

Preface

The current process of economic globalisation is, undoubtedly, a complex phenomenon. Some recent reports and the recent growth in the academic literature on this subject have clearly shown that globalisation is central to current debates in nearly all social sciences. Additionally, it is a process that is not just about economics but also involves cultural, social and political factors, although economic factors and elements form its basis and constitute one of the key driving forces.

It is clear that there are important interrelationships between globalisation and services. Some service industries, for example transport, communications, advanced business services or banking and other financial activities, are clearly linked to the process of economic globalisation and directly influence its evolution. Other service activities remain heavily localised either due to their mode of delivery or because of cultural factors. Such services, for the time being, appear to be relatively unaffected by the forces of globalisation, for example personal services and some basic advanced business services. However, it is clearly the case that globalisation and services are strongly linked in such a way that, in many cases, the latter act as direct instruments of globalisation and contribute to the process of globalisation that is being experienced by most industrial and service sectors as well as economies. Globalisation and technological developments are clearly implicated in encouraging as well as forcing service companies, as well as service delivery modes, to change.

To explore these and related issues, for example factors that are influencing the liberalisation of services on an international scale, constitutes a task which cannot be covered in a single book. However, it is possible to raise questions and provide some answers or, at least, try to clarify problems and bring elements together that will enrich and deepen the debate. This is the primary aim of this collection. Our starting point for this debate was the opportunity to organise the IX RESER Congress that was held in October 1999 at the University of Alcalá, Madrid,¹ under the organisational responsibility of SERVI-LAB,² a research centre particularly focused on the analysis of service activities, their problems, prospects and policies.

Under the title 'Service Industries at the Eve of the XXIst Century: Growth, Globalisation and the EMU', over 150 experts from a wide range of universi-

ties, research institutions and firms explored the relationship between services and globalisation. The conference explored three related themes: the growth of services, globalisation of services, and services and European Monetary Union. The quality of the papers and the importance of these issues have led to this edited collection of some of the most significant papers presented at the conference on the issue of services, trade and globalisation.

The themes highlighted around the globalisation–trade–services nexus are developed through three parts and in fourteen chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the state of the current debate into services and globalisation. It also explains the structure of the book and introduces each of the chapters. Part I explores the current state of (interdisciplinary) thinking into the changing role of services and the globalisation of services.

Part II draws from and illustrates many of the issues examined in Part I providing theoretically informed case studies that reveal the growing complexity of service trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). Specifically, these chapters through their focus on modes or ways of globalisation explore trade, investment and services management from a global perspective. A key theme that underlies all these chapters is flows of knowledge (management models, modes of service delivery, and so on) between countries, and especially flows of both traded and untraded knowledge.

The focus changes in Part III to consider recent global trade negotiations involving services. The purpose of this section is to provide a valuable resource for academics and policy makers on the current round of trade negotiations. Some of the issues explored in Part I and II are revisited, but this time a policy focus is developed. These trade negotiations are on going, and the authors of these papers are some of the most important individuals involved either directly or indirectly in the negotiations.

NOTES

1. RESER (Reseau Services Espace) was founded in 1988 as The European Network of Research on Services and Space. RESER is an interdisciplinary network involving academics from all the major social sciences as well as representatives from the policy-making community. Its objectives include contributing to the progress of research into service activities, the evaluation of research undertaken into service activities, the development of new statistical methodologies to analyse the service sector and the development of models and theories to support political and business decision making. RESER is currently the sole European Research network exploring the relationships between service activities, the economy and space, and one of its main characteristics is to encourage multi-disciplinary and comparative approaches to the study of service industries, functions and occupations.
2. Service Industries Research Laboratory, founded in 1996 through an agreement between the University of Alcalá and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Madrid.