

Global standards and the philosophy of consumption: Toward a consumer-driven governance of global value chains

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Abstract

This study delves into the significant ethical criteria in the context of global standards. It addresses the moral wrongdoings and adverse side effects associated with global value chains as discussed in the business ethics literature. The methodology involves theoretical application and synthesis. The study employs ethical principles from deontology, consequentialism, and political cosmopolitanism to establish normative criteria such as “injustice and harm to others” and “bad outcomes.” It further investigates how these criteria should influence consumers' decisions, actions, and responsibilities. These criteria are then used to examine the moral wrongdoings and negative effects mentioned in global standards. The study explores how global standards implicitly express consumers' roles in governing global value chains. It scrutinizes consumers' actions and decisions by applying ethical frameworks to global standards. The study outlines consumers' individual and political responsibilities in achieving the goals of global standards. The research findings have implications for governments, consumers, and organizations in practicing shared responsibility. The aim of this research is to provide normative guidance for responsible actions.

KEY WORDS

consequentialism, consumer ethics, deontology, global standards, governance of global value chains, normative criteria, political cosmopolitanism, responsibilities of consumers

1 | INTRODUCTION

Consumers drive global value chains. They originate and shape demand, and influence what companies produce, how they produce, and how they distribute. Consumer influence can be conscious or unconscious, engaged or disengaged, but it is always there. This influence reflects enormous power. Some authors have addressed

the role of consumers in the establishment of fair-trade standards (Anderson, 2018; Castaldo et al., 2009; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005; Hira & Ferrie, 2006; Moore, 2004; Peattie & Samuel, 2018; Schenk, 2019). Others have explored consumer social responsibility (Caruana & Chatzidakis, 2014; Devinney et al., 2006; Pigors & Rockenbach, 2016; Vessia, 2019; Vitell, 2015). Still, others have examined political consumerism or consumer boycotts and protests

Abbreviations: Ch, Chapter; ETI, Ethical Trade Initiative; GDP, Gross Domestic Product; IGO, Intergovernmental Organizations; ILO, International Labour Organization; INGO, International Nongovernmental Organizations; ISO, International Organization for Standardization; MNC, Multinational Corporations; NGO, Nongovernmental Organizations; OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; SA, Social Accountability; SAI, Social Accountability International; SDG, Sustainable Development Goals; UN, the United Nations; UNGC, United Nations Global Compact; WTO, World Trade Organization.

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(Neureiter & Bhattacharya, 2021; Beck, 2019; Brinkmann, 2004; Barnett, Clarke, et al., 2005; Donaghey et al., 2014; Neilson, 2010). These interpretations offer evidence that consumers wield power and imply the existence of consumer norms.

Only a few authors apply normative ethics to consumer research (for example, Barnett, Cafaro, et al., 2005; Karimova et al., 2020; Schwartz, 2017). In this study, we adopt Schwartz's (2017) normative taxonomy of moral wrongdoings in consumer ethics and extend it to global standards. We ask what normative criteria such as "injustice and harm to others" and "bad outcomes" should imply for the responsibilities of global consumers in global value chains. We analyze the content of global standards and ethical theories to answer this research question.

First, we identify the normative criteria most relevant to evaluating moral wrongdoing and negative effects along global value chains. We focus on the requirements that are addressed in international standards. We also examine consumers' involvement in developing those standards. Second, we determine what these criteria should imply for global consumers' choices, activities, and responsibilities. We consider theoretical frameworks such as deontology (e.g., Kant [1785]), utilitarianism (e.g., Mill [1863]), and political cosmopolitanism (Pogge, 1998, 2002; Young, 2006, 2010). We outline normative criteria such as "harm to others and injustice" and "bad outcomes." Third, we draw conclusions about research on the ethics of global governance, the ethics of global value chains, and consumer responsibility.

This paper contributes to the normative and conceptual business ethics literature. It emphasizes consumers' responsibility along with corporations, NGOs, and states in governing global value chains. The paper is novel in its approach. It synthesizes global standards with ethical theories and examines them through ethical and political philosophies. It further delineates perspectives on how consumers should influence the governance of value chains to reduce negative externalities. It also seeks to identify norms that consumers can apply through personal choices. The results of this study also carry implications for governments, businesses, and organizations. For instance, organizations should cultivate a spirit of collaboration and cooperation with consumers and civil society to encourage ethical consumer behavior. Organizations can assist consumers in understanding their responsibilities to realize the goals of global standards.

2 | METHODOLOGY

This paper focuses on a theoretical investigation and theoretical synthesis. Its method applies normative theory to consumers and business ethics (Hasnas, 1998; Smith, 2008). Normative theory and normative business ethics construct ideals, raise good questions, and justify good actions. They address how businesses and consumer markets ought to be organized. Some examples concern the following questions: How can business processes serve justice as an end in more or less free markets? How should consumers, corporations, and other stakeholders make decisions? What are the duties

of consumers toward the society, corporations, and states? How should consumers wield their influence? What duties come with such power? What are the limits of such power? Are these questions deontological or utilitarian? Or some of both?

Our approach contrasts with research describing businesses and organizations' contours when we ask and answer these questions. Those perspectives attempt to explain or predict the interactions between corporations and their stakeholders, like consumers. In this research, we focus on what those interactions ought to be. Some critics oppose the application of normative ethics to business. They highlight the abstract nature of ethical theories and their potential for contradictions in business practice (Hasnas, 1998; Weaver & Trevino, 1994). Only by distancing ourselves from the traditional norms of business operations can we challenge the status quo. Norms offer goals and standards against which actions may be measured. They help to direct changes in business and society. This is precisely the endeavor that helps us find direction for change.

The normative ethics in business are applied ethics. They deal with the empirical, with facts. Instead of uncritically describing established conventions related to business practice, a normative approach recommends critical questioning of such empirical practices in the light of alternatives. In this way, change can be brought in business and societal contexts. The relationship between normative and descriptive business ethics is a dialectical one of difference, complementarity, tension, mutual inspiration, and influence (cf. Brinkmann, 2019, e.g., with a summary table on page 287).

For example, normative ethics justify consumer demand for fair trade standards. Consumers helped to create those standards, so their influence is manifest. Applying normative theory in business is more than just an abstract endeavor. Methodologically, normative theory and empirical facts would be "empty" or "blind," respectively, without one another. Normative theory and empirical facts need each other because together, they may lead toward realizing ideals in the business world (Weaver & Trevino, 1994).

