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A cross-national comparative analysis of innovation policy in the integrated circuit industry

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Abstract

This research discusses innovation policies in the integrated circuit industries of the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, the United States, and the People's Republic of China. Using Rothwell and Zegveld's model of industrial innovation policy as a starting point, this research compares innovation policy across the four nations, specifically focusing on three topics: (1) national preferences for innovation policy; (2) the influence of innovation policy on industry innovation requirements; and (3) the competitive advantages realized as a result of industrial innovation requirements in the four countries. Our research indicates the policy tools used by each country, followed by results that indicate the effectiveness of industry innovation policies on requirements for industry innovation.

This work generates several suggestions for Taiwan's integrated circuit industry: the Taiwan government should emphasize specific policies to provide a better research and development environment; it should build a complete information system that encourages knowledge diffusion and accumulation; and it should adopt *Procurement* as a policy to extend domestic market demand. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Innovation policy; National innovation system; Industrial innovation; Integrated circuit industry

1. Introduction

Knowledge is a key strategic resource for economic development world-wide [1,2], and innovation is one of the primary means of obtaining this knowledge. Tech-

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nological innovation has played a critical role in the integrated circuit (IC) industry and, over the past 50 years, strong relationships have been created between IC industry innovations and government innovation policies in many countries. In the 1950s, as the semiconductor industry was emerging, propelled in part by the Cold War between the USA and Russia, the IC industry began evolving as a result of concentrated governmental procurement and military support of various related research and development (R&D) activities.

For example, Korea decided on a policy for IC industry development which brought in several foreign companies and encouraged them to import advanced technologies. Korea concentrated its resources on cultivating three major conglomerates that could compete in the global market, successfully bringing DRAM to the global market. Similarly, the Taiwan IC industry introduced technology that had been produced by the RCA Company. Taiwan's Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) was then responsible for transferring this technology to various companies.

Numerous studies based on the "national systems of innovation" approach found that national government policies can make a significant difference, as seen from the various performance levels of neighboring countries [3]. Clearly, research on national innovation policy is becoming much more important.

Few papers have offered a comprehensive analysis of cross-national innovation policy. This article reports on our comparative analysis of innovation policy covering a developed country (the USA); emerging industrial countries (Korea and Taiwan); and a fast developing country (mainland China).

2. Innovation and innovation policy

2.1. Emergence of the concept of innovation

Schumpeter defines innovation as the activity of developing an invented element into a commercially useful element that becomes accepted in a social system [4]. Drucker wrote: "Business has only two basic functions: marketing and innovation. Marketing and innovation produce results. All the rest are costs" [5]. Innovation is also regarded as the use of new knowledge to offer a new product or service which customers want [6]. However, some scholars argue that this is actually the first application of invention.

The process of innovation cannot be separated from a firm's strategic and competitive context [7]. Therefore, innovation includes a series of activities such as science, technology, organization, finance, and commerce. Innovation is not a single function; rather, it is a network that interacts with all the value-chain activities. Innovation plays different roles for companies and for governments. Companies develop new products through innovation; a government uses innovative policies to enhance its industrial innovative capacity. The primary objective for companies engaged in innovation is higher profits; for governments, it is overall economic development.

Sundbo suggested that innovation theory has had three paradigms since the begin-

ning of the twentieth century: (1) entrepreneurship paradigm; (2) technology–economic paradigm; and (3) strategic paradigm [8].

2.1.1. Entrepreneurship paradigm

This paradigm emerged around 1900, evolving out of the economic wave of growth in the late nineteenth century, and early innovation theories were intended to explain this growth. This was the period of the “great founder”, and the fundamental element in these theories was the entrepreneur — an individual who is driven by some need to create business activities. Thus, the behavior of these individuals helped explain economic growth.

2.1.2. Technology–economic paradigm

In the late 1930s, through the 1940s and into the 1950s, a new wave of world economic growth appeared. Enterprises had grown into large companies and were well-organized. The number of engineers and technicians increased greatly, and technological development became the key factor in new innovation.

