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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Chunyan Yu is a Professor of Air Transport Management in the College of Business at ERAU. Her expertise is in performance measurements and benchmarking of airports and airlines, regulatory policy analysis, demand analysis and forecasting; measurement and analysis of productivity and efficiency; transport infrastructure ownership forms, and pricing and cost recovery issues.

Volodymyr Bilotkach is a Senior Lecturer in Economics at Newcastle University, and Associate Editor of *Journal of Air Transport Management*. He obtained his PhD in Economics from the University of Arizona, has been Assistant Professor at the University of California, Irvine, and held visiting/teaching posts at ZEW in Mannheim, Korea University, Sorbonne, University of Surrey, and University of Hiroshima. His research spans economics of the aviation sector. He published over 30 articles in scholarly journals, and advised the Netherlands Competition Authority, European Commission, and Incheon Airport.

Seock-Jin Hong has been an Assistant Professor at University of North Texas (UNT), USA since September 2015, and a Professor at the Kedge Business School in Bordeaux, France from March 2009. His research interests include

air transport and cargo; safety management; and tourism industry. His papers have appeared in various journals such as *Journal of Air Transport Management*, *World Review of Intermodal Transportation Research*, *Transport Policy Studies*, etc. He serves as a referee for *Supply Chain Forum: International Journal*, *Journal of Air Transport Management*, *Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies*, etc.

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The 18th Air Transport Research Society World Conference (ATRS) was held in Bordeaux, France, from July 17 to July 20, 2014. The conference was attended by some 347 participants, and 321 papers were presented. We, the guest editors, have selected seven papers to be included in this special issue. We believe that these papers provide a glimpse into the breadth of topics presented and discussed at the conference and offer important contribution to the literature on air transport.

Climate change has becoming one of the top issues in the aviation industry. In the first paper, Burbidge draws on the results of EUROCONTROL's *Challenges of Growth* study in 2013. She discusses various climate change risks which could impact the European aviation sector, and the timescales in which those impacts may occur and where uncertainties remain. The paper offers a set of practical recommendations to develop European aviation's resilience to the potential impacts of climate change.

Moving from environmental sustainability to financial sustainability, Pires and Fernandes discuss the economic forces that are potentially important to capital structure choices in the airline industry. Their results indicate that decisions about borrowing or issuing shares in the airline industry do not seem to hinge on what has been addressed by the trade-off theory, which may be explained by the market imperfections in the airline industry. Accordingly, the study recommends a regulatory minimum percentage of equity capital in order for a company to operate in the sector. They further suggest that consolidation should be restricted for very large companies and, large companies should be split up into divisions, each addressing specific markets.

The fast growing gulf carriers have caused heated public debates over their role in the global aviation markets. To provide some empirical evidence to the debates, Klophaus examines the business potential of fifth freedom flights operated by Emirates between Germany and the USA. The study identifies Hamburg as the most likely German airport to serve Emirates' fifth freedom flights to and from the USA, although it has the fifth freedom rights to serve Frankfurt, Munich and Düsseldorf.

In the fourth paper, Bo and Tsui investigate the effects of joining a strategic alliance group on airline productivity performance. In contrast to some of the previous studies, they find that joining an alliance group does not appear to help improve airline productivity. However, they suggest that increasing the number of members in an airline alliance group may lead to improved productivity for the member airlines initially.

Turning from airlines to airports, Yang and Santonino analyse passengers' level of acceptance of self-service bag drop (SSBD) and the factors that may affect passenger satisfaction of baggage check-in methods and self-service channels, based on a survey conducted at Singapore Changi Airport. The study finds higher passengers' satisfaction of SSBD than other baggage check-in methods while preference varied depending on age, travel purpose, etc. They also identify the reduced waiting time at check-in area as the primary reason for potential use of SSBD.

The paper by Yen, Chang and Wu develops a mechanism to allocate the costs of providing landing services at airports based on a combined user-pay and average-cost approach. Land costs are also included in the calculation of landing fees under some scenarios. The study validates the proposed mechanism with the two largest Taiwanese airports, Taipei Songshan Airport (TSA) and Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport (TPE). The authors conclude that weight-based charges might not reflect the damage/costs induced by aircraft on runways at the two Taiwanese airports.

In the last paper, Hayashi examines the impacts of the introduction of HSR services on the market shares of rail versus air in a number of specific routes. The study finds that HSR was able to capture a significant share of passengers on short to medium distance routes, but not in the presence of low cost carriers. The study further finds that LCCs has been successful in stimulating new demand for air travel.

We would like to extend our thanks to the authors and the reviewers for their contribution to this ATRS special issue of *International Journal of Aviation Management*. We believe that these papers offer valuable insights to the ever-challenging aviation industry, and will encourage further research on the respective topics.