3 | GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS AND THE EMERGING ROLE OF STANDARDS IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

3.1 | The role and importance of standards in global supply chains

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) defines a set of standards as: "a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context." (ISO, 2019, §1). From the perspective of corporate responsibility, standards can also be "predefined voluntary rules, procedures and methods to systematically assess, measure, audit and/or communicate the social and environmental behavior and/or performance of firms" (Gilbert et al., 2011, p. 24).

Such definitions are clumsy, awkward, and technical—and vague. The ISO definition is a “standard for standards.” From a consumer perspective, global standards can be understood as guidelines. It means that the standards should orient consumers toward sustainable lifestyles and moral decisions as they acquire, use, and dispose of consumer goods. The standards should also guide the political participation of consumers in the governance of global value chains as stakeholders in corporations and end-buyers in those value chains. This requires that ISO and other global standards should be translated into norms that consumers can apply.

Global standards have emerged along with economic globalization and value chains in general. Regarding value chains, we refer to the structure of value-adding activities that start with raw materials and end with the finished product (Gereffi et al., 2001). From a consumer perspective, it makes sense to look at global value chains as “those activities that are required to bring a product or service from conception, through the different phases of production—involving a combination of physical transformation and the input of various producer services—delivery to final consumers, and final disposal after use” (Frederick, 2016, §1).

Gereffi and Lee (2012) suggest combining perspectives on the interdependence of globalization and value chains. They include managerial, industrial, national, and developmental perspectives. Combining these perspectives offers some hope for sustainable corporate social responsibility but offers no guarantees (Gereffi et al., 2005; Gereffi & Lee, 2016). Baldwin (2013) focuses on value chain technology, especially transportation and telecommunications technology. These technologies allow for economies of scope and scale for countries and businesses. They also offer other comparative advantages. With these technologies, countries and businesses can extend their manufacturing around the world. They make international trade profitable (Baldwin, 2013; Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017; Gereffi et al., 2001). Still others discuss the costs of globalization. These costs include exploiting child labor and vulnerable workers in value chains. Global value chains can foster sweatshops, hazardous working conditions, and other labor abuses (Lund-Thomsen & Lindgreen, 2014).

Global standards can result from such externalities, and they can draw attention to them. Global standards communicate the critical importance of conscious governance in economic globalization. Global standards emphasize the ethical dimensions of international trade, including basics like human rights, living wages, healthy and safe working environments. They also cover consumer, corporate, and state responsibilities in global value chains (Gereffi et al., 2005; Nadvi, 2008).

There are three contrasting views of the implementation of global standards. All three perspectives seek to set global standards for governing global value chains. Top-down governance of value chains stresses the roles of leading industries and governments. Bottom-up governance stresses the roles of specific countries, specific organizations, and consumers (Gereffi & Fernandez-Stark, 2016). The third perspective treats consumers as the primary stakeholders. In this view, consumers deliberatively participate in the governance of

global value chains. They deliberatively help define standards and the contexts in which they apply. This puts the standards outside the control of corporations (Dubuisson-Quellier & Lamine, 2008; Hemphill, 2013).

Many articles address the roles of standards¹ in global supply chains (Knorrtinga & Nadvi, 2016; Nadvi, 2008). Nadvi defines standards as: “commonly accepted benchmarks that transmit information to customers and end-users about a product’s technical specifications, its compliance with health and safety criteria or the processes by which it has been produced and sourced” (2008, p. 3). Standards provide customers with information about product characteristics and production processes. This information can serve consumers as a basis for attaching value to the product (Nadvi, 2008). This information can also help to reduce transaction costs. It improves coordination and cooperation among buyers and local suppliers (Gereffi et al., 2005). Such standards can come from buyers, suppliers, and consumers. Sources may also be national and international NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, or others (Gereffi et al., 2001; Gereffi & Lee, 2016; Toffel et al., 2015).

Some global standards are voluntary, neither binding nor enforceable by law (Gilbert et al., 2011). Other standards are *binding*. They find their way into the regulations or laws of countries that host parts of a value chain. Trading countries might choose to put in place global standards in bilateral trade agreements. The most important implication of voluntary standards concerns morality and free will. For example, these might be the standards that an individual or a group has about what is right and wrong. Moral standards, in this sense, are imperatives, involving moral duties and responsibilities. They do not refer primarily to how people act or how the world is but to what individuals or a community *ought to do* or how the world should be.

3.2 | Classification of global standards

Gilbert et al. (2011) have classified accountability standards into four categories. These categories are principle-based standards, certification standards, reporting standards, and process standards. We used these categories to construct Table 1. Table 1 shows widespread standards that may apply to global value chains. It also shows how we categorized the standards by target and involved groups (see Table 1).

Target and involved groups include corporations, consumers, civil society, and national states. When standards target more than one specific group, they may be more likely to reach their goals (see Table 1). They involve more stakeholders and invite them to collaborate along the value chain. Most of these standards are voluntary. They may become more effective and more efficient if they are less voluntary. That usually means that they are embedded in robust governmental regulatory regimes. These regulatory regimes often imply sanctions (Short & Toffel, 2010; Toffel et al., 2015; Wettstein, 2009). Organizations follow global standards with voluntary and mandatory elements (Gereffi & Lee, 2016).

TABLE 1 The categorization of global standards in accordance with their target groups and involved parties.

Global standards and their focus groups	National states and public policy	Multinational, transnational, and national corporations	Consumers and the civil society
UN Global Compact (UN) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Guiding principles on business and human rights (UN) ^a	◆	◆	◊
Guidelines for multinational enterprises (OECD) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Principles of corporate governance (OECD) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector (OECD) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Supply Chain Sustainability a practical Guide for Continuous improvement (UN and BSR) ^a	◊	◆	◊
A guide to traceability: A practical approach to advance sustainability in global supply chains (UN and BSR) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Business Social Compliance Initiative–Codes of conduct (FTA) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UN) ^a	◆	◊	◊
Fostering and communicating sustainable lifestyles: Principles and emerging practices (UNEP) ^a	◊	◊	◆
Principles of Consumer Charter for Global Businesses (CI) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Ethical Trading Initiative's Base Code (ETI) ^a	◊	◆	◊
Sustainable Development Goals (UN) ^a	◆	◊	◊
SA 8000: Social accountability (SAI) ^b	◊	◆	◊
Fair Trade standards (FLO, WFTO, NEWS, EFTA, FINE) ^b	◊	◆	◊
Global Reporting Initiative (CERES) ^c	◊	◆	◊
International Integrated Reporting Framework (IIRC) ^c	◊	◆	◊
ISO 26000 (ISO) ^d	◊	◆	◊

