

# Global Value Chains and Rural Livelihoods: The case of Chilean smallholder raspberry growers

*Ed Challies*

*PhD candidate, School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences Victoria  
University of Wellington*

**Supervisors:** Warwick Murray & Richard Willis

This seminar will be a summary of my PhD research to date, and cover the aims of the research, methodology and methods, key findings and tentative conclusions. The project consists of a localised case study of Chilean peasant farmers and their participation, via global value chains, in export agriculture. The research is intended to contribute to an improved understanding of the complex local outcomes of contemporary globalisation processes and, in particular, the implications for smallholder farmers of agri-food globalisation. Based on the assumption that, in pursuit of such an understanding, a consideration of *both* overarching structural factors *and* local specificity and diversity is necessary, the research seeks to integrate two investigative frameworks: First, a global value chain (GVC) approach is employed in an exploration of the 'vertical' dynamics of the raspberry value chain – its configuration, key actors and governance structure – and the terms on which Chilean smallholder growers are integrated into the chain. Second, a sustainable rural livelihoods approach is taken to shed light on the 'horizontal' and local implications of participation in the chain at the household level. While general trends in the globalisation of agriculture have seen productive consolidation, land concentration and the elimination of 'non-viable' peasant farmers in the developing world, my research complicates this picture somewhat, with an account of inverse economies of scale, diverse rural livelihoods and the opportunities (and substantial challenges) for sustainable smallholder participation in the raspberry GVC. Potential points for policy intervention and areas for further research are also suggested.

The study draws in the first instance on over 60 semi-structured key informant interviews, conducted in Chile between August 2007 and March 2008, with a wide range of actors in the value chain for raspberries. Participants include peasant farmers, company managers and representatives, intermediaries, transporters, exporters, input providers, agronomists and technicians, local and central government figures, and importers in northern markets. Secondly, the study draws on 20 in-depth semi structured interviews and farm visits with smallholder raspberry growers and heads of households. Additionally, the project draws on numerous field visits to sites of primary production and processing, and a range of secondary statistical data collected in Chile. Methodologically the research combines global value chain analysis (Gereffi, Humphrey & Sturgeon 2005; Gibbon & Ponte 2005; Kaplinsky 2000) and a rural livelihoods approach (Bebbington 1999; Carney 1999; Scoones 1998) in an attempt to understand the real local development implications for rural households and communities, of participation in the global agri-food complex via agri-food chains.

