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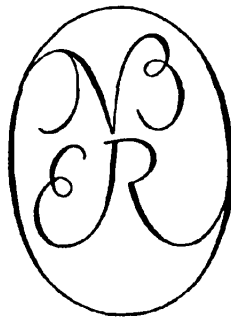
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Capital  
and Rates of Return  
in Manufacturing Industries

GEORGE J. STIGLER

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



A STUDY BY THE  
NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, NEW YORK

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IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

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*(Resolution adopted October 25, 1926,  
as revised February 6, 1933, and February 24, 1941)*

# Contents

PREFACE	xiii
1. Introduction	3
2. The Flow of Investment and the Pattern of Rates of Return	11
3. Competition and the Rate of Return	54
4. The Rate of Investment	72
5. Labor and Capital	92
APPENDIXES	
A. Construction of the Basic Tables on Capital and Rates of Return	107
B. Construction of the All-Manufactures Corporate Capital and Rate of Return Series for 1926-58	203
C. The Concentration Ratios	206
D. The Employee and Annual Earnings Data	216
E. Capital and Rates of Return in 1957 and 1958, on the New Industrial Classification	220
INDEX	227



## T A B L E S

1. Average Annual Percentage Change in Capital in Manufacturing Industries, 1947-56	5
2. Distribution of Industries, by Ownership Specialization and Industry Specialization of Companies in Manufacturing, Measured by Payroll, 1954	8
3. Assets in Manufacturing Industries, 1938-57	14
4. Annual Percentage Increase of Capital in Munitions and Other Industries, Book Values, 1938-47	16
5. Percentage Increase of Capital in Construction Goods Industries, Book Values, 1947-56	17
6. Percentage Increase in Total Assets in Manufacturing Industries, 1938-57	18
7. Rank Correlation of Percentage Increase in Assets Among Manufacturing Industries, Pairs of Years, 1938-57	30
8. Industries With Largest Relative Increase and Decrease in Number of Corporations, 1948-56	32
9. Relative Increase in Assets of Industries and Average Corporate Assets, 1948-56	33
10. Percentage Rate of Return in Manufacturing Industries, 1938-57	35
11. Dispersion of Rates of Return in Manufacturing Industries, 1938-57	37
12. Correlation Between Rates of Return in Manufacturing Industries in Successive Years, 1938-57	49
13. Correlation of Percentage Change in Assets, in Book Values and 1947 Prices, Manufacturing Industries, 1938-57	50
14. Comparison of Rate of Return, in Book Values and 1947 Prices, Two-Digit Industries, Selected Years, 1938-56	52
15. Distribution of Unconcentrated Manufacturing Industries, by Average Rate of Return, Three Periods, 1938-56	58
16. Distribution of Unconcentrated Industries, by Rate of Return, Before and After Adjustment for Small Business Salary Withdrawals, Two Periods, 1938-54	60
17. Average Rate of Return and Standard Deviation of Rates of Return, in Concentrated, Unconcentrated, and Ambiguous Industries, 1938-57	68
18. Correlation of Rates of Return for Concentrated, Unconcentrated, and Ambiguous Industries, Two Decades, 1938-57	70

TABLES

19. Income, Dividends and Interest Paid, Retained Earnings, and Increase in Capital, All Manufacturing Industries, 1947-58	74
20. Annual Regression of Relative Change in Corporate Capital on Relative Change in Receipts and Profit Rate, Ninety-Eight Industries, 1948-57	77
21. Regression of Percentage Change in Capital on Percentage Change in Receipts and on Profit Rate, 1938-56	81
22. Regression of Percentage Change in Capital on Percentage Change in Output and on Profit Rates, Twenty-One Major Industries, 1947-54	82
23. Correlation Between Investment and Profit Rates, Change in Market Value and Receipts, Twenty-One Industries, Selected Years, 1949-54	85
24. Regression of Relative Investment on Previous Relative Change in Receipts and Profit Rates, Ninety-Eight Industries, 1949-57	87
25. Regression of Relative Change in Capital on Relative Change in Receipts and Profit Rate, by Industry Structure, Two Periods, 1938-56	88
26. Technical Progress, Investment, and Rate of Return, 1947-54	90
27. Aggregate Payroll as Percentage of Total Distributive Shares in Manufacturing Industries, Selected Years, 1939-54	93
28. Annual Earnings Per Worker and Rate of Return on Capital in Manufacturing Industries, Selected Years and Periods, 1938-55	95
29. Annual Earnings and Capital Per Worker, Manufacturing Industries, 1939 and 1954	97
30. Annual Earnings of Employees, and Capital-Receipts Ratio, for Small and Large Plants and Firms, 1947 and 1954	103
A-1. Textile Mill Products: Receipts Cross-Classified by 1948 and 1947 Industry Classes	110
A-2. Ratio of Industry Rented Assets to Owned Assets, 1938-57	112
A-3. Estimate of Rented Property as Share of Owned Assets, by Industry Class, 1948 and 1953	113
A-4. Procedure for Estimating Noncorporate Receipts in Non-census Years, Confectionery Products Industry	115
A-5. Ratio of Assets to Sales in Manufacturing Corporations, 1947	116
A-6. Noncorporate Share of Value of Products, 1947	117
A-7. Average Life of Equipment in Manufacturing Industries	121

