

*Transport: Critical Essays in Human Geography*. Edited by Susan Hanson and Mei-Po Kwan. Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008, 552 pages. £140.00 (Hardcover)

'Transport', the book edited by Susan Hanson (Clark University) and Mei-Po Kwan (Ohio State University) is part of the Contemporary Foundations of Space and Place series edited by John Agnew (UCLA), which brings together some remarkable papers in the various fields of human geography. Here we have looked at the volume on transport, seen from a critical perspective.

The book is divided into four parts: fundamental concepts, individual behaviour in the urban spatial context, inter-regional transport, and policy issues. The first part is, in turn, subdivided into four categories: access and mobility; access, networks and development; equity; and costs associated with transport. Each of the sections and sub-sections contains from two to seven papers, certainly enough to provide a clear idea of the perspective on each issue in this discipline. A valuable element of the book is that it has classic papers, such as the ones by Hägerstrand, Giuliano, Hodge and Hanson, but also includes papers that incorporate relatively recent issues to the field of transport geography, as hub-and-spoke analysis, intermodality and air transportation. In addition, the papers grouped into the policy category address the current implications of existing debates (e.g. Mokhtarian paper on the complementarity of telecommunications and travel), but they also discuss the implications of recurrent concerns to public policies (e.g. Garret and Taylor paper on the social equity of public transportation systems). The papers included in the last two categories (interregional transport and policy issues) provide a hint of which topics could become future dominant topics in transportation research.

In this regard the book is useful for monitoring the evolution of the discipline. As Hanson and Kwan mention in the introduction, during the 1960s location

decisions were seen to be rational and, therefore, quantitative approaches were emphasized. However, since the late 1960s and the 1970s there is a stronger acknowledgment of the influence of non-rational human behaviours that shape spaces and places. It is at this point that the book starts with the paper by Hägerstrand, which, by looking into the time geography of individuals, represents one of the major turns in the field. From that moment, behavioural issues have been in the spotlight. In fact, the debates that opened up in the 1970s and 1980s are still of great relevance: length and time of commuting trips (e.g., Hanson and Schwab, Janelle), low-density urban developments and land-use (e.g., Giuliano), the difficulties of developing public transport schemes in areas of high car ownership (e.g., Webber) and gender and public transportation (e.g., Forer and Kivel).

This volume also illustrates the methodological development of transport geography. Traditionally a quantitative discipline, both theoretically and empirically, it has always benefited from technological advances (i.e. computing power and geographic information systems). Although since the work by Hägerstrand qualitative approaches have been important in critical transport geography, data and quantitative methods remain essential for any in-depth analysis of transportation issues. Good examples of the importance of data are the 1999 paper by Kwan on gender and accessibility and the 2004 paper by Leinbach and Bowen on the articulation of air cargo services related to the electronics industry in Southeast Asia.

The book also suggests that policy-related papers are relatively recent. Many of these transport issues had been already addressed in theoretical or empirical studies, but always from an understanding of mobility, accessibility and equity dynamics, among other things. Yet it is clear that the analysis of transport matters from the policy side is barely present until the late 1990s. From the selected papers, it seems that the interest in using and transforming the accumulated knowledge into real policies comes from the increasing

concerns in relation to the environment, congestion and limited financial budgets.

As John Agnew notes in the preface to the series, English dominates global academic production and there has been a significant effort to include contributions by non-native English-speakers. Latin American scholars have been active in some of the fundamental concepts of critical transport geography, such as access and equity. However, for the 'Transport' volume the number of non-native English-speakers is quite limited and there is only one contribution from a scholar affiliated with a Latin American institution. However, this is not wholly the responsibility of the editors as articles written in English by Latin American scholars are not as numerous as is desirable.

Overall, this book constitutes an extraordinary manual for postgraduate students in that it offers a significant overview of some of the most outstanding papers since 1970 in the field of transportation and geography. This can be very helpful for students to frame their research into progress in the discipline. In addition, it is also useful for other scholars and those with limited access to academic journals.

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