Topic: The Uptake of Global Value Chains by International Organizations

ABSTRACT
Global value chains (GVCs) have provided a useful framework for understanding the new global economy associated with geographically dispersed supply chains, global outsourcing by multinational lead firms, and the dynamic growth of large emerging economies. A critical but hitherto overlooked aspect of GVC analysis is its rapid adoption during the past decade by virtually all of the leading international organizations (IOs) that focus on economic and social development issues in the global economy. While concerns that the 2008-09 global economic recession would spark a wave of protectionism generated a focus on high-risk GVCs (e.g., apparel, autos, electronics, steel) by the World Bank, OECD and WTO, a broader array of IO’s have utilized the GVC perspective to advance a diverse range of programs and policy initiatives linked to the goals of inclusive and sustainable development. My research seeks not only to document the reasons for the rapid uptake of GVCs by IOs, but also to unpack the multiple ways the GVC framework is being utilized by IOs on the ground: (1) a neoliberal approach, which emphasizes open international trade and investment to promote gains from GVCs; (2) a developmentalist approach, which highlights the role of strong states and national industrial policy to harness GVCs for local development; and (3) a public–private collaborative approach, which targets lead firms in GVCs (both global and domestic) that are willing to adapt their strategies to incorporate local development goals, while the public sector provides the institutional foundations for private sector growth. A related issue is how the changing configuration of GVCs is likely to alter the future relevance of IO’s in mediating and recasting the global development agenda in an increasingly stratified and uncertain international economy.

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His major ongoing research projects are: (1) a book on the uptake of the global value chain paradigm by major international organizations in the economic and social development arena (expected completion date: August 2016); (2) work with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank on export competitiveness, workforce development, and regional value chains, with an emphasis on Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa; (3) member of the Global Agenda Council on “The Future of Manufacturing” (World Economic Forum), which will initiate a bi-annual “Global Manufacturing and Industrialization Summit” co-sponsored by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), beginning in 2016; and (4) “A Global Value Chain Analysis of Food Security and Food Staples in the Energy-Exporting Countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region,” funded by the Minerva Initiative (U.S. Dept. of Defense) (2012-2016).