



The Oxford Handbook of Innovation

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PART FRONT MATTER

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Introduction to Part II

A CENTRAL finding in innovation research is that firms seldom innovate in isolation. Interaction with customers, suppliers, competitors and various other private and public organizations is very important, and a “system perspective” is useful in understanding and analyzing such interaction. In Chapter 7, Edquist traces the development of such an “innovation system” perspective, particularly with respect to nations (so-called “national systems of innovation”), and discusses the achievements, shortcomings and potential of this approach. He also considers the role of some central activities of such systems, e.g., R&D and education. Following this, Mowery and Sampat (Chapter 8) examine one of the central organizations in national systems of innovations: universities. Chapter 9 by O'Sullivan focuses on another aspect of innovation systems, finance, discussing the varied approaches adopted on the relationship between finance and innovation. An essential feature in innovation systems is the conditions for appropriation of the economic returns to innovation. Granstrand (Chapter 10) provides a historical overview of intellectual property rights and surveys the extensive literature on this topic. The next two chapters deal with the boundaries of systems of innovation. As Edquist notes in Chapter 7 these boundaries do not have to be national, but may be regional, global or sectoral (“sectoral systems” are discussed in more detail in Part III of this volume). Regional systems of innovation are analyzed by Asheim and Gertler (Chapter 11) and Narula and Zanfei in Chapter 12 examine the “globalization” of innovation and the role of multinational enterprises in this process.