

Reviews / Comptes rendus

The Geography of Urban Transportation

by Genevieve Giuliano and Susan Hanson, 4th ed.
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Urban transportation is paramount for providing people with the ability to travel to and participate in a wide range of social and economic activities. However, many cities have severe transportation problems (e.g., automobile congestion and emissions, long commutes, bicycle and pedestrian safety issues, crowded or infrequent public transit service). These problems vary across space and often align with, or even reinforce, socio-economic inequalities. *The Geography of Urban Transportation* provides a thorough overview of these issues, from theory and methodology to policy and planning strategies aimed at reducing inequalities and improving the overall well-being of urban residents.


The Geography of Urban Transportation is organized into three parts, each containing several chapters written by leading researchers in various sub-fields of transport geography. Part I is an overview of transport geography: its forms and functions, a brief modern history, and summaries of existing theories and paradigms of thought within the discipline. Part II provides an overview of contemporary urban transport planning processes and discusses the common forms of data and methods used during analysis. Part III is a series of chapters concerning transport policy issues such as finance and investment, congestion and emissions, and public transit planning. It also tackles the social equity implications of urban transport. Compared to the previous editions (1986, 1995, 2004), the fourth edition (2017) includes updates to a number of existing chapters and introduces two new chapters: one on urban freight and the other on the links between telecommunications and urban travel behavior.

The main strength of the book is that it covers a wide breadth of topics, provides a thorough historical perspective and theoretical background, and offers practical information aimed at pertinent policy and planning issues. Most authors designed their chapters to review a specific sub-field of transport geography and to offer a foundation for conducting future research. Chapters in this book certainly would be suitable reading material for advanced undergraduate or early graduate-level courses on transport geography. However, since the book focuses its discussion on cities in the United States, some of the policy issues and case studies it provides may not be directly applicable to Canadian cities. It is even less likely to apply to cities in other parts of the world, which have even greater diversity in their transport networks, urban form, and governmental structures. This criticism does not detract from the overall content of the book, but it would likely require supplementary material if being used to study cities outside of the United States.

My main critique of the book is that despite its 2017 publication, it has very little discussion on emerging research within transport geography. Like other fields, transport geography has been influenced by the growth of information technologies, in terms of how they are changing cities as well as our ability as researchers to produce knowledge about transportation and urban form. Methods in transport geography are changing due to the ubiquity of mobile devices and real-time location information. These and other sensors are producing massive quantities of data on the movement of people and vehicles. Research on transport geography has historically relied on data from regional travel surveys—which only occur once every few years—but these new near-continuous streams of data are providing the opportunity to enhance our knowledge and aid evidence-based policy. As well, spurred by these technologies, new forms of urban transportation are emerging such as autonomous vehicles, ride-hailing (e.g., Uber), and other app-based mobility services (e.g., bike-sharing). There is ample recent

research about these developments, particularly regarding their effects on travel behavior, congestion, and emissions; there is also lots of debate over whether they enforce or alleviate urban inequalities. The book only briefly touches on these emerging trends and research agendas,

but their impacts and uncertain futures necessitate more discussion.

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