Note: Abbreviations in brackets refer to the following organizations who are responsible for setting standards: UN, United Nations; OECD, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; FTA, Foreign Trade Association; CI, Consumers International; SAI, Social Accountability International; UNEP, United Nations Environment Program; FI, Fairtrade International; CERES, Coalition of Environmentally Responsible Economies; ETI, Ethical Trade Initiative; IIRC, International Integrated Reporting Council; ISO, International Standardization Organization; WBCSD, World Business Council for Sustainable Development; BSR, Business for Social Responsibility; FINE is an informal association of the four main Fair Trade networks: FLO, Fair Trade Labeling Organization International; WFTO, International Fair Trade Association, or the World Fair Trade Organization; NEWS, Network of European Worldshops; EFTA, European Fair Trade Association. ◆, Target group—are focus groups (e.g., corporations, organizations, governments and states, consumers etc.) who are responsible for implementing standards. ◊, Involved group—are focus groups (e.g., states, consumers, NGOs, etc.) who are affected by target groups of standards and hold responsibility as stakeholders.

^aPrinciple-based standards.

^bCertification standards.

^cReporting standards.

^dProcess standards.

In the literature, classifications of standards refer to one or more stages in global supply chains (Nadvi & Wältring, 2004). These classifications can be difficult to assemble because standards vary greatly (Gilbert et al., 2011).

We can also classify standards according to who sets them (see Figure 1). Institutions define standards for corporations from the top down (Kaplinsky, 2010; O'Rourke, 2003; Toffel et al., 2015). State-based institutions that set standards include customs services and organizations like the OECD. Supplier-country civil-society institutions may include trade unions. Trade unions may set local laws or monitor compliance with ILO standards.

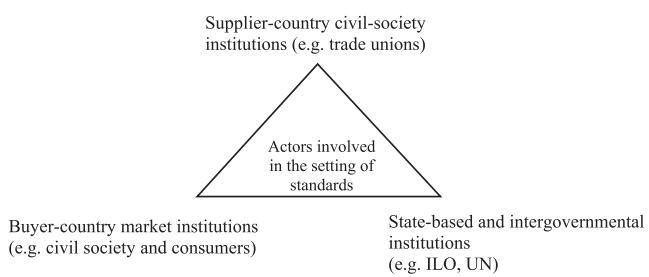


FIGURE 1 Major institutions involved in the regulation of transnational standards. The figure is based on the classification of standards by Toffel et al. (2015).

Buyer-country market institutions may pressure corporations through ethical and political consumerism. NGOs in buyer countries can be involved in environmental, social, and ethical initiatives. Examples include the “Clean Clothes Campaign,” “Human Rights Watch,” and “Consumers International.” Civil society organizations may set standards for labor content and sustainability. “Fairtrade International” has influenced producers on labor and environmental issues (Kaplinsky, 2010).

3.3 | Consumer involvement in global standards

Consumers often lack information about the products they buy. Global standards can guide them toward ethical choices. The literature lacks research on how consumers influence global standards for the governance of global value chains. We reviewed many global standards and the roles that they assign to consumers. These roles included transparency and consumer education, justice and fairness, sustainable consumption, and citizenship.

The OECD guidelines contain a section dedicated to consumer interests (OECD, 2011). This section directs corporations to provide precise and clear information to consumers. For example, corporations should be clear about prices, environmental practices, storage, and disposal. The section also encourages MNCs to support consumer education about their business activities. This information should help consumers make better social, environmental, and economic decisions. Production for consumers has become more complex. This places more responsibilities on governments, civil society organizations, and corporations. Corporations share responsibility with these bodies. The section encourages MNCs to deal fairly with consumers. The principle of fairness is about fair marketing practices and product reliability (OECD, 2011, p. 51f).

The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) developed its Base Code (2010). This code encourages the protection of workers' rights. When companies adopt ETI's Base Code, they bind themselves to use ETI's standards throughout their value chains. This means collaborating with their suppliers and retailers. Ethics underlies responsible trade in the Base Code. This standard stresses consumer responsibility for political activity on fair trade (Albareda, 2013; Brinkmann, 2004). Social Accountability International also worked with many stakeholders to develop standards. Their standards resemble ILO standards and the UN's Human Rights Convention standards (SAI, 2014).

The Fairtrade initiative is a voluntary certification system and labeling process. It signals that an organization follows established fair trade and production standards. Fairtrade recognizes that the global community has rights and responsibilities worldwide (Nicholls & Opal, 2005). Fairtrade builds alternative value chains that link producers and consumers in the initiative. They help orient consumers to support ethical consumer choices (Hale & Held, 2011).

The UN Environmental Program published “Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Principles and Emerging

Practices.” This report provides consumers with a principle-based guide to living more sustainably (UNEP, 2016). The main aim of the standard is to promote sustainable lifestyles. The principles inform consumers about responsible consumption, minimizing natural resource consumption, and more. Eight principles cover stakeholder-focused engagement. They help set goals for a better life and choose strategies for sustainable lifestyles. Sustainable lifestyles mitigate environmental impact and promote fairness and prosperity for all.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals focus on consumers, consumption, and production (2016). It is also known as “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” Goal 12 of the initiative is dedicated to sustainable consumption and production. It addresses frameworks and active programs for environmentally friendly techniques and management tools. Goal 12 covers a broad range of practices and aims. It includes better use of natural resources, reducing consumer waste, and reducing harm and injustice. The document encourages stakeholders to promote SDGs to consumers, policymakers, and producers. Goal 12 obligates national governments to design frameworks for sustainable consumption and production. It encourages governments to collaborate with business sectors and consumers (UN, 2016a, 2016b).

Global standards give some responsibilities to consumers. They share responsibility for human rights abuses. They share responsibility for global production unfairness, environmental issues, and long-term sustainability. The standards imply two messages for consumers. First, consumers have expectations and rights with respect to producers and states. They can expect corporations to follow standards. They can expect states to enforce consumer rights and regulate value chains. Second, consumers have obligations in global supply chains. The standards offer ways for consumers to buy ethically and engage in political activities. These can make consumers responsible participants in the governance of global value chains. As long as corporations oppose regulations, the hope for a transformed global economy is an illusion. If corporations start to support regulations, then hope rises (Wettstein, 2009). Consumers must press this case for corporations to respond.