2.1.3. Strategic innovation paradigm

The basis of this paradigm is the market functions of a firm. In 1960, Levitt [9] wrote his seminal article rejecting Schumpeter’s postulate that the entrepreneur is the active creator of economic growth through innovation. Levitt’s theories emphasized the innovation function, but only from a pure pull or marketing view. He argued that innovation involved seeing new market possibilities and exploiting them by marketing new or old products in new ways or in new combinations.

2.2. Policy perspectives on innovation

According to studies by Edquist and Hommen [10], innovation policies can be classified as demand-side oriented or supply-side oriented. Similarly, theories of innovation process can be classified as linear or systems-oriented. Important parallels and logical connections can be drawn from these two classifications. For instance, a linear view of the innovation process supports a supply-side orientation in innovation polices. Conversely, a systems perspective on innovation yields a more fruitful perspective from the demand side in terms of both theoretical and policy relevance.

2.3. Industry innovation requirements (IIRs)

Most management scholars and economists regard innovation as a fundamental factor in economic growth, but few people have studied the impact of innovation on economic growth. Until the mid-1960s, most studies discussed how innovation would change the structure and competitiveness of industry. Rothwell and Zegveld [11] pointed out that industry innovation could increase overall economic development. Porter [7] determined that, in order to upgrade local competitive advantages to the national level, new competitive theories must also consider technological progress and innovation.

Rothwell and Zegveld summarized the factors required for industry innovation, including *technical knowledge, manpower, market information, management skill, financial resources, research and development, R&D environment, domestic market, and international market*. These are shown in Fig. 1.

2.4. Innovation policy

Science, technology, and innovation policy (in the narrow sense) are specific parts of what could be labeled more broadly as “innovation policy”. Science policy is the most supply-side-oriented and the least direct of these policies. Technology policy is the most difficult to define because technological research varies significantly in the continuum from relatively mono-disciplinary scientific research to multidisciplinary commercial innovation. However, innovation policy, oriented toward appropriate new product ideas, production processes, and marketing concepts, can produce, at minimum, temporary competitive advantages [12].

The search for appropriate policy tools is not easy. Macro measures are not effective; thus, proposals like a general R&D tax credit are pointless. Policies must be designed to influence particular economic sectors and activities. In this regard, the key policy problem is to augment or redesign institutions rather than to achieve particular resource allocations [13]. A list of possible innovation policies given by Rothwell and Zegveld is summarized in Table 1. These policies can be grouped under three main headings.

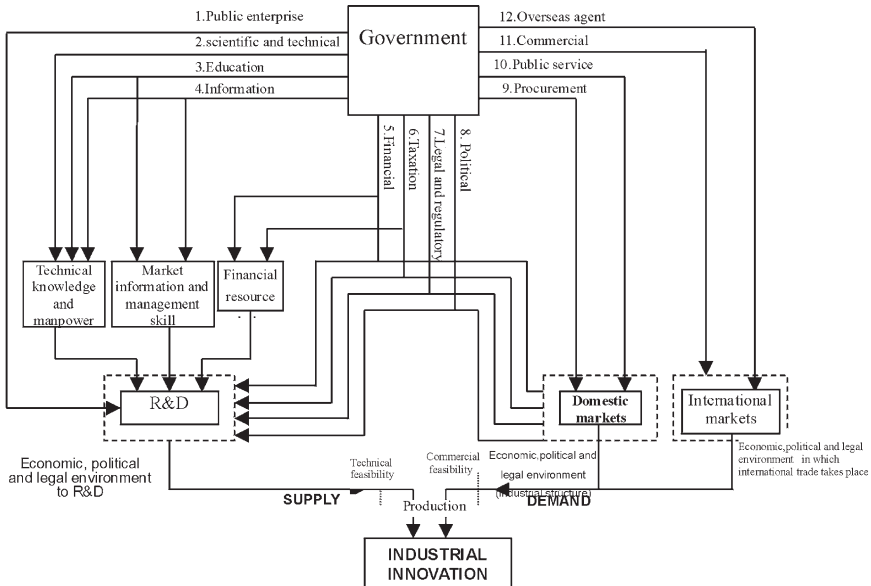


Fig. 1. Policy targets and tools for inducing innovation. Source [11, p59].

