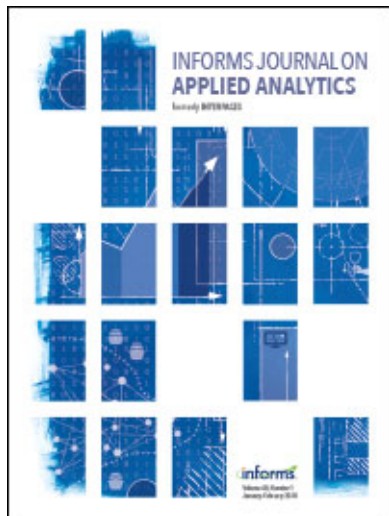




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To cite this article:

M. Eric Johnson, (2007) Introduction to the Special Section on Supply Chain Management: Globalization in the Auto Industry. Interfaces 37(4):309-309. <https://doi.org/10.1287/inte.1070.0307>

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Introduction to the Special Section on Supply Chain Management: Globalization in the Auto Industry

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Key words: supply chain management; professional: comments on; auto industry.

In May 2006, we published a special issue on *Supply Chain Management: Technology, Globalization, and Policy at a Crossroads* (Johnson 2006). The response was far greater than we could have ever hoped. When we published that special issue, we were still processing a number of papers that we could not include at that time. We now present two more papers from that stream of work. While both are interesting and relate to the special issue topic, they differ slightly from the typical *Interfaces* application article. They focus on very different aspects of globalization in the auto industry.

Balakrishnan, Seshadri, Sheopuri, and Iyer examine the supply chain evolution in the Indian auto industry. They track the progress of the industry on dimensions of cost, quality, productivity, and profitability and compare them to the trajectories of the competitors in China. With the rapid rise of manufacturing in

both India and China, the results provide an intriguing view into these changing supply chains.

The second paper examines how product variety impacts supply chain design. While globalization is often accused of fostering product homogeneity, for individual manufacturers the challenge of serving global customers is more often related to the complexity of handling product variants. Over the past 10 years, operations researchers have examined many technical aspects of managing product variety. Swaminathan and Nitsch look at how global auto firms have managed variety and analyze a particular supply chain strategy called the sequencing point (SP). They classify and categorize different supply chain strategies for managing variety in the context of short case studies.

Reference

Johnson, M. E. 2006. Supply chain management: Technology, globalization, and policy at a crossroads. *Interfaces* 36(3) 191–193.