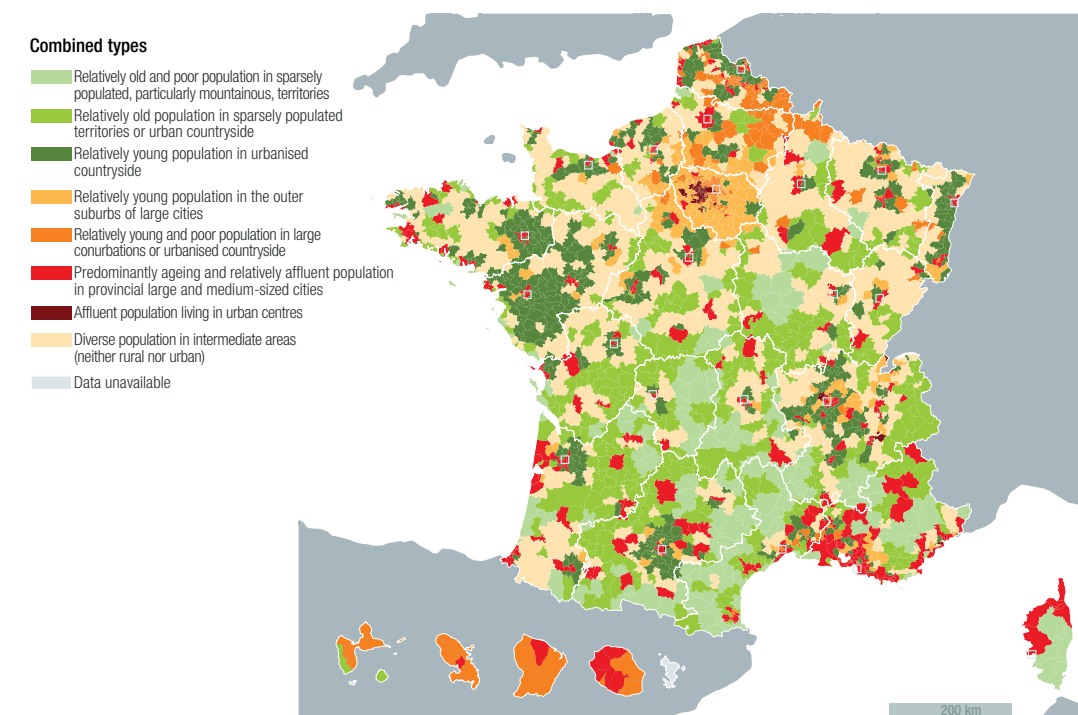


# 4 A framework for comparison

In addition to these indicators, the report contains three typologies, including a summary typology, in order to take account of both the socio-demographic profiles of the population and the characteristics of the living environment a territory provides. These typologies can be used as a framework of reference for comparing territories in terms of the quality of life they offer, providing the means required to analyse the position of a territory in relation to others with similar characteristics in terms of population and living environment.

## Qualities of life that reflect the varying characteristics of the population and the living environments different territories offer



Sources: Insee PC2011, SOeS, DREES, traitement Bureau de l'Observation des Territoires-CGET, 2014. Maps and data are available on the *Observatoire des Territoires* website: <http://www.observatoire-des-territoires.gouv.fr> > Reports section

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OTTANVIANO F. et al., "Les enjeux du processus d'institutionnalisation des indicateurs de bien-être territorialisés: le cas de l'expérience grenobloise", 81<sup>e</sup> Congrès de l'Acfas "Savoirs sans frontières", Unesco, Université de Laval, Québec, Canada, 2013.

## Other links

### International organisations

#### ► OECD: How is life in your region?

*Measuring regional and local well-being for public policies*

Publication: 13 November 2014

<http://www.oecd.org/fr/regional/comment-va-la-vie-dans-votre-region-9789264223981-fr.htm>

### Initiatives in France

#### ► For new indicators of wealth in the Pays de la Loire region

*The Pays de la Loire region adopted its Agenda 21 plan for solidarity and responsibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, that is its programme of initiatives designed to promote the sustainable development of the territory, in June 2009.*

<http://www.paysdelaloire.fr/dossiers-thematiques/democratie-territoriale/>

#### ► IBEST: territorialised sustainable indicators of well-being

<http://creg.upmf-grenoble.fr/production-scientifique/operations-de-recherche/projet-ibest-174980.htm?RH=1292860364090>

#### ► Nord-Pas-de-Calais region and the ARF

An indicator of social health for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region:

[https://www.nordpasdecalais.fr/upload/docs/application/pdf/2012-09/note\\_49.pdf](https://www.nordpasdecalais.fr/upload/docs/application/pdf/2012-09/note_49.pdf)

Sustainable development: the new indicator revolution

<http://www.arf.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/rapportfinalARF.pdf>



Premier ministre

COMMISSARIAT  
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DES TERRITOIRES

L'Observatoire  
des Territoires



# A NEW TERRITORIAL INTERPRETATION USING INDICATORS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

## Methodological guide aimed at local actors

The present guide is intended to facilitate the adoption of the dossier and provide an opportunity to use these indicators of quality of life.

► Quality of life is a notion that first emerged in public statistics with the **Report by the Commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress led by J. Stiglitz, A. Sen and J.-P. Fitoussi (2009)**.

► This measurement is part of a movement to redefine what represents a country's wealth, over and above growth in GDP. **What are the criteria for a 'good' life in society? How do you measure a country's progress in terms of well-being?** Such questions have fuelled much debate among researchers, elected representatives, technicians and citizens alike.

► An exploratory study conducted by the Insee in 2014 provided a **measure of the quality of life within France as a whole**. This approach goes beyond conventional territorial performance indicators based on production and revenue

► **Official bodies in various foreign countries and regions** have already introduced initiatives designed to measure quality of life. In France, meanwhile, local actors are starting to take the issue on board and demonstrating a willingness to **identify new instruments to guide public action**.

# 1 What is quality of life?

## Balancing various aspects

We all have an intuitive idea of what constitutes quality of life - "quality of life is what makes life good, pleasant or comfortable" (LARGEAUT-FAGOT, A., 2002, p.1) - but when it comes to defining the concept or providing a theoretical definition, we realise that there are as many different approaches as there are disciplines seeking to measure this quality of life<sup>1</sup>. In an attempt to overcome this lack of conceptualisation, quality of life is understood empirically, through research into the multiple factors that contribute to quality of life.

The various studies undertaken reveal a number of common elements that appear to reach a consensus in terms of what represents quality of life, including material living conditions, health, education, work/private life balance, social relations, involvement in political life and the environment. Quality of life is, then, defined as achieving a perfect balance of all of these elements, even if they do not all hold the same weight, depending on the individual and their living conditions.

## Subjective well-being - a factor in quality of life

In addition to these so-called 'objective'<sup>2</sup> indicators of quality of life, the Report by the Commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress recommends that data on subjective well-being be gathered. This involves gauging individuals' perceptions of their own lives both in general and in relation to certain aspects. Data regarding perceptions can provide useful indications in fields that cannot be understood using conventional public statistics tools. Furthermore, they complement objective indicators in that the latter provide information on "the collective properties of quality of life, whereas subjective indicators tell us about individual aspects of well-being" (TOBELEM-ZANIN, C., 1995, p.102).

Quality of life is a multi-dimensional concept. With this in mind, efforts to measure it must take into account data regarding financial situations and material living conditions, living environment, health, political faith, etc. Analyses have shown that subjective data on individuals' perception of their quality of life can be used in a complementary manner.

A global indicator of satisfaction regarding life in general cannot, however, replace an in-depth analysis of the various factors that contribute to quality of life.

# 2 Indicators of quality of life: what purposes do they serve?

Given the limitations of GDP and in a context of environmental and social crisis, many local initiatives designed to exceed a strictly economic approach to wealth have been developed and partnerships aimed at developing new indicators have been established. Research initiatives are also on the increase, particularly in the field of economics.

There are a number of objectives that underpin the development of these new indicators:

## Observation and knowledge tools

Indicators of quality of life are more often than not used to "monitor regional and local performance for the purposes of self-diagnosis, the aim being to collect regional information by gathering data and knowledge on various aspects of well-being [...]" (OECD, 2014, p.95). This is true of most 'dashboards' of indicators that provide large amounts of information and make it possible to monitor such data over time.

## Symbolic and communications tools

The production of such indicators also serves to fuel public debate on the aspects that contribute to a territory's wealth, above and beyond traditional economic performance indicators. These might include, for example, the social health indicator developed by Florence Jany-Catrice and Rahib Zotti for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council in 2007 following efforts on the part of the region to produce new regional development indicators, involving experts, associations and the local authorities. The indicator, which comprises a series of 14 variables, makes it possible to rank regions based on a score of 0-100, the main finding being that there is no correlation between "levels of social health and levels of economic wealth measured based on GDP per inhabitant or income; indeed, some of the economically wealthiest territories are also among the "poorest" according to this indicator" (Jany-Catrice, 2011, p.85).

