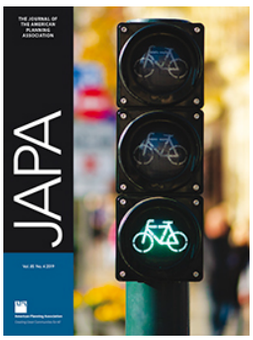

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Journal of the American Planning Association

ISSN: 0194-4363 (Print) 1939-0130 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjpa20

Banister: *Inequality in Transport*

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To cite this article: Mahtot Gebresselassie & Thomas W. Sanchez (2019) Banister: *Inequality in Transport*, Journal of the American Planning Association, 85:4, 593-594, DOI: 10.1080/01944363.2019.1641385

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1641385

a component of his Obesity Task Force. In this position, she worked on participatory design for 13 community gardens.

In these chapters, Mees provides a detailed examination of the evolution of community gardens in New York from the mid-1960s through the near-bankruptcy of the 1970s and up to the recent past. Although she largely steers clear of any political assessment, the priorities of each mayoral administration are clearly readable in her historical outline. She highlights the fact that community gardens are affected by factors such as legislation and local policies, land use and housing priorities, real estate financing options for local residents or larger-scale developers, gentrification, and open space policies. Her account also reveals the gradual surfacing of an increasing sensibility first to ecological concerns and then to health concerns.

Mees argues that community gardens create communities, enhance quality of life, and influence the broader concerns of ecology, food supply, and health. She also traces a gradual recognition of community gardens as a valuable and valued alternative to the park system. Although she outlines the benefits of community garden activity for the people involved, Mees does not address the general cultural circumstances that make such impacts highly desirable, which include mitigating social ostracism and cultural intolerance.

A particularly compelling chapter follows the evolution of the Puerto Rican *casita* from its vernacular origins as an island dwelling to its manifestation in the transplanted Puerto Rican community of the South Bronx. Generously illustrated by the author's color photographs, the account of the casitas and their satellite structures highlights the cultural assertion embodied in these buildings and their use, which occasionally challenges or takes precedence over the rules devised to regulate community gardens.

The final chapter relates the author's field experience in participatory design for 13 gardens and their self-built structures. Her account reveals the subtle tensions between providing a design that meets local standards for garden structures while involving participants in a process that allows for the expression of their preferences and concerns in the resulting structures.

Participatory Design and Self-Building in Shared Urban Open Spaces combines broad historical context, detailed history of a major case study, and field reports on a localized implementation that seeks to reconcile participatory design and compliance with local regulations in self-built structures. It relies on an extensive array of carefully documented sources listed at the end of each chapter.

The scope of this study makes it a go-to resource for New York City community gardens and, as such, a number of scholarly tools would facilitate the reader's topical consultation: a comprehensive bibliography, an index, a list of abbreviations, and, for the New York section of the book, a chronology of events. The latter could have reduced repetitions in the text of the individual chapters, and careful editing might have enhanced readability. These are, of course, minor concerns given the pioneering nature of this work, which also highlights the role played by various groups that were able to organize and make their voices heard, despite their vulnerability to sweeping forces of real estate development and profit.

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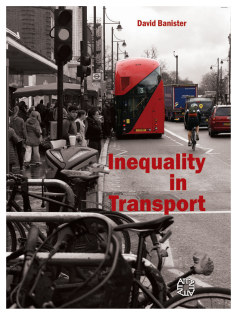
Transportation

Inequality in Transport

David Banister

(2018). London, UK: Alexandrine Press. 272 pages. $40.00 (paperback)

Reviewed by Mahtot Gebresselassie and Thomas W. Sanchez, Virginia Polytechnic Institute



David Banister, a professor emeritus of transport studies at the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, is an influential figure in the field of sustainable transport and urban development. In his self-published book, *Inequality in Transport*, Banister provides a rich argument about how inequality pervades society and transport in particular. Several chapters incorporate an array of quantitative data, with tables and figures highlighting patterns of inequality and describe transport inequality in various dimensions, undergirded by a strong theoretical foundation with Rawlsian streak.

Despite both the implied and stated objectives and a wealth of information, Banister does not deliver tangible recommendations on how equality in transport can be achieved. Nor does he provide any new theory or theory-building for transport inequality despite his

vast knowledge and experience. The end result is a volume that mostly restates what we already know: Transport inequality is a very significant challenge, the rich have gained transport advantages at the expense of the poor, the poor are disproportionately affected by negative externalities, and it is challenging to implement theory.

Inequality in Transport focuses on Great Britain as a case study, limiting lessons that can be learned in various contexts. Although there are some global commonalities in urban transport and mobility patterns, the case of Great Britain is not easily applied to, for instance, the United States or less-developed nations. The detailed trends and issues are well presented with insightful discussion, but the limited geographic scope represents a missed opportunity. Case in point: Transport inequality in the United States is intertwined with race, an issue he does not discuss. His argument is also limited by the vast amount of research from outside Great Britain that Banister excludes from his discussion. He writes, "Although much has happened over the past 15 years, the issues of equity, equality, and fairness have not featured high on the transport agenda" (p. 53). Although this may be true in Great Britain, it is certainly not the case abroad, particularly in the United States.

Inequality in Transport excludes substantial transport-related research and scholarship in the areas of civil rights, environmental justice (mentioned in passing as social and environmental justice), transport equity, and social equity. In the case of the United States, there have been significant increases in equity-related evaluations and research pertaining to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964); Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (1994); the Welfare Reform Act (1996); the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005); Federal Transit Administration Circular 4703.1 (2012); and both mandated and voluntary reporting by metropolitan planning organizations. Though certainly not perfect, these regulations and practices provide the basis for legal challenges related to transport inequality in the United States.

For anyone working on transport inequality issues, Banister offers a sobering message that inequality in transport is inevitable because of different types of transport needs and abilities to pay. Emphasis on transport inequality in terms of income, however, leads to another blind spot in the book. Transport inequality is a function of race and ethnicity, bodily ability, civic status, age, and other factors. These traits, mentioned in passing or missing from Banister's discussion, can be correlated with income, but they also bring a different set of transport disadvantages outside of income inequality considerations. A narrow focus on income limits the potential impact and scope of solutions derived from the book.

The book concludes with a discussion of a hierarchy of transport modes (walking, cycling, bus, car, rail) in a decreasing order of equality. To reduce inequality, Banister points out, it is important to make such a clear link between mode and level of inequality to prioritize investments for options that offer more equality and less externalities. However, he does not offer concrete direction on how this can be implemented. "Society needs to move away from the primary focus of transport policy on choice and the mobility concerns of the 'rich' to one that takes a broader perspective on opening up opportunities and giving greater independence to all people" (p. 227). This illustrates the book's lack of new thinking on the topic and actionable recommendations for policymakers to reduce inequality.

Transport Inequality is a good read for those new to the topic or those looking for a refresher. It has something to offer for readers interested in theoretical arguments, quantitative evidence, and discussion of trends in transport inequality relative to income. Perhaps the book should have been titled *Transport Inequality and Income: A Comprehensive Overview of Trends in the UK*. Though a less catchy title, it would have been more accurate.

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