4 | WHEN PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY OFFERS CONSUMERS RELEVANT NORMATIVE CRITERIA

4.1 | Ethics of consumption and moral taxonomies

Our working definition of consumer ethics incorporates the responsibilities of consumers and moral reasons for responsible actions. These reasons and responsibilities are justified in philosophical theories and global standards. As noted earlier, empirical approaches to consumer ethics have dominated to date (Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Vitell, 2003; Vitell & Ho, 1997), but there is a growing interest in theoretical and normative consumer research in philosophy and the ethics of consumption (Barnett, Cafaro, et al., 2005; García-Rosell & Moisander, 2007; Karimova et al., 2020; Schwartz, 2017). Barnett,

Cafaro, and et al. (2005) apply basic concepts of ethical theories such as deontology, consequentialism, and virtue ethics on consumer decisions; García-Rosell and Moisander (2007) and Karimova et al. (2020) apply virtue ethics to consumers and analyze virtuous consumer lifestyles precisely. Schwartz's (2017) book offers the perspective of normative consumer ethics that reaches globally while applying ethical theories to the local level. We adopted Schwartz's (2017) consumer ethics taxonomies to analyze global standards' content. We adopted this taxonomy because it combines global reach and local application.

Schwartz uses moral taxonomy to identify and describe four types of moral misconduct in a global consumer economy (2017, p. 21f). The first of these types, "wrongdoing during product manufacturing," refers to pain and suffering experienced by people involved in the production process, harm to the environment, and damage to people's health during global production. The second, "wrongdoing during product use," occurs when the consumption of an end-product has negative external effects on the environment, consumers' health, and the well-being of other people. For example, many chemicals used in fast fashion manufacturing harm the environment, factory workers, and consumers. Current fashion and consumption practices result in large amounts of textile waste incinerated, landfilled, or exported to developing countries (Niinimäki et al., 2020). The third, "wrongdoing during product marketing," involves four core marketing-mix strategies—product, price, promotion, and place. It covers unethical, unsustainable, and unfair advertising, price politics, retail, and distribution of consumer goods. The fourth, "wrongdoing ancillary to the product itself," refers to consumer wrongdoing in purchasing a company's morally produced products while the company demonstrates morally corrupt practices in producing other consumer goods.

The second taxonomy enhances these norms by identifying four distinct types of wrongdoings commonly associated with consumer products (Schwartz, 2017, pp. 21–32). The first, "actions that cause injustice and harm," refers to harm that affects others (Preiss, 2018). These actions result in social and economic injustice, physical and psychological harm, or environmental damage that harms humans themselves. The second, "actions that promote bad outcomes," implicates consumer products that glorify actions with morally wrong implications and consequences. "Harm to others" can result in pain and suffering due to morally wrong actions. Determining the difference between "actions that cause injustice and harm" and "actions that promote bad outcomes" entails judging the actions themselves before the fact, for example, ex-ante. In examining actions that promote bad outcomes, we judge the moral worth of the results of the actions that cause injustice and harm, for example, ex-post. In examining actions that cause injustice, we can eliminate the causes of injustice. This means that we can eliminate bad outcomes of our actions when we do not cause injustice and harm with our actions.

In the following section, we try to ground these moral taxonomies in moral philosophical theory to reconstruct what underlies consumer decisions and actions or to construct a foundation for our normative ethics of consumption.

4.2 | An investigation of philosophical frameworks for consumer behavior

Barnett, Cafaro, and et al. (2005) and Schwartz (2017) have illustrated the implications of deontological and consequentialist ethics for consumption. They described the incompatibility of deontological premises in the case of child labor during the production of consumer goods. However, these did not build bridges between their examples and the core concepts of Kantian ethics—such as the categorical imperative. Similarly, their application of consequentialism misses the detailed analysis of consequentialist principles in Mill's classical utilitarianism or Singer's ideas about effective altruism. Political cosmopolitanism has yet to arrive in the consumer ethics literature. The following sections try to fill such gaps. We show that moral taxonomies identified by Schwartz (2017) can be applied in the context of moral theories such as deontology, utilitarianism, and political cosmopolitanism.

4.3 | Deontology

Kant's theory of duty (*deon*, from ancient Greek δέον, means "duty" or "obligation") represents the basis of deontological ethics. Consumers are autonomous, as opposed to heteronomous, to the extent they freely and willfully follow the maxim or moral law of categorical imperatives.² The first formula of the categorical imperative implies that in their choices, consumers should "act only following that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (Kant [1785], p. 437). The relevant point of Kant's ethics for consumers lies in how we can prove our deontological judgments through *impartiality*. The universalizability of moral judgments implies moral consent with the judgments of all human beings. Impartiality enables us—*independent of cultural differences and origin*—to universalize our moral judgments based on our capacity to follow reason. Consumers judge impartially, i.e., morally correctly, when the judgments are universally valid, without contradictions, and they can be willed as "universal practical laws" (Kant [1785], p. 438).

Here are some examples to illustrate the categorical imperative. According to the deontological maxim, consumers act morally correctly when consumer goods and their products do not involve morally wrong actions that harm other people or perpetuate injustice. This means that exploitative child labor in producing consumer goods is morally wrong because the rule "all children ought to work" cannot be applied universally. A consumer who accepts Kantian moral imperative would ask for any given decision: Does the principle on which the decision is based pass the categorical imperative test? Can this principle be willed universally by any consumer without contradiction? To prove the categorical imperative, Kant would require us to universalize the maxim of the action: "It is morally permissible for any consumer to buy goods produced with child labor; everyone ought to buy consumer goods with child labor." Would such a universalized maxim be logically coherent?

Based on a Kantian moral theory, the answer is "no." The practical reasoning by consumers would not apply the maxim as a universal law. Morally right consumer choices follow imperatives of "reason" as opposed to "human instincts". Thus, consumer choices that are not objectively "reasonable" cannot be considered universal laws and, therefore, cannot qualify as a categorical imperative. Given deontological choices, consumers ought to consume based on the unconditional ground of imperatives. What does that mean? If consumers buy child-made clothing because they follow their own desire for the clothes, then their purchases correspond to a hypothetical imperative, i.e., a conditionally or morally wrong imperative.

By the second form of the categorical imperative, consumers ought to make choices that "use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means" (Kant [1785], p. 394). According to Kant's second categorical imperative, no human being should be treated solely as a means to an end but should also be considered as a "nontradable" end in themselves. Consumers' purchases of slave-made goods show that a consumer purchase can support immoral production, like violations of human rights, despite consumers having complete information about the wrongdoings perpetrated during production and despite being aware of the negative impact of their choices. Thus, the second categorical imperative demands that consumers boycott (Robinson, 2018) goods produced using morally corrupt practices. Regarding moral rights, deontological ethics relate to consumer choices and actions that promote justice and eliminate the causes of injustice that harm no one and that do not contradict one's moral values.

