



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

The Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics

Journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ajsl



Editorial

Port Management Studies

Selected papers from

The Conference of International Association of Maritime Economists

Theme: *“The Role of Maritime Clusters and Innovation in Shaping Future Global Trade”*

August 24-26, 2015

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This special issue on port management studies is based on a selection of papers from the 2015 International Association of Maritime Economists conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, organized by the Malaysia Supply Chain Innovation Institute. The special issue answers to a call for research papers, released before the conference, within the broader field of “port management studies”, with the aim to seek contributions in this emerging field within maritime and port related research.

The use of (strategic) management theory in port research has been increasing since the 1990s (Woo et al., 2011; van der Lugt et al., 2013), both on the level of the management and strategy of individual stakeholders in the port supply chain (such as port operators and port authorities) as well as on the level of interrelations and interdependencies between different port stakeholders. The intrinsic characteristics of the port industry, which is highly internationalized and includes a large plethora of public and private stakeholders, make this sector an ideal field for challenging extant management theories. This industry, indeed, is composed by a variety of actors, e.g. port authorities, local and central

governments, terminal operators, shipping lines, logistics providers, etc., which are protagonists of a wide array of dynamic interactions. Each player deserves ad-hoc analytical frameworks and the complexity of the overall competitive picture needs to address consolidated theoretical streams.

The final selection of papers in the issue represents four distinct challenges that many port managing bodies and their stakeholders are facing within their decision-making processes on successful strategies. The papers offer more in-depth insights on those challenges in the context of the Asian and Australian continent. As such, contributions analyzing cases from Turkey, Vietnam and Australia are present, along a dual case paper of two world regions (North and South-America) which has a particular relevance for the Asian continent.

The first challenge, presented by ESMER, NGUYEN, BANDARA and YENI, and related to the core of the port managing body’s own value chain activities, builds upon the increasing need to better understand port customers needs, in particular with regard to value creation in ports.

While recent literature exists on port user perceptions measurement as a means to monitor quality perception (Brooks and Schellinck, 2015), and seminal contributions on port pricing and port marketing have been made during the last 2 decades (Haralambides, 2000; Cahoon, 2007), the authors offer insights into the aspects of non-price competition between ports. The research is based on the Turkish case, in itself very interesting, given the dominance of privately owned ports as opposed to the predominantly government-owned landlord or service port models in the larger part of the rest of the world. The paper is explorative in nature, giving meaning to the concept of non-price competition in the port industry, and showing that among others, customer care, service customization and diversification, play a role to shape non-price competition and the associated port strategies.

The second challenge revolves around the inherent confrontation of public and private objectives in the planning, management and operation of a port ecosystem, as one the main tasks of a port authority as the coordinator and animator of integrated strategic planning for the whole ecosystem. Recent port management literature on this topic has highlighted the importance of public-private cooperation and the associated challenges (Aerts et al. 2015), as well as the importance of inclusive stakeholder management for port managing bodies (Dooms, 2010), and the identification of stakeholder conflicts and the management thereof (Parola and Maugeri, 2013). The paper of GALVAO, WANG and MILESKI draws upon these recent advances and offers a content analysis of media reports for two major ports in the Americas. The results highlight that conflicts along the public-private dimension also emerge based on inadequacies within the institutional set-up, next to the traditional conflicts in the context of (inefficient) port logistics processes.

The third challenge relates to the increasing need of port managing bodies to develop hinterland strategies, in the context of competitiveness and sustainability. More in particular, the contribution of NGUYEN and NOTTEBOOM applies and re-interpretes an existing methodology developed by Macharis and Verbeke (2002) for the evaluation of suitable locations for intermodal hubs (or dry ports) in the hinterland of a seaport. Their Vietnamese case study confirms the applicability of the LAMBIT model in the context of an emerging Asian economy, and provides further empirical evidence of the need for increased stakeholder inclusivity with regard to dry port location choice, given the strongly divergent interests of the stakeholders, as identified in the study.

Finally, the fourth challenge expands the economic and geographic scope towards the whole logistics industry, and contributes on the body of knowledge on interfirm alliances and collaboration between logistics companies. Here, PATEMAN, CAHOON and CHEN shift the focus to Australia for a survey on the future of collaboration in the industry, based on a conceptual framework assessing both enablers and inhibitors, through a large-scale survey. The results lead to concrete recommendations, which suggest the need for an increasing collaboration of logistics companies in the context of Asia-Australia relations; this against a background of varying success of such collaborations, given the current cost-efficiency driven approach of decision-makers, rather than a more opportunity driven framework boosted by international trade relations.

March, 2016

Acknowledgement

The Guest Editors of this Special Issue would like to thank the reviewers who have volunteered their time to provide valuable feedback to the authors. They would also like to thank the contributors for making this issue an important asset to the existing literature in the field and also the Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics editorial support for their help during the preparation of this issue.

Acknowledgement to Reviewers

Geoffrey Aerts
 Marcello Risitano
 Alessio Tei
 Indra Vonck
 Gordon Wilsmeier

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