

# Sonja Opper

Full Professor



**Knowledge Group:** Strategy and Operations

**Research Domains:** International Management

**Teaching Domains:**

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## Biography

Sonja Opper is a Professor of Global Strategy and Institutions at Università Bocconi. Before joining Bocconi, she was the Gad Rausing Professor of International Economics and Business at the Department of Economics at Lund University in Sweden. Her research is about how individual effort and local institutions contribute to some businesses being much more successful than others.

Her current research explores patterns of institutional change, the interplay between social networks and institutions, and social heuristics of strategic decisions. Most of her empirical research is set in transition and emerging economies—such as China's economy—which offer a natural laboratory for the study of social and institutional change. In her research she combines different methodologies such as standard manager and company surveys, laboratory experiments and social network analysis. She is the author of numerous articles on her topics of interest. Her works have been published in the *Journal of Management Studies*, *Academy of Management Journal*, and in the *Management and Organization Review*, among others.

She got her PhD in Economics from the University of Tübingen in Germany.

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## Research Monographs

### **Strong Bridges: Trust Beyond Structure**

BURT, R. S., S. OPFER - "Strong Bridges: Trust Beyond Structure" - 2026, Oxford University Press

### **Capitalism from below: markets and institutional change in China**

NEE, V., S. OPFER - "Capitalism from below: markets and institutional change in China" - 2012, Harvard University Press, United States of America

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## Contribution to Chapters, Books or Research Monographs

### **Evaluation in Network Context**

BURT, R. S., S. OPPER, "Evaluation in Network Context" in The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Social Evaluations., Anastasiya Zavyalova, Rupert Younger (Eds.), Oxford University Press, chap. 23, 2025

### **Economic Change from an Institutional Perspective**

OPPER, S., "Economic Change from an Institutional Perspective" in Handbook of Economic Sociology for the 21st Century., Andrea Maurer (Ed.), Springer International Publishing, pp. 177-190, 2021

### **Economic Institutions from Networks**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "Economic Institutions from Networks" in Re-Imagining Economic Sociology., Patrik Aspers, Nigel Dodd (Eds.), Oxford University Press, chap. 6, pp. 148-173, 2015

### **Sociology and the New Institutionalism**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "Sociology and the New Institutionalism" in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences., James D. Wright (Ed.), Elsevier, pp. 979-983, 2015

### **Markets and institutional change in China**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "Markets and institutional change in China" in The Oxford Companion to the Economics of China., Shenggen Fan, Ravi Kanbur, Shang-Jin Wei, Xiaobo Zhang (Eds.), Oxford University Press, pp. 267-272, 2014

### **Bringing market transition theory to the firm**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "Bringing market transition theory to the firm" in Work and Organizations in China After Thirty Years of Transition., Lisa Keister (Ed.), Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 3-34, 2009

### **New Institutional Economics and Its Application on Transition and Developing Economies**

OPPER, S., "New Institutional Economics and Its Application on Transition and Developing Economies" in New Institutional Economics., Éric Brousseau, Jean-Michel Glachant (Eds.), Cambridge University Press, chap. 18, pp. 389-405, 2008

### **Going Public Without the Public: Between Political Governance and Corporate Governance**

OPPER, S., "Going Public Without the Public: Between Political Governance and Corporate Governance" in The Chinese Economy in the 21st Century: Enterprise and Business Behaviour., Barbara Krug, Hans Hendrichske (Eds.), Edward Elgar Publishing, chap. 1, pp. 1-20, 2007

### **On Politicized Capitalism**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "On Politicized Capitalism" in On Capitalism., Victor Nee, Richard Swedberg (Eds.), Stanford University Press, chap. 4, pp. 93-127, 2007

### **The power structure in China's listed companies: the company law and its enforcement**

OPPER, S., S. WONG, R. HU, "The power structure in China's listed companies: the company law and its enforcement" in China's new role in the international community : challenges and expectations for the 21st

century., Heinz-Dieter Assmann, Karin Moser v. Filseck (Eds.), Peter Lang, pp. 119-148, 2005

### **Inefficient Property Rights and Corruption: The Case of Accounting Fraud in China**

OPPER, S., "Inefficient Property Rights and Corruption: The Case of Accounting Fraud in China" in The New Institutional Economics of Corruption., Johann Graf Lambsdorff, Markus Taube, Matthias Schramm (Eds.), Routledge, chap. 11, 2004

### **Arbeitsmarktinstitutionen und arbeitsmarktpolitische Instrumente in der VR China**

OPPER, S., "Arbeitsmarktinstitutionen und arbeitsmarktpolitische Instrumente in der VR China" in Der chinesische Arbeitsmarkt : Strukturen, Probleme, Perspektiven., Jutta Hebel, Günter Schucher (Eds.), Institut für Asienkunde, pp. 45-67, 1999

