

trabajan en el transporte marítimo fuera de la esfera de las Conferencias Marítimas, lo que ha dado lugar a una presencia creciente de transportistas independientes que ofrecen equipamientos, capacidades de descarga y frecuencias en algunos casos superiores a las líneas regulares.

Una vez sentadas las características de este tipo de acuerdos, Freire y González Laxe se aproximan a la determinación y fijación de las tasas en el marco de las Conferencias Marítimas, empleando las herramientas del análisis económico. Y a continuación reflexionan sobre las nuevas fórmulas de cooperación en los servicios marítimos.

Finalmente, el capítulo 6, trata de la dimensión económica de los puertos. Los autores profundizan en la conformación del nuevo escenario portuario internacional que se ha dibujado desde finales del siglo pasado. En el primer apartado se determinan los efectos de la globalización marítima sobre el sistema portuario. Las transformaciones han sido ciertamente notables. Los autores citan como más destacadas las siguientes: a) la redistribución de los tráfico, en donde la emergencia de los puertos asiáticos muestra el traslado hacia el Pacífico del eje de los intercambios; b) la nueva concepción de las plataformas mundiales del transporte, con una creciente jerarquización portuaria, resultado de los cambios técnicos de los modos de transporte; c) el intenso crecimiento del tráfico de conte-

nedores, acompañado de la modificación en el tipo de mercancías dominantes en el conjunto del transporte internacional; d) la reorganización de las compañías marítimas internacionales, como respuesta a los nuevos cambios geo-estratégicos.

En los apartados siguientes, podemos encontrar información sobre la integración de los puertos en la cadena de transportes, a lo largo de una secuencia cronológica que parte de los años sesenta y llega hasta la actualidad. Aquí se analizan los elementos que configuran la accesibilidad de los puertos, así como las nuevas formas de organización vinculadas a las terminales portuarias, concluyendo con una clasificación actualizada de las tipologías portuarias.

En resumen, este trabajo resulta de utilidad a todos aquellos interesados en la Economía Marítima. Uno de sus activos es la facilidad y sistematización en la exposición, lo que le acerca a un manual de referencia; pero es igualmente válido para especialistas, gracias a la aportación que realiza para el conocimiento de la realidad y del funcionamiento marítimo. La definición de los conceptos, junto con la aplicación al análisis de hechos concretos ocurridos en las dos últimas décadas le habilita para ambas funciones. Su principal carencia, la falta de enumeración de unas conclusiones globales.

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Telegraph Messenger Boys: Labor, Technology, and Geography 1850-1950.

Autor: Gregory J. Downey

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The telegraph messenger boy was an iconic figure for over a hundred years in the United States. First on foot, later on bicycle, he (and less often, she) was associated with the delivery of information too urgent, or too confidential, to be entrusted to other forms of communication. The messenger boy can be seen as a forerunner of today's bike courier, weaving maniacally through traffic and pedestrians, found in many major cities the world over.

Greg Downey's book describing their lives is superbly placed at the disciplinary intersection of history and ge-

ography, constructing a narrative around the dialectical interaction between the temporal and the spatial. There, technology is not fetishized but presented as part of a socially constructed system in which, Downey argues, individual technologies are conceived “not in isolation from each other, but together in the service of larger goals” (p. 6). Theoretically grounded in the fertile Marxist geographical tradition of David Harvey (heavily influenced by Henri Lefebvre), in which time and space are viewed as human constructions, *Telegraph Messenger Boys* provides an original and valuable approach of particular relevance to labour scholars in the field of transport and communications.

Downey’s starting point is a nineteenth-century world in which space was annihilated by time but also time was annihilated by space. The development of (almost instantaneous) communication re-oriented temporal relations, helping create, as William Cronin points out in *Nature’s Metropolis*, the futures markets of Chicago. But spatial relations were also affected, with the built environments of cities becoming re-ordered as thousands of workers operated together in close proximity. Of course, the speed with which such re-ordering took place varied greatly: New York was not the same as rural Appalachia. Indeed, a key backdrop to the book is the nature of uneven geography in the capitalist landscape.