4.4 | Utilitarianism/consequentialism

The utilitarian approach implies that only the outcomes of consumer choices, not their intentions, are relevant to an ethical evaluation of the actions. For example, utilitarian consequentialism asserts that the moral rightness or wrongness of an action ought to be evaluated against the consequences of that action. By making an ethical choice, the utilitarian consumer ought to maximize, with his or her choice, the outcomes of the morally good over the morally wrong actions. Mill ([1863], p. 186) characterized classical utilitarian principle: "The Greatest Happiness Principle holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness [...]. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure."

Utilitarian principles imply that the following end purpose should lead a consumer: to use one's choice to maximize pleasure and happiness for all involved actors. According to utilitarian ethics, the total sum of pleasures should guide our choices. A consumer's morally right actions ought to promote the happiness of others affected by the actions as much as the consumer's individual happiness. At the very least, no one should be worse off because of the economic transaction. From this, it can be inferred that, even in globalization,

economic cooperation should help increase the production of consumer goods worldwide and promote the individual's happiness by increasing collective well-being. For example, a consumer making a choice to buy a fair-trade product instead of a sweatshop product increases not only the consumer's happiness and well-being but also the happiness of people producing these goods. This choice may also reduce the overall suffering of people affected by it.

4.5 | Effective altruism

Some modern applications of utilitarianism can be found in Singer's (1972) consequentialist ethics. According to Singer's (1972) ethics, if affluent consumers redistribute their incomes through consumption for philanthropic reasons, they might reduce global poverty, considering rising income inequality. For example, they may buy consumer goods for charity or donate part of their income. The consumer can spend money on charity, support nonprofit supply chains in developing countries, or philanthropic consumption until he or she reaches the level of marginal utility: "that is, the level at which, by giving more, [one] would cause as much suffering to [oneself] or [one's] dependents as [one] would relieve by [one's] gift" (Singer, 1972, p. 234). The redistribution of income implies that, according to the idea of effective altruism, the global poor and worse-off people in value chains would benefit.

Because utilitarianism judges the results of actions, injustices and harm may still occur. We cannot eliminate the causes of wrongful acts in all cases, but we can reduce the pains maximizing overall happiness of involved persons. Benefits like human rights, even life itself, are subject to the promotion of the greatest good within a society. Utilitarianism may be relevant for reducing "actions that promote bad outcomes." In this sense, utilitarianism also lends itself to the performance of the possible. That is, consumers and others should stress what can be done in the context of what should be done. The greatest evil in a supply chain may be small children working in a mine, but eliminating that behavior may be beyond consumers' influence.

Normative theories in consumer ethics address a fundamental issue: Is consumer ethics an individual responsibility, focusing on the internal motivation of principles for individual decisions, or is it an institutional endeavor, focusing on how political and economic institutions should be arranged to produce more just outcomes in the governance of value chains? In the next section, we discuss the relevance of political philosophy and its implications for consumers.

4.6 | Consumers in political philosophy

Political philosophy may come into play when other theories have failed. Deontology may lead a consumer to perceive a duty to eliminate harm in a global supply chain, but ordinary purchases will not suffice to carry out that duty. In that case, political actions like boycotts and protests may become duties.

Works in political philosophy, like normative ethics, are essential to developing normative theory in global value chains. One example is the stakeholder theory in business organizations (Conill, 2017). According to this theory, moral principles for managing stakeholder interests become legitimate through applying political philosophies. In this section, we apply some political philosophies to the role of consumers as political citizens in the governance of global value chains. We have selected some political philosophers' ideas about global justice and applied these ideas to political cosmopolitanism, considering the roles of global standards and consumers.

"Actions that promote injustice and harm to others" require a violation of a society's fundamental sense of fairness (Rawls, 2005, 2013). In line with this definition, according to Rawls (2013, p. 249), civil disobedience "should be recognized as a form of political action within the limits of fidelity to the rule of law." Civil disobedience addresses the majority's sense of justice through substantial violations of that sense of justice. If violations of the majority are rectified, injustices should lead to the basis for remedying them. Furthermore, Rawls (2013, p. 250) underlined that "civil disobedience should be restricted to those cases where the dissenter is willing to affirm that everyone else similarly subjected to the same degree of injustice has the right to protest in a similar way."

In the vein of contractarian philosophy, we want to look at the importance of consumers in political activities in a highly simplified scenario. Cosmopolitan contractarianism is a form of social contract theory. It is based on the global idea of "justice as fairness" advanced by Rawls (2005). Building upon the core ideas of cosmopolitan contractarianism, we want to argue that Rawls' (2005) idea of the "veil of ignorance" plays a crucial role in the legitimization of *global consumer citizenship*. Let us modify the idea of the "veil of ignorance" and apply it to our examination of the governance of global value chains. We assume that consumers—in a Rawlsian hypothetical position—would agree to choose principles to govern the global economic order that would guarantee "freedoms" to the individuals involved in global production. We also assume that they would choose regulations of social and economic inequalities in a global economy.³ If we view consumers as operating beneath a "veil of ignorance," we must also understand that they would know that increasing well-being depends on the globalization of production chains and the sharing of capital and resources worldwide. Being in the "shoes of the other" under the "veil of ignorance," consumers agree on principles for the governance of global economic cooperation. They would agree to principles that benefit the interests of consumers, and the interests of all affected people in production and consumption along global value chains. These people might include workers or future generations.

We believe that consumers would choose the principles of fair production and consumption that are linked to the governance mechanisms and themes in global standards. The distributive function of economic principles could be realized through fair distribution of economic gains, and through market mechanisms and the design of just international institutions during production and consumption that could regulate global value chains.⁴

The rules of global economic trade tend to favor the interests of rich countries (Pogge, 2002; Rodrik, 1998; Stiglitz, 2007). According to Pogge (2002), consumers in the wealthiest societies and countries are actively responsible in part for the misery of poor countries in global production chains. He claims that the rules of international trade are biased toward rich countries in many forms. These include the design of intellectual property rights, resource-borrowing privileges from poor countries, the unequal distribution of economic gains, and the disproportionate consumption of resources by countries with high consumer purchasing power.

