

مجلة التنمية والسياسات الاقتصادية

أثر التضخم على أداء القطاع المالي في دول حوض
البحر الأبيض المتوسط.

مجدي الشوربجي

أثر العطل على أداء سوق الأسهم: دلائل من
الأردن ومصر.

سيبوه عينتابليان

باسل شمس الدين

تحليل كفاءة القطاع المصرفي في الكويت.

وداد سعد

شوقي الموسوي

هامش الربح ومنافسة الواردات: هل أدت الواردات إلى
زيادة إنضباط مؤسسات الصناعة التحويلية التونسية؟

رياض بن جليلي

وقائع مؤتمر:

" مقاربات جديدة لصياغة السياسات التنموية ".

علي عبدالقادر علي

مراجعة كتاب:

" تقرير البنك الدولي حول إقليم الشرق الأوسط
وشمال إفريقيا: 2005 آخر التطورات و الآفاق المستقبلية
الاقتصادية: الطفرة النفطية و إدارة العوائد المالية ".

حاتم أمير مهران

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~~المجلد الثامن - العدد الثاني~~
يونيو 2006

الأهداف

- ♦ الاهتمام بقضايا التنمية والسياسات الاقتصادية في الأقطار العربية في ضوء المتغيرات المحلية والاقليمية والدولية.
- ♦ زيادة مساحة الرؤية وتوسعة دائرة المعرفة لدى صانعي القرار والممارسين والباحثين في الأقطار العربية .
- ♦ خلق حوار علمي بناء بين الباحثين والمهتمين بالاقتصادات العربية وصانعي القرار بالمنطقة .

قواعد النشر:

1. ترسل ثلاث نسخ من البحوث والدراسات ومراجعات الكتب والتقارير إلى رئيس التحرير .
2. تنشر المجلة الأبحاث والدراسات الأصلية (باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية) والتي لم يتم نشرها سابقاً ولم تكن مقدمة لنيل درجة علمية أو مقدمة للنشر في مجلات أو دوريات أخرى.
3. تكون الأوراق والدراسات المقدمة بحجم لا يتجاوز الثلاثين صفحة، بما فيها المصادر والجداول والرسوم التوضيحية، كما لا تزيد مراجعة الكتب والتقارير على العشر صفحات. ويشترط أن تكون البحوث والمراجعات مطبوعة على أوراق 8 1/2 x 11 بوصة (A4) مع تحطيط سطر (Double Spaced) وعلى وجه واحد، وتترك هوامش من الجوانب الأربعة للورقة محدود بوحدة ونصف.
4. تكون المساهمات مختصرة بقدر الإمكان وسهلة القراءة والإستيعاب من قبل الممارسين وصانعي القرار.
5. يرفق الباحث ملخصاً عن البحث لا يزيد عن 100 كلمة، بحيث يكون مكتوباً باللغتين العربية والإنجليزية.
6. يكتب الباحث اسمه ووجهة عمله ووظيفته على ورقة مستقلة مع ذكر عنوان المراسلة وأرقام الهاتف والفاكس والبريد الإلكتروني (إن توفر).
7. في حالة وجود أكثر من مؤلف يتم مراسلة الاسم الذي يرد أولاً في ترتيب الأسماء .
8. تخصص قائمة بالمراجع في آخر البحث ولا توضع فيها إلا تلك المراجع التي تم الإشارة إليها في متن الورقة أو البحث. وترتب على الشكل التالي:

Krueger, A.O. (1992), Economic Policy Reform in Developing Countries, Blackwell, Oxford.

