

## A JOINT SEMINAR WITH DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGY AND POLICY

### Strategic Coupling with Global Production Networks: The Emergence of East Asian Firms in the Global Economy

**Speakers:** Prof Henry Yeung Wai-Chung  
Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS

**Chair:** Dr Erin Scott, Department of Strategy and Policy, NUS

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, 16 September 2015, 12.30pm – 2.00pm

**Place:** Mochtar Riady Building, BIZ 1 Seminar Room #2-2, NUS

#### Abstract

In this seminar, I explain the emergence of leading East Asian firms as formidable competitors in highly globalized market segments and industries critical to the three newly industrialized economies of South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore. Much of the existing social science literature on the political economy of industrial transformation has emphasized the role of the developmental state in picking these domestic firms as “national champions” and in promoting their rapid growth through sectoral industrial policy. Drawing upon my recent theory of global production networks (GPN 2.0), I argue that network-level dynamics and firm-specific initiatives are more critical to the successful emergence of these East Asian firms in the contemporary era. The key mechanism for explaining their emergence in today’s global economy is premised on the successful strategic coupling with global production networks – a new organizational platform serving as the world economy’s backbone and central nervous system. This coupling mechanism is underpinned by three components of strategic partnership, industrial market specialization, and (re)positioning as global lead firms. To illustrate this strategic coupling mechanism in two global industries of electronics and semiconductors, I present some firm-level data from my extensive interviews with leading East Asian firms and state institutions. I conclude with a dynamic conception of state-firm relations in the changing context of global economic governance.

#### About the Speaker

Henry Wai-chung Yeung (PhD Manchester) is Professor of Economic Geography at the National University of Singapore since 2005, Co-Director of GPN@NUS Centre since October 2014, and Director of the JY Pillay Comparative Asia Research Centre in the NUS Global Asia Institute since January 2015. He is Principal Investigator of the S\$4.95 million strategic grant awarded by the National University of Singapore to establish the Global Production Networks Centre. His research interests cover economic globalization, global production networks, East Asian firms, and the political economy of development. He was a recipient of the NUS Outstanding University Researcher Award (1998) and Outstanding Researcher Award (2008). His latest monographs are *Strategic Coupling: East Asian Industrial Transformation in the New Global Economy* (forthcoming in Cornell Studies in Political Economy Series, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, March 2016) and *Global Production Networks: Theorizing Economic Development in an Interconnected World* (with Neil Coe, Oxford University Press, Oxford, April 2015). His previous authored books are: *Transnational Corporations and Business Networks* (Routledge, 1998), *Entrepreneurship and the Internationalisation of Asian Firms* (Edward Elgar, 2002), and *Chinese Capitalism in a Global Era* (Routledge, 2004). He is also co-author of *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction* (with Neil Coe and Phil Kelly, Wiley, 2007/2013). He has published another 7 edited books, over 90 academic journal articles, and 45 book chapters. He is Editor of two top journals in Geography – *Environment and Planning A* and *Economic Geography*, and serves on the editorial boards of 20 other international journals, including *Journal of International Business Studies* and *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*. Together with Yadong Luo and Peter Buckley, he is currently co-editing a special issue of *Global Strategy Journal* on “innovating business models for global competition”. As of 17 July 2015, over 2,060 publications listed in the ISI Web of Science databases cited his work (excluding self-citations; *h*-index = 25). He has 10,742 citations on Google Scholar.

His CV : [https://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/geoywc/aboutme/Yeung\\_Full%20CV\\_March%202015.pdf](https://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/geoywc/aboutme/Yeung_Full%20CV_March%202015.pdf)

**Lunch will be served at 12.00 noon at Staff Lounge.**

ADMISSION IS FREE – ALL ARE WELCOME

This seminar is co-organised with the Department of Strategy and Policy, NUS Business School