

Increasing the Impact of Logistics Research:
an Academic Perspective

Professor Alan McKinnon

*Kühne Logistics University
Hamburg*

BOOSTLOG project
Online Launch Event
ALICE

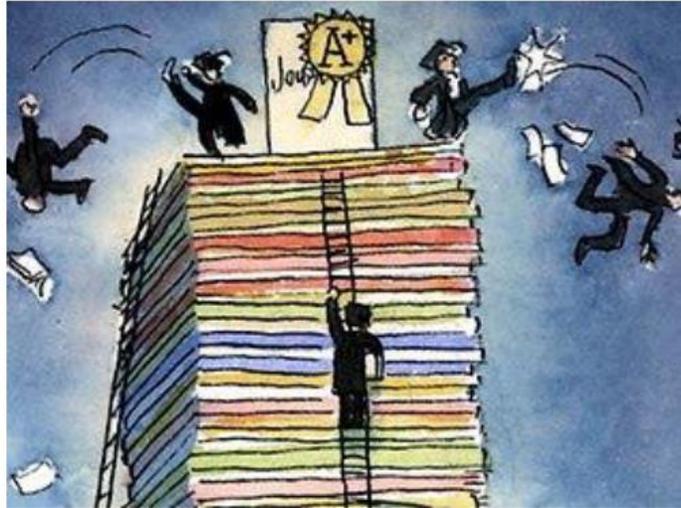
26 March 2021



Misalignment of Research Performance Targets

Academic priorities

- research income
- publications in highly-rated journals



Starry-eyed: journal rankings and the future of logistics research

Alan C. McKinnon
Kühne Logistics University, Hamburg, Germany

Starry-eyed II: the logistics journal ranking debate revisited

Alan C. McKinnon
Kühne Logistics University, Hamburg, Germany

Rigour versus Relevance debate

<https://bit.ly/3vYOp8u>

<https://bit.ly/3sjjDoG>

Transport Reviews, 2015

<https://bit.ly/2NSwjnv>

Vol. 35, No. 4, 401–403, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2015.1052894>



The consequences of the extended gap between curiosity-driven and impact-driven research

Johan Woxenius
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Widening 'gap between what research projects are externally funded and what counts in academic careers and university evaluations'

UK **REF** Research
2021 Excellence
Framework

impact = 25% weighting

very broad definition

'the degree to which the **impact** has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the performance, policies, practices, products, services, understanding, awareness or well-being of the beneficiaries,'

