

KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY: A SYNTHETIC PERSPECTIVE ON INNOVATION

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Abstract

In the global knowledge economy there are several emerging problematical issues such as the nature of production, property rights, innovation cycle, governance structure and uneven development. This paper therefore provides an alternative concept, i.e., a knowledge community, to examine these issues. The knowledge community, which is a concept derived from interdisciplinary theoretical synthesis, consists of a plurality of actors who recognize the common value of a specific knowledge tradition, identify themselves as members of the community and thereby voluntarily contribute to the production, diffusion and use of that knowledge. The knowledge community is driven by an ideology. Moreover, a knowledge community has four basic elements, including homogeneity, diversity, autonomy and collective advantage. Even though the knowledge community has a lot of positive functions in innovation, there are also negative functions. The story of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's largest semiconductor foundry, is described and analyzed in the paper as an illustrative example. The case of TSMC shows that a latecomer can also appropriate from positive self-identity in the knowledge community. With the concept of knowledge community, the innovator in the knowledge economy plays new game with old players, turns disadvantages into advantages, and uses contradiction to create values.