

[Journal of World History Special Issue on Automobiliation](#)

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The Journal of World History

Global Automobiliation: An Underexamined Transnational Revolution of the Last Two Centuries

Special Issue Editors: Prof. Simon Gunn (University of Leicester), Prof. Fabio López Lázaro, (University of Hawai'i), Dr. Susan Townsend (University of Nottingham)

This Special Issue of the *Journal of World History* invites article manuscripts that address any aspect related to the global, transnational, and cross-cultural histories of automobiliation, automobilism, anti-automobilism, de-pedestrianization, and re-pedestrianization.

In recent decades, heated scholarly debates about the internal and external combustion engines' effects on human lives around the world since the 1800s have taken place, but these issues have been investigated **as global phenomena** primarily within sociology and urban studies rather than in the fields of transnational and world history. Nevertheless, historians have been prominent in advancing our understanding of the complex economic, socio-cultural, and political changes wrought by transportation automobiliation; these suggest that it may have been one of the most significant **world-scale revolutions** of the past century. A growing body of historical evidence points to how the use of vehicles propelled by internal combustion and diesel engines (today's ubiquitous cars, automobiles, lorries and trucks) changed lives **across national, cultural, and continental boundaries**, from the top-down spread of global manufacturing and distribution systems to the cross-cultural diffusion of both futuristic dreams about life-enhancing autonomous vehicles and apocalyptic nightmares about automobile dependency. Automobiliation thus requires analysis as a world-historical set of changes.

Increased reliance on automobiles since 1900 has profoundly affected how populations faced the challenges of housing, employment, and access to foods, medicines, and social engagement. These processes have continued to evolve alongside the rise of environmental, ecological, and health concerns over the **human scale and sustainability** of this global automobile revolution (in turn prompting further automobiliation efforts in new technological directions, such as the invention of electric cars). Concomitant changes whose consequences are only now coming into scholarly focus, such as the de-pedestrianization of urban life and humans' increased sedentariness, require analysis as transnational historical phenomena.

The need for a serious examination of these global events is motivated by the significant degree to which **both urban and rural spaces** since the 1800s have been **altered, rebuilt, and even**

designed to fit the logistical needs of automobiles. Moreover, scholars exploring the cultural, social and political effects of automobilization have also stressed that the changes made to spaces and networks, especially in pre-existing urban contexts, were not just a result of **automobilizing processes** but also of **conscious projects promoting automobilism**, even individualistic automobilism, most famously in automobile manufacturers' promotion of the car as a more desirable mode of movement than public transportation. Such projects were often propelled by ideological and even mythical celebrations of automobiles as vectors for various discourses of **modernity** with deep political and economic resonance (such as celebrations of individualism, developmentalism, and the technologicalization of daily life). Historical investigations into **automobility** have also begun to trace the dialectical interplay between automobilism and the reactive **projects of anti-automobilism and re-pedestrianization** that have recently become globally prominent.

Submission due date: May 1, 2019. PLEASE NOTE that all submissions must be made using the Journal of World History's online platform, <https://jwh.msubmit.net>: questions about the online submission system should be directed to journal@hawaii.edu.

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