Preface

A growing interest of social scientists in general, and transportation experts in particular, in the European scene has been evident in the last ten years. This growing interest is due to actual scientific and applied developments in Europe, to the importance of the EC policies and research agenda, and to the trend of studying the difference between North American and European research. This interest also led to talks between the Network of European Communications and Transportation Activity Research (NECTAR) and American transport experts from the Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS) in California in order to formulate ways of cooperation. This book, apart from contributing to the general understanding of transportation systems, may thus serve as a window to present the four pertinent topics in the field of travel behaviour recently studied in Europe. Although it grew out of the fourth NECTAR Euroconference which took place in Israel (1998), it also includes additions written especially for it. In that respect it is wider than a post-conference collection of papers.

NECTAR is now a professional association which grew out of a European Science Foundation (ESF) funded network during the 1980s. The ESF can see in NECTAR a model in which the support of the networking has paid off. Leaving the nest of the ESF, NECTAR members have decided to continue both the meetings and the research collaboration. The current book is an outcome of this collaboration.

The book comprises four parts all based on non-traditional approaches. The first part deals with mobility and travel patterns. It analyses the relationship between housing and mobility, between infrastructure and mobility, and between parking and mobility. The second part examines the diverse range of relationships between telecommunication and travel, especially travel to work, and is complemented by an empirical study on long-distance telephone calls. The major issue of traffic congestion is presented and discussed in the third part. Special attention is given to the non-traditional concept that one should not get rid of congestion, but rather keep some. Some congestion is good for the system. Part III also presents several aspects of congestion on a European-wide scale as well as estimating the potential of traffic-calming measures, and assessing the consequences of urban sprawl from the point of view of environmental and social sustainability. Finally, the fourth part presents key

issues in modelling behavioural responses. It presents innovations in the field of data collection as well as the notions of behavioural thresholds. It further presents a conceptual model of households' activity-scheduling process, based partially on empirical evidence gathered through a Computerized Household Activity Scheduling Elicitor (CHASE) survey. The book ends with questions concerning the possibility of modelling personal reactions to employment and residential relocations.

The editors wish to thank Mr Gregory Newman for his language and general editing assistance, and to acknowledge the graphical assistance offered by Mr Peter Lupan of the Department of Geography and Environmental Development at Ben-Gurion University. Special thanks are also due to Jennifer Chilton, Francine O'Sullivan and Julie Leppard of Edward Elgar Publishing for a fruitful cooperation throughout the publication procedures.

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