As Pogge (2005, p. 5) notes, advantaged countries, their corporations and consumers, "are harming the global poor" if and insofar as they collaborate in imposing an "unjust global institutional order upon them." In this sense, harm and social justice relate to the structure of international institutional order (Pogge, 2005, p. 5): "if and insofar as it foreseeably perpetuates large-scale human rights deficits that would be reasonably avoidable through feasible institutional modifications." In this context, Pogge (2005, p. 5) assigns responsibility not only to national states and multinational corporations, but also indirectly to consumers as citizens of these states: "And many citizens of these affluent countries bear responsibility for the global institutional arrangements their governments have negotiated in their names." Pogge's (1998, 2002) arguments can be summarized like this: wealthy consumers have a duty to remedy the suffering of the losers in global value chains. These "losers" include exploited workers and people or environments harmed during production. The remedies may be realized through restructuring global institutional and legal orders.

Like and yet distinct from Pogge's cosmopolitanism, Young (2006, p. 103) proposes a "social connection model" of responsibility. He argues that: "all agents who contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices." If a consumer has material and institutional advantages over the poor and vulnerable, then that consumer also has more significant obligations and responsibilities. According to Young (2010a, pp. 104–5), consumers bear responsibility for structural injustice⁵ because they contribute by their actions to the processes that produce unjust outcomes. Young (2006, 2010) argues that the political responsibility of consumers consists of cooperating with states, corporations, NGOs, and all supply chain actors to work collaboratively against injustices. She calls this a "shared responsibility." Young (2006, pp. 125–30) offers four parameters for allocating responsibility within this context. These parameters are based on the actor's position in the social structure: (1) consumers' power to influence the unjust process; (2) consumers' privileges, i.e., the level of their benefit from the structural injustice; (3) consumers' interest in the transformation of the structural injustice; and (4) the collective ability of consumers. This includes the ability to remedy the situation by joining, for example, civil society organizations in taking collective action to transform unjust structures.

To summarize these theories, we conclude that political cosmopolitanism is pertinent to the legitimization of global standards and global economic governance. Political cosmopolitanism plays a vital

role in the justification of the role of consumers in civil society, especially in the context of *global consumer citizenship*. The significance of these theories to global supply chains and political consumerism can be evaluated using the moral criterion of injustice and harm to others.

What do these political theories mean for the corporate world? Political philosophy's central problems mirror the corporate world's central problems. These theories cover state legitimacy and global governance. This leads to discussions about the best kind of citizens' political obligations. In a corporate world, these political theories have implications for just distributing the benefits and burdens in global value chains. They also have implications for the construction of just rules for global cooperation among firms and states. Consider, for example, the case of the World Fair Trade Organization. If the arguments in this section are correct, then not only do political theories speak to crucial questions in the normative study of businesses, but they also require us to rethink the fundamental features of global economic governance and the economic rules in capitalism.

5 | GLOBAL PRODUCTION CHAINS, STANDARDS, AND THE ETHICS OF CONSUMPTION

5.1 | Normative criteria to evaluate the moral wrongdoings noted in global standards

How do taxonomies of consumer ethics like Schwartz's (2017) overlap with the content of global standards? To what extent can these normative criteria also be used to evaluate wrongdoings in global value chains? If we look again at the content of the standards, we can identify a few such overlaps (see Table 2).

For instance, injustice and harm to others and wrongdoings during product marketing are mentioned in the OECD guidelines for MNCs. According to the guidelines, companies should avoid unfair business, marketing, and advertising practices (see the "OECD Guidelines for Multinational Corporations"). Fair trade standards for marketing emphasize pricing strategies to avoid injustice and harm in corporate marketing. A fair price is "defined as freely negotiated through dialogue between the buyer and the seller and is based on transparent price setting. It includes a fair wage and a fair profit. Fair prices represent an equitable share of the final price to each

player in the supply chain." (see "Fairtrade standards") Further, the UNEP standards for sustainable consumer lifestyles mention bad outcomes and wrongdoings during product use. These principles encourage consumers to reduce the harmful outcomes of products, for example, through recycling and reducing waste. When consumers pay more attention to information about products and manufacturers, they may reduce or eliminate bad outcomes and wrongdoings related to their purchases.

Global standards overlap with the themes in normative evaluation criteria for wrongdoings in value chains. These normative criteria are themes in the global standards. Two normative criteria such as "injustice" and "harm to others" as well as "bad outcomes" appear to be the most important criteria. These criteria can then be extended and combined in standards with moral wrongdoings during product manufacturing, product marketing, and product use.

5.2 | Standards, normative criteria, and the responsibilities of global consumers

One way of synthesizing our findings is to conceptualize consumer responsibility in global value chains. Social responsibility binds consumers not only to individual moral choices, but also to political responsibility. This political responsibility means cooperation and engagement with states, INGOs, and NGOs to influence global economic governance (Caruana & Chatzidakis, 2014). More specifically, we suggest extending the concept of consumer responsibility to individual, political, and shared responsibilities. This means relating it to the complementary responsibilities of other actors such as nation-states and intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, and corporations along global value chains.

5.3 | The individual responsibilities of consumers

If we synthesize philosophical theory with the content of global standards on injustice, harm to others, and adverse outcomes, then we see a variety of consumer responsibilities that overlap with the responsibilities of states, corporations, and civil society organizations (see Figures 2–4).

Individual consumer responsibility entails taking responsibility for one's choice in purchases and donations that correspond to

TABLE 2 Examples of injustice and harm to others thematized in global standards.

Principles and moral issues for regulating injustice and harm to others as addressed in global standards	Types of moral misbehavior: Wrongdoings during product manufacturing
Principles 4 and 5 in the UN Global Compact; Principles 3.1–3.5 and 9 regarding contamination and safety in the workplace in the ETI Base Code; Principle 10, Part 3 regarding living wages in the OECD Guidelines for MNCs; Social, economic, and environmental outcomes addressed in Principle 10 of the UN Global Compact, or Goal 12 regarding sustainable production and consumption in the Sustainable Development Goals.	Exploitative child labor and forced labor; Inhuman and dangerous working conditions; Wages lower than necessary for a basic subsistence level; Unsustainable use of scarce and finite resources along global supply chains, and the consequences for future generations.

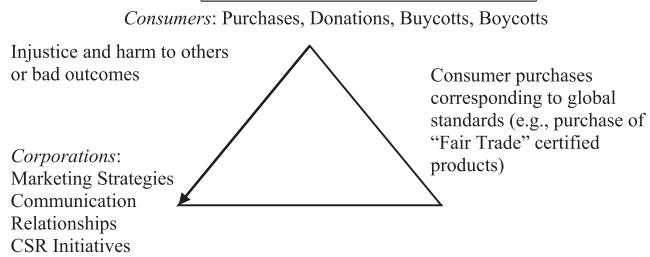


FIGURE 2 Individual responsibility of consumers toward corporations. →↔ The lines with arrows and double-arrows represent the interconnections and influence of actions among actors who hold responsibility in global supply chains (e.g., corporations and consumers).

