
1 Introduction

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Many aspects of the identity of the city in the developing world city are currently in flux. Dimitriou's edited book entitled *Transport Planning for Third World Cities* (1990), a kind of predecessor to this book, was initially published some 20 years ago (reprinted in 2010), but now there is no longer a 'third world' and what constitutes a 'developing world' is under great debate. City officials and professionals have been attracted to many international currents for understanding urban quandaries and their solutions. Perspectives on what is 'developing' depends in part on what urban subsystems are in focus. Cities of widely different income profiles, different structure and plights are all part of the developing world. In fact, the typology of 'developing cities' (that is, cities of the developing world) has never been at all comfortable. Numerous efforts have been made to categorize them, with little agreement over most of these typologies. It seems to us that the core of definition of the developing city for purposes of this book is:

- rapid change in travel demand and its structure;
- the presence of a dysfunctional misfit among the many urban subsystems that comprise the setting and behaviour of urban transportation; and
- the existence of substantial populations in poverty.

In cities of the developing world the conditions and growth or decline of many transport-related subsystems are significantly out of synchronization with one another. They exhibit:

- Rapidly increasing vehicle ownership.
- Dramatic changes in spatial, temporal and modal characteristics of personal trip patterns with rapidly increasing personal trip rates.
- Evolving land use patterns of dramatically declining density.
- Concurrent use of many vehicle technologies which provide complementary mobility options but also obstruct each other's performance and make system integration very difficult.
- Inadequate infrastructure extensions likely to be caused by authorities' commitments to inadequately evaluated projects, weak planning overview and the impossibility of meeting burgeoning demand.

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- Changing systems of production through industrialization and globalization producing a new and different profile of requirement for goods movement.
- Inadequate efforts to deal with rapidly increasing local pollution and global warming effluents.

The problem of disjointedness is very apparent in such cities. Motorization is increasing at more than 10 per cent a year in many cities – doubling every seven years in some instances. This single fact puts a special shape on the whole sphere of phenomena in the cities where it takes place. Since infrastructure has not been supplied, travel behaviour has stabilized or land use has continued at existing densities with this scale of growth of the motor vehicle fleet. Urban land use incursions into surrounding (typically rural) regions at very low densities have in many instances produced a very different kind of city to those found in the developed world, with very different structural and social characteristics, which suggest that in some cases new typologies of city structures are emerging.

Some have argued that developments of this kind once took place in the developed world as well. New York and Glasgow, for example, had residential densities over 1400 people per hectare 100 years ago but are now settled stably into average densities with a small fraction of these, and growing slowly. In the developing world, however, the economic roles of cities rapidly changed with the new and often dramatic opportunities presented by globalization. In some cases, the new focus such developments presented benefited from totally new logistics, very fast changes in technological innovation on a number of fronts simultaneously, and very different resultant patterns of employment location. Through rapid economic change and diverse personal economic conditions there are numerous transport modes in simultaneous use in public ways – from bicycles and animal traction to high-speed motor cars – each accusing the others of impedance. Levels of environmental pollution are growing rapidly, projecting the concern for sustainability as a priority to many cities where the matter was until recently virtually totally unaddressed.

Poverty is a great and defeating spectre of transport in the developing city, because whatever might partly overcome the constraining effect of these misfitting systems is unlikely to be inexpensive and will thus present high opportunity costs. The mobilization of a large, desperately poor population, on the other hand, will call upon the same pot of resources and will need to be met at very low cost if it is to be affordable. The inability to meet both these challenges simultaneously puts a cloud over the efforts towards mobility and sustainability of the developing city, inevitably producing some ‘winners’ and some ‘losers’. Reluctance to permit higher

public transport fares to use as revenues to reinvest in the expansion of the system, for example, stems opportunities for improving the mobility of significant parts of the urban population.