## Tools for action

Indicators of quality of life are also starting to be used to guide public policies, with the notable aim of targeting those regions with the greatest needs. In southern Italy, for example, a regional development policy has set quantifiable targets for improving four aspects of quality of life (education, water, waste management and care for the elderly and children) in a territory in which the level and quality of public services were inferior to those provided in other parts of the country. Implemented as part of the European Union's cohesion policy between 2007 and 2013, this programme of initiatives was based on 11 indicators and included legislative and financial investment measures. In Sardinia, for example, it has notably served to increase the proportion of waste that is recycled (OECD, 2014).

# 3 A common set of indicators

The 12 indicators of quality of life referred to in the first part of the 'Quality of life, inhabitants and territories' dossier of the 2014 report by the *Observatoire des Territoire* are outlined below. It should be noted that these indicators were chosen based on a number of criteria:

- ▶ expressing one of the fields of quality of life referred to and providing a good illustration thereof;
- ▶ making it possible to form an unambiguous opinion regarding what the indicator means in terms of quality of life;
- ▶ being easy to understand;
- ▶ being available at commune level and on various dates for the purposes of drawing a comparison over time.

These indicators can be downloaded and mapped at *territoire de vie* level on the *Observatoire des Territoires* website. These indicators have been provided for the Observatoire by the Insee which may, if need be<sup>3</sup>, calculate them based on a different geographic scale.

Depending on specific local characteristics and players' needs, other indicators may be added to the suggested common set of indicators; in order to do so, a public debate may be arranged with a view to involving local actors and citizens in defining what represents a territory's wealth and choosing appropriate indicators<sup>4</sup>.

## Some examples of indicators designed to facilitate an 'objective' understanding of quality of life within territories.

Issue	Indicator	Source
Service accessibility	Proportion of the population with access in an average of 15 minutes or less to the 12 facilities in the intermediate category.	Insee: BPE2013, PC 2011, Méric PC 2011
Education	Proportion of those aged 20 or over having obtained the <i>baccalauréat</i> or a higher diploma (rate standardised)	PC 2011
Gender equality	Difference between the rates of employment among men and women of 25-54 years old	PC 2011
Employment-work	Proportion of long-term unemployed (over a year) persons within the active population of 15-64-year-olds	PC 2011
Environment	Proportion of urbanised areas within the territory	EU/SOeS Corine Land Cover 2006
Work/private life balance	Proportion of employed active persons living 30 minutes or less from their workplace	Insee: PDF 2013 PC 2011, Méric PC 2011
Housing	Proportion of the population living in overcrowded housing (among those main residences occupied by 2 or more people)	PC 2011
Social relations	Proportion of people aged 75 or over living alone	PC 2011
Social relations	Proportion of single-parent families	PC 2011
Income	Average annual net taxable income per tax household	DGfip, (PIT) 2011
Health	Comparative global mortality rate	Insee, Civil status 2008-2012, PC 2011
Civic life	Electoral turnout in the 1 <sup>st</sup> round of the presidential election	Ministry for the Interior, results of the 1 <sup>st</sup> round of the 2012 presidential election

PDF: Permanent Database of Facilities, Insee.

PC: Population Census, Insee.

EU: European Union.

SOeS: Observation and Statistics Service of the Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy.

DGfip: Department of Public Finance.

PIT: Personal Income Tax

<sup>3</sup> For further information you are advised to contact the appropriate regional branch of the Insee.

<sup>4</sup> Existing participatory approaches notably include those aimed at "identifying wealth and well-being criteria (SPIRAL methodology, Pays de la Loire region) and those focusing more on a discussion of the indicators developed or yet to be developed (ISS in Nord-Pas-de-Calais region in particular)" (OTTAVIANI, A. et al., 2013, p.10).

<sup>1</sup> Quality of life has been researched in a variety of fields, including geography, psychology, medicine, economics, etc., since the 1970s and the notion has experienced growing success among economists since the early 2000s.

<sup>2</sup> The 'objective'/subjective' contrast is used here for the purposes of convenience but it is important that it be qualified. Indeed, insofar as any statistical object is a convention representing a certain vision of society, both types of indicator incorporate a subjective aspect with regard to individuals' living conditions and well-being.