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One of the main, common objectives of an enlarged European Union should be the reduction of the 'wealth gap'. The best tool to achieve this is a reinforced cohesion policy. During its implementation a healthy balance must be found between ensuring strict financial discipline and sufficiently flexible rules to ensure the proper and full absorption of the funds.

*EU Commissioner Péter Balázs,
twin-commissioner for Regional Policy
May-October 2004, speaking at the launch of the
Structural Funds 2007-2013, 14 July 2004*

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Urban & Regional Transportation Modelling. Essays in Honour of David Boyce, edited by Der-Hong Lee, ISBN 1-84376-306-0, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, Glos. Price £75, HB (web price £67.50).

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David Boyce joined the Regional Science community by gaining his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1965, and this Festschrift honours a diverse and most productive career. The volume is the third in the Elgar series 'New Dimensions in Networks' under the editorship of Anna Nagurney, and consists of 20 previously unpublished papers on theoretical and computational aspects of spatial modelling.

The book's key messages will be of most use to those working at the coalface of spatial modelling. Most of the papers take the form of a theoretical and technical discussion of a new aspect of transport modelling, followed by some comments on the algorithms used, and some numerical examples and applications usually drawn from small or medium-sized urban networks.

The less technically minded reader will find Huy Williams' overview of transport planning models particularly useful and clear. The main body of the papers confirms the formidable technical diversity and detail of the transport modelling field. Included in the subjects receiving specific attention are extensions of transportation modelling into a multi-modal context, the modelling and optimal setting of traffic signals, the role of road pricing in a city with and without a ring road, and the impact of on-line traffic information in the modelling of driver behaviour including driver reaction to road works or accidents.

The papers are mostly geared towards dynamic or stochastic behaviour and optimisation, with traffic flows, route choice and departure times variable and/or stochastic. These extra dimensions do, of course, make a number of the papers quite heavy going mathematically, and readers need a good facility with modelling technique to make the best use of the book.

Perhaps the most technically demanding paper is by Dong, Zhang and (series editor) Nagurney. This focuses on modelling the interplay of transportation and telecoms networks, with the 3 tiers of manufacturing, distribution and retailing activity, random demands from retailing, and e-commerce business-to-business transactions. Five theorems on finite dimensional variational inequalities and market equilibria are proved, and applied to 6 numerical examples to illustrate the algorithm and computational procedure.

The book finishes with two papers from a slightly different direction: one (co-authored by Geoff Hewings) on highway capacities and intra- and inter-regional trade in Brazil, involving the combined transportation and input-output modelling area on which David Boyce recently published (PRS, 2002), and finally a short Swedish paper on the 'C-economy' (creative, cognitive, cultural, computerised, etc.) which is drawing research attention in urban economics.

Almost all the papers have a modern and full chapter bibliography, and in almost every case one finds David Boyce has made a key contribution to the relevant literature. The book as a whole has a well-prepared index, and the presentation and readability of the technical text is impressive, important in an at-times densely-written volume.

A number of the authors are David Boyce's former students, and most of the rest are present and former colleagues. The genuine affection and academic respect which is felt for Professor Boyce comes clearly through, as a gifted teacher and wide-ranging and technically sophisticated researcher.

The likely audience for the book will be (apart from libraries) academic researchers and urban modelling specialists looking for hints and know-how in algorithms and comparative programming efficiency. The price, for an edited hardback research collection of high publishing quality, is quite reasonable, but probably beyond the student pocket.

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