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Book review

Hercules E. Haralambides. (Ed.), Port Management: Seminal Papers from Maritime Economics and Logistics, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK (2015). (124,79 € (hardback). ISBN: 978-1-137-47576-3)

This book is a collection of the seminal papers published in the journal *Maritime Economics and Logistics* throughout the last two decades.

For scholars working in the field of maritime transport, the journal *Maritime Economics and Logistics* needs no introduction. Founded in 1999 as the *International Journal of Maritime Economics*, in 2005 the name was changed to *Maritime Economics and Logistics*. This modification reflected an evolving focus in the sector from a narrower economics-based approach concerned with issues of efficiency, pricing and competition to a broader focus on the entire logistics sector. The maritime element is undoubtedly an essential part of logistics due to the increased complexity of global supply chains. The journal is therefore read by all academics whose interests touch on maritime transport, regardless of their disciplinary background, from economics to operations research to geography to logistics.

Over 20 years the journal has published approximately 600 papers by more than 1000 authors. Unlike some journals where the editor relies solely on the opinions of the reviewers, those of us who have published in this journal have benefitted from supportive and insightful comments from the editor who takes a direct interest in each paper.

Professor Haralambides has been the editor-in-chief throughout these two decades and presents in this volume an edited collection of seminal papers from this dynamic and changing era. Those of us who follow the journal will have read many of these papers as they were published over the years. However, the unique value of the book is that all papers have been refreshed and updated by the authors to ensure they remain abreast of the latest developments. A particular value of the book is for anyone new to the field such as graduate students, who can use this volume as a primer of all the key issues and can look to it also for the latest methods and data summarising each of these core topics.

The book covers the important and interesting themes showing how the industry has developed over the last few decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, container ships carried only a few thousand containers and scholars were interested in designing efficient networks and improving the efficiency of port handling. The evolution of port governance as many ports around the world privatised their container handling operations led to a focus on evaluating concession bids as well as analysing port pricing to recover infrastructure investment as ports moved to a more commercial footing. The papers bring us right up to date with the complex world we presently inhabit, involving issues of governance, competition, policy and strategy as ports become more entrepreneurial in managing their place within complex global supply chains. The published papers demonstrate that decisions on infrastructure development, usage and pricing cannot be taken in isolation but must take account of fierce competition for port choice, the increasing size of container vessels and the market position of carrier alliances. The chapters provide both an overview and discussion of all of these issues, as well as demonstrating state-of-the-art analytical techniques for market analysis and decision making.

The volume thus covers all the relevant topics that have influenced the evolution of container shipping over the preceding two decades and those that continue to exert significant impact now. As the title suggests, there is a slightly stronger focus on ports than on shipping services, with nonetheless several chapters on the latter. The book also focuses on container ports rather than bulk and general cargo, reflecting the dominance of this topic in the academic literature.

It is traditional in book reviews to leaven the praise by highlighting the shortcomings, which is rather difficult in a collection of the best papers selected from two decades of publishing. The icing on the cake would have been a longer introduction providing Professor Haralambides' own overview and comments on the evolution of the maritime sector, along the lines of the excellent and entertaining paper recently published in the journal (Haralambides, 2017). It therefore seems that the future second edition of this volume already has new contenders for inclusion.

Reference

Haralambides, H., 2017. Globalization, public sector reform, and the role of ports in international supply chains. Marit. Econ. Logist. 19 (1), 1–51.

Jason Monios,
Kedge Business School, Domaine de Luminy - BP 921, 13288 Marseille, Cedex 9, France
E-mail address: jason.monios@kedgebs.com.

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