Table 1
 Classification of government policy tools (source: Ref. [11, p. 59])

	Policy tool	Example
Supply side	Public enterprise	Innovation by publicly owned industries, setting up of new industries, pioneering use of new techniques by public corporations, participation in private enterprise
	Scientific and technical development	Research laboratories, support for research associations, learned societies, professional associations, research grants
	Education	General education, universities, technical education, apprenticeship schemes, continuing and further education, retraining
	Information	Information networks and centers, libraries, advisory and consultancy services, databases, liaison services
Environmental side	Financial	Grant loans, subsidies, financial sharing arrangements, provision of equipment buildings or services, loan guarantees, export credits
	Taxation	Company, personal, indirect and payroll taxation, tax allowances
	Legal regulatory	Patents, environmental and health regulations, inspectorates, monopoly regulations
	Political	Planning, regional policies, honor or awards for innovation, encouragement of mergers of joint consortia, public consultation
Demand side	Procurement	Central or local government purchases and contracts, public corporations R&D contracts, prototype purchases
	Public services	Purchases, maintenance, supervision and innovation in health service, public building, construction, transport, telecommunications
	Commercial Overseas agent	Trade agreements, tariffs, currency regulations Defense sales organizations

1. *Supply*: provision of financial, manpower and technical assistance, including the establishment of scientific and technological infrastructure.
2. *Demand*: central and local government purchases and contracts, notably for innovative products, processes, and services.
3. *Environment*: taxation policies, patent policies and regulations, such as measures that establish the legal and fiscal framework in which an industry operates.

3. The cross-nation comparison

Innovation policies within the integrated circuit industries of four nations were investigated. Three issues are discussed which enabled us to produce a full cross-nation comparison: (1) the character and tendency of each nation's IC industry innovation policy; (2) the impact of innovation policy on IIRs; and (3) the competitiveness of each nation's IIRs.

The methodology used here includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. An empirical study and an expert survey questionnaire were used to determine the findings. First, we present the history and content of each nation's IC innovation policy. Then follows a comparison of each nation's IC innovation policy to highlight differences in each country. Second, we discuss the impact of policy tools on IIR. An expert questionnaire, completed by 34 experts, was designed to determine the competitiveness of every IIR in each nation. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical method was used to calculate the data.

3.1. Cross-nation IC industry innovation policy tools

Through secondary data collection, 72 innovation policy tools used by the US government, 96 from Korea, 159 from Taiwan, and 88 from mainland China were collected. Preliminary categorization results are shown in Table 2.

The main differences between the four national innovation policies are summarized in Table 3, which lists all factors with weights higher than 10%.

Tools that are common to all four countries are *scientific and technical*, and *legal regulatory*. In addition, each nation has unique tools. The US government used *procurement* as the main tool for guiding the development of its IC industry. Korea used *financial, taxation, and education* as innovation policy tools. Taiwan used *political, commercial, education, and financial* tools. Mainland China used the *commercial* tool to support its IC industry.

3.2. The impact of innovation policy tools on IIRs

Using Fig. 1 as a basis, Shyu [14] defined the relationship between policy tools and IIRs, summarizing his findings in Fig. 2.

