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Book of Interest

Airport Systems Planning by Richard de Neufville, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976, 232 pp., \$14.95.

The field of airport planning is notable for the vast amount of information spread through hundreds of advisory circulars, technical manuals, papers and reports but very few textbooks that provide the student or the professional with a synthesis of the various technical aspects of the subject or a discussion of current tissues. In this context, any new book is to be welcomed as at least a step toward remedying this situation, particularly if it addresses issues not adequately covered in other works.

Airport Systems Planning by Richard de Neufville is particularly timely because it concentrates not on repeating the conventional methodology that has already been summarized by such authors as Horonjeff, but on addressing many of the current issues that vex those airport planners who are confronted with problems for which the conventional approach has proved inadequate. In the process, many of the tenets of contemporary practice are subject to critical probing by the author and are found wanting. However, those readers who seek new solutions will be disappointed, for while problems are exposed and hard questions asked, the author does not offer a package of easy answers.

Many will find the title of the book confusing, for it does not refer, as might be thought, to the planning of a multi-airport system, but rather to a view of the airport as a composite of many different functional systems. Coming from the author of such works as *Systems Analysis for Engineers and Managers*, this emphasis of the systems viewpoint is to be expected, yet the distinction was evidently not made clear to the designer of the dust jacket, who has preserved the confusion with a clever illustration of the relationship of the major airports serving the North Atlantic market. In fact the author provides a *potpourri* of issues touching on forecasts of demand, satellite airports, access, terminal design and airport financing, that draws upon his considerable experience of airport planning as both an academic analyst and consultant. Yet each issue is considered separately and their potential interactions, such as the implications of shifts in access mode split for terminal design or satellite airport policy for demand forecasts do not receive the attention that might be expected, given the author's concern for the nature of the airport as a set of linked systems.

The book precedes its discussion of the various topics with an intriguing comparison of the airport planning paradigm as developed in the United States and Europe, particularly Britain and France. The author speaks with assurance, and personal experience, concerning the different styles of national planning, yet many readers may find the contrast between the U.S. planners, with files open to

all and with decisions shaped by public hearings and interested parties, and their sophisticated, elitist European counterparts, planning for the good of society under the protection of Official Secrets Acts, a little hard to accept. Perhaps this emphasizes the author's point that societal and cultural values and assumptions are not constant, and that airport planning should reflect these differences. When almost all technical guidance on airport planning issues from the western world, and particularly the United States, that observation should at least raise questions in the minds of those responsible for airport planning elsewhere on the globe.

Sometimes the author apparently fails to see the full force of his own arguments, in a tantalizing manner. Thus while emphasizing the importance of considering the nature of the public interest and community needs, instead of just the requirements of those agencies more traditionally involved in airport decisions, the conclusion is reached that planning should be based on the automobile as the dominant access mode without any consideration of the impacts that this policy has on highway congestion, air pollution, energy consumption or even the level of service available to the auto-less traveller. Similarly the 13 pages devoted to a consideration of satellite airports and the role of the airport in the wider national network argues the connectivity advantages and the higher attractiveness of large hub airports without relating this to the emerging landside capacity problem that was identified as a major current concern earlier in the book.

Airport planning is a complex matter that requires the skills of many professions. *Airport Systems Planning* is a provocative examination of the state of the art in many of its aspects, and deserves to be read by all those involved in the airport planning process. Perhaps some will be moved to probe more deeply the many issues that have necessarily been given a superficial treatment in a book that attempts to span the whole field. Others may be startled to realize how inadequate the existing methodology is in so many areas, considering the scale of the impacts of airport decision-making.

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