



A “different” European project?

An interview with Bruno Faivre d'Arcier, professor at the *Laboratoire d'Economie des Transports* (Transport economics research unit) of Lyon University

Transflash: You have been working on a European project called MAX, for Maximize Mobility Management. What are its aims?

B.FA. The full title of the project is “Successful Travel Awareness Campaigns and Mobility Management Strategies”. It has a number of aims. Mobility Management (MM) is an approach that works mainly on individuals’ travel behaviour, so on the demand and not just on the offer. This project has attempted to capitalize on the large amount of experience available, both to prove its effectiveness and to build up a corpus of knowledge, methods and techniques that can help to set up relevant and effective measures. The project has enabled 26 partners from 16 European countries to work together.

Transflash. The evil spirit in me says that this is the Nth European project on this subject! How is this one different?

B.FA. First of all, because in the approach to awareness campaigns it attempts to associate the long-term urban dimension and a certain “professionalism” in the design and implementation of the measures. Next, it leads on to a series of immediately operational techniques and methods (which are being translated into 14 languages which will be available for free on the EPOMM site). And finally, in the area of research, it has helped us move forward in our understanding of behavioural change mechanisms.

Transflash. What do we know as a result of MAX that we didn’t know before?

B.FA. With MAX, we have been able to show that when measures take into account the individuals’ characteristics and their psychological “stage” as regards changes, they can lead to more effective measures or campaigns. This is undoubtedly the means of leaving behind us what was often a fairly rough and ready approach, based on voluntary action, to move towards more effective strategies. Capitalizing on knowledge and action in this way makes the approach more solid.

Transflash. MAX breaks down into MaxSem, MaxExplorer, MaxSumo and MaxEva. Can you tell us a bit about these modules?

B.FA. **MaxExplorer** is a very simple tool intended for those who are not very familiar with MM: depending on who they are (a town, a company, or a school, for example), what the main targets are (employees, residents, school children, visitors), where they are (town centre, suburbs, outskirts, countryside) and the size of the target group, it gives a classified list of the Mobility Management measures that seem most relevant.

MaxSem is based on a new theoretical model of behavioural change that has been validated by surveys carried out in several countries (including France). It aims to show that in order to encourage individuals to change behaviour we need to take account of their current “stage”: for example, do they plan to change or not; have they tried out an alternative mode to the car, and are they satisfied with it? This tool provides a questionnaire and a survey approach to assess what stage of change the people concerned are at.

MaxSumo is a method built up to contribute to designing, setting up, monitoring and evaluating MM measures.

MaxEva is a European database whose long-term aim is to identify all the results of MM measures. It will ultimately be possible to build up a predictive model of the measures' impact, to help decision-makers make the best choice.

But these four tools are not the only ones to come out of the Max project. There are three others. The first is a methodological guide for developing awareness campaigns aimed at encouraging people to less use their car in city centres. The second is a Quality approach in the field of MM (which will lead to a certification procedure at European level). The third is a guide giving recommendations for including the transport dimension in urban planning.

Transflash. The project is coming to an end after 3 years. Has it achieved all its goals? If not, why?

B.FA. Almost all its goals have been reached, as you can see from the tools and methods proposed. Unfortunately the work has unveiled that only countries in the North of Europe carry out serious evaluations systematically, and the lack of scientific data has not made it possible to develop the forecasting model as planned.

Transflash. What practical outcomes can be expected? What promises can you give to local authorities?

B.FA. Many local authorities are still sceptical about the effectiveness of Mobility Management. It is true that these “soft” measures seem less effective than a good old investment such as a tram line. But their costs are not in the same league and their effectiveness is to be evaluated in the long term, since they concern individual behaviours. At a time when local authorities have a hard time financing their investments, these are actions that represent very good value for money. By making the approach more professional, we are providing local authorities with Quality assurance.

Transflash. Fundamentally, what is most lacking with mobility management today: methods, “knowledge”, or awareness from citizens or politicians?

B.FA. In France, although LOTI (the framework law on inland transport) mentions this function in the sustainable urban transport plan, it is rare that local authorities have “mobility managers”. This means that there is a lack of awareness to the fact that it is also necessary to work on behaviours. If people prefer to use their car rather than public transport, it is because they are satisfied with the car, even if it works out more expensive for them. To encourage them to change their behaviours, we need to offer them personalized solutions that tackle “their” transport problems.

Transflash. Why does “individualized marketing” seem so effective in Perth -or elsewhere- and why has it never been adopted on a larger integrated scale?

B.FA. This takes us back to the previous question! The offer-based approach leads to reasoning in terms of transport “flow” and therefore in terms of average and anonymous individuals. The idea of sending “marketers” to perform a mini household survey in a district to “understand” its inhabitants' travel problems, and to provide them with a “customized” multimodal answer as cheaply as possible is miles away from the approach of our transport authorities, who by nature are preoccupied with filling their public transport services. I'm looking forward to the day when we have Urban Mobility Authorities who are more interested in mobility than in transport!

Transflash. Are things going as fast as you would like?

B.FA. At the moment in Europe, things are changing quickly. Thanks to projects like MAX, a community is gradually growing, to encourage experience sharing and know-how building. In France, the few consultants who have gone into Mobility Management field still have a hard time getting contracts. A lot is being done in the area of corporate mobility plans, mainly driven by the ADEME (the French environment and energy management agency) but we are still a long way away from fully integrating this mobility dimension in urban planning or transport system management. If we really want to bring down car use in city centres, we'll have to find answers and alternatives that are in keeping with the expectations of the populations concerned, something that the sole public transport offer will not be able to achieve.

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EPOMM: www.epomm.eu

MAX project: www.max-success.eu