BOOK REVIEW

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The Role of States in Maritime Employment and Safety: A Legal and Economic Study. By KX Li and J Wohnam (Dalian Maritime University Press, 2001), ISBN 7-5632-1468-2, pp. 316, US\$48.

This important and welcome book examines the safety aspects of maritime employment, combining legal and economic approaches. It considers the effects on safety of various regimes of ship registration, covering the Port State Control records of 36 fleets over 20 years and modelling the characteristics of maritime employment. It reviews relevant international laws and considers the effects of these on seafarers' health and safety in the light of states' jurisdictions and the resulting liabilities. It is all the better for one author being both a Master Mariner and a lawyer; and for the other being an environmental scientist. It is not surprising that the list of acknowledgements contains many of the most distinguished individuals and most of the academic, official and industrial institutions concerned with maritime safety today.

The analysis is thorough, considering the causes of some 11,860 deaths and 4,089 injuries. This sample is much bigger than that of earlier studies so that, by comparison, improved estimates of overall death and injury rates can be established; this is duly indicated by the much increased values of correlation coefficients. Studies of jurisdiction and liability then lead to suggestions for improvements and for the more efficient targeting under Port State Control. Since Mr. WA O'Neill, Secretary of the International Maritime Organisation, contributes a Foreword, we may be assured that this study will receive official attention. One need only mention the advent of Formal Safety Assessment, with cost-benefit analysis as a new and important component, to welcome this as a substantial contribution to a rapidly growing and inter-disciplinary field.

The literature is excellently covered — the bibliography should provide a gold-mine for subsequent students — but two comments may be made. First, a study which is explicitly labelled as 'economic' might devote some pages to a formal treatment in terms of economic welfare, preferably including the distributional effects of maritime casualties. Secondly, if the Dalian Maritime University Press really wishes to become known as a significant publisher of such works then it might devote some thought to providing higher qualities of paper, printing, page size and binding; and to providing an index.

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