Practical relevance of SCM research not just a European concern

IJLM
30,1

Practical relevance of theory-driven supply chain management research

Evidence from China

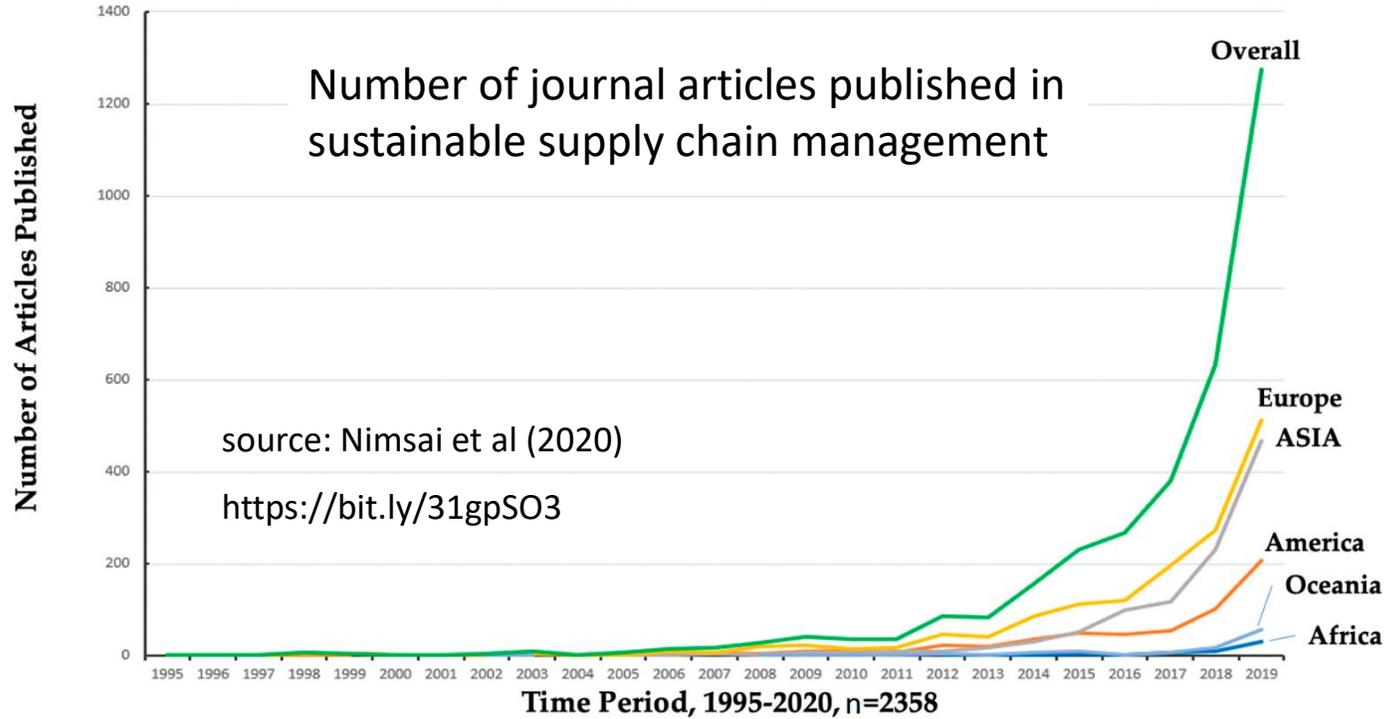
Xiaohong Liu
Business School, Central University of Finance and Economics,
Beijing, China, and

Alan C. McKinnon
Department of Logistics, Kühne Logistics University, Hamburg, Germany

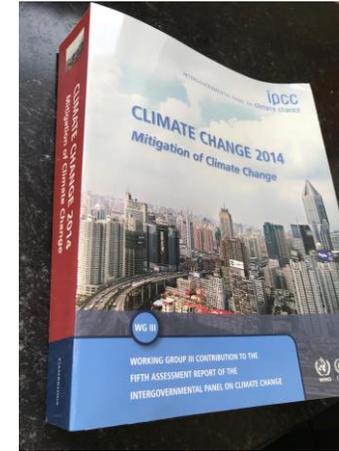
<https://bit.ly/2P6gc6s>

'The survey found that much SCM research does not translate into actionable knowledge for practitioners'

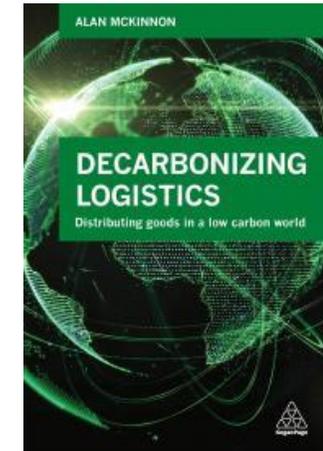
Exponential Growth of Research Literature in Logistics and SCM



IPCC AR5 (2014)



