SPRU Friday Seminar

Date 31 January 2014
Speaker Raphi Kaplinsky (Open University and SPRU)
Title Global value chains, where they came from, where they are going, and why this is important

Abstract
This Discussion Paper focuses on the origins and trajectories of Global Value Chains. It charts their growing significance in global trade and identifies a series of literatures which have documented their global extension. The early documentation of dispersed global production chains was often largely heuristic. By contrast, the contemporary GVC literature is rich in theory and provides important insights into the dynamics of the global economy and the distributional outcomes of growth. The transformation of an heuristic framework into an analytical framework draws on a series of theoretical constructs, namely on changing market dynamics, core competences and rent, chain governance, upgrading, embeddedness and the subordination of labour. The Paper concludes with a discussion of possible future dynamics in GVCs, including the potential impact of the emergence of low and middle income Rising Powers on the trajectory of GVCs and the possibility of resourcing production back to near sourced suppliers close to the market.

Bio:
Raphie Kaplinsky began his career at SPRU in 1970 and subsequently moved to the IDS where he worked until 2006. Between 1999 and 2006 he held a joint appointment at CENTRIM. He moved to the Open University in 2006 and was charged with the development of new research programmes. This resulted in the Asian Drivers-Rising Powers programme, which focused inter alia on the impact of China's rise on Africa, on global commodities prices and on the terms of trade. His current interest is working with colleagues (including SPRU) to develop a globally networked research programme on Inclusive Innovation. Since the mid 1990s he has participated actively in a global research network focusing on Global Value Chains, with a personal interest on chain rents as a determinant of income and power distribution.