

Review of existing studies on maritime clusters

Abstract

Maritime clusters benefit both business operations and the national economy. They have existed for a long time, and have contributed significantly to both global and regional economic development, yet only in recent decades has research into the effects of clustering gained much attention. Most of such research is similar to studies of general industry clustering, with little consideration given to the unique nature of the shipping industry. This study analyzes the key elements of maritime cluster studies during the past 20 years, including conceptual development, industry sectors included, research methods, factors for clustering, studies of specific clusters, and the relationships among maritime service businesses. Misunderstandings about the difference between International Maritime Centers and a maritime cluster are also clarified. Such analysis allows us to identify possible issues and deficiencies in the existing studies, and to point out directions for future research on maritime clusters.