TRANSPORT POLICY IN THE EEC

John Whitelegg

Transport Policy in the EEC

JOHN WHITELEGG

ROUTLEDGE
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1988 by
Routledge
a division of Routledge, Chapman and Hall
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Published in the USA by
Routledge
a division of Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.
29 West 35th Street, New York NY 10001

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Biddles Ltd, Guildford and King's Lynn

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Whitelegg, J. (John)
Transport policy in the EEC. – (The Routledge EEC series).
1. European Community countries
Transport. Policies of European Economic Community
I. Title
380.5'094

ISBN 0-415-01258-9

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Whitelegg, J. (John)
Transport policy in the EEC / John Whitelegg.
p. cm. – (The Routledge EEC series)
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-415-01258-9.
1. Transportation and state – European Economic Community countries. I. Title. II. Series.
HE242.8.W47 1988 380.5'068 – dc19 88-14863

Preface

The title of this book is *Transport Policy in the EEC*, not 'of the EEC'. This emphasis deliberately conveys the central notion that EEC transport policy will produce results only through the medium of national transport policies, which vary enormously from country to country within the Community. This influence will work in both directions, and it is to be expected that national transport policies will influence the final form and content of an EEC transport policy. Transport policy, then, has to be viewed as an arena for conflict between member states as each strives to ensure that policies and directives maximize self-interest. This creates an unstable environment for policy formulation and one which is fundamentally unsuited to resolving dilemmas in transport. Nevertheless, it is the reality of transport policy in the EEC – and the background against which this book is set.

The book has benefited enormously from the advice and encouragement of others. Thanks are due to Mayer Hillman, John Roberts, Kate Oliver, Sheila Faith (MEP), Susan Hoyle and Don Mathew. All of these gave thoughtful advice and encouragement. In the Department of Geography at Lancaster I have been very fortunate to have the help of a remarkably good team of workers. Pauline Cross, Elsa Drinkall and Lenore Saville all struggled with the text. Peter Mingins and Claire Jarvis contributed their cartographic and design skills, and Sandra Irish her proof-reading skills. All six made Lancaster a very pleasant place to work.

The book was begun in Darmstadt in West Germany and completed in Dortmund in the same country some 14 months later. In Darmstadt I was lucky to have the advice of Peter Sturm and Klaus Schlabbach as well as the facilities provided by Professor Retzko. In Dortmund I have been equally fortunate to work with Helmut Holzapfel. In both places I have learned a great deal about my subject and owe an intellectual debt to the progress which has been made in Germany and made so freely available to me.

J. Whitelegg
Dortmund-Oespel February 1988

Glossary and abbreviations

Cabotage	In its original maritime context it means trade between two ports in the same country. It is now used to describe the ability of road haulier from country A to operate within country B if this is a destination country or is en route to a third country. This implies the opening of road haulage business in any European country to the operators of any other member state.
Harmonization	The adoption of legislation by Community institutions that is designed to bring about changes in the internal systems of member states. These changes are intended to ensure roughly approximate conditions in all states and to contribute to an efficient common market.
Liberalization	The removal of barriers to trade which may operate in one or more member states, e.g. removing any restrictions on the quantity of pricing of transport services which might discriminate against non-national operators, freeing road haulage from controls on quantity and permitting access to markets and transport services throughout the community without distortions which might be imposed by national governments.

Abbreviations

CTP	Common Transport Policy of the EEC
ECMT	European Conference of Ministers of Transport
ECU	European Currency Unit
EIB	European Investment Bank
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
IMP	Integrated Mediterranean Programme
ONSER	Organisme National de Sécurité Routière
PSO	Public Service Obligation
NCI	New Community Instrument
SIT	Specific Transport Instrument
TEU	Twenty Foot Equivalent Unit (referring to container sizes)
TIEP	Transport Infrastructure Experimental Programme
UIC	Union Internationale des Chemins de Fer
VDA	Verband der Automobilindustrie E.V.