Messenger boys step fascinatingly into this world as go-betweens, with transient identities that enable them to navigate both the physical and metaphorical boundaries of the information economy. According to Downey they move between the “seen and the unseen, the indoor and the outdoor, the virtual and the physical, the child and the adult, the entrepreneur and the employee, the public and the private, the local and the global” (p. 14). These are common topics in human geography, but Downey crafts them into a diligent historical analysis that carefully and painstakingly reconstructs the minutiae of the messenger-boy world. Using a wide variety of sources (company records and news-

letters, local newspapers, novels, advertisements and trade magazines), Downey begins in the 1840s with the construction of the first telegraph line between Washington DC and Baltimore, and ends with the bankruptcy of Western Union in the 1990s. Throughout, the messenger boy remains pivotal – indeed, Downey suggests that Western Union’s demise may have been due in no small part to the final phasing out of messengers in the 1970s. After all, without a messenger, he asks, what exactly was a telegram?

The first messengers appeared at the ‘point of delivery’ for Western Union’s (WU) inter-city network. Though a ‘conceptual value’ was placed on the messenger boy’s service, it was not yet fully realized. Messenger boys occupied a quasi-apprentice role, with some as young as nine left in charge of rural telegraph offices in the 1860s. With the arrival of the American District Telegraph Company (ADT) in the 1870s, the network became as vital for intra-city relations as inter-. New call-box technology enabled messengers to be summoned as well as used for delivery. WU’s initial contract with, and eventual takeover of, ADT provided greatly enhanced service coverage and speed.

Downey argues that with a more intricate network operating at different geographical scales, telegraph companies increased the extraction of value from their messenger boys in numerous ways. First, by the 1880s, it was clear that local boys were able to carry and collect far more than just telegrams. Money, legal documents, machine parts and movie films were among some of the items transported. Second, with such a large pool of workers and inevitable periods of downtime, companies unwittingly helped create the first form of temporary office labour. With labour comprising the major cost to telegraph companies, the provision of a reserve army inevitably depressed messenger wages. Notions of apprenticeship were replaced by more mercenary temporary employment.

The turn of the century brought two major challenges to the industry. First came Pro-

gressive concern at the employment and moral corruption of young boys. The companies instituting training schools had already addressed this in the 1870s. However, reformers expressed concern at the iniquitous urban spaces messenger boys inhabited. Yet, paradoxically, the value of the messengers lay in their ability to penetrate these spaces. The messenger uniform acted as a form of protection, both for the boys and for customers – especially women – who might not want to open the door to any old body late at night. At their most extreme, messenger boys acted as appendages for otherwise place-bound women, providing an intriguing surrogate-son contact with the outside world.

The second challenge came from other communications technology, especially the telephone. Downey rejects the inevitability of the latter's success, but, by the 1920s, it became clear that telegrams needed to be reinvented. And so they were: messenger boys entered the niche market of singing telegrams, special delivery, weddings, birthdays and, especially during the World Wars, the grim reaper of death. The telegram became an exceptional form of communication and the arrival of the messenger signaled that the news you were about to receive was momentous.

Charged with this responsibility, perhaps, messenger boys, according to Downey, became men. They also threw their weight behind the growing militancy of the inter-war labour movement. Yet, ironically, the transition from adolescence to adulthood sounded the death-knell for the profession: minimum wage recognition led to companies contracting telegram delivery to the Post Office and substituting mechanization for the maintenance of their own pool of messengers.

Much else is discussed in this work: the role of gender, in particular, plays an intricate part to the story, as does industry economics. The book's greatest strength is its implicit and explicit weaving of the general and the particular. The trajectory of the messenger boy is a peculiarly modern one, in which, as Marx claimed (and Marshall Berman reminded us), all that is solid melts into air. Indispensable yet disposable, caught in a maelstrom of time and space, the messenger-boy story can be related to all workers, with or without bicycles.

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"Turismo y Nueva Sociedad".

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El número 25 de la revista *"Historia Contemporánea"* de la Universidad del País Vasco, hace referencia a un tema de actualidad y repercusión social; se centra en el turismo de la Europa de los siglos XIX y XX. El turismo es un fenómeno interdisciplinar, basado en la conexión de diversos elementos: la aparición de una nueva mentalidad, las reformas políticas de los distintos gobiernos europeos y las transformaciones socioeconómicas de los Estados. En definitiva, es el punto de arranque que marcha paralelo junto con las revoluciones tecnológicas e industrial del momento.

La brillante introducción de Carlos Larrinaga, que, a su vez, colabora con un artículo titulado *"El Turismo en la España del siglo XIX"*, da muestra de la singularidad del tema así como de la reciente historiografía que sobre