

31st Annual Conference of the European Association for Evolutionary
Political Economy
12-15 September 2019, Warsaw (Poland)

**Special session: Improving our understanding of Global
Value Chains in theory and practice.**

Co-organised by *RA Industrial Policy and Development* and *RA Entrepreneurship and Theory of the Firm*

Invited speakers

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Carlo Pietrobelli
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Organisers

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Scope of the special session

Research on the different configurational aspects of firms’ activities worldwide has increasingly moved from delocalization of specific activities towards encompassing the whole value chain. The emergence of Global Value Chains (GVCs) as governance structure of international production, trade and investment, challenges conventional ways on how we approach non-standard organizational arrangements, economic globalisation but also policies that aim to take advantage of globalisation in order to develop dynamic domestic industries.

In this context, research areas E1 “Industrial Policy and Development” and E2 “Entrepreneurship and Theory of the Firm” organise a special session that aims to foster both empirical and theoretical investigation to better understand (the topics are not restrictive):



- How the concept of Global Value Chains as hybrid organizational forms affects governance and policy making?
- How GVCs interact with and are embedded in their institutional environment?
- What is the role of technology and technological change in this interaction (of GVCs and institutions)?
- What determines participation in a GVC?
- What factors determine the GVC coordination and performance?
- How GVCs affect international division of labour?
- What are the conditions for firms participating in GVCs to upgrade, that is to make better products and/or more efficiently or move into more high added value activities?
- What type of policies might enhance firms' upgrading, in the sense of becoming competitive in new market niches, sectors or production phases?

Scientific Relevance

In today's world, production takes place in different locations and / or is the outcome of complex relations and networking activities.

This has raised new research questions and creates new challenges for different strands of literature. For example in Institutional Economics the interaction of non-standard institutional arrangements with the institutional environment or in Economics of Development the possible strategies for enhancing firms' international competitiveness.

The research agenda nowadays seeks to integrate the discussion on GVCs as a field for further consideration.

GVCs can be viewed as organizational arrangements and ways that players structure their activities and operate transactions within institutional environment.

They also involve the distribution of different parts of the value chain across different locations and with different degrees of control.

In this context the purpose of this special session is to contribute to an open and ongoing discussion by:

1. Improving our understanding of GVCs and bringing new ways of policy thinking and especially industrial policy thinking.
2. Contributing to the conceptualization of GVCs as a form of organization that moves beyond the firm and the sector as units of analysis.
3. Contributing to monitoring and mapping GVCs by discussing and bringing about a) characteristics that are relevant when studying GVCs and b) new ways of measurement for capturing the locus of control, the performance outcomes of a GVC, the distribution of value creation and the appropriation of generated surpluses.

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