transport chapter
720 references



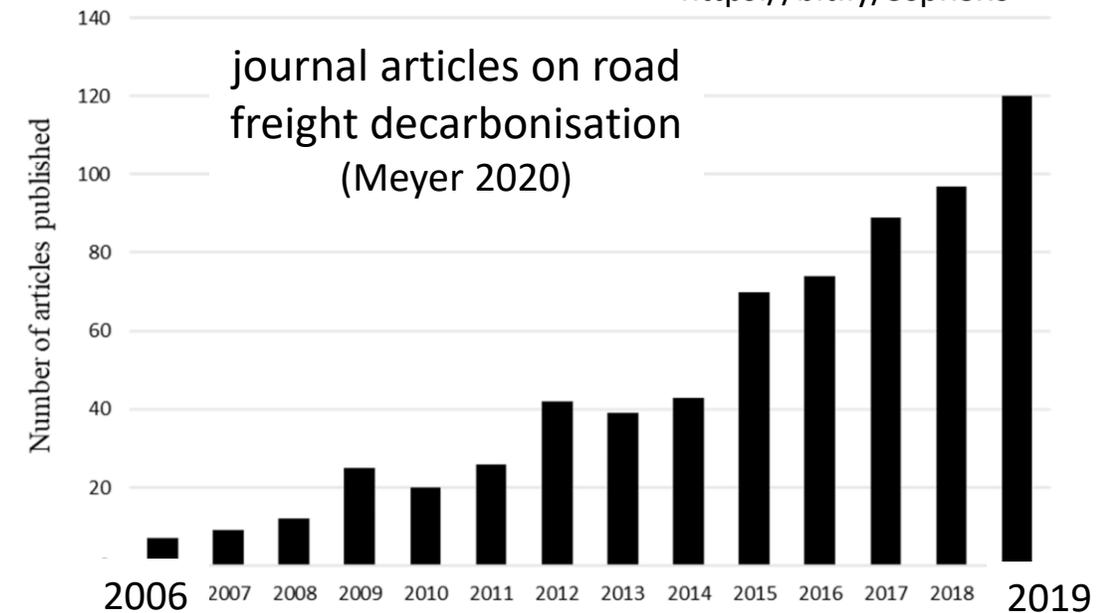
630 references

<https://bit.ly/3sph3xo>

reviewing and synthesizing literature now a major challenge

Systematic Literature Reviews: *selection criteria*

- some focus on higher-rated journals
- late cut-off dates: *'research myopia'* –ignoring earlier studies
risk of duplicating research



Siloed Knowledge

<https://go.shell.com/2QmuwYR>



65 references: 1 academic journal paper cited

Grey vs Peer-reviewed literature: *relative status*

Limited cross-referencing: *connections and synergies missed*

Who reviews and synthesises research across both domains?

How much research literature is read outside academic circles?



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Transportation Research Part D

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/trd

Decarbonizing road freight transportation – A bibliometric and network analysis

Tobias Meyer

<https://bit.ly/3sph3xo>

92 references – no industry / consultancy reports cited

Should Managers Read Academic Articles?

<https://bit.ly/3lRzcS5>



Christian Stadler Contributor Leadership Strategy
I write about strategy.

Forbes

'Absolutely. It gives them access to important new ideas much earlier than popular books. But will they do it? Probably not. Leaders usually don't have the time to battle with the inaccessible prose of academic articles'

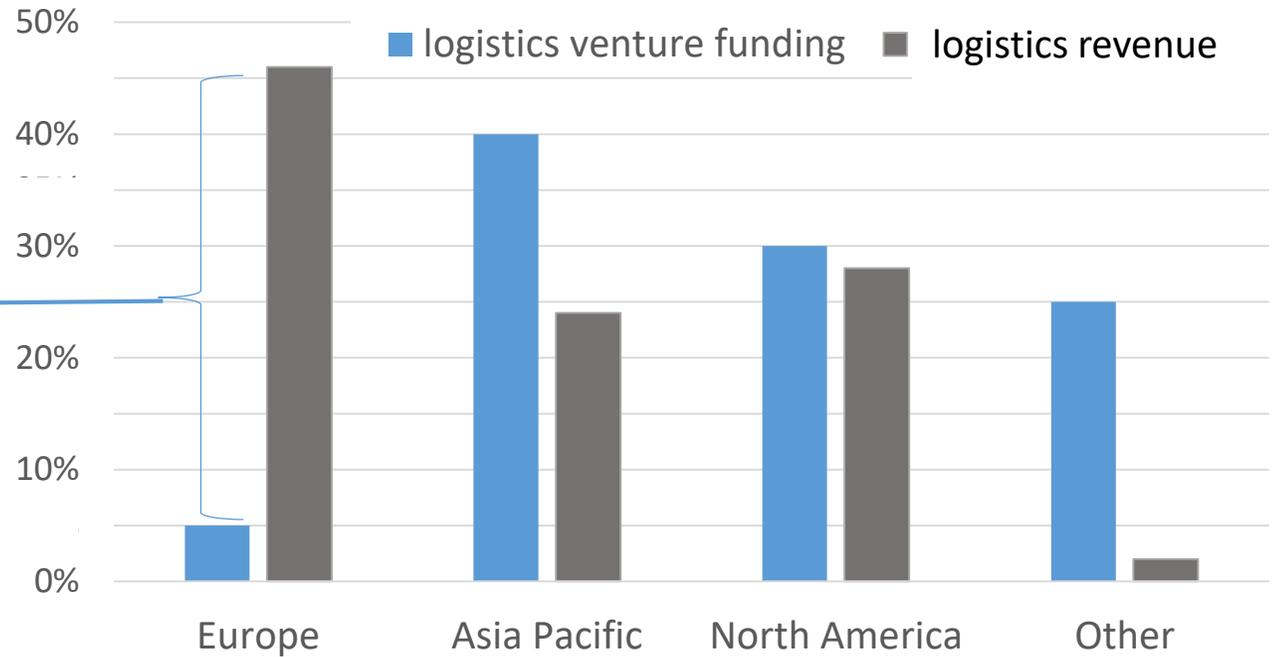
Increasing the Impact of Research on European Logistics