Based on these relationships, the impact of innovation policy on IIRs could then be studied, and the analysis results are shown in Table 4. Our research suggests that

Table 2
Analysis of cross-nation innovation policy tools

Cross-national innovation policy tools											
USA			Korea			Taiwan			China		
	Item	Weight	Item	Weight	Item	Weight	Item	Weight	Item	Weight	
Supply side	Public enterprise	0	0.00	1	1.04	5	3.14	8	9.09		
	Scientific and technical development	15	20.83	19	19.79	23	14.47	27	30.68		
	Education	3	4.17	12	12.50	18	11.32	5	5.68		
Environment side	Information	6	8.33	4	4.17	6	3.77	6	6.82		
	Financial	2	2.78	19	19.79	17	10.69	3	3.41		
	Taxation	7	9.72	12	12.50	9	5.66	5	5.68		
	Legal regulatory	11	15.28	10	10.42	17	10.69	11	12.50		
	Political	2	2.78	6	6.25	26	16.35	7	7.95		
Demand side	Procurement	14	19.44	4	4.17	2	1.26	1	1.14		
	Public services	5	6.94	2	2.08	15	9.43	4	4.55		
	Commercial	7	9.72	7	7.29	20	12.58	11	12.50		
	Overseas agent	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.63	0	0.00		
	Total	72	100	96	100	159	100	88	100		

Table 3
Cross-national innovation policy comparison

Inclination of every nation's innovation policy tools	USA	Korea	Taiwan	Mainland China
Unique policy tools	Procurement	Financial Taxation Education	Political Commercial Education Financial	Commercial
Common policy tools	Scientific and technical, Legal regulatory			

		Innovation policy tool											
		public enterprise	scientific and technical	education	information	Financial	taxation	legal Regulatory	political	procurement	public services	commercial	overseas agent
IIRs	R&D	●	□	□	□	□	□						
	TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE		●	●	□								
	RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT		□	□	□	□	□	●	●				
	MANAGEMENT SKILL			●	●								
	MANPOWER		●	●	□								
	FINANCIAL RESOURCE					●	●						
	MARKET INFORMATION			●	●								
	DOMESTIC MARKET					□	□	□	□	●	●		
	INTERNATIONAL MARKET											●	●

● directly related □ indirectly related

Fig. 2. Relationship between policy tools and IIRs.

US government innovation policy tools have the greatest influence on *domestic market*, which accounts for 20.85%, followed by *research and development* at 16.61%. The smallest impact is on *market information*, *international market*, *management skills*, and *financial resources*, which account for 3.91%, 4.56%, 5.86%, and 5.86%, respectively.

Korean government innovation policy tools have the greatest influence on *research and development*, which accounts for 19.19%. The smallest impact is on *inter-*

Table 4
The impact of innovation policy tools on IIRs

Industry innovation requirements (IIRs)	Nation			
	USA	Korea	Taiwan	Mainland China
1. R&D	16.61 ^a	19.19 ^a	17.49 ^a	22.60 ^a
2. Technical knowledge	13.68 ^a	12.79 ^a	12.41 ^a	16.83 ^a
3. R&D environment	14.98 ^a	16.67 ^a	16.31 ^a	15.83 ^a
4. Management skill	5.86	6.20	6.77	5.29
5. Manpower	13.68 ^a	12.79 ^a	12.41 ^a	16.83 ^a
6. Financial resource	5.86	12.02 ^a	7.33	3.85
7. Market information	3.91	5.43	6.77	5.29
8. Domestic market	20.85 ^a	12.21 ^a	14.53 ^a	8.65
9. International market	4.56	2.71	5.92	5.29

^a Influential extent exceeds 10%.

national market, *market information*, and *management skill*, which account for 2.73%, 5.43%, and 6.20%, respectively.

Taiwan government innovation policy tools have the greatest influence on *research and development*, which accounts for 17.49%, followed by *R&D environment* which accounts for 16.31%. The smallest impact is on *international market*, *market information*, and *management skill*, accounting for 5.92%, 6.77%, and 6.77%, respectively.

Mainland China government innovation policy tools have the greatest influence on *research and development*, which accounts for 22.60%, followed by *technical knowledge* and *manpower*, each accounting for 16.83%. The smallest impact is on *financial resource*, *international market*, *market information*, and *management skill*, accounting for 3.85%, 5.29%, 5.29%, and 5.29%, respectively.

The impact of cross-nation IC industry policy tools on IIRs was found primarily on *research and development*, *R&D environment*, *technical knowledge*, and *manpower*. Other IIRs, such as *management skill*, *market information*, and *international market* received a much lower impact. Table 5 shows a clear comparison of every nation's policy tools on IIR.

