Chapter 4
City Competitiveness and Airport: Information Science Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Transport systems allow people to take part in social and working activities, which are variously spread in space and time. Cities where transport systems are widely developed benefit from a high-quality accessibility, which makes them more attractive both to users and investors. As a consequence, they can gain in competitiveness and economic growth. Particularly, an airport can play an important role in assuring the development of the city best linked to it, as it enlarges its external accessibility and attractiveness. As information science applications can be used to obtain more reliable, efficient and safer systems, with reference to these latter aspects this chapter describes the importance of improvements concerning surface transport systems linking cities to their nearest airports as well as improvements assuring safer operations and capacity enhancement at the city airport airside.

INTRODUCTION

Competition is defined as “a situation in which people or organisations compete with each other for something that not everyone can have” (Oxford Dictionary, 7th Edition). Given the current globalisation tendency, not only firms traditionally compete for the market but also cities now compete for investors (e.g., companies, organizations, agencies), visitors and inhabitants and then demand a suitable planning. In this context, “city planning” is the control of the development of cities in terms of their buildings, roads and services, so that they can be agreeable and convenient places...
for people to live in, as well as attractive areas for investors and visitors.

Two important aspects of city competitiveness are city efficiency and accessibility. In terms of efficiency, a competitive city is a place where people, living there or visiting it, do not waste time or money. In terms of accessibility, defined as a measure of potential opportunities for interaction (Hansen, 1959), a competitive city is well connected and also offers services and activities (such as shops, firms, education centres, health centres, and so on) easily reachable.

It is worthwhile to note that the concept of (time) efficiency is linked to that of accessibility, as a good accessibility also means that people do not waste time to move inside the city itself or to reach the city from outside. Accessibility is assured by transport systems, linking not only city districts among them but also the overall city to its surroundings.

While several chapters of this book focus on city competitiveness by examining synchronization of subsystems inside it (then from the perspective of a single urban area), the aim of this chapter is to enlarge that point of view in order to examine the city competitiveness from the wider national and over-national perspective, beginning from transport considerations. Then, the problem is now reversed and the question is: given an efficient synchronization of city subsystems, how can city competitiveness, helped by Information Science (IS) applied to transports, increase in a over-regional perspective? Or, in other words: at over regional level, why could people (as investors, visitors, and so on) prefer to go to that city?

Figure 1 tries to provide an answer from the transport perspective. All the other things being the same, external investors and visitors prefer destinations well linked to the over-regional transport networks; particularly, airports potentially represent the gateway to a city, as they can