9. سن، أ.ك.، (1984) **الموارد والقيم والتنمية** مطبعة جامعة هارفرد، كمبريدج.
9. توضع الهوامش في أسفل الصفحة المناسبة وترقم بالتسلسل حسب ظهورها .
10. توثق الجداول والرسوم التوضيحية المستعارة وغيرها بالمصادر الأصلية .
11. لا ترد الأوراق المرسلة إلى المجلة سواء قبلت للنشر أو لم تقبل .
12. تفضل المجلة استلام البحوث على البريد الإلكتروني للمجلة jodep@api.org.kw مكتوبة ببرنامج Microsoft Word أو أي معالج كلمات حديث .
13. يتم إشعار المؤلف بإستلام بحثه خلال إسبوعين من تاريخ إستلامه .
14. تخضع كل المساهمات في المجلة للتحكيم العلمي الموضوعي، ويبلغ الباحث بنتائج التحكيم والتعديلات المقترحة من قبل المحكمين إن وجدت، خلال إسبوعين من تاريخ إستلام ردود كل المحكمين .
15. يصبح البحث المنشور ملكاً للمجلة، وتُسوجب إعادة نشره في أماكن أخرى الحصول على موافقة كتابية من المجلة .
16. جميع الآراء الواردة في المجلة تعبر عن آراء كاتبها، ولا تعبر بالضرورة عن وجهة نظر المجلة أو المعهد العربي للتخطيط .

مجلة التنمية والسياسات الاقتصادية

تصدر عن المعهد العربي للتخطيط بالكويت

المجلد الثامن - العدد الثاني - يونيو 2006

مجلة محكمة نصف سنوية تهتم بقضايا التنمية والسياسات
الاقتصادية في الأقطار العربية

الهيئة الاستشارية

حازم الببلاوي
سليمان القدسي
سمير المقدسي
عبدالله القويز
عبداللطيف الحمد
محمد الخجعا

مصطفى النابلي

هيئة التحرير

أحمد الكواز
أحمد طلفاح
إبراهيم البدوي
بلقاسم العباس
التهامي عبد الخالق
رياض بن جليلي
عبد الرزاق الفارس
عدنان وديع
مصطفى بابكر
يوسف جواد

رئيس التحرير
عيسى الغزالي

نائب رئيس التحرير
علي عبدالقادر علي

سكرتير التحرير
صالح العصفور

توجه المراسلات إلى:

رئيس التحرير - مجلة التنمية والسياسات الاقتصادية
المعهد العربي للتخطيط

ص.ب 5834 - الصفاة 13059 الكويت

تلفون 4844061 - 4843130 (965) - فاكس 4842935 (965)

البريد الإلكتروني jodep@api.org.kw

الاشتراكات :

ثلاث سنوات	سنتين	سنة	داخل الوطن العربي :
US\$ 40 US\$ 70	US\$ 25 US\$ 45	US\$ 15 US\$ 25	للأفراد لمؤسسات
خارج الوطن العربي :			
US\$ 70 US\$ 115	US\$ 45 US\$ 75	US\$ 25 US\$ 40	للأفراد لمؤسسات

ثمن النسخة في الكويت : 1.5 دينار كويتي .

عنوان المجلة :

مجلة التنمية والسياسات الاقتصادية

المعهد العربي للتخطيط بالكويت

ص.ب 5834 صفاة 13059 الكويت

تلفون 4844061 - 4843130 (965) - فاكس 4842935 (965)

البريد الالكتروني: jodep@api.org.kw

محتويات العدد العربية

- 5 افتتاحية العدد
- أثر التضخم على أداء القطاع المالي في دول حوض البحر الأبيض المتوسط.
- 7 مجدي الشوربجي
- وقائع مؤتمر:
" مقاربات جديدة لصياغة السياسات التنموية ".
- 31 علي عبدالقادر علي
- مراجعة كتاب:
- " تقرير البنك الدولي حول إقليم الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا:
2005 آخر التطورات و الآفاق المستقبلية الاقتصادية:
الطفرة النفطية و إدارة العوائد المالية ".
- 41 حاتم أمير مهران

افتتاحية العدد

يحتوي هذا العدد وهو الثاني من المجلد الثامن على أربع أوراق بحثية وملخص لوقائع مؤتمر بالإضافة إلى عرض لكتاب.