Europe is already a mature logistics market
R&D funding within established businesses
- but same applies to North America

start-up innovation funding gap

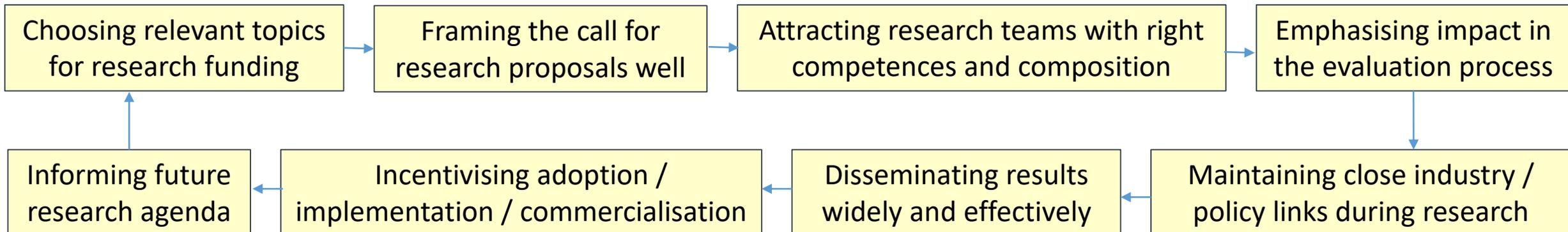
use of EU R&I funding to stimulate
start-up activity in the logistics sector

+ meeting other research objectives:
*support business improvement, emission
reduction, policy formulation etc*



Source: McKinsey (2021)

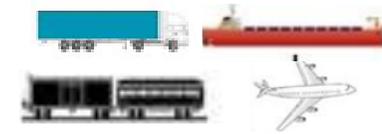
Reinforcing the commitment to logistics impact at all stages in the research process