3.3. The relative competitiveness of each nation's IIRs

Our research adopted Rothwell and Zegveld's concepts of IIRs as the major variables in questionnaires sent to experts. To test the reliability of the questionnaires, the Cronbach Alpha method was used. The results are shown in Table 6.

If we regard 0.75 as the standard, the four nation's Cronbach Alpha values are above this standard. The reliability of the questionnaire is *critical high*. ANOVA and Tukey statistical methods were used to evaluate the competitiveness of each nation's IIRs. The results are shown in Table 7, which indicates the competitive conditions for every nation with respect to innovation.

Table 5

A comparison of each nation's policy tools in IIR (note: items in italics denote common characteristics)

	USA	Korea	Taiwan	Mainland China
Exceeds 10%	1. Domestic market 2. <i>R&D</i> 3. <i>R&D environment</i> 4. <i>Technical knowledge</i> 5. <i>Manpower</i>	1. <i>R&D</i> 2. <i>R&D environment</i> 3. <i>Technical knowledge</i> 4. <i>Manpower</i> 5. Domestic market 6. Financial resource	1. <i>R&D</i> 2. <i>R&D environment</i> 3. Domestic market 4. <i>Technical knowledge</i> 5. <i>Manpower</i>	1. <i>R&D</i> 2. <i>Technical knowledge</i> 3. <i>Manpower</i> 4. <i>R&D environment</i>
Below 10%	6. <i>Management skill</i> 7. Financial resource 8. <i>International market</i> 9. <i>Market information</i>	7. <i>Management skill</i> 8. <i>Market information</i> 9. <i>International market</i>	6. Financial resource 7. <i>Management skill</i> 8. <i>Market information</i> 9. <i>International market</i>	5. Domestic market 6. <i>Management skill</i> 7. <i>Market information</i> 8. <i>International market</i> 9. Financial resource

Table 6

Cronbach's Alpha values

	Nation			
	US	Korea	Taiwan	Mainland China
Value	0.7965	0.7632	0.7572	0.7569

The table shows that the US has a competitive advantage in almost every factor. Mainland China is at a relative competitive disadvantage. Its only competitive advantage is in *domestic market* over Taiwan and Korea. Korea is at a competitive advantage compared with mainland China, while Korea is inferior to Taiwan in terms of *management skill*, *manpower*, and *financial resource*. Taiwan has several competitive advantages compared with mainland China, and is superior to Korea in terms of *management skill*, *manpower*, and *financial resource*. However, relative to the US, Taiwan is at a competitive disadvantage in *R&D*, *R&D environment*, *market information*, and *domestic market*. Table 8 shows the relative IIR competitiveness of each nation.

4. Conclusions

This research investigated the IC industry innovation policies of four countries: the United States, Korea, Taiwan, and mainland China. A theoretical framework was used to analyze the subjects, and the following conclusions were reached.

Table 7
The ANOVA and Tukey table of every nation's IIRs

		Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance	Tukey
R&D	Between groups	58.188	3	19.3969	37.690	0.000	1>2,3,4, 2>4, 3>4
	Within groups	63.813	124	0.515			
	Total	122.000	127				
Technical knowledge	Between groups	56.813	3	18.938	39.097	0.000	1>2,3,4, 2>4, 3>4
	Within groups	60.063	124	0.484			
	Total	116.875	127				
R&D environment	Between groups	77.063	3	25.688	56.439	0.000	1>2,3,4, 2>4, 3>4
	Within groups	56.438	124	0.4558			
	Total	133.500	127				
Management skill	Between groups	60.688	3	20.229	44.153	0.000	1>2,4, 2>4, 3>2,4
	Within groups	56.813	124	0.458			
	Total	117.500	127				
Manpower	Between groups	18.086	3	6.029	11.142	0.000	1>2,4, 2>4, 3>2,4
	Within groups	67.094	124	0.541			
	Total	85.180	127				
Financial resource	Between groups	58.836	3	19.612	43.646	0.000	1>2,4, 3>2,4
	Within groups	55.719	124	0.449			
	Total	114.555	127				
Market information	Between groups	86.688	3	28.896	82.966	0.000	1>2,3,4, 2>4, 3>4
	Within groups	43.188	124	0.348			
	Total	129.875	127				
Domestic market	Between groups	68.594	3	22.865	31.285	0.000	1>2,3,4, 4>2,3
	Within groups	90.625	124	0.731			
	Total	159.219	127				
International market	Between groups	68.461	3	22.820	44.064	0.000	1>2,4, 2>4, 3>4
	Within groups	64.219	124	0.518			
	Total	132.680	127				

