

# Rethinking East and Southeast Asia in the New Global Economy

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## **Abstract**

Based on my recent book with Cornell University Press, *Strategic Coupling*, I examine economic development and state-firm relations in East and Southeast Asia, focusing on the region's emerging role in the new global economy. Much of the earlier social science literature on the political economy of industrial transformation has emphasized the role of the developmental state in picking selected domestic firms as “national champions” and in promoting their rapid growth through sectoral industrial policy. Drawing upon my empirical research on South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, I argue that production network-level dynamics and firm-specific initiatives are more critical to the successful industrial transformation of these Asian economies in the contemporary era. This key mechanism of strategic coupling with global production networks offers a dynamic conception of state-firm relations in the changing context of global economic governance in East and Southeast Asia.

## **Speaker**

**Henry Wai-chung Yeung** is Distinguished Professor (and Professor of Economic Geography since 2005) and Acting Head at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore, Co-Director of the Global Production Networks Centre (GPN@NUS), and Director of the JY Pillay Comparative Asia Research Centre in the NUS Global Asia Institute. He is Principal Investigator of a S\$4.95 million strategic grant awarded by the National University of Singapore to establish the GPN@NUS Centre. He is a leading social scientist specializing in theories and the geography of transnational corporations, global production networks and



global value chains, East and Southeast Asian firms and developmental states in the global economy.

Professor Yeung received his BA (First Class) from NUS in 1992 and PhD from the University of Manchester in 1995. He was a recipient of the NUS Outstanding University Researcher Award (1998), Outstanding Researcher Award (2008), and University Research Recognition Award (2018). In December 2017, he was selected by the American Association of Geographers in the United States to receive the AAG Distinguished Scholarship Honors for 2018 “in recognition of his extraordinary scholarship and leadership in the discipline”. AAG Honors are the highest awards offered by the American Association of Geographers and remain among the most prestigious awards in American geography that have been awarded since 1951. Earlier in June 2017, he was conferred the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) Murchison Award 2017 for “pioneering publications in the field of globalisation”. Awarded since 1882, the Murchison Award is the most senior among all awards conferred by the Royal Geographical Society in the United Kingdom. With the two awards, he has not only achieved the highest scholarly distinction in both British and American Geography, but also created history by being the only person from Asia to be recognized with awards/honors by both of Geography’s most important professional bodies.

Professor Yeung has published six authored books, seven edited books, and over 95 journal papers and 50 book chapters across the fields of human geography, urban and regional studies, Asian studies, international business, and political economy. His latest monographs are *Strategic Coupling: East Asian Industrial Transformation in the New Global Economy* (Cornell Studies in Political Economy Series, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, May 2016) and *Global Production Networks: Theorizing Economic Development in an Interconnected World* (with Neil Coe, Oxford University Press, Oxford, April 2015). His research has achieved very high impact in the social sciences. The ISI Web of Science database shows that he has 11 journal papers each receiving over 100 citations and his accumulated work has been cited at least 4,300 times in over 3,050 publications (excluding own work) as of July 2018, generating an h-index of at least 31. His citations on Google Scholar have exceeded 16,000. He is Editor of two top journals in Geography – *Environment and Planning A* and *Economic Geography* and Past Editor of *Review of International Political Economy* (2004-2013), and serves on the editorial boards of 20 other international journals, including *Global Networks*, *Journal of Economic Geography*, and *Journal of International Business Studies*.