



China as an Innovation Nation

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This volume assesses China's transition to innovation-nation status in terms of social conditions, industry characteristics and economic impacts over the past three decades, also providing insights into future developments.

Defining innovation as the process that generates a higher quality, lower cost product than was previously available, the introductory chapter conceptualizes the theory of an innovation nation and the lessons from Japan and United States. It outlines the key governance, employment and investment institutions that China must build for such transition to occur, and examines China's challenges and strategies to innovate in the era of global production systems. Two succeeding chapters explain the evolving roles of Chinese state in innovation, and the new landscape of venture capital finance. The remaining chapters provide studies of major industries, which contain analyses of the evolving roles of investment by government agencies and business interests in the process. Included in these studies are traditional industries such as mechanical engineering, railroads, and automobiles; rapidly evolving and internationally highly integrated industries such as information-and-communication-technology (ICT); and newly emerging sectors such as wind and solar energy.

Written by leading academics in the field, studies in this volume reveal Chinese innovation as diverse across industries and enterprises and fluid over time. In each sector, we observe continued co-evolution of state policy, market demand, and technology development. The strategies and structures of individual companies and industrial ecosystems are changing rapidly. The sum total of the studies is a great step forward in our understanding of the industrial foundations of China's attempt to become an innovation nation.

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Editorial Review

Review

"There have been many books about innovation in China recently. This book clearly stands out for its penetrating analysis of the evolutionary process of how industries in China, traditional and high-tech, are climbing the ladder of innovation. It has also demystified some of the controversies around the concept of indigenous innovation. The book not only sheds light on how China has become the world factory over the last 30 years, but also provides clues on where Chinese innovation is going in the next decade. It is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand what is going on in China and how China is going to influence the world."

-- Lan Xue, Tsinghua University

"It is a long debated issue whether the government should play an active role in a country's pursuit for higher levels of technological sophistication. This book takes a positive stand over this issue by providing industrial level studies about China's quest for an innovation nation. Attending to details, those studies offer fresh information about how the Chinese government has succeeded or failed to promote innovation in specific industries. This book is definitely worth reading for anyone who is not satisfied by popular but abstract debates about the role of the government."

-- Yao Yang, Peking University

"In this important volume, Zhou, Lazonick and Sun have tried to remedy this situation by providing a broad comparative overview of the challenges of innovation faced by late modernizers and by inviting a group of specialists to address issues of innovative performance in key industrial sectors. The volume, thus, makes an important contribution to our understanding of technological innovation in China, and should find a place on the must-read lists of scholars, policymakers, and members of the business community."

-- Richard P. Suttmeier, University of Oregon

"The issue of China's innovation prowess continues to occupy the attention of policymakers and business leaders as well as leading scholars across the world. China as an Innovation Nation is one of the first comprehensive books on the PRC innovation effort that actually uses a series of explicit case studies to highlight and analyze the core strengths and shortcomings of Chinese innovative capabilities. The combination of these insightful, well documented case studies taken together, especially those related to high speed rail, integrated circuits, and telecommunications, allows us to better grasp not simply if, but more importantly, when and how China will impact the future trajectory of the prevailing global innovation system. This is a must read for serious observers of the Chinese technology system."

-- Denis Simon, Duke Kunshan University

About the Author

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Yu Zhou is a Professor of Geography at Vassar College. She received Bachelor and master degree in urban and environmental sciences at Peking University and her PhD. in Geography at University of Minnesota in 1995. Her research is on globalization and high-tech industry in China, and ethnic communities and transnational business networks in the United States. She is the author of the book *The inside story of China's high-tech industry: making Silicon Valley in Beijing* (2008). She has received multiple grants and awards, and was selected as one of the Public Intellectual Fellows by National Committee of United States-China Relations.

William Lazonick is Professor of Economics and Director of the Center for Industrial Competitiveness at University of Massachusetts Lowell. He is Co-founder and President of The Academic-Industry Research Network. Lazonick is also a visiting Professor at the University of Ljubljana, the Telecom School of Management, Paris, and the Munk Centre of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. He holds a B.Com from the University of Toronto (1968), M.Sc. (Econ) from the London School of Economics (1969), and Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University (1975). In 1991 Uppsala University awarded him an honorary doctorate for his work on the theory and history of economic development.

Yifei Sun is Professor of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography, California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Dr. Yifei Sun has worked as the principal investigator for two projects supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation. One project examined foreign R&D in China while the other analyzed the technological innovation in China's information communication technology industries. He has published more than thirty articles in leading international journals such as *Journal of Economic Geography*, *Technovation*, *Regional Studies*, *Environment and Planning A*, and *International Journal of Technology Management*. Dr. Yifei Sun has co-edited five special issues on China's innovation in reputable international journals such as *International Journal of Technology Management*, *China Review*, *Environment and Planning A*, *Asian Pacific Business Review* and *GeoJournal*. He also co-edited one of the first books on foreign R&D in China, entitled "Global R&D in China" (Routledge, 2008)

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