في الورقة الأولى يقوم مجدي الشوربجي بقياس أثر التضخم على أداء القطاع المالي في ست من دول حوض البحر الأبيض المتوسط خلال الفترة 1988 - 2003 وذلك باستخدام منهج بيانات السلاسل الزمنية المقطعية. يشير الكاتب إلى وجود أثر معنوي سالب للتضخم على أداء القطاع المصرفي وسوق الأسهم في الدول محل الدراسة، كما يبين أن أهم نتائج الدراسة تتمثل في أن القطاع المالي لن يتدهور طالما أن معدل التضخم الفعلي أقل من 8%.

وفي الورقة الثانية يتناول صبوح عين تابلين وباسل شمس الدين أثر العطل بأنواعها على أداء سوق الأسهم. إختبرت الورقة بعض الفرضيات الموضوعية عن هذه العلاقة من واقع بيانات تجريبية من سوقي الأردن ومصر. وقد أظهر الباحثان بأن الرقم القياسي لعائدات السوق في اليوم الذي يسبق العطلة (دينية أو غير دينية) هو إيجابي وجوهري لسوق عمان لتبادل الأسهم وكذلك لأرقام مجموعة مصر المالية. كما بينت النتائج أيضاً أن نتائج الأيام التالية للعطل (الرسمية وغير الرسمية) هي غير جوهرية.

وفي ورقة ثالثة تناولت وداد سعد وشوقي الموسوي تقييم أداء البنوك التجارية العاملة في الكويت وذلك بعد فترة من الإصلاحات الهيكلية والتنظيمية، التي تزامنت بدورها مع ارتفاع حدة المنافسة بين المصارف إقليمياً وعالمياً. وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود تحسن ملموس في الكفاءة الإنتاجية لهذه المصارف خلال فترة الدراسة 1999 - 2004، كما أظهرت أيضاً وجود علاقة جوهرية بين الكفاءة والأداء المالي للبنوك التجارية العاملة في الكويت.

وفي الورقة الرابعة بحث رياض بن جليلي أثر زيادة تنافسية الواردات على رفع أسعار الصناعات في تونس، وقد استهدف في دراسته التحقق مما إذا كانت المنافسة

