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Social Dimensions of Sustainable Transport: Transatlantic Perspectives.
Edited by Kieran P. Donaghy, Stefan Poppelreuter and Georg Rudinger.
Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. 208 pages. £55.00 (Hardback).

This edited volume comprises a collection of papers that arose from meetings of the Sustainable Transport in Europe and Links and Liaisons with America (STELLA) Project, the overarching aim of which was to assess, in social terms, the sustainability of existing and future patterns of mobility and travel behaviour. In the preface (p.XV), the editors define the identification of 'commonalities and contrasts in forces determining spatial mobility in Transatlantic societies' and the development of a more coherent understanding of 'the transportation needs of increasingly diverse and ageing populations', as two of the project's key objectives.

In structural terms, the book is divided into four complementary sections, the first of which includes an introduction and discusses mobility trends and policy developments in North America, selected EU member states and a number of the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Reference is made to the similarities and differences that can be observed when comparing the European and North American contexts (the transport implications of significant variation in residential densities, for example). The resultant impacts on mobility patterns and travel behaviours are also noted. More specifically, Chapter two contains a comprehensive and detailed examination of the changes in travel behaviour patterns that have occurred in selected CEE countries as a result of the significant political and economic change that has occurred in the region over the last 15 years or so.

The second part of the collection contains more detailed commentaries by K. Warner Schaie & Heidrun Mollenkopf, Brigitte Waldorf & David Pitfield and Kay Axhausen on how certain social groups (the elderly, those on low incomes or lone parents, for example) experience different mobility problems and highlights how these often require bespoke solutions or interventions. It is suggested that the mobility needs of some groups are still not being adequately addressed, largely as a consequence of the underdeveloped relationship between the transport and social policy professions. Particular emphasis is placed on the mobility implications of ageing populations, the impact of driving cessation and the feminisation of the pensioner cohort. The potential for technological advance in its various guises (intelligent transport systems, teleworking, etc) to provide solutions to mobility-related dilemmas is discussed. However, the authors caution that not only is detailed

knowledge of such systems a pre-requisite to use, but also that access will often be constrained by fiscal considerations.

In parts three and four the reader is presented with a series of largely quantitative chapters examining a broad range of issues. Part 3 addresses the issue of accessibility, the factors affecting congestion levels experienced in Central Business Districts (CBDs) and different approaches to behavioural modelling. The relevance of these chapters is galvanised by the fact that accessibility planning and congestion charging have become two of the dominant issues in UK transport policy circles in recent years. This section also contains two detailed case-study illustrations of applied behavioural modelling. Part four contains a chapter, authored by Chang-Hee Christine Bae and Inge Mayeres, which addresses the costs and externalities associated with the delivery of transport services, and concludes with a chapter that examines different ways of stimulating the uptake of walking and cycling as alternatives to car use.

Overall the chapters, although subject to some degree of variation, are generally well-written and of good quality. Effective reference is made to contemporary policy considerations in most cases. For instance, road price charging is discussed in terms of equity implications and also political acceptability. One of the strengths of the publication is that each chapter concludes by identifying a series of further research questions that the author(s) consider worthy of more fulsome investigation. However, one wonders whether it might have been possible to give greater consideration to the social implications of different regulatory mechanisms associated with the operation of public transport systems, and bus services in particular. The book would perhaps also benefit from having a concluding chapter that sought to integrate the findings and recommendations of the different contributors and evaluate them as part of the more holistic drive to address the multi-dimensional problem of social exclusion that is currently being attempted in a number of countries. Having said that, it is important to acknowledge that the publication makes insightful reference to a plethora of key issues that have until recently often been overlooked by those responsible for the planning, management and operation of public transport systems.

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