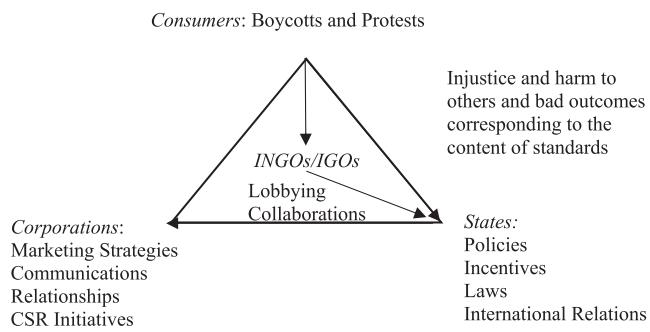


FIGURE 3 The political responsibility of consumers within the concept of multiagent and multilevel consumer social responsibility. → The lines with arrows represent the influence of actions among or between actors who bear responsibility in global supply chains. The figure shows consumers, corporations, states, and (I) NGO(s) as actors and institutions who hold the responsibility.

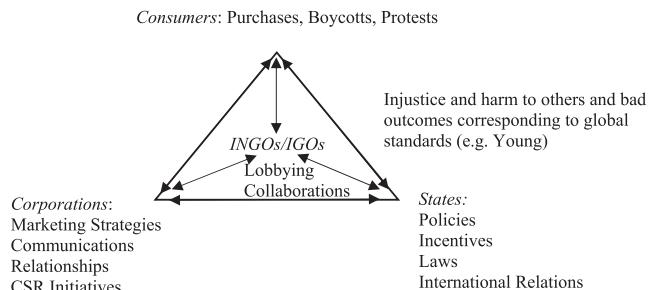


FIGURE 4 Shared responsibility of consumers within the concept of multiagent and multilevel consumer social responsibility. ↔ The lines with double-arrows represent the interconnections and influence of actions among or between actors who bear the main responsibility in global supply chains. Consumers, corporations, states, INGOs and IGOs are actors and institutions who hold the responsibility.

global standards. According to global standards, and philosophical theories, consumers have a moral obligation to make informed purchases. For example, consumers should consider the transparency of supply chains under which goods are produced, not just their personal brand loyalties. When consumers choose more sustainable and fair products, they support fair producers and value chains. In the context of negative duties, this means that a consumer does

not allow harm to others or injustice to occur. If consumers refuse to purchase immorally produced goods, they can eventually lead to freedom of choice between unethically and ethically produced goods.

For instance, when corporations provide little or no information to consumers about how they generate or distribute their profits, they may hide an unfair distribution of economic gains along their value chains. This can cause poverty wages and lower well-being. Fair trade standards typically comprise the principles of fair prices that allow fair distribution of revenue to each player in a value chain. The individual responsibility of the consumer refers mainly to morally responsible purchases. Thus, a consumer's negative duties may include boycotts of unfairly produced goods. Their positive duties may include choosing fair and sustainable goods. This also has implications for negative duties, since such a choice does not harm people or the environment along the value chains of such goods. In the context of positive duties, consumers redistribute income through donations or philanthropic consumption. Positive duties mean that consumers ought to assist those worse off in a supply chain and seek to help them. Consumers exercise their power through purchases and political activities when they fulfill their duties. Both can influence corporations' moral communications, relationships, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

5.4 | The political responsibility of consumers

Political consumerism (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013) concerns the activities of citizens, consumers, and political activists in using the market as an arena for politics. In line with this definition, we identify within the "political responsibility of consumers" a type of consumer responsibility to change the structures of global markets, for example, in collaboration with NGOs, IGOs, and states (see Figure 3).

According to some political philosophers (e.g., Pogge, 2005; Young, 2010b), consumers ought to directly influence states and corporations through protests and boycotts. In collaborating with NGOs and IGOs, consumers ought to actively lobby states in areas such as laws, policies, and incentives that influence CSR initiatives to eradicate the causes of injustice and harm to others or to mitigate bad outcomes of global value chains.

Consumers can also influence how states address the design and redesign of institutions and the rules of international trade. This may include the state's own regulations of human rights issues. Consumers' protests can influence the design of policies, incentives, and laws that ought to influence communications, CSR initiatives, and relationships of corporations along global supply chains. In the context of positive duties, consumers ought to collaborate with civil-society organizations and institutions supporting the political agendas of these institutions. For example, they can advocate for supporting NGO developmental projects in poor countries. In the context of negative duties, consumers' political

responsibility consists of participating in political boycotts, consumer lobbies, and demonstrations to communicate a political will for change. These steps may be necessary for realizing the content of global standards along production chains and the enactment of appropriate laws in national regulation, for example, to protect human rights.

5.5 | Shared responsibility: Consumers, corporations, and states

"Shared responsibility" represents a holistic approach that involves collaboration and cooperation among institutions and actors involved in global production chains to eradicate the causes of injustice and harm to others, as well as to reduce bad outcomes (see [Figure 4](#)).

In this model, economic actors in global supply chains collaborate with one another to eradicate injustice in those value chains. Consumers put pressure on corporations, and corporations encourage consumers to meet the goals of standards, applying some ideas of Young ([2010a](#)). There is a chain of influence and power here. States influence consumers, corporations lobby states, and consumers influence corporations and states. These can integrate to help workers and to elevate sustainability along value chains. Collectively, they can create economic incentives to reach target standards. Young ([2010a](#)) suggests considering the level of power, privileges, and social connections of involved actors in global value chains. The most powerful states, corporations, and the most affluent consumers should have more responsibility for remedying the causes of injustice, or structural injustice, than consumers, corporations, and states in weaker economic positions like suppliers or workers in poor countries.

If corporations, states, (I)NGOs, consumers, and IGOs collaborate, they may achieve desirable structural changes along global value chains. For example, through boycotts, protests, and lobbying, consumers can directly influence states to create economic incentives for corporations to practice CSR. Corporations can lobby states for responsible trade agreements and the implementation of trading standards. Corporations can also create incentives for consumers to purchase in responsible ways. There is a need for further thought and action. Political discourse should intensify between companies, states, international organizations, NGOs, and consumers. They should seek agreement on alternative, appropriate business forms. This end requires greater transparency about the sources and uses of revenue along global value chains, including wages, working conditions, and environmental impacts.

