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## The Impact of Inflation on Financial Sector Performance in Euro-Mediterranean Countries

Magdy A. El-Shourbagui

### Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to measure the impact of inflation on financial sector performance in six Euro-Mediterranean countries during the period 1988-2003 using fixed effects panel data models with country and time specific fixed effects. Overall, the results indicate, first, that there is a significant and negative impact of inflation on both banking sector development and stock market performance, and second, that there is a strong negative impact of inflation on financial sector performance if inflation rate is above the threshold rate of inflation which is estimated at roughly 8 %. The policy implication is that inflation hurts financial sector performance once it exceeds this threshold.

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# The Impact of Holidays on Stock Market Performance: Evidence from the Jordanian and Egyptian Stock Markets

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Bassel Chamseddine \*

## Abstract

Different hypotheses were developed on the relation between holidays and market returns and tested by examining empirical evidence from the Jordanian and Egyptian markets. Results reveal that the stock index returns for the day before a holiday (both religious and non-religious) are significant and positive for the Amman Stock Exchange and the Egypt Financial Group indices. These results are consistent with previous psychological studies showing that people's moods are more positive than normal prior to holidays. On the other hand, the results for the days after holidays and for unofficial holidays are insignificant. It is concluded that the positive mood effect is present only before the holidays.

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# Efficiency Analysis of the Banking Sector in Kuwait

Wadad Saad\*  
Chawki EL Moussawi\*\*

## Abstract

This paper presents an assessment of the performance of commercial banks operating in Kuwait after and within a period of structural reforms and regulations, accompanied by an increasing competitiveness in the banking world. Two types of techniques are used for this purpose: (a) a non parametric technique – Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) – to analyze the technical, allocative, cost, and scale efficiency of Kuwaiti commercial banks; and (b) a parametric technique – ordinary least squares (OLS) regression – to investigate the determinants of efficiency in these banks. Using panel data of seven banks for six years (1999 – 2004), the empirical results show improvements in the production efficiency over time. Furthermore, by using a slack-based efficiency measure, different efficiency frontier levels and more appropriate benchmarkers for inefficient banks are obtained. The statistical approach suggests significant relationships between the efficiency scores and financial performance.



## Introduction

The core of Kuwaiti's financial system is the banking sector. Kuwaiti banks are well capitalized, highly liquid and can withstand considerable shocks. This sector is comprised of a limited number of institutions: seven commercial banks, two specialized banks: (a) one operates under Islamic law, and (b) one is a branch of a foreign bank. The banking market is concentrated with the two largest banks accounting for about half of local banks' total assets, loans and deposits. These banks are mostly privately owned.

However, the banking sector has undergone major events during the last two decades (*Souk Al Manakh* crisis in 1982, Iraqi invasion and occupation in 1990). The subsequent recovery of the banking sector was facilitated by substantial government support and prudent fiscal and monetary policies.

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# Markup Pricing and Import Competition: Has Import Disciplined Tunisian Manufacturing Firms?

Riadh Ben Jelili\*

## Abstract

Two approaches have been taken to examine the effect of increased import competition on markups in industries. In one approach, the gross price-average cost margins – defined as the ratio of sales net of expenditure on labor and intermediate inputs over sales – is used as an indicator of the markup, and regressed on a set of explanatory variables including variables representing the level of import competition. In the other approach, the methodology developed by Hall (1988) is used. It involves regression of output growth rate on a share-weighted growth rate of inputs, the regression yielding the markup as the slope coefficient. This paper extends Hall's approach to examine whether intensified international competition forces industries to price more competitively by examining six manufacturing sectors in Tunisia between 1972 and 1999. Results show significant but plausible and moderate markups to be present in the Tunisian manufacturing industry. The econometric evidence tends also to support the hypothesis that increased exposure to import competition serves to lower the markup. In other words, import competition disciplines domestic firms in imperfectly competitive industries. However, the regression results obtained here suggest that the direct effect of competition law on industry markup is not significant.

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