Table 8
Relative IIR competitiveness of each nation

		Relative advantage items			
		USA	Korea	Taiwan	Mainland China
Relative disadvantage items	USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● R&D ● Technical knowledge ● R&D environment ● Management skill ● Manpower ● Financial resource ● Market information ● Domestic market demand ● Explore international market 			
	Korea			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management skill ● Manpower ● Financial resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Domestic market demand
	Taiwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● R&D ● Technical knowledge ● R&D environment ● Market information ● Domestic market demand 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Domestic market demand
	Mainland China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● R&D ● Technical knowledge ● R&D environment ● Management skill ● Manpower ● Financial resource ● Market information ● Domestic market demand ● Explore international market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● R&D ● Technical knowledge ● R&D environment ● Management skill ● Manpower ● Market information ● Explore international market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● R&D ● Technical knowledge ● R&D environment ● Management skill ● Manpower ● Financial resource ● Market information ● Explore international market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore international market

4.1. “Scientific and technical” and “legal regulatory” are the primary policy tools used in all four nations

This research found all four countries in this study used *scientific and technical* and *legal regulatory* as their primary policy tools for developing innovation. In addition, in the early stages, to support the semiconductor industry, the US government also used *procurement* as another primary tool.

In contrast, during the 1970s and 1980s, in order to cultivate its conglomerates, Korea’s primary policy tools were *financial* and *taxation*. The development of the Taiwan IC industry was initiated by ITRI, and the use of *political* tools. To attract foreign capital and enhance competitiveness, mainland China introduced *commercial* tools as their main policy tool.

4.2. Most tools impact technology development

The impact of the IIR innovation policy tool on *R&D*, *R&D environment*, *technical knowledge*, and *manpower* was greatest, and *management skill*, *market information*, and *international market* were impacted to a lesser degree. This finding shows that most policies are highly effective for developing technology but are less effective for increasing market opportunities. However, recent research strongly suggests that marketing factors are critical to innovation and technology development. For enhancing national innovation capacity, governments can provide marketing mechanisms.

4.3. The relative competitiveness of each nation’s IIRs

After overall evaluation of the IIR competitiveness of each nation, this research found that the US currently has competitive advantages in every aspect. Mainland China has an overall competitive disadvantage, except for the *domestic market*, which has a higher competitive advantage than Taiwan and Korea. Korea has a competitive advantage compared with mainland China. Taiwan has several relative competitive advantages compared with mainland China and is superior to Korea in terms of *management skill*, *manpower*, and *financial resource*. Compared with the US, Taiwan is at a competitive disadvantage in *R&D*, *R&D environment*, *market information*, and *domestic market*. Overall, in the past two decades, under the leadership of ITRI and government-related policy tools, a comprehensive industry structure for the Taiwan IC industry has been well-established.

5. Recommendations for the Taiwan government

This research makes two recommendations for the Taiwan government.

1. The government should reconsider the *science and technical* and *taxation* policy tools. The industry infrastructure does not seem suitable for high-technology

- enterprises. These tools can be designed to develop the proper R&D environment and further upgrade R&D and technical knowledge.
2. The *market information* innovation policy tool is obviously insufficient. An effective information service system should be established that will enhance the competitiveness of the IC industry. This information system will help businesses gain market opportunities which are critical to the innovation process.

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