Railway operators

BR	British Rail
CH	Greek Railways
CP	Caminhos de Ferro Portuguese (Portuguese Railways)
DB	Deutsches Bundesbahn
DSB	Danske Statsbaner (Danish State Railways)
FS	Ferrovie dello Stato (Italian railways)
JNR	Japanese National Railways
NS	Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Dutch railways)
NSB	Norwegian State Railways
SBB	Schweizerische Bundesbahn (Swiss Railways)
SJ	Sveriges Statens Järnvägar (Swedish railways)

SNCB	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Belges (Belgian Railways)
SNCF	Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (French Railways)
VR	Finnish State Railways

Contents

Figures and tables

Figures

Tables

1 Transport policy in the EEC

A book on transport policy in the EEC must overcome many hurdles if it is to present a lucid account of such a large area of policy, and over so extensive a geographical space. The purpose of this chapter is to establish our guidelines and to place transport and transport policy into an EEC and European context.

Transport is such an important part of everyday life, and so much a part of other major policy areas, that it is difficult indeed to draw neat boundaries around it or subject it to orderly dissection. At a national level this presents policy making with serious difficulties, but at an international level the problems are magnified. Within the EEC the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has given rise to much discussion, debate, and dissent, but nevertheless it has produced on the ground tangible effects, having an enormous impact on the structure of agriculture and its economic importance in member states. The same cannot be said for transport which is also a common policy within the meaning of the legislation establishing the EEC. Much of this book will be concerned with unravelling the different elements of the Common Transport Policy (CTP) and interpreting its emphases and gaps.

Transport policy in most European countries, and particularly member states of the EEC, is an amalgam of many years' historical evolution tempered by some distinctively different national approaches to issues like regulation and state intervention, railways, and social concerns. Enormous problems are involved in producing a lucid analysis of transport policy in any one nation state which would make an attempt at synthesizing transport policy over the twelve states significantly unproductive, a factor which is not unrelated to the failure of the CTP to take off in any way that bears comparison with the CAP.

Transport policy is most recognizable when states take action in areas of finance, infrastructure, or competition regulation for particular modes, yet these are not necessarily the areas of policy which will most

influence the form and structure of transport or contribute to the quality of life and ease of movement of citizens of the EEC. In practically all European countries there is a geographical division of responsibility in transport matters with the state providing the general framework, but leaving a considerable latitude for local interpretation. In the UK the shire counties and recently abolished metropolitan counties represent the local level within which there would be considerable latitude for transport policy innovation, particularly in land use and fare levels for local transport. In West Germany the federal system gives added weight and significance to regional variations in policy, while a third tier at the level of the city or the *Kreis* adds to the diversity. Under these circumstances, transport policy cannot be understood without some knowledge of the interplay between local and national initiatives, the geographical allocation of power, and the diversity of policy initiatives within any one state whether federal or not.

Of increasing importance to an assessment of transport policy within an administrative system is an understanding of land use and environmental considerations. In transport planning it is now commonplace to be reminded of the interdependence of transport systems and land use systems – but this acknowledgement is rarely translated into physical results for the benefit of residents or workers faced with unacceptable traffic environments or long, tiring, and expensive commuter trips. In most European countries traffic planning still takes place against a background of forecasts of greater car ownership and the assumed advantage of new roads, while public transport struggles with a land use system which has not been designed to maximize the advantages of collective forms of transport. Although the results of this kind of planning do vary through Europe, the effects are not dissimilar – road traffic accidents, polluted environments, loss of agricultural land and forest to new motorways, poor travel opportunities for those who do not own a motor car, and environments which are unfriendly both to the very young and elderly. These are transport policy matters. Sometimes they will surface in the shape of proposals for cycle ways or pedestrian areas in cities or in plans for residential areas to reduce traffic speed, or eliminate traffic altogether, but the central question of traffic in society and the role of the private motor car is rarely confronted. Transport policy, therefore, operates through proxy variables, which sometimes produce results but are more often merely cosmetic. It must follow the dictates of wider economic planning, as in the case of the French support of high-speed railways; and in all countries policies which might impinge on ownership

and use of cars take a secondary role in importance to the car industry itself and its employment role. In Britain support for the 'company car' (a state-subsidized car for higher socio-economic groups) institutionalizes support for the car and does little to negate whatever progress can be made in public transport with lower fares or the occasional environmental improvement or cycle way project.