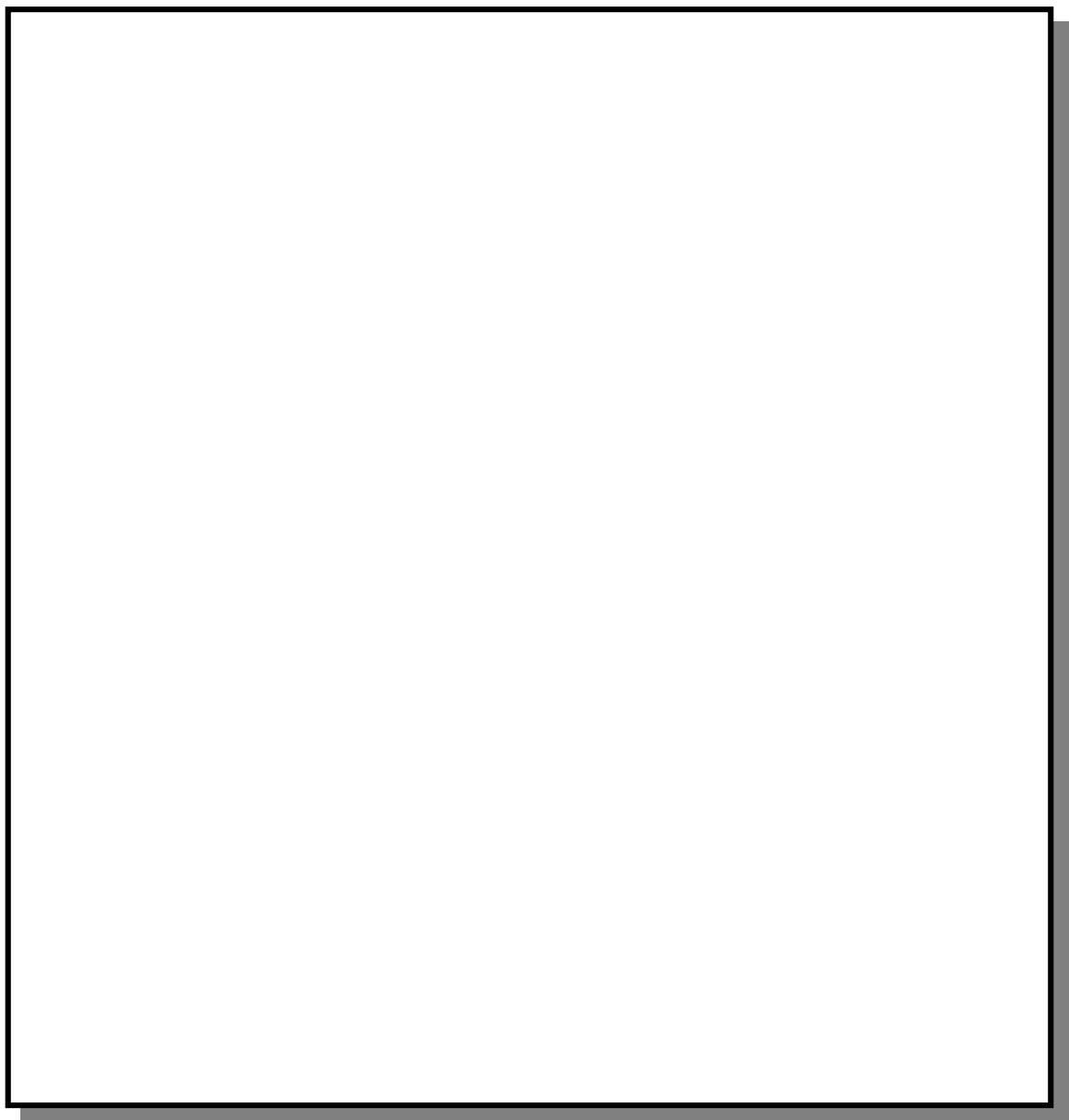
الدولية النقدية قد أجبرت الصناعات التونسية على وضع أسعار أكثر تنافسية وذلك بدراسة ستة أنشطة صناعية في تونس للفترة من 1972 - 1999. وقد بين بن جليلي في ورقته أن هناك زيادة جوهرية ولكنها معقولة قد حصلت في هامش الربح للصناعات التونسية، ومع أن الأدلة الاقتصادية تتجه إلى تأييد الفرضيات القائلة بأن الزيادة في منافسة الواردات تدفع إلى تخفيض هامش الربح، إلا أن نتائج الانحدار في الدراسة تشير إلى عدم جوهرية الآثار المباشرة لقانون المنافسة على هامش الربح في الصناعة.

وفي باب ملخص وقائع اللقاءات العلمية، استعرض علي عبدالقادر علي وقائع المؤتمر الدولي حول " مقاربات جديدة لصياغة السياسات التنموية " الذي عقد في العاصمة اللبنانية بيروت في الفترة 20 - 21 مارس من عام 2006، بتنظيم من المعهد العربي للتخطيط بدعم من البنك الإسلامي للتنمية، وبرعاية من دولة رئيس مجلس الوزراء اللبناني الأستاذ فؤاد السنيورة.

أما في باب عرض الكتب فقد قام حاتم أمير مهران بعرض لتقرير البنك الدولي حول إقليم الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا تحت عنوان : " 2005 آخر التطورات والآفاق المستقبلية الاقتصادية : الطفرة النفطية وإدارة العوائد المالية " .

نأمل أن تفتح موضوعات هذا العدد آفاقاً جديدة للحوار بين القراء وأن تكون ملهمة للعديد من الباحثين في الدخول إلى مجالات اقتصادية حيوية تضع أفكاراً جديدة للحوار ولتكون بمتناول أيدي الباحثين وصانعي القرار لخدمة قضايا التنمية في منطقتنا العربية.

رئيس التحرير



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			8

مجدي الشورباجي*

1988

2003 -

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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.

* Mailing Address: Dr. Magdy A. El-Shourbagui, Department of Economics, Misr University for Science and Technology, 6th of October City, Al-Motamayez District, Egypt. Tel: (202) 202-2623. Fax: (202) 835-4699. E-mail: mshourbagui@yahoo.com.

