



Transport Geography Papers of Polish Geographical Society

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REVIEW: O. GITKIEWICZ – *NIE ZDĄŻĘ (ENG. I WON'T MAKE IT)*, DOWODY NA ISTNIENIE PUBLISHING HOUSE, WARSAW; 240 PP.

Recenzja: O. Gitkiewicz – *Nie zdążę*, Wydawnictwo Dowody na Istnienie, Warszawa; 240 ss. Wprowadzenie

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Nie zdążę by Olga Gitkiewicz is not a scientific study. However, the book published in 2019 in a documentary form also seems important for the scientific community, especially for geographers dealing with transport geography or, more specifically, transport based social exclusion. Hence the decision to familiarise also the readers of *Transport Geography Papers of Polish Geographical Society* with it – especially since it is a valuable supplement to the book by K. Trammer, *Ostre cięcie [A sharp cut]*, already reviewed here. The author's observations may be inspiring for the scientific community, and they may broaden the understanding of the studied issues.

Due to the nature of the described publication, it is difficult to provide a classic summary here. O. Gitkiewicz's book is a story about transport problems of the inhabitants of the Polish provinces. The author, however, is trying to search for sources of this phenomenon. She often cites scientific studies and experts she spoke with.

The author begins her reflections mentioning fascination with the automotive industry in the United States and the conspiracy against public transport there. She also draws attention to the impaired pedestrian rights in Poland, especially compared to drivers' rights. She juxtaposes this with positive examples from abroad. The author critically looks at Poles' excessive fascination with owning one's own car and at how individual motoring in Poland is supported by causative factors. In O. Gitkiewicz's work, flesh and blood people are still in the centre of attention, as it should be in research on transport based social exclusion. Their stories related to difficulties in traveling to meet their basic needs should be taken seriously. The advantage of the book is mainly based on voices of expert groups noticing that further development of individual motorisation at the expense of public transport can have quite deplorable effects in the future. The author states rightly that transport exclusion in Poland has the face of an elderly woman. She also

shows the difficult life of people living outside sub-urban areas. Backing herself up with experts' voices, O. Gitkiewicz crushes a myth that it would also be best to subject non-urban public transport to the self-regulating market. Anyway, how this market works is shown perfectly in the chapter devoted to the quality of bus transport in the Polish provinces. The author also draws attention to the problem of partial transport based social exclusion and a significant number of local Polish residents who have to adjust rhythms of their lives to public transport timetables. She also notes that most local governments do not even attempt to become public transport organizers in their area. The book also describes the success of a municipal transport company established in Lipno County. A lot of space has been devoted to the Bus Connection Development Fund – examples of attitudes towards it of quoted anonymous local government officials are alarming. The text also includes examples of

specific cities deprived of public transport on a daily basis. Attention is also drawn here to the allegorical presentation of the difference in shaping transport habits in Poland and the Czech Republic. The text mentions commuting from the commuters' perspective, too. O. Gitkiewicz also deals with the subject of deliberately stifling a demand and restructuring of PKP [Polish Railways] or cutting off passengers from re-established routes (the case of Lubin area).

Is the book worth reading? Definitely, yes – it focuses on many pathologies that have been plaguing non-urban Polish public transport for nearly 30 years. Even though it is not a scientific study, it can certainly be useful for understanding the world around us. Above all, it is the first to address the issue of transport exclusion – and not by juggling with numbers, but primarily from the perspective of an average user of public transport.

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