*TABLES*

A-8. Illustrative Calculation of Price Index of Book Value of Machinery and Equipment, Seventeen-Year Life, Iron and Steel Products	122
A-9. Officers' Compensation and Profits in Apparel Corporations, 1941	126
A-10. Depreciation Charges as Per Cent of Net Profit After Taxes in Manufacturing Industries, 1947	128
A-11. Rates of Return in Current Prices, Manufacturing Industries, 1948-57	130
A-12. Amortization (Accelerated Depreciation) in Manufacturing Corporations, 1940-57	131
A-13. Hypothetical Adjustments for Accelerated Depreciation, Metals and Metal Products	133
Basic Tables, Data on Capital and Rates of Return, All Manufacturing Industries, 1938-47 and 1947-57	
A-14. Beverages, 1938-47	139
A-15. Food and Kindred Products, 1938-47	140
A-16. Tobacco and Products, 1938-47	142
A-17. Textile Mill Products, 1938-47	143
A-18. Apparel and Products Made From Fabrics, 1938-47	145
A-19. Basic Lumber, 1938-47	146
A-20. Furniture and Finished Lumber, 1938-47	147
A-21. Paper and Allied Products, 1938-47	148
A-22. Printing and Publishing, 1938-47	149
A-23. Chemicals and Allied Products, 1938-47	151
A-24. Petroleum and Coal Products, 1938-47	153
A-25. Rubber and Products, 1938-47	154
A-26. Leather and Products, 1938-47	155
A-27. Stone, Clay, and Glass Products, 1938-47	156
A-28. Metals and Metal Products, 1938-47	158
A-29. Machinery and Equipment, Except Transportation and Electrical, 1938-47	160
A-30. Electrical Machinery and Equipment, 1938-47	162
A-31. Transportation Equipment, Except Vehicles, 1938-47	164
A-32. Motor Vehicles and Parts, 1938-47	166
A-33. Residual Manufacturing, 1938-47	167
A-34. Ordnance Equipment, 1938-47	168
A-35. Total Manufacturing, 1938-47	169

*TABLES*

A-36. Beverages, 1947-57	170
A-37. Food and Kindred Products, 1947-57	171
A-38. Tobacco Products, 1947-57	173
A-39. Textile Mill Products, 1947-57	174
A-40. Apparel and Products Made From Fabrics, 1947-57	176
A-41. Basic Lumber, 1947-57	177
A-42. Furniture and Finished Lumber, 1947-57	178
A-43. Paper and Allied Products, 1947-57	179
A-44. Printing and Publishing, 1947-57	180
A-45. Chemicals and Allied Products, 1947-57	182
A-46. Petroleum and Coal Products, 1947-57	184
A-47. Rubber Products, 1947-57	185
A-48. Leather and Products, 1947-57	186
A-49. Stone, Clay, and Glass Products, 1947-57	187
A-50. Primary Metal Products, 1947-57	189
A-51. Fabricated Metal Products, 1947-57	190
A-52. Machinery, Except Transportation and Electrical, 1947-57	192
A-53. Electrical Machinery and Equipment, 1947-57	194
A-54. Transportation Equipment, Except Vehicles, 1947-57	196
A-55. Motor Vehicles, 1947-57	198
A-56. Professional and Scientific Instruments, 1947-57	199
A-57. Residual Manufactures, 1947-57	200
A-58. Ordnance, 1947-57	201
A-59. Total Manufacturing, 1947-57	202
B-1. Corporate Assets, Excluding Other Investments, and Rates of Return, 1926-58	203
C-1. Concentration Ratios for Manufacturing Industries, 1935 and 1947	211
C-2. Concentration Ratios for Manufacturing Industries, 1947 and 1954	213
D-1. Employment and Earnings in Manufacturing Industries, 1939 and 1947	216
D-2. Employment and Earnings in Manufacturing Industries, 1947 and 1954	218
E-1. Corporate Assets, Rates of Return, and Noncorporate Shares, 1957 and 1958, by 1958 Standard Industrial Classification	221

## CHARTS

1. Corporate Capital and Rates of Return in Manufacturing Industries, 1926-58 12
2. Frequency Distribution of Manufacturing Industries, by Annual Rate of Change of Capital, 1938-57 20
3. Frequency Distribution of Manufacturing Industries, by Annual Rate of Return, 1938-57 38

## Preface

CONSIDERING how often our economic system is described as “capitalistic” or “the profit system,” it is paradoxical that we have had relatively little information on the stock of capital or the rate of profits it yields in various industries. Ralph C. Epstein’s book of nearly thirty years ago, *Industrial Profits in the United States* (New York, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1934), was for long the only tolerably comprehensive source, and even now the Federal Trade Commission–Securities and Exchange Commission quarterly reports have important limitations.

I am confident, therefore, that economists will welcome the comprehensive and fairly detailed data on capital and rates of return in all manufacturing industries here presented. Their debt (and mine) is primarily to my two associates who conducted this laborious and difficult work. Mary O. Conlon and Claire Friedland have successively undertaken this responsibility and discharged it with skill and conscientiousness. At various times Nestor Terleckyj, Murray Brown, Arthur D’Antonio, George Friedman, Ann Novick, and Robert V. Goldstein also assisted in this work.

The analytical essays which comprise the larger part of the text apply the data, with varying success, to three traditional problems of economics: the tendency of rates of return to equality, determinants of the rate of investment, and relationships between capital and labor. My debt to Miss Friedland is equally heavy in this work.

Various readers of the manuscript have offered helpful suggestions, and particular acknowledgement is due to Gary S. Becker, Ralph L. Nelson, and Victor Fuchs. I am also indebted to the Directors who reviewed the manuscript, Melvin G. de Chazeau, Murray Shields, and Boris Shishkin.

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GEORGE J. STIGLER