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Seaports, Urban Sustainability, and Paradigm Shift

Peter V. Hall

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SEAPORTS are big business; not just because of the valuable land, labor, and technology inputs they combine, but more so because of the role they play in global production and distribution systems. In his history of the first half-century of the ocean shipping container, Levinson argues that the container has been an integral piece in contemporary economic globalization. According to the United Nations, six and half billion metric tons of seaborne trade cargo was carried across the wharves of the world's seaports in 2004. These cargo movements do not simply transverse the waterfront; they move through sensitive marine ecosystems and along popular waterways, on city streets, through neighborhoods, and in shared rail corridors. Containerization and the rise of logistics have unleashed a fundamental change in the relationship among seaports, the localities that host them, and their associated cargo movements. These changes in seaports have important implications for the urban paradigm shift demanded by global climate and energy changes.



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