

1. Projects



ImagineTrains

Finished research

Begin: January 2013

End: March 2017

Piloted by Dr. Max Bergman, this comparative study, led by French, American, South African, Indian and Chinese research teams, explores the role of the imaginaries of decision-makers in choices relative to the train and rail infrastructures.

Research participants

Coordination

- Hanja Maksim
- Max Bergman
- Zinette Bergman

Research participants

French Team

- Arnaud Passalacqua
- Maxime Huré
- Fabian Kröger
- Harold Mazoyer
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Research participants

American Team

- Mimi Sheller
- Allen Batteau
- Susan Zielinski

- Fred Gamst

Research participants

South African Team

- Gordon Pirie

ImagineTrains

imaginetrains.forumviesmobiles.org

Under the guidance of Dr. Max Bergman, who specializes in mixed methods in the social sciences, five research teams will explore the role of imaginaries in decisions linked to the train. What imaginaries are at play when it comes to the train, both for decision-makers and users? What role do they play in the development of rail projects? And finally, what do they tell us about the way decisions are made in this field?

The aim of this research is to better understand the different rationalities, even fantasies, at work in decisions regarding the train, and to identify their national and cultural underpinnings so as to inform future rail policies.

The ImagineTrains project shall take the form of an international, multi-disciplinary comparative study. A French team - combining members of the Identités Cultures Territoires (ICT) research laboratory (Université Paris Diderot) and members of the association Passé Présent Mobilité (P2M), headed by Dr. Arnaud Passalacqua - will bring together historians and political scientists. An American team, led by anthropologist Dr. Allen Batteau, will include sociologists, anthropologists and urban planners from Wayne State University, Drexel University and the University of Michigan. These three-year studies will be complemented by three two-year studies in South Africa, India and China.

To study the individual and collective imaginaries of political decision-makers, the researchers will conduct individual and collective interviews, perform case studies on existing, planned and abandoned lines, and analyze media (oral archives, images, museum collections, advertising, music, film, literature, etc.). The results of these investigations will be aggregated by country and then incorporated into the overall project.

Paper and web publications will punctuate the project over the three years. At the end of the project, in spring 2016, a workshop, conference and comprehensive report will present all of the findings, as well as provide recommendations aimed at informing the decisions of the policymakers of tomorrow.

Coordinator's note

Welcome to the ImagineTrains project webpage. In this project, decision makers, researchers, and others from France, the US, South Africa, India, and China explore the imaginary of the train. You can read more about the general outline of The Project or see how the “Imaginary of the Train among Decisions Makers and Train Users” is studied in France, The United States, China, India, and South Africa. This website also offers the

opportunity to read each country's Project Blog, where the research teams are reporting on the different research phases. You can also access some of the interviews and focus groups that have been conducted, as well as information, images, and videos. Also available are publications, Project Reports and a digital database of images of trains and mobility from different places. Bringing together these diverse resources gives you the opportunity to look at, listen to, watch, and read about the Imaginary of the Train as it manifests in different global and cultural contexts. We invite you to compare and contrast these different perspectives while exploring your own Imaginary of the Train.

Max Bergman

Mobility

For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.

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