(1) ((1993) (1989) (1986) (1992) :

(1996)

(1999)

2003 - 1988

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(1) ستم الإشارة في متن الورقة إلى المراجع باللغة العربية بعد ترجمة أسماء المؤلفين بينما يتم إثبات المراجع باللغة الأصلية.

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.((13:2002))

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.(3:2000

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.((6-7:1999) (4:2000))

.((14:2002))

(1999)

.1989 - 1960

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168

(2001)

1999 - 1960

.%6 %3

(2001)

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(2)

(1999)

((347-349:1999))

$$Y_{it} = \mu_i + \beta_1' X_{it} I(q_{it} \leq \gamma) + \beta_2' X_{it} I(q_{it} > \gamma) + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

$i=1, \dots, N, t=1, \dots, T$

$N \quad T$

- = i
- = t
- = N
- = T
- = TN
- = μ_i
- = Y
- = X
- = q
- = γ

= I(.)

$$Y_{it} = \begin{cases} \mu_i + \beta'_1 X_{it} + e_{it}, & q_{it} \leq \gamma \\ \mu_i + \beta'_2 X_{it} + e_{it}, & q_{it} > \gamma \end{cases}$$

$$Y_{it} = \mu_i + \beta' X_{it}(\gamma) + e_{it} \quad (2)$$

$$\beta = (\beta'_1 \beta'_2)'$$

(2)

$$\bar{Y}_i = \mu_i + \beta' \bar{X}_i(\gamma) + \bar{e}_i \quad (3)$$

$$(3) \quad (2)$$

$$Y_{it}^* = \beta' X_{it}^*(\gamma) + e_{it}^* \quad (4)$$

$$Y_{it}^* = \bar{Y}_i - Y_{it}$$

$$X_{it}^* = \bar{X}_i - X_{it}$$

$$e_{it}^* = \bar{e}_i - e_{it}$$

$$Y^* = X^*(\gamma)\beta + e^* \quad (5)$$

$$\gamma \quad \beta$$

$$\hat{\beta}(\gamma) = (X^*(\gamma)' X^*(\gamma))^{-1} X^*(\gamma)' Y^* \quad (6)$$

$$\hat{e}^*(\gamma) = Y^* - X^*(\gamma)\hat{\beta}(\gamma) \quad (7)$$

$$S_1(\gamma) = \hat{e}^*(\gamma)' \hat{e}^*(\gamma) \quad (8)$$

$$= Y^*(I - X^*(\gamma)'(X^*(\gamma)' X^*(\gamma))^{-1} X^*(\gamma)) Y^*$$

γ

(8)

$$\hat{\gamma} = \arg \min_{\gamma} S_1(\gamma) \tag{9}$$

[(8)]

(1)

$$1 = 2$$

γ

(1996, 1999)

t -

$$LR_0 = (S_0 - S_1(\gamma)) / \hat{\sigma}^2 \tag{10}$$

(1)

$$1 = 2 :$$

(1999)

(1999)
(3)

$$FSP_{it} = \beta_1(1-d_{it}^{\Pi^*})(1/\Pi_{it} - 1/\Pi^*) + \beta_2(d_{it}^{\Pi^*})(1/\Pi_{it} - 1/\Pi^*) + \Theta'X_{it} + e_{it} \quad (11)$$

$i=1,\dots,N, t=1,\dots,T$

$$d_{it}^{\Pi^*} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \Pi_{it} > \Pi^* \\ 0 & \text{if } \Pi_{it} \leq \Pi^* \end{cases}$$

	:] :		:
			= FSP
		· [
		·	= Π
		·	= Π^*
Π^*	Π_{it}		= d^{Π^*}
			= X
	:		= LPCI
		LPCI	= LPCI ²
		LPCI	= LPCI ³
			= IFI
		IFI	= IFI ²
		IFI	= IFI ³
			= IQ
			= e

