

Technological Systems and Economic Performance: The Case of Factory Automation (Economics of Science, Technology and Innovation)

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In 1987 the Swedish National Board for Technical Development (STU, later becoming the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development, NUTEK) initiated a study of Sweden's Technological Systems and Future Development Potential. A comprehensive, interdisciplinary study was envisioned, yielding not only useful insight but also a permanent competence base for future analyses of technological systems and technology policy in Sweden. Three leading Swedish research institutes were invited to participate: the Industrial Institute for Economic and Social Research in Stockholm, the Department of Industrial Management and Economics at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, and the Research Policy Institute at the University of Lund. I was invited to direct the project. The project group decided to focus initially on a particular technological system, namely factory automation, to be followed by similar studies of other systems. Numerous publications have resulted from the project thus far. The current volume represents a summary of our work on factory automation. It consists of several original essays and of some previously published papers which have been edited, in some cases substantially, in order to form a comprehensive and coherent picture of a technological system. To our knowledge, this is the first in-depth analysis of a technological system designed as a component of a systematic study of technological systems more generally. At the time of this writing, three further studies on electronics and computers, pharmaceuticals, and powder technology are under way, to be published in a later volume.

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