

Economy and Society >

Volume 37, 2008 - [Issue 3: Governing Global Value Chains](#)

15,108 417

Views | CrossRef citations to date | Altmetric | 12

Original Articles

Governing global value chains: an introduction

Peter Gibbon , Jennifer Bair  & Stefano Ponte 

Pages 315-338 | Published online: 09 Oct 2009

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140802172656>

Sample our
Social Sciences
Journals
>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

 Full Article

 Figures & data

 References

 Citations

 Metrics

 Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

Share

Abstract

This introductory paper to the special issue on governing global value chains (GVCs) focuses on the concept of governance as the dimension of GVCs that has received the most theoretical and empirical attention to date. After a brief introduction of the GVC concept in relation to the literature on economic globalization, we review the three main interpretations of GVC governance that have been advanced: governance as driving, governance as coordination and governance as normalization. After summaries of the four subsequent papers (by Bair, Gibbon and Ponte, Milberg, and Palpacuer), the authors offer reflections on the current state of development of GVC analysis. The unevenness and theoretical eclecticism of the GVC literature to date, particularly but not only with regard to the understanding of governance, poses the question of whether it is possible to reconcile the different approaches within a unified paradigm. If

not, then GVC analysis is better understood as a methodological approach that can be mobilized within various theoretical perspectives.

Keywords:

global value chain analysis governance value driving coordination normalization

Notes

1. The term 'global value chain analysis' is used throughout this article in a generic way to subsume 'global commodity chain analysis', which was the term commonly used to describe the same framework until around 2001–2. See Bair ([2005](#)) for a discussion of the similarities and differences between the world-systems approach to commodity chain analysis, the global commodity chain framework (GCC) and GVC analysis.
2. Although theoretically GVC analysis could be extended to other economic activities such as the service sector, to date most of this research has focused on either agricultural production or manufacturing (see Rabach & Kim, [1994](#)).
3. Gereffi (1994) first identified three such dimensions: (1) an input-output structure, which describes the process of transforming raw materials and other inputs into final products; (2) a territoriality, or geographical configuration; and (3) a governance structure. In a later contribution, Gereffi ([1995](#)) added a fourth dimension: the institutional framework, which describes the 'rules of the game' bearing on the organization and operation of chains.
4. The main factors playing a role in the distribution of returns between owners and labour were said to remain exogenous to chains: national labour market conditions and the productivity and skill composition of supplying-firm labour forces (Wood, [2001](#)).
5. For a review of this literature as it has been applied to the coffee industry, see Gibbon ([2007](#), pp. 59–60, 68–70).
6. In a recent co-authored paper on the relationship between global buyers and local producers in Korea and Taiwan (Hamilton & Gereffi, [2008](#)), Gereffi has returned to the construct of the buyer-driven commodity chain, providing support for Sturgeon's claim

that the new typology of governance proposed by Gereffi, Humphrey and Sturgeon (2005) is not intended to replace the GCC framework's original buyer-driven versus producer-driven distinction.

Related Research Data

[Commodity chains, services and development: theory and preliminary evidence from the tourism industry](#)

Source: Review of International Political Economy

[Quality standards, conventions and the governance of global value chains](#)

Source: Economy and Society

[Who Gains from Product Rents as the Coffee Market Becomes More Differentiated?A Value-chain Analysis](#)

Source: IDS Bulletin

[Global Capitalism and Commodity Chains: Looking Back, Going Forward](#)

Source: Competition & Change

[Global production networks and the analysis of economic development](#)

Source: Review of International Political Economy

[The Globalization of Organic Agro-Food Networks](#)

Source: World Development

[Restructuring of the European chocolate industry and its impact on cocoa production](#)

Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
417

[Power in global value chains >](#)

Mark P. Dallas et al.
Review of International Political Economy
Published online: 23 Jul 2019

[Quality standards, conventions and the governance of global value chains >](#)

Stefano Ponte et al.
Economy and Society
Published online: 15 Aug 2006

How does insertion in global value chains affect upgrading in industrial clusters? >

John Humphrey et al.
Regional Studies
Published online: 3 Jun 2010

View more

Information for

Authors
R&D professionals
Editors
Librarians
Societies

Opportunities

Reprints and e-prints
Advertising solutions
Accelerated publication
Corporate access solutions

Open access

Overview
Open journals
Open Select
Dove Medical Press
F1000Research

Help and information

Help and contact
Newsroom
All journals
Books

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#)

[Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG



Taylor & Francis
by informa