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Book review

**Michiel C.J. Bliemer, Corrinne Mulley, Claudine J. Moutou. (Eds.), Handbook on Transport and Urban Planning in the Developed World, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham UK (2016). (£185 (hardback) ISBN: 978 178,347 138 6)**

At first glance the contribution of this book, and it's value amongst all the other books on transport planning, is not apparent. Why the focus on the developed world and how is this different from the developing world? Given that the vast majority of the research and development in transport planning stems from the developed world, what does this book contribute that is new?

But on reading through the book I've found it remarkably stimulating and inspiring, while also providing a very effective summary of the state of the practice as well as an overview of the research. The many chapters, while not always perfectly connected with each other, are very well written – with an excellent summary of the topic, combined with stimulating and thought provoking discussions. I find that the chapters that relate to my areas of research expertise provide a useful summary and stimulating discussion, while the chapters relating to areas with which I have relatively limited experience are easy to read and very useful in building a mental map.

More specifically, chapter 1 provides an overview of the entire book, with a good narrative linking the chapters. However, it is also probably the weakest link in the book. While it summarises the chapters and the sections quite well, it fails to position the book as a whole. Section 1 comprises three chapters that provide a historical perspective, and make a good start for the book. While they are effective at establishing the current state of the practice, they also take a more introspective approach which is stimulating.

Section 2 comprises five chapters focused on various issues in the developed world, such as changing demographics, technology and social media, urban freight, transport network reliability, and parking. Each of these chapters is individually very well written, but it's not very clear why the section chose to focus on parking (for instance) and not something else such as changing attitudes to car ownership for example. Nevertheless the chapters make very interesting reading and summarise these issues clearly and succinctly.

Section 3, focuses on policy making and strategy, with chapters examining stakeholders and politics, institutional framework, and sustainability goals. These are well rounded and appropriate, as well as well-written. Section 4 on appraisal and financing comprises three chapters on transport economics, appraisal of infrastructure, and PPPs, and round out the discussion of demand, supply and policy making in sections 2–4.

Sections 4 and 5 are in my opinion the meat of the book, though the preceding chapters are essential reading before we get there. This is beauty of the book that I failed to appreciate when I first skimmed through it, but it jumped out at me when I finished reading it end to end. Specifically, in sections 4 and 5 we hear about the state of the practice and state of the art methods in urban and transport planning, with detailed discussions of the emerging issues and how they affect these methods.

Overall it's been a very enjoyable read. This is definitely a book that I value owning, and anticipate reaching out for it often as a source of inspiration. I expect the book to be a source of inspiration for experienced readers. Students of urban and transport planning will also find the book easy to read, and a useful resource in understanding this rapidly evolving field.

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