

# Assessment of the complementarity of the dhow network with container shipping lines at Djibouti

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## Abstract

The persistence of dhow shipping around the Arabian Peninsula is puzzling for the maritime economist. Indeed, nowadays, almost every commodity can be carried easily and cheaply through the global network of container shipping lines, directly or through a hub (Song & Panayides, 2015). Given the difference of capacity between a dhow (however big, like a “500-tons baghlah”; Martin, 1980) and a containership (even a small 1200 TEU feeder one), how can small dhows survive in such a competitive environment? Yet, dhow shipping is still active in the region, not only for local trades but also for long range trade such as between East Africa ports to Indian or Sri Lanka ports. Two explanations are at least possible. Dhows and container ships may be either complementary for the same commodities, or dually fitted for different kind of commodities. Testing this complementarity is a tricky matter when very few data are available. The data provided by Djibouti port Authority is a way to do it from one of the major container port of East-Africa. Based on port data on dhows stopovers at Djibouti during the 2014-2018 period, the purpose of this article is to test the complementarity/duality of the means of transport, the kind of commodities carried, the ships' routing patterns, and the level of inclusion of dhow wharfage in the city.

## Keywords

Dhow, Arabian Peninsula, Network connectivity, non-containerized cargo, Industrial economics

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