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Book review

Introduction to Transport Policy. A Public Policy View, Peter Stopher, John Stanley. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK (2014). 341pp., $145.00 (Hardback) $45.00 (Paperback), ISBN: 978 1 78195 246 7

This well-structured and highly readable textbook for students and practitioners in transport geography, transportation planning, transport policy, and related studies and professions provides valuable insights. With an overall focus on urban transport congestion, the authors do not promise to manage any problems, but to enable the reader to understand why they exist. With a brief historical review of technological developments as a vantage point, the authors give ample background information to expand the reader's perspective not only to understand various interrelationships between economic, social and technological items, but also to set up the methodological framework to identify and evaluate complex transportation problems (chap. 2).

Apart from standard approaches, the PESTEL framework is introduced in chapter 3 on policy needs and processes introducing a larger set of instruments to treat Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal challenges. Several examples of transport-related decision-making processes for road and rail are given, taking into account the local and regional levels, hereby forming a wider understanding of the full policy cycle. Following some of the basics of public policy, the structure of this textbook is designed to deliver the relevant knowledge base and foundations of economy and sustainability, traffic theory and transportation planning, and social policies (chap. 4–6). Several *externalities,* including social exclusion, environment, health and safety, congestion, and fuels and technology, are elaborated in the next part of this book (chap. 7–10) which are then brought together alongside economic transport-related benefits (chap. 11). The subsequent three chapters on transport policy and planning instruments (chap. 12–14) would sensibly lead into the chapter on integrated land use/transport policy (chap. 16). Unfortunately the reader's train of thought gets interrupted with investigations on goods movement (chap. 15), which is not without merit, just in an unusual position within the book. Indeed, in other chapters discussion on freight and logistics is integrated with the wider discussion and this may have been a more appropriate solution in terms of flow. With this as the main shortcoming of this book's structure, any sceptic impression is overcome with the closing chap. 16 comprising a number of imperative arguments for the proposed strategy described mainly with solutions for New York City and Melbourne.

However, this textbook contains a number of surprises. The readers receive only sparse information about the authors, which might be interpreted as positive, but with the holistic perspective as one of the main strengths of this book, and one of the authors coming from engineering background and the other one from transport policy background, revealing more information about the authors would emphasise and complement the promotion of interdisciplinary approaches as the bottom line of this book.

What actually is more than just a surprise is the outdated knowledge presented in the very few lines (pp. 202–203) on fuel cell and solar powered vehicles, not mentioning battery electric vehicles, which suppresses any discussion on their potential impact on transportation systems worldwide. The authors could well have given a totally negative judgement on these technologies, but ignoring the state of development completely ("multi-passenger vehicles have not yet been developed") appears to be inappropriate.

A few statements in this book are given with the pretension of global validity, e.g. on environmental laws (e.g. p. 134) and correlated planning requirements, which do not hold true confronted with the development of legislation e.g. in Germany. The same has to be said about a few conclusions that the authors draw from traffic observations (c.f. p. 180) which may unnecessarily harm their overall credibility – this book could well do without these generalisations.

This criticism is outweighed by the significance of positive surprises. The authors put a number of issues on the agenda which had been either neglected for decades, as is the case for plans and policies to foster walking and cycling, or have emerged recently as auspicious measures e.g. related to car-sharing. This should not be underestimated with regard to its weight and importance to generations of planners and practitioners.

Highlighting the need for higher vehicle occupancy in all forms of motorised transport and linking this to carpool lanes and parking policies (e.g. pp. 279–280) in this student textbook will help to enable more, better and timelier solutions to urban congestion and the desired reductions in CO_2-emissions in the future. Therefore, a lot more (e.g. Pratsch, 1975; Minett, 2013) could be described and explained about ridesharing, etc.

Obviously one of the greatest advantages presented in this book is underestimated by the authors themselves: The identification of diverging definitions of congestion as different profession-specific perspectives of exactly the same problem is mentioned only in passing, but it's a worthwhile item to explain given the substantial mis-understandings in professional as well as general public discussions.

Last but not least it's a pleasure to see combinations of spatial *and* transportation planning and policy promoted as the favourable strategy: In the early 1970s, this had already become the mainstream point of view in Germany since Kutter (e.g. Kutter, 1973), while authors of U.S. and other international English-language publications predominantly denied any interdependency of spatial and transportation related factors and developments until only one or two decades ago. The reader may also take delight in the convincing Australian practices based upon these integrated concepts.

As a conclusion, Peter Stopher and John Stanley's *Introduction to Transport Policy. A Public Policy View*, is highly recommended to all

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students and practitioners requiring a comprehensive compendium in transportation contexts.

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