Further confounding the effort to address these problems is the general lack of agreement on projects and policies (and their priorities) aggravated by the absence of adequate institutional and professional capacities to respond appropriately to these challenges. Cities of the developing world are targeted by many consultants, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the well-meaning actions of international agencies, from several different professional orientations, producing cross-currents of belief and initiative on the problems. Few of the countries, however, have associations of professionals with coherently evolving indigenous perspectives on these problems. Furthermore, where the politics of self-interest intervenes and overrides professional and technical advice, this takes its toll and makes matters yet worse.

Our purpose in putting together this edited book is to offer reflections on the above issues (and more) and to provide numerous strategic informed perspectives on these matters as they affect such cities. The reader will find that the project and policy agendas for urban transport, in spite of their variations in contexts, are not as different among the cities as one might expect. Many cities throughout the developing world for example, have vehicle inspection programmes and campaigns to put transport vehicles on less polluting fuels in order to improve environmental conditions. Many such large cities also have some form of travel demand management. Other cities have experience with more modest actions such as pedestrianization, parking controls, special vehicle restrictions, and so on. Privatization of major traffic routes seems to be moving from exclusively intercity applications to increasingly urban highways. Many cities are simultaneously considering the merits of different rail technologies, while a remarkable number are either looking into introducing or are undertaking currently popular bus rapid transit (BRT) systems. A number of cities have even attained some level of public transport system integration (for fares, networks, regulation, and so on), often at the time implementing high-volume passenger schemes. This is truly a major achievement, considering that system integration has been urged and attempted for a good half-century. Based on recent successful applications, some cities are also currently debating the merits of congestion pricing – after several decades of largely ineffective advocacy by economists.

While communication and learning jointly from experience has clearly a long way to go, there are definite indications that productive intercommunication is now growing rapidly, not only between cities of the developed

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and developing world but also among cities of the developing world. There are impressive examples of a thriving dialogue at several levels.

One is the effort to grasp this multifaceted problem through understandings of 'sustainability'. This vision or concept evolved from a natural-resource management base that emerged from the 1970s. The current effort is to find meaningful applications of the principles of sustainability as it diffuses through the whole span of environmental, institutional, economic and social concerns in which urban transport has an important part to play. Sustainability is rapidly becoming a platform to unify the diverse components of the field of urban transport development, with aims and forces intended to avert the environmental calamity behind it.

A second set of themes concerns the question of making cities more competitive, so as to enable them to absorb larger labour markets. This will lead to improved efforts at understanding the urban impacts of globalization and will help cities to emerge as platforms for advanced technologies of production. In the case of the urban transport sector, this could prove especially significant for transport logistics and the supply chain management requirements of the sector, and the creation of specialized logistic centres.

Though not at the same level of scope, perhaps the most dramatic evidence of intercommunication among cities about mobility has been the appearance of what must be called an international movement in BRT, undoubtedly the most widespread interest in a single new technology since the introduction of the electric streetcar in the 1870s. The apparent surfacing of congestion pricing in dialogue across the developing world, on the basis of what some experts deem to be 'successful' recent experiments, is another example of this new decentralized collaboration we are experiencing.

As editors, it is our hope to provide through this book a series of diverse contributions that will function as benchmarks for participants in this decentralized international collaboration, producing a more coherent and informed debate as we press on with the all-important job of addressing the accessibility and mobility needs of cities in the developing world.

The book is in three parts. It commences in Part I with an attempt by the editors to set the international context of transport policy-making and planning for cities in the developing world. In Part II, it moves on, with the assistance of a number of eminent contributors, to identify and provide insights into specific important issues. In Part III the book offers a series of critical reviews provided by another set of eminent contributors who offer perspectives on new developments in the theory and practice of urban transport policy-making and planning in the developing world, culminating in a new agenda for a more holistic and sustained approach

to urban transport challenges in the developing world for the twenty-first century proposed by the editors.

REFERENCE

Dimitriou, H.T. (1990) 'Transport problems of Third World Cities' in *Transport Planning for Third World Cities* (reprinted 2010) edited by H.T Dimitriou, Routledge, London.