

BOOK REVIEWS

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***Handbook on Global Value Chains*, edited by Stefano Ponte, Gary Gereffi and Gale Raj-Reichert.**
Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019. Pp. 640.

In recent years, global value chains (GVCs) have become an important area of research in international and development economics. Given that this volume comprises thirty-five core chapters divided into five parts, it is a difficult task to summarize and review all these chapters in detail. Instead of following the conventional approach, this essay provides a broad review in terms of the different parts of the volume.

Part I is devoted to reviews of the methodological framework underlying the study of GVCs. The five chapters in this section offer a very useful summary of how GVCs are studied in the literature. The empirical examples included in the first three chapters are particularly useful for those keen on diving into studying GVCs in specific industries. These chapters are methodically complemented by Chapters 4 and 5, which review the models used by sociologists and economists.

Part II of the volume covers a broad range of topics such as governance (Chs 6 and 7), inequality (Chs 8–11) and environment (Chs 12–13). The methodological approaches employed here are diverse—political economy, sociology (and organization) and political economy (classical/Ricardian, neo-Marxian/developmentalist, neo-Gramscian). The chapters on governance dwell on the role of power in shaping the structure of GVC networks. Moreover, the impact of GVCs on inequality is examined from the perspective of the creation and extraction of rents. Inequality is also examined in terms of uneven development (North-South) and contestations/conflicts. While the environment has not received enough attention in the mainstream economics literature on GVCs, the environment chapters in this volume take a perspective that stretches the vertical chain of production and extraction of rents, covering the natural ecosystem and sustainability management approaches.

The seven chapters (Chs 14–20) that make up Part III of the volume focus on the different aspects relevant to GVC upgrading. The typologies and trajectories of economic upgrading are carefully discussed in Chapter 14. This is a valuable chapter for scholars who are just beginning to examine this topic. Services are an integral component of GVCs and their role in upgrading is explored in Chapter 15. The remaining chapters in this section cover ethical and social dimensions of upgrading, such as quality of employment (Ch 16), corporate social responsibility (Ch 17), livelihood (Ch 18), environment (Ch 19) and gender (Ch 20). These carefully drafted chapters provide useful insights for policymakers interested in developing a more holistic approach to upgrading their country's participation in GVCs.

Firm-level and industry-level analyses of GVC are the focus of Chapters 21 to 27 in Part IV. The chapters highlight a wide range of topics such as firm-level strategies (corporate, technology and institutional) in Chapter 21, the role of first-tier suppliers (Ch 22), innovation capabilities of firms (Ch 23), technological capabilities (Ch 24) and industrial clusters (Ch 25). The remaining chapters in this part delve into two areas within the business literature on GVCs: multinational enterprises (Ch 26) and supply

chain management (Ch 27). The chapters in Part IV will especially appeal to economists and market practitioners interested in the management and technological aspects of GVCs.

In the concluding segment, Part V, policy issues are broadly discussed in eight chapters (Ch 28–35). The opening chapter (Ch 28) in this part does not focus on policies *per se* but provides policymakers with a view of the overarching canvass through sketches of the evolutionary and historical changes that have occurred during the emergence and development of GVCs. The follow-up chapters deal with broad and specific policy discussions in the areas of upgrading (Chs 29–31), trade policy (Ch 32), public-private partnerships (Ch 33), government/state (Ch 34) and international development organizations (Ch 35).

Overall, this volume is an important resource for both seasoned and new scholars researching GVCs. Many of the authors in this book have made significant contributions to the research literature on GVCs, thereby making this a comprehensive and authoritative volume. This publication also strives to be as inclusive as possible by embracing a wide range of different approaches that have been used in various fields and disciplines to study GVCs. Some of these approaches include business, economics, economic geography, political economy and sociology. The diversity and plurality of methods in this volume are not necessarily a weakness. For mainstream economists starting to research GVCs, this volume will be particularly useful in broadening their perspectives in terms of some of the key developmental, social and political issues that have been discussed in other disciplines. Although policymakers may not find the time or inclination to read the entire volume, they are encouraged to dip into this book to understand better the wide variety of issues and concerns about GVCs and development. Students engaged in the GVC literature, irrespective of their field of study, will certainly find this a valuable reference. The chapters provide readers with concise summaries of the various lines of research approaches in the study of GVCs.

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***In the Shadow of the Palms: More-Than-Human Becomings in West Papua*, by Sophie Chao.** Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2022, Pp. 336.

In the Shadow of the Palms is a moving tribute to the Marind people of the Upper Bian River, West Papua. Sophie Chao pens an anthropological take on the dark side of development economics—an agribusiness narrative that wreaks destruction, death and dastardly dreaming in its expansion. Her post-humanist analysis of rural development explores the more-than-human becomings in this region, where virgin forests and mangroves fall prey to the insatiable hunger for oil palm.

Chao's book is ground-breaking in many ways. She takes an innovative approach to plant-human relations by giving the invasive species *agency*, tapping on *plant turn*, an interdisciplinary methodology that sees oil palm as “communicative, sentient and world-making actors” (p. 8).

But it is not just this interminable crop that takes on a life of its own. Sago, too, is an active organism in the Upper Bian, and in the lives of the Marind. A distant cousin of the oil palm, it is the lifeblood of the people. The author expertly weaves its stories with that of an indigenous community that faces extermination as much as the plants that symbolize their history, culture and spirituality. To the Marind, this wilderness is more than what they seem and their engagement with the vegetation is a mutual nurturing for longstanding coexistence.