Choosing Impactful Topics for Research Funding

some pet topics

optimal modal split scenarios based on future carbon intensity trends



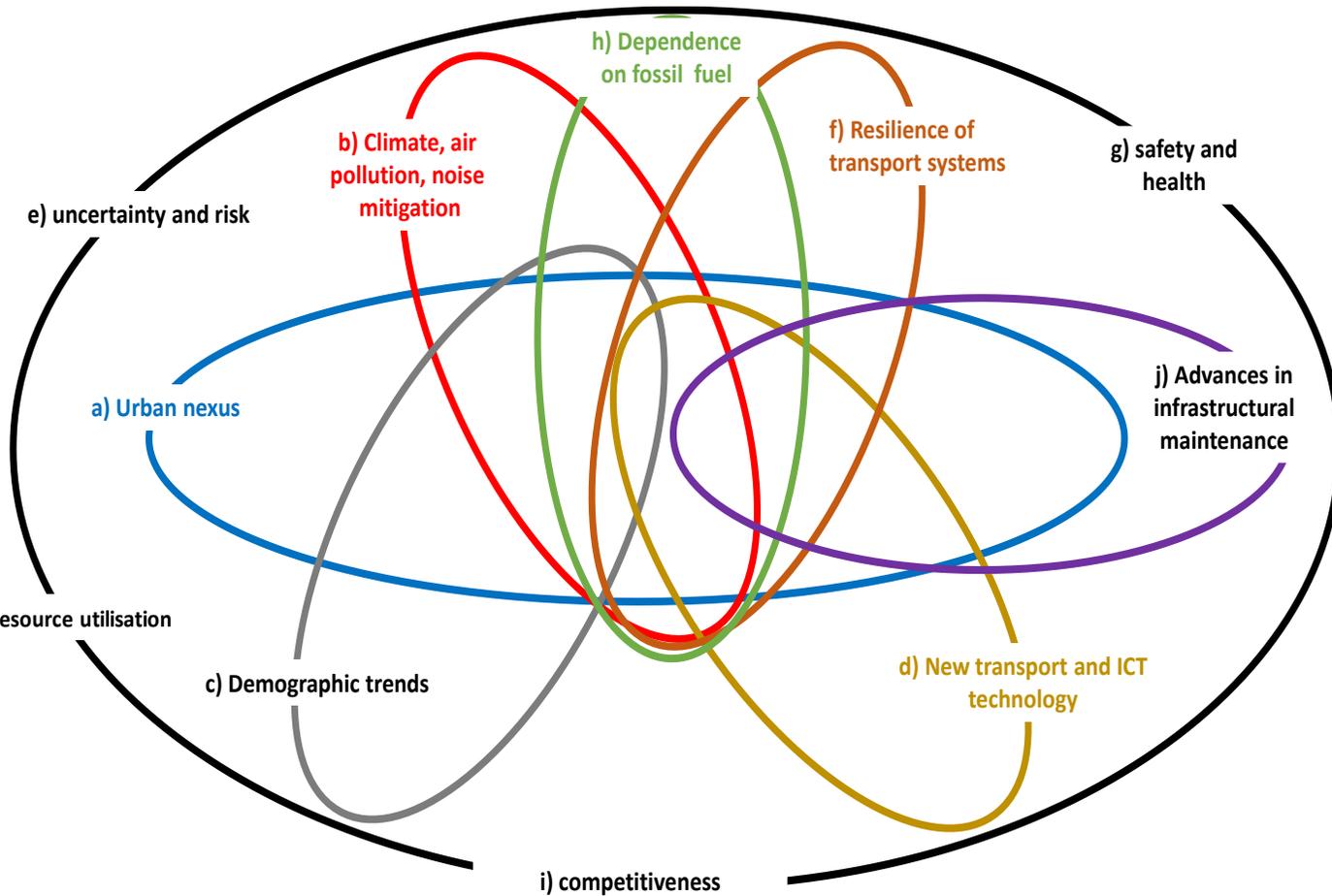
combined impact of climate change mitigation, adaptation and negative emission on logistics



potential contribution of blockchain to product carbon auditing across E2E supply chains



preparing global supply chain in used-trucks for transition from ICE to low carbon powertrains



11 inter-locking research challenges

H2020 Transport Advisory Group (2014)

Issues arising at different stages in the research and innovation process

Framing the call for research proposals well

scoping coherence latitude
bundling research into larger projects - *consequences for impact?*

Attracting research teams with right competences and composition

academic / practitioner / consultancy / organisational mix
importance of co-ordination and personal chemistry

Emphasising impact in the proposal evaluation process

weighting attached to dissemination and potential impact criteria
judging / validating the applicants' claims - risk taking

Maintaining close industry / institutional links during research

industry participation in project ↔ representation on an advisory board
research dynamics where researchers, managers and policy-makers interact
Action Research Living Labs

Disseminating research outputs widely and effectively

communication channels peer reviewed & grey literature text and tools
audience targeting IPR issues open sourcing archiving

A Philosophical Definition of Logistics?



Bertrand Russell *'In Praise of Idleness'* (1932)

<https://bit.ly/31fC5mj>

'Work is of two kinds: first, altering the position of matter at or near the earth's surface relatively to other such matter; second, telling other people to do so. The first kind is unpleasant and ill-paid; the second is pleasant and highly paid'

'...and a third kind, researching how matter should be moved in way that improves competitiveness and minimises carbon emissions. This is satisfying and essential.'

McKinnon (2021)

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The Influence of Logistics Management on Freight Transport Research

A Short History of a Paradigm Shift

Alan C. McKinnon