Consumers act in contexts established by states and corporations. That need not require dictatorial action on the part of the state or the part of corporations. Instead, these significant actors should fulfill their duties so consumers can fulfill theirs. This could mean something as simple as assuring that the infrastructure is in place to recycle plastic and glass. Governments can provide cans for sorting the used products, and corporations can find ways to

use them. Consumers can then use the system these entities offer. Consumers can also influence states and corporations to provide morally suitable contexts. The morally suitable contexts should be embodied in global standards. Not only should states and corporations adopt such standards, but they should also interact with consumers on what those standards are and what they should be. Unless all the stakeholders communicate, little action is likely to take place.

From a moral point of view, it should be a duty for international actors to protect the well-being of the most vulnerable and the poorest people along the value chains. Multinational corporations, supranational institutions, and governments have a duty to cooperate to improve the well-being of millions of underpaid workers in global value chains. The business model that dominates the global value chain fails at this. Value is created and profits are generated by buying labor where the costs are as low as possible, and selling the goods produced for low wages at the highest possible prices. This model may create millions of jobs in emerging countries like Bangladesh, but the corresponding poverty wages also create massive inequalities and injustices worldwide (Ackerly, [2018](#)). In low-wage countries, social standards, infrastructure development, or people's chances of a good life usually fall by the wayside.

Consumers drive the global value chain and the global business model. It is one thing for workers in poor countries to seek living wages. It is another for the well-off consumer to demand that workers be given a right to living wages. This should be the starting point not only in the sense of moral responsibility, but also in the sense of a more peaceful world. Such a measure would help to combat the causes of flight and migration. Similarly, fair trade agreements should provide incentives to ensure real wage growth. Outsourcing of production should only be authorized if both multinational and local companies in the value chain guarantee that legal and social standards will be strictly respected. This means that appropriate restrictions should also be imposed in the event of noncompliance. This may call for state action, perhaps influenced by consumer action.

To sum up, it is no longer the time to think about *rebuilding* value chains. Instead, it is time to rethink value chains and build a different system. This would mean finding the right combination of regulatory mechanisms, trade agreements, and tax systems for global value chains to promote social and industrial development while protecting the environment. Environmental protection also requires significant changes in daily consumption patterns for food, clothing, electronics, and other items. Trade unions, NGOs, consumers, businesses, and governments play a crucial role in building sustainable and fair value chains. Their involvement in the design of new global governance is fundamental to the functioning of the system.

The time has come to convert voluntary global social standards into binding laws. Trade unions, (I)NGOs, consumers, suppliers, and governments should work together with international organizations to build the fair value chains of the future. It is also up to the actors involved to reflect on why the old system has failed so profoundly. What can be done differently in the future by each consumer, in co-operation with (I)NGOs, states, and corporations?

6 | CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Our investigation in this article crosses different disciplines and sub-disciplines—such as business and consumer ethics, marketing and consumer research, and global economic governance—each has its own focal points, biases, and terminologies.

We started our analysis by asking a series of questions, none genuinely independent of the others. We should conclude, at least in part, by answering those questions. We think that answering this one question covers it and the others.

How should consumers wield their influence over global value chains? They should recognize their duties and their influence in these global value chains. This means informing themselves when possible. It means choosing away from harm to people and to the environment. It means pushing other actors like states and corporations to do their respective duties. It also means recognizing and acting according to global standards and influencing those standards toward higher moral ground. This involves personal moral involvement and engagement with other actors. There lies consumer power and consumer duty. They move together.

Our research has addressed two critical issues in economic globalization. First, we applied normative criteria to evaluate negative effects and wrongdoings in global value chains. We placed these in the context of global standards. Second, we identified consumers' responsibilities in influencing or meeting these criteria in global value chains. The two normative criteria we identified, namely causing harm and injustice, and promoting bad outcomes, are integral to assessing negative effects and moral wrongdoings in global value chains. We showed that these normative criteria are thematic in global standards. We constructed a foundation for our normative criteria and global standards through philosophical theories of deontology, consequentialism, and political cosmopolitanism.

The synthesis of standards with ethical approaches implies that the optimal approach is that of "shared responsibility." In shared responsibility, consumers, as members of a civil society, collaborate with states, corporations, and all other involved actors along value chains. To meet normative criteria, consumers must accept: (a) individual responsibility for purchase decisions and donations; (b) the political and shared responsibility to engage in dialog with corporations, states, and civil society; and (c) the positive and negative duties regarding the externalities of global production chains.

Our study holds significance for consumers, businesses, organizations, and public policy. The concept and practice of responsibility in global value chains should be viewed and implemented comprehensively. All participants in the governance of value chains should be interconnected, with their influence driving organizational transformation to meet standards. The role of public policy should be evaluated from this viewpoint. Public policy can prove effective if the call for change encompasses consumers and corporations. Our

research has the aim to give guidance for morally right actions for all involved actors in global value chains.

For potential future research in consumer ethics, we recommend some next steps. We see significant possibilities in normative consumer ethics for a discourse ethics approach. This approach would use the work of Jürgen Habermas (1981). It could be developed based on the concept of shared and political responsibility. Such an approach could even include an action research component, like staging and evaluating a stakeholder dialog, based on a Socratic dialog design (Brinkmann, 2015; Brinkmann et al., 2016). This would not only preach in favor of dialog, but also practice a dialog about risks and opportunities in sharing responsibilities. Another approach could work with the complementary strengths and weaknesses of descriptive and normative consumer ethics, for taking, and sharing, responsibility for improved consumer ethics, both in theory and in practice.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

PEER REVIEW

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

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ENDNOTES

¹"Standards" in the literature are sometimes called "global standards" (Gereffi, 2011), "standards" or "international accountability standards" (Gilbert et al., 2011), but interchangeably so. The authors of this paper additionally use "standards along global supply chains."

²According to Kant ([1785], p. 437) a categorical (or unconditional) imperative is "one that represents an action as objectively necessary and makes it necessary not indirectly, through the representation of some end that can be attained by the action, but through the mere representation of this action itself (its form), and hence directly."

³ See Rawls (2005, p. 60f) for the principles of justice: "The first statement of the two principles reads as follows. First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others. Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all."

⁴ For the application of the "difference principle" to the global context, see Pogge (2002), who argued that the Rawlsian "difference principle" has its legitimacy in the context of international distributive justice.

⁵ Young (2003, p. 7) understands "structural injustices" as "harms that come to people as a result of structural processes in which many people participate." Structural injustice "exists when social processes put large categories of persons under a systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities, at the same time as these processes enable others to dominate or have a wide range of opportunities for developing and exercising their capacities" (Young, 2003, p. 12).

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