Throughout Europe there are many different kinds of approach to land use and environmental improvements which impinge on transport. In Holland, the Woonerfen schemes are a notable example of the kind of drastic improvements which can be produced in residential areas by reducing traffic speed and tipping the balance in favour of children and residents. In Germany, *Verkehrsberuhigung* experiments have had a similar effect and have raised the general consciousness over both what is possible and what is acceptable.

Land use is a key issue in any social or economic planning. Within a national state it will influence the demands made on transport infrastructure and hence on energy consumption and public expenditure. These are real costs which have to be met and which, in their turn, generate further costs in the form of disbenefits to groups of residents and transport users. It is paradoxical, therefore, that land use planning plays such a small part in transport policy. This applies at all geographical scales. Decisions on where to build new schools, hospitals, or workplaces (or which to close) are rarely taken with transport considerations in mind. Regional planning within a nation state has not been effective in reducing the pressure on heavily utilized infrastructure in growth areas while re-deploying such pressure to areas of high unemployment and/or underutilized infrastructure. In fact the opposite seems to be the case, with most European countries still experiencing a regional problem of some kind, together with great pressures in areas like the M4 corridor to the west of London. Growth areas, with their heavier dependence on motorized transport and air traffic than the growth areas of a previous technological revolution, impose particularly heavy burdens on transport and the traffic environment. They are also more likely to be involved in international traffic movements. For the EEC the growth of international traffic (both passenger and freight) has been a major stimulus for increased activity in the sphere of liberalization and harmonization, always with an emphasis on removing barriers and easing movement.

The combined effect of land use changes at a European level, producing areas of high growth and an atmosphere of liberalization at the supranational level, is to stimulate transport with consequential

effects on quality of life and the environment for those who experience the increasing levels of traffic. These transport problems are in reality only a special case of a more general problem which is one of coping with the environmental and social consequences of economic growth. Economic growth, when it occurs, is very uneven in its spatial and social impact, generating considerable disbenefits for some groups. An alternative to economic growth is a policy based on conservation and social development. Whether or not the latter would constitute a fair exchange for jobs and other benefits of economic growth is difficult to say, and very much depends on who is gaining and who is losing. What is clear is that transport policies cannot be viewed in isolation from land use changes and economic changes; there is a fundamental relationship of mutual dependence which has to be reflected in policy making at any level, and also one with the creation and alleviation of environment dereliction. Transport policy making at both the national and EEC level has not reflected these basic characteristics of land use and transport systems, but they will nevertheless be emphasized in this book.

This book, then, is about transport policy within the EEC, and the focus derives from the importance of this administrative agency and its attempts to restructure and reorganize major features of social and economic activities. However, it should be remembered that the EEC itself has no overriding geographical logic or spatial cohesion. It was a group of six nations in 1957, and enlarged to nine in 1973 and ten in 1981. With the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1985, it became a group of twelve. Negotiations are currently in progress with the aim of adding Turkey, a further severe test of the EEC's geographical logic. Still this leaves out large and important areas from the net, particularly the Scandinavian countries, and more important from the point of view of transportation, Austria and Switzerland – which must be traversed in Community links with Italy. Here it is not the intention to enter into a debate on the definition of *Europe* merely to note that the EEC is not Europe, and Europe is not the EEC. In practical transport terms this makes life very difficult for EEC-level policy making as major areas of policy, particularly that of international road and rail haulage, will require the co-operation and agreement of non-member states. This is even more the case for inland waterway travel. Freight traffic on the Rhine is of central importance to the international movement of goods and to the rates which apply by road and rail in this highly competitive environment, yet this aspect of European transport is controlled by pre-EEC international regulations and is not easily influenced by EEC policies.