This bestselling book debunks the myth of a dynamic private sector vs. a sluggish public sector by providing a detailed account of the role of the public sector in taking on high-risk entrepreneurial investments, from the Internet to the ‘green revolution’.

This bestseller from leading economist Mariana Mazzucato – named by the ‘New Republic’ as one of the ‘most important innovation thinkers’ today – is stirring up much-needed debates worldwide about the role of the State in innovation. Debunking the myth of a laggard State at odds with a dynamic private sector, Mazzucato reveals in case study after case study that in fact the opposite situation is true, with the private sector only finding the courage to invest after the entrepreneurial State has made the high-risk investments. Case studies include examples of the State’s role in the ‘green revolution’, in biotech and pharmaceuticals, as well as several detailed examples from Silicon Valley. In an intensely researched chapter, she reveals that every technology that makes the iPhone so ‘smart’ was government funded: the Internet, GPS, its touch-screen display and the voice-activated Siri. Mazzucato also controversially argues that in the history of modern capitalism the State has not only fixed market failures, but has also shaped and created markets, paving the way for new technologies and sectors that the private sector only ventures into once the initial risk has been assumed. And yet by not admitting the State’s role we are socializing only the risks, while privatizing the rewards in fewer hands. This, she argues, hurts both future innovation and equity in modern-day capitalism. Named one of the ‘2013 Books of the Year’ by the ‘Financial Times’ and recommended by ‘Forbes’ in its 2013 ‘creative leaders’ list, this book is a must-read for those interested in a refreshing and long-awaited take on the public vs. private sector debate.

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About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Mariana Mazzucato is RM Phillips Professor in the Economics of Innovation, SPRU, University of Sussex. Named one of the ‘three most important thinkers about innovation’ by the ‘New Republic’, she lectures widely and advises the UK government and the European Commission on innovation-led growth.

www.marianamazzucato.com


@mazzucatoom