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Journal of Transport Geography xxx (2005) xxx–xxx

**JOURNAL OF
TRANSPORT
GEOGRAPHY**

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Book review

3 **Michel Beuthe, Veli Himanen, Aura Reggiani, Luca**
Zamparini, Transport Developments and Innovations in
an Evolving World, Springer, Berlin, 2004, ISBN 3 540
00961 2. viii + 345pp., hbk £65.50/EUR 84.95/\$109.00

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 8 This edited book is the outcome of a NECTAR (Net-
 9 work on European Communications and Transport
 10 Activity Research) conference held in Helsinki in 2001
 11 about European strategies in view of global economic
 12 and transport changes. The difficulty for the editors fac-
 13 ing such an endeavor is always to select the appropriate
 14 papers and to try to articulate them according to some
 15 commonality, which then becomes a theme. The gener-
 16 alist catch-all title of the book is the outcome of such
 17 a constraint of trying to fit fairly unrelated chapters into
 18 some mould. The same approach is replicated in the dif-
 19 ferent parts of the book, the first being labeled “Techno-
 20 logical developments in transport”, the second “New
 21 forms of travel behavior”, the third “Freight transport
 22 innovations” and the fourth, even more ambiguously
 23 and unclearly, refers to “Scenario perspectives”. The ti-
 24 tles are certainly engaging, but are the chapters up to
 25 par?

26 The chapters of the first part are oriented to the con-
 27 ceptual issues related to ICT (Information and Commu-
 28 nication Technologies), with their potential impacts on
 29 transport innovations, individual accessibility, container
 30 shipping and urban distribution. The four chapters of
 31 this part are a strong component of the book. The chap-
 32 ters of the second part investigate the securities of ICT
 33 and travel behavior, notably the unwillingness of indi-
 34 viduals to adapt their travel patterns and a tendency
 35 to keep existing habits. The third part focuses on freight.
 36 Even in an era of global communication networks, it
 37 may be reassuring to see confirmation that accessibility
 38 is a key factor of efficiency, which can be enhanced by
 39 intermodalism. The fourth part is a collection of varied
 40 case studies related to Europe and Israel, mainly evalu-
 41 ating strategies for a multi-polar urban and regional
 42 landscape; more planning and government intervention
 43 are required.

44 The editors provide a succinct synthesis of the major
 45 findings of the book in their introduction. It is stressed
 46 that in spite of new ICT, transportation networks, and

globalization, the importance of proximity and accessi- 47
 bility remains the same. The declared perspective about 48
 transport development and innovations, which follow 49
 an entrenched European socialist view, first states the 50
 obvious; that accessibility needs to be improved and that 51
 environmental impacts must be abated. Then follow the 52
 usual conclusions that cars are bad and that public trans- 53
 it is good. Both the population in general and business 54
 must thus be forced to realize that governments and 55
 bureaucrats know best when their travel or shipping 56
 choices are concerned. Perhaps the inertia in freight 57
 and passengers being observed is an indication that pas- 58
 sengers and freight forwarders would prefer to make 59
 their own choices after all. 60

The book has a fairly limited appeal outside Europe, 61
 from which the great majority of the empirical evidence 62
 is derived. However, several chapters provide good con- 63
 ceptual and theoretical perspectives to which a global 64
 audience will relate, as well as a good balance between 65
 passengers and freight issues. At the time of this review, 66
 most of the information and data discussed in the book 67
 has rapidly moved towards obsolescence (no data more 68
 recent than 2000), partially the outcome of a three year 69
 delay between the conference (2001) and the publication 70
 of the book (2004). Surprisingly no attempts were made 71
 by the authors and editors to update the material with 72
 additional evidence and findings. In this regard, the 73
 book has become a victim of what it preaches by the 74
 time of publication its innovativeness and originality 75
 may have passed by. It might possibly have been better 76
 to publish some chapter as articles instead. Overall, 77
 however, the manuscript is a collection of solid papers 78
 that certainly trigger interest, questioning and debate. 79

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