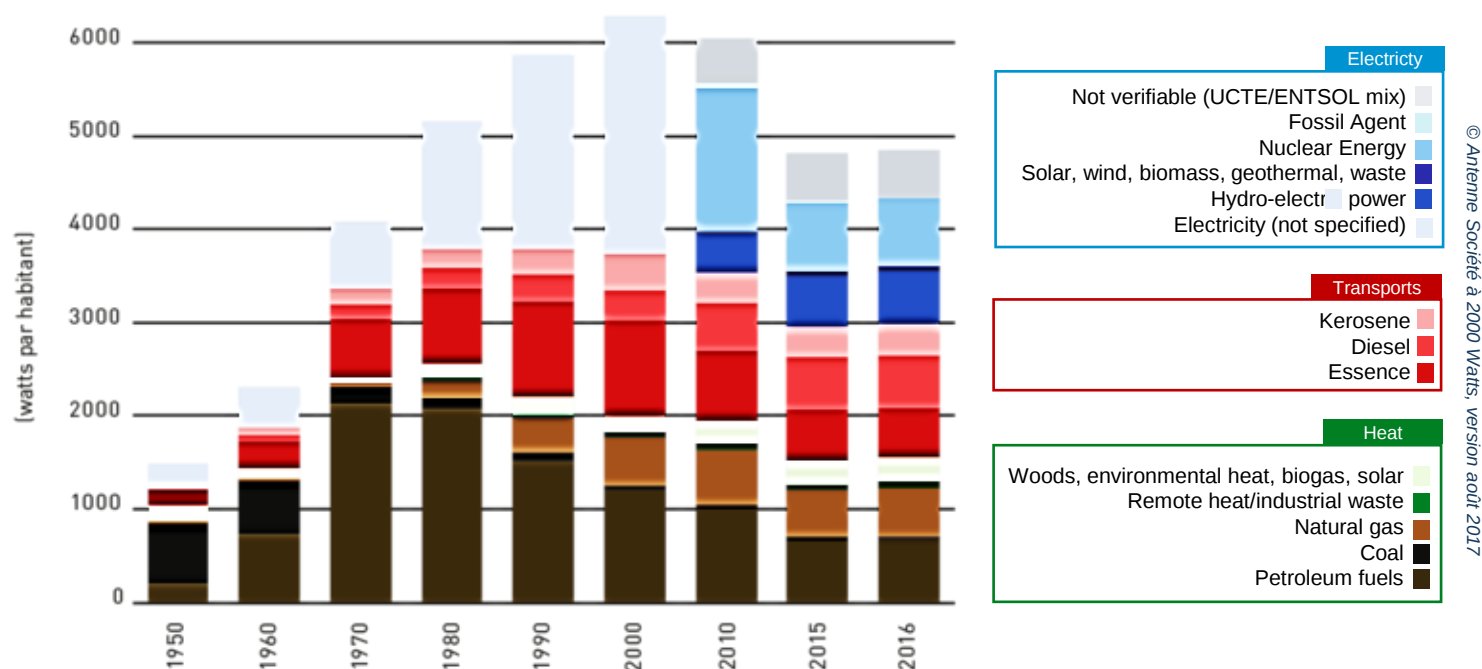
ZÜRICH – 2,000 WATT SOCIETY

Zürich has the particularity of having directly addressed the issue of sufficiency in an ambitious plan since 2008: the company at 2,000 Watts. This objective was adopted by 76.4% by referendum by the citizens of the canton, a guarantee of strong support for the project, and has spread to almost all other cantons in Switzerland. **The 2,000-watt company, despite its name, is not only focused on electricity consumption, but also paves the way to an ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable future.** The objective is threefold for 2050: 2,000 watts of primary energy per capita per year, and zero CO2 emissions generated by the use of energy, thanks to 100% renewable energy.

The city has identified 5 areas of action in its roadmap: mobility, energy supply, consumption, residential areas, buildings. Principles of action have been drawn up, accompanied by precise objectives and **it appears in their "Energy Masterplan 2020", that sufficiency is the first of the orientations** that guide these actions.

Society assessment at 2000 watts and greenhouse gas for Switzerland (graph in French)

Continuous power according to energy agents (primary energy level)



Even though the 2,000-watt society was adopted by a large majority in a referendum, the city is careful to maintain broad support from citizens through public relations and communication work.

Citizen actors and initiatives are included in the development and implementation of projects, around a steering group. This brings together the departments of environmental protection, health, real estate, civil engineering and waste management of the city of Zurich and works together with municipal energy companies, the university and civil society.

In concrete terms, the municipality subsidises individual energy-saving measures and offers advice and assessment services to encourage its citizens to limit their energy consumption. More directly, the municipality has focused on 4 actions below.

All these actions have had a beneficial effect on the consumption of the citizens of Zürich, since they consumed an average of 5,000 Watts per person in 2005 and this number fell to 3,216 Watts in 2018 (while the objective was to reach 4,000 Watts in 2020).

Nevertheless, the roadmap **demonstrates that the actions taken by Zurich will not be sufficient to achieve the 2050 targets without additional actions at cantonal and national levels.**

Collaboration between the different levels is therefore essential to ensure that the measures taken at the level of an agglomeration are as efficient as possible.

Establishment of criteria when designing new housing estates, in terms of energy efficiency but also sufficiency, through a mandatory reflection on shared spaces and the need for each infrastructure. The need for the construction of a new road will be questioned through the prism of its ability to reduce travel times as much as possible.

Encouragement of the reduction of living space through the densification of residential areas, the implementation of the criteria for occupancy of its rental units and the procedures for exchange between housing co-operatives. Two of the latter have reduced the average individual area allocated per capita from 49 to 39m² between 2008 and 2020.

Improvement of the carbon-free mobility of its inhabitants, by improving the transport offer and restricting the supply of parking for private vehicles.

An attempt to change consumer behavior, by acting on advertising and shop opening hours and by supporting the adoption of sustainable agriculture from the nearby region.

WHAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER

Faced with the major environmental challenges of our time, between the path of "ecological catastrophism" and that of belief in technological solutions, **the notion of sufficiency seems to be able to offer a new ideal.**

It encourages the questioning of needs, to rediscover the possibility of being satisfied with "just enough" with the aim of being happy. In this respect, it contradicts the linear extractive schema of consumption resources that structure the narrative of our society's progress, **and it invites us to think of a way to decouple economic growth in resource consumption.**

In a limited world, sufficiency contains issues of equality, resilience and public health that are strong for the territories. While almost nothing concretely limits the consumption of resources by individuals, **politics seems to be the most capable of building a model favorable to the adoption of sufficiency.**

However, since it contradicts the habits of life inherited from extractive liberalism, sufficiency cannot be imposed from above. The examples that are successful and spread throughout the world are avenues which, by proposing mutualization, circularity, new modes of production and consumption, can (re)vive the desire for a simpler society.

If the territorial scale appears to be the most appropriate one for deploying sufficiency, in particular for redefining development indicators, its action will be as effective as it will be supported by measures taken at supra-local levels. Also, if energy consumption does indeed underpin many of our consumption and is a legitimate priority axis of sufficiency policies, **the contradictory injunctions between overconsumption and the need for sufficiency seem difficult to reconcile in the current state.**

Given that advertising, communication and marketing are major vectors of cultural transformation, it is a question of putting the sense of needs back at the heart of communication devices, to trace a desirable path towards sufficiency.



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