



Some remarks on the features submitted as part of the IVM student journalist competition

Sylvain Allemand
Jury Member

The task facing participants in the international journalism competition organised by IVM was far from simple: it required not only the ability to write but also attention to the presentation of the feature as a whole: the skills of a graphic artist or even photographer, of a designer, etc, combined with the talents of a copy editor. Participants also needed the ability to work in a team on a subject – urban mobility – that is unfamiliar to the public, despite its day-to-day importance.

Given all these demands, we were highly impressed by the work submitted. Although on this occasion it would seem that certain candidates did no more than discover the problems associated with urban mobilities, they demonstrated a certain commitment to their work and gave many reasons for satisfaction:

- many participants successfully situated innovation in mobility within the sociocultural and political context of their chosen city. In doing so, they showed that it is an illusion to hope to transpose a given innovation unchanged to another society. This conclusion emerges particularly from the South American features.
- Most of the features showed a clear – albeit sometimes implicit – awareness that the problems of urban mobilities are primarily a matter of political will, before technological or even economic issues come into play. This was clearly demonstrated by the Danish team's entry.
- Most of the entrants sought originality of presentation. Although the results were not always convincing, they were sufficiently effective to suggest the idea that the theme of mobility is original enough to require new approaches to handling information, layout and the relationship between text and graphics.

- The so-called rich countries have much to offer the developing world, but also much to learn from it. This is also the message that emerges from the contributions from the Latin American countries.

There are a few general criticisms we might formulate:

- Most of the entrants focused on an original experiment, thereby suggesting that the solution to the problems of urban mobility involved a revolutionary innovation. Some were obviously influenced by the arguments of the promoters of the innovation in question, and failed to maintain critical detachment.

- Likewise, the tendency to overvalue new technologies led to a degree of technological determinism.

- Finally, very few of the participants grasped the concept of intermodality, which is indispensable in looking at methods of transport as complementary rather than opposed. From this perspective, the car is not necessarily a method of transport to be excluded... As to the fact that urban mobilities and their improvement are an international issue, not confined to the northern hemisphere alone, the jury – with its members from different professional, geographical and disciplinary horizons – also provided a fine illustration. Beyond the points of convergence and divergence, the competition was a reminder of how much discussions on the issues of mobility can be enriched by a diversity of viewpoints. It also provided a measure of how much progress has been made by certain media in handling information.

In this respect, there should be a special award for our colleague from the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, which regularly dedicates a full page to issues relating to urban mobility!

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