(357:1999)

$$\begin{pmatrix} \hat{\beta}_1 \\ \hat{\beta}_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} (1/\Pi_{it}) \\ (1/\Pi_{it}) \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \hat{\beta}_2 \\ \hat{\beta}_1 \end{pmatrix}$$

$(\hat{\beta}_1 > 0)$

$$(\hat{\beta}_2 < 0) \quad \hat{\beta}_2$$

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.(2:2001

2003

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.(4) (

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(4) تتراوح قيمة مؤشر الحرية الاقتصادية بين صفر (انعدام الحرية الاقتصادية) وواحد (حرية كاملة) وتصنيف الدول بأنها ذات حرية اقتصادية مرتفعة إذا كانت قيمة مؤشرها 7 أو أكثر بينما تصنف الدول ذات المؤشر الذي تقل قيمته عن 5 بأنها ذات حرية اقتصادية منخفضة.

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(1)

قيمة الاحتمال	إحصائية هانس	القيمة المقدرة للمعدل الحرج للتضخم	المتغير التابع
0.070	20.809*	8.154	مؤشر أداء القطاع المصرفي
0.136	16.293	60.369	مؤشر أداء سوق الأسهم

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(1999)

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224.7

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(2)

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2.807 (0.65)	
191.929* (2.37)	
8.225** (3.49)	
0.758** (5.34)	
3.017 (0.55)	
-14.287 (0.45)	

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(3)

قيمة معامل الانحدار (إحصائية زد)	
18.442** (2.61)	معدل التضخم المنخفض
190.165* (2.58)	معدل التضخم المرتفع
8.553** (3.14)	لوغاريتم متوسط نصيب الفرد من الناتج المحلي الإجمالي الحقيقي.
0.796** (5.82)	الاندماج المالي الدولي
-11.444 (1.33)	الجودة المؤسسية
57.605 (1.39)	الحد الثابت

.5%
1%* :
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(0.96)

(0.140)

.(0.66)

(0.44)

(2)

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() (5)

(4)

(4)

معامل الانحدار	
-0.173* (1.8)	معدل التضخم
4.053* (1.79)	لوغاريتم متوسط نصيب الفرد من الناتج المحلي الإجمالي الحقيقي
-0.952** (4.20)	تربيع لوغاريتم متوسط نصيب الفرد من الناتج المحلي الإجمالي الحقيقي
0.185* (1.89)	الاندماج المالي الدولي
-0.002* (1.73)	تربيع الاندماج المالي الدولي
8.786** (11.89)	الجودة المؤسسية

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. %1

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2003 - 1988

(5) تم إختبار، وتأكدت، استقلالية متغيري معدل التضخم ومتوسط الدخل الحقيقي للفرد كل على حدة.

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**“2005 Economic Development and Prospects:
Oil Booms and Revenue Management”**

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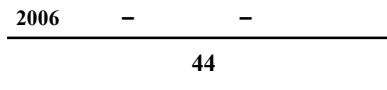
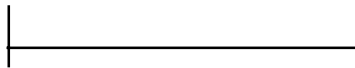
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**The Impact of Holidays on Stock
Market Performance:
Evidence from the Jordanian and
Egyptian Stock Markets**

**Sebouh Aintablian
Bassel Chamseddine**

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

Sebouh Aintablian *
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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* Corresponding author, Institute of Financial Economics, Department of Economics, American University of Beirut, P.O.Box: 11-0236, Riad El-Solh / Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon. E-mail: sa24@aub.edu.lb. The authors would like to acknowledge helpful comments by Samir Makdisi and an anonymous referee of this journal. Research assistance was provided by Suzanne Mouradian, Wajih Al Boustany and May Kanounji. Financial support was provided by the Institute of Financial Economics at the American University of Beirut and The Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research (LNCSR).

Introduction and Background

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of holidays on the stock market performance, by using empirical evidence from the Jordanian and Egyptian stock markets. This research focuses on studying and testing the impact of a major variable – people’s mood – which has been ignored in earlier traditional studies. Lately, the impact of mood on decision making has been attracting the attention of many researchers who now consider it to be a major factor affecting the