### **Menschenrechte und die Globalisierung der Wirtschaft - Konflikt oder Chance**

OPPER, S., J. STARBATTY, "Menschenrechte und die Globalisierung der Wirtschaft - Konflikt oder Chance" in Perspektiven der Menschenrechte: Beiträge zum fünfzigsten Jubiläum der UN-Erklärung (Moderne Geschichte und Politik)., Benita von Behr, Lara Huber, Andrea Kimmi, Manfred Wolff (Eds.), Peter Lang, pp. 127-145, 1999

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## **Articles in Scholarly Journals**

### **Trust in Difficult People: A Social Network Perspective**

OPPER, S., N. ZOU, "Trust in Difficult People: A Social Network Perspective", Journal of Management Studies, 2024, vol. 61, no. 7, pp. 2885-2918

### **Guanxi and Structural Holes: Strong Bridges from Relational Embedding**

BURT, R. S., S. OPFER, "Guanxi and Structural Holes: Strong Bridges from Relational Embedding", American Journal of Sociology, 2024, vol. 130, no. 1, pp. 1-43

### **Social network and institution-based strategyresearch**

OPPER, S., "Social network and institution-based strategyresearch", Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 2023, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 329-351

### **Il mito delle guanxi: cosa sappiamo davvero**

OPPER, S., "Il mito delle guanxi: cosa sappiamo davvero", Economia & Management, 2023, no. 1, pp. 48-50

### **Cooperation Beyond the Network**

BURT, R. S., S. OPFER, H. J. HOLM, "Cooperation Beyond the Network", Organization Science, 2022, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 495-517

### **Social Network and Temporal Myopia**

OPPER, S., R. S. BURT, "Social Network and Temporal Myopia", Academy of Management Journal, 2021, vol. 64, no. 3, pp. 741-771

### **Social network and family business: Uncovering hybrid family firms**

BURT, R. S., S. OPPER, N. ZOU, "Social network and family business: Uncovering hybrid family firms", *Social Networks*, 2021, vol. 65, pp. 141-156

### **Strategic decisions: behavioral differences between CEOs and others**

HOLM, H. J., V. NEE, S. OPPER, "Strategic decisions: behavioral differences between CEOs and others", *Experimental Economics*, 2020, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 154-180

### **Political Connection and Disconnection: Still a Success Factor for Chinese Entrepreneurs**

BURT, R. S., S. OPPER, "Political Connection and Disconnection: Still a Success Factor for Chinese Entrepreneurs", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 2020, vol. 44, no. 6, pp. 1199-1228

### **Interbank Relations, Environmental Uncertainty, and Corporate Credit Access in China**

BURZYNSKA, K., S. OPPER, "Interbank Relations, Environmental Uncertainty, and Corporate Credit Access in China", *Management and Organization Review*, 2020, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 595-628

### **Are entrepreneurial cultures stable over time? Historical evidence from China**

OPPER, S., F. N. G. ANDERSSON, "Are entrepreneurial cultures stable over time? Historical evidence from China", *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 2019, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 1165-1192

### **Learning to Trust: From Relational Exchange to Generalized Trust in China**

NEE, V., H. J. HOLM, S. OPPER, "Learning to Trust: From Relational Exchange to Generalized Trust in China", *Organization Science*, 2018, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 969-986

### **Are capitalists green? Firm ownership and provincial CO emissions in China**

ANDERSSON, F. N. G., S. OPPER, U. KHALID, "Are capitalists green? Firm ownership and provincial CO emissions in China", *Energy Policy*, 2018, vol. 123, pp. 349-359

### **More or less guanxi: Trust is 60% network context, 10% individual difference**

BURT, R. S., Y. BIAN, S. OPPER, "More or less guanxi: Trust is 60% network context, 10% individual difference", *Social Networks*, 2018, vol. 54, pp. 12-25

### **Risk Aversion and Guanxi Activities: A Behavioral Analysis of CEOs in China**

OPPER, S., V. NEE, H. J. HOLM, "Risk Aversion and Guanxi Activities: A Behavioral Analysis of CEOs in China", *Academy of Management Journal*, 2017, vol. 60, no. 4, pp. 1504-1530

### **Early Network Events in the Later Success of Chinese Entrepreneurs**

BURT, R. S., S. OPPER, "Early Network Events in the Later Success of Chinese Entrepreneurs", *Management and Organization Review*, 2017, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 497-537

### **Endogenous dynamics of institutional change**

DELLAPOSTA, D., V. NEE, S. OPPER, "Endogenous dynamics of institutional change", *Rationality and Society*, 2017, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 5-48

### **Lending for growth? A Granger causality analysis of China's finance-growth nexus**

ANDERSSON, F. N. G., K. BURZYNSKA, S. OPPER, "Lending for growth? A Granger causality analysis of China's finance-growth nexus", *Empirical Economics*, 2016, vol. 51, no. 3, pp. 897-920

### **Network effects, cooperation and entrepreneurial innovation in China**

OPPER, S., V. NEE, "Network effects, cooperation and entrepreneurial innovation in China", *Asian Business & Management*, 2015, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 283-302

### **Homophily in the career mobility of China's political elite**

OPPER, S., V. NEE, S. BREHM, "Homophily in the career mobility of China's political elite", *Social Science Research*, 2015, vol. 54, pp. 332-352

### **A Matter of Time: Revisiting Growth Convergence in China**

ANDERSSON, F. N. G., D. L. EDGERTON, S. OPPER, "A Matter of Time: Revisiting Growth Convergence in China", *World Development*, 2013, vol. 45, pp. 239-251

### **Entrepreneurs Under Uncertainty: An Economic Experiment in China**

HOLM, H. J., S. OPPER, V. NEE, "Entrepreneurs Under Uncertainty: An Economic Experiment in China", *Management Science*, 2013, vol. 59, no. 7, pp. 1671-1687

### **Sales Maximization or Profit Maximization? How State Shareholders Discipline their CEOs in China\***

OPPER, S., S. WONG, Y. YANG, "Sales Maximization or Profit Maximization? How State Shareholders Discipline their CEOs in China\*", *Asia-Pacific Journal of Financial Studies*, 2012, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 347-375

### **Why is Chinese provincial output diverging?**

WESTERLUND, J., D. L. EDGERTON, S. OPPER, "Why is Chinese provincial output diverging?", *Journal of Asian Economics*, 2010, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 333-344

### **Endogenous Institutional Change and Dynamic Capitalism**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "Endogenous Institutional Change and Dynamic Capitalism", *Sociologia del Lavoro*, 2010, no. 118, pp. 15-39

### **A Theory of Innovation: Market Transition, Property Rights, and Innovative Activity**

NEE, V., J.-H. KANG, S. OPPER, "A Theory of Innovation: Market Transition, Property Rights, and Innovative Activity", *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics (JITE)*, 2010, vol. 166, no. 3, pp. 397-425

### **Political Capital in a Market Economy**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "Political Capital in a Market Economy", *Social Forces*, 2010, vol. 88, no. 5, pp. 2105-2132

### **Bureaucracy and Financial Markets**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, "Bureaucracy and Financial Markets", *Kyklos*, 2009, vol. 62, no. 2, pp. 293-315

### **Developmental State and Corporate Governance in China**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, S. WONG, "Developmental State and Corporate Governance in China", *Management and Organization Review*, 2007, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 19-53

### **Political economy of labor retrenchment: Evidence based on China's state-owned enterprises**

HU, Y., S. OPPER, S. M. L. WONG, "Political economy of labor retrenchment: Evidence based on China's state-owned enterprises", *China Economic Review*, 2006, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 281-299

## **The Political Economy of Privatization: Empirical Evidence from Transition Economies**

OPPER, S., "The Political Economy of Privatization: Empirical Evidence from Transition Economies", *Kyklos*, 2004, vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 559-586

## **Shareholding structure, depoliticization and firm performance**

WONG, S. M. L., S. OPPER, R. HU, "Shareholding structure, depoliticization and firm performance", *Economics of Transition and Institutional Change*, 2004, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 29-66

## **Enforcement of China's Accounting Standards: Reflections on Systemic Problems**

OPPER, S., "Enforcement of China's Accounting Standards: Reflections on Systemic Problems", *Business and Politics*, 2003, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 151-173

## **Party power, market and private power: Chinese Communist Party persistence in China's listed companies**

OPPER, S., S. M. L. WONG, H. RUYIN, "Party power, market and private power: Chinese Communist Party persistence in China's listed companies", *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 2002, vol. 19, pp. 105-138

## **Dual-track Ownership Reforms: Lessons from Structural Change in China, 1978-1997**

OPPER, S., "Dual-track Ownership Reforms: Lessons from Structural Change in China, 1978-1997", *Post-Communist Economies*, 2001, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 205-227

## **How tensions between specific Chinese and American interests affect China's entry into the WTO**

GURBAXANI, I., S. OPPER, "How tensions between specific Chinese and American interests affect China's entry into the WTO", *Intereconomics*, 1998, vol. 33, no. 5, pp. 212-222

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## **Proceedings/Presentations**

### **Guanxi and Structural Holes**

BURT, R. S., S. OPPER, "Guanxi and Structural Holes" in 83rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, 4-8 August, 2023, Boston, United States of America

### **Emotional Energy and Structural Holes**

BURT, R. S., S. OPPER, G. SODA, "Emotional Energy and Structural Holes" in Intra-Organizational Networks Conference (ION Conference), April 14-16, 2023, Lexington, KY, United States of America

### **Culture and entrepreneurship in China: Evidence on stable long-run regional variation**

OPPER, S., F. N. G. ANDERSSON, R. WILSON, "Culture and entrepreneurship in China: Evidence on stable long-run regional variation" in 76th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management - August 5-9, 2016, Anaheim, CA, United States of America

### **Relational Exchange and Generalized Trust in China**

NEE, V., S. OPPER, H. HOLM, "Relational Exchange and Generalized Trust in China" in 76th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management - August 5-9, 2016, Anaheim, CA, United States of America