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# **EDITORIAL: SPECIAL ISSUE: TRANSPORT GEOGRAPHY IN ASIA**

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This special issue is partially based on articles selected from the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Hong Kong Society for Transportation Studies in Hong Kong on December 17-20, 2011. The conference was organized by the Hong Kong Society for Transportation Studies, the Institute of Transport Studies and the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Hong Kong. The conference aimed to foster excellence in transportation research and practice, stimulate professional interactions, and provide a forum for exchanging ideas on transportation developments. The presentations covered but were not limited to transport geography, economics, dynamics, planning, design, operation and management, policy, and travel behavior.

Although transport geography is not a new subject, it continues to grow. There are always new issues. Moreover, the issues faced by Asia can be very different from those faced by the US and Europe. The economic growth in Asia has been rapid in recent decades, whereas the economic activity in Europe and the US has gradually slowed. Asia has encountered difficulties in planning future transport infrastructure and its management and operation. The advances in methodological approaches and their successful application should prove implicative to decision makers, transport authorities, and researchers in the field, especially in Asia. Hence, this special issue is devoted to transport geography in Asia.

Five articles are collected in this special issue, two of which have been presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Hong Kong Society for Transportation Studies. The other three were selected from an open call for papers. These articles emphasize empirical findings on various transportation issues in Asia and the Pacific Rim. They also cover different modes of transportation including air, maritime, road-based motorized transport, and walking.

The first article, by Inkinen and Pyyhtiae, analyzes the connectivity and centrality of airline networks in relation to intercontinental air passenger flows towards nine Asian destinations. The authors examine the effects that economical and geographical factors have on airline network displacement. The results indicate that the diversity of the connecting hubs for intercontinental air flows in Northern Europe has been

increasing, and the destination palette to Asia has been expanding continuously. This finding is informative in its determination of airlines' operational strategies, given the diminishing marginal revenue per passenger due to the economic recession in European areas. It also implies that more airline hubs should be placed in a beneficial location in response to the potential growth in air transport demand in Asian cities such as Tokyo, Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Osaka.

The second article, by Lam et al., proposes a novel activity-based methodology for modeling exposure and examining the crash risk for elderly pedestrians. This approach integrates the information obtained from travel characteristics surveys, historical crash records, and road network databases into pedestrian crash analysis. The movements of elderly pedestrians are analyzed in time and space using geographic information systems. The authors provide insight into refining and selecting appropriate remedial measures at locations with a high risk of elderly pedestrian crashes. This research is particularly important because Asia's urban populations rely heavily on walking as a transport mode and have an aging problem.

The third article, by Wadud, attempts to measure the depreciation of property prices in relation to aviation noise and its relevant attributes, based on a meta-regression analysis of Asian airports. The author uses the Noise Depreciation Index to gauge the trade-off between property prices and the noise levels attributed to air transport. The results indicate that GDP and income are deterministic to the association between the property prices and noise levels. This finding is implicative to transport planners in selecting airport locations and should be of great concern because the demand for air transport has been growing rapidly in many developing Asian countries, making environmental sustainability, including the reduction of noise impact, a serious transportation infrastructure development issue.

The fourth article, by Ng et al., investigates the port choices of shipping lines and shippers in Australia using empirical evidence. A semi-structured survey was carried out to model the decisions of shippers, with respect to port of origin, destination, and supply chain network. Deterministic attributes including infrastructure capacity, level of services, cost and tariff, and connectivity to the port choices have been revealed. The authors show that the port choice decision is closely related to associated supply chain management, including the landside logistics chain and inter-modal services. This article should stimulate discussion among government, transport authorities, and shippers on port choice and, perhaps more importantly, on the future development of port infrastructure.

The last article, by Wong et al., documents the details of a first travel characteristics survey conducted in Macau. Macau is featured by the gaming-led tourism economic strategy and has unique transportation demand, supply, and travel pattern characteristics. The authors provide a study plan, data collection procedure, zoning system, and method of analysis for the survey. The information presented in this article can be used as a benchmark for other future transportation studies in Macau and should prove useful to studies conducted in similar Asian cities.

The five articles published in this special issue provide interesting findings on tackling the challenges of transport operation, management, and planning in Asia. Various aspects of transport geography are addressed including air transportation,

maritime freight transport, traffic safety, and travel behavior. It is our hope that this special issue will stimulate new thinking from decision makers, transport authorities, researchers, and practitioners in the field.

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