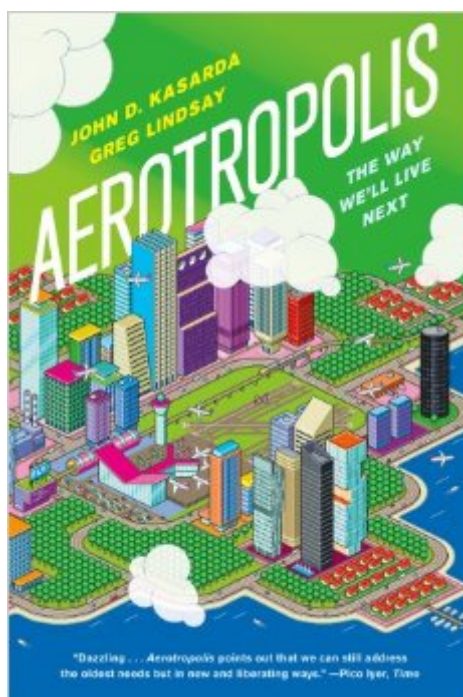


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Aerotropolis: The Way We'll Live Next



Synopsis

This brilliant and eye-opening look at the new phenomenon called the aerotropolis gives us a glimpse of the way we will live in the near future—and the way we will do business too. Not so long ago, airports were built near cities, and roads connected one to the other. This pattern—the city in the center, the airport on the periphery—shaped life in the twentieth century, from the central city to exurban sprawl. Today, the ubiquity of jet travel, round-the-clock workdays, overnight shipping, and global business networks has turned the pattern inside out. Soon the airport will be at the center and the city will be built around it, the better to keep workers, suppliers, executives, and goods in touch with the global market. This is the aerotropolis: a combination of giant airport, planned city, shipping facility, and business hub. The aerotropolis approach to urban living is now reshaping life in Seoul and Amsterdam, in China and India, in Dallas and Washington, D.C. The aerotropolis is the frontier of the next phase of globalization, whether we like it or not. John D. Kasarda defined the term "aerotropolis," and he is now sought after worldwide as an adviser. Working with Kasarda's ideas and research, the gifted journalist Greg Lindsay gives us a vivid, at times disquieting look at these instant cities in the making, the challenges they present to our environment and our usual ways of life, and the opportunities they offer to those who can exploit them creatively. Aerotropolis is news from the near future—news we urgently need if we are to understand the changing world and our place in it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book challenges us with its approach to the subject matter. It amounts to a 400+ page brochure about John Kasarda's work as a business consultant. He's obviously very bright and thoughtful, and Greg Lindsay writes articulately. However the book's overall style seems unique and well, uncomfortable. Lindsay is writing about Kasarda in the third person, discussing "Kasarda's plans" etc. Yet Kasarda is a co-author, suggesting a first person discussion, because the book is all about Kasarda's ideas guided by Kasarda's overall thoughts. Why didn't Kasarda write this himself? Or why didn't Lindsay write the book about Kasarda? Had Lindsay been the sole author, then he might have had the freedom to inject more objectivity into the discussion that really needs more balance, as discussed below.

What is an "aerotropolis?" The definition is made clear, but not until page 174. "An Aerotropolis is basically an airport-integrated region, extending as far as sixty miles from the inner clusters of hotels, offices, distribution and logistics facilities... the airport itself is really the nucleus of a range of 'New Economy' functions," with the ultimate aim of bolstering the city's competitiveness, job creation, and quality of life." Further, "it can be boiled down to three words: speed, speed, and speed." Speed gives us competitive advantages on a global scale. Therefore, the airport should be the center of any city, with all logistics, transportation facilities, warehouses, etc. serving the same function: logistical speed. The authors' message is reinforced a hundred times throughout the book. Nations, states, cities or corporations who don't adapt will be destroyed by speedier competitors. This is because "individual companies no longer compete: their entire supply chains do."

This is a strange book. For starters, the top-billing author, John Kassarda, didn't write a word, and indeed is mentioned or quoted only every several pages or so; even when he is, Lindsay (who actually wrote the book) seems to often cast subtle doubt on Kassarda's theories, as in the frequently-used "If Kassarda is right, ...". Then, while the book is chockfull of good anecdotal research, the evidence is awkwardly and haphazardly woven into a rather hazy overarching theory. One suspects that Lindsay and the editors came to realize that but it was too late to chuck Kassarda and his brand from the cover. Lindsay is a journalist, and the book reads like an extended magazine piece. Breezy, well-crafted prose dotted with abundant statistics and meant-to-impress comparisons ("the up-front costs for infrastructure would start at \$33 billion, more than the US originally earmarked for the reconstruction of Iraq"; Hainan is "the size of Belgium with the climate of Hawaii"; Beijing's new terminal "...could accommodate all of Heathrow's five terminals, with enough room left for a sixth") help make this an easy in-flight read. With an apparent rush to print, fact-checking was clearly back in coach while storytelling sat secure in the cockpit behind the armored door. For

example, Lindsay contrasts America's mere 9 cities with population greater than 1 million with China's 125-150 such cities. The fact is, the Chinese draw municipal boundaries around entire metropolitan areas, and even what would be considered whole states (as is the case with Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing). Measured that way, the U.S. has 51 metropolitan areas with over 1 million inhabitants. China still has many more, but the drama is a bit deflated. There are quite a few gaping holes in Kassarda's hypotheses.

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