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Book review

Landscapes of Mobility: Culture, Politics and Placemaking, Arijit Sen, Jennifer Johung (Eds.). Ashgate, Burlington (2013). $109.95 (Hardback) ISBN: 978-1-4094-4282-3

The work of eleven highly-qualified and inventive scholars, all with affiliations to US universities, comes together here in a text that probes objects, contacts and flows in space. The contributions range widely. Transport geographers might find most immediate resonance in chapters dealing with mapping FedEx flights, interviewing people in a Dahomey valley about reactions to road building, and examining mappings and images of homelands which helped Indian emigrants to North America interpret their mobility. Typically, the chapters contain copious helpful and thought-provoking maps, illustrations and interviews, contemporary and historic.

The remainder of the smorgasbord includes chapters on using medieval travelogues to ascertain aspects of Sri Lankan urbanism; on the links between property and mobility among Japanese Americans and African Americans in shared and overlain spaces in San Francisco; on neighbourhood mobilities in Milwaukee that differentiated social class (albeit with some subversion); on using surplus ISO containers in Caribbean ports to provide emergency housing after disasters. A chapter on mass housing for people displaced by Hurricane Katrina, the Haitian earthquake, the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster and the Tohoku earthquake manifests unfortunate and emergency mobilities in several ways. Chapters about a mobile studio for public participation in urban design, and about clothes as mobile homes, press points about engagement and adaption further. A chapter about the design and narration of the Ceausescu's 'House of the Republic' in Bucharest, and its transformation into the 'Palace of the Parliament', addresses the mobilities of residents, representations and visitors.

Writing from the perspectives of anthropology, architecture, art history, landscape and urban planning, the contributors to *Landscapes of Mobility* bring into focus for transport geographers the various ways movement infrastructures and movements themselves are embedded in and help to constitute place and surface, and give them meaning. Politics and commerce emerge as driving forces, sometimes abetted by, sometimes contested by citizens going about their ordinary activities, and always represented in some way by re-codings in speech, signs and images. Landscapes are indeed moulded by mobilities and, in turn, help to shape them.

The fascination of *Landscapes of Mobility* is the diversity of the case studies, both in scale (local to global) and topic. For the transport geographer the book's novelty is twofold: the easy switch between past and present, and the absence of quantitative social-science methodologies. The empiricism here is not statistical; there is no modelling. The intellectual tease is the social theory that undergirds most chapters, and the cross-stitching that threads through them. The co-editors' 'Introduction' sets the tone and urges new ways of thinking about connectivity and instability in the world. Their challenging chapter contributes a substantial reflection on disciplinary genealogies of mobility beyond transport geography.

Landscapes of Mobility is a cornucopia that easily merits picking up and dipping into time and again. Away from the mainstream where transport geographers anchor their work, the volume contains essays that surprise, illuminate and challenge in equal measure. There is an overall set of provocations and messages, but there are also multiple memorable case studies that can be read simply for what they disclose about places and phenomena seldom studied.

'Mobility landscapes' are evidently different to – and possibly richer and more complex than – transport landscapes. That anyway, is one of the subliminal messages here. A parallel and complimentary book from transport geographers would help show how far we have come from noting instances of and explaining transport-in-the-landscape, and transport landscaping (beautification). Our new agenda includes transport-contra-landscape, but, like Sen and Johung's book, our work also disentangles the multiple complex inter-relations and interactions of mobile person, map and (built) environment. Their register might be different; their goal is shared. Take a moment to cross-fertilise.

Gordon Pirie
University of Cape Town, South Africa
E-mail address: gordon.pirie@uct.ac.za

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