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The Competitive Performance of Manufacturing Industry in a Number of Arab Countries

Ahmed Alkawaz

Abstract

This paper reviews the current overall state of competitiveness in Arab Countries, and its main determinants: innovative capacity, efficiency, the availability of production factors, and determinants of investment. Then, the paper tackles the competitive performance of the manufacturing activities in a number of Arab countries. This is done with reference to selected industrial indicators, such as value added, per capita value added, manufacturing exports, diversification index, and industrial competitive performance indicators. A comparison analysis is followed with the main foreign competing countries in the two exporting markets, i.e. China and Turkey. A special reference is made to the Egyptian case due to data availability and the long experience of industrialization. Certain manufactured products are identified as facing serious competition in the markets in question. This requires structural and industrial rehabilitation to cope with these findings.

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Structural Transformation, Productive Efficiency, and Competitiveness of Arab Manufacturing Sector

Belkacem Laabas

Abstract

This paper is concerned with the challenges of enhancing the competitive capacity of Arab manufacturing sector in the context of slow structural transformation, deteriorating productive efficiency, and re overall worsening of competitive environment for most of the Arab countries . Using the Chenery and Squiryn approach for the study of structural transformation, a regression equation over the period 1980-2007 is estimated for a large sample of countries. It turned out that most Arab economies are primary producers and did not achieve manufacturing transformation at their 2006 income level. However those countries which achieved the transformation have a manufacturing sector that is in its infancy and of small size. Econometric analysis showed that most Arab countries are suffering from low productive efficiency severely hindering their export capacity and competitiveness in international markets.

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The State versus the Market: A False Dichotomy

Atif Kubursi*

Abstract

The rush towards globalization and a sense of triumphalism about capitalism in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union have combined to revert much of the economics profession to a new fundamentalism about the virtues of markets and the shrinking of government. Over the past three decades, a stunning imbalance in ideology, conviction and institutions has emerged one that favors markets over the state. This triumphalism has been challenged both on theoretical and empirical grounds by the unraveling of the financial markets and the speed with which recessionary forces have spread across the world. The pendulum is swinging back under the force of systematic and highly refined theoretical questioning of the orthodoxy, the critical re-assessment of the Southeast Asian experience and recent economic upheavals. As important as its role in shaping the economy, the state can also frustrate and override the development of a vibrant private sector that can play a key role in sustaining a balanced and prosperous economy. The dominance of the state or its exclusive eminence could threaten and retard growth and development as it can subvert the dynamics of a propulsive and dynamic economy. It is here where the excesses of one system can undo the success of the entire economy. The real substantive issues are not about market failure or government failure but about what makes for a successful economy where both systems can work together re-enforcing each other as equal partners in the responsibility for sustainable development.

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Role of the Private Sector and Inclusive Growth in an Emerging Economy: The Indian Scenario

Manoj Agarwal

Abstract

The present paper attempts to analyze pattern of privatization in the Indian economy since its political independence. It is interesting to note that this second most populous economy of the world started with mixed economy where non-agricultural organized sector was tilted initially in favor of the public sector. The economy has moved to what is now mainly market economy in a gradual manner. Before undertaking economic reforms and rapid privatization in the early 1990s, the Indian economy has provided a congenial atmosphere like self-sufficiency in food supply, increased savings and investments, improved human development, infrastructure, etc for privatization. Privatization in India has been helpful in raising economic growth but it appears it is not able to contain challenges like unemployment and regional inequalities. Fiscal discipline, governance and better human development with well functioning institutions become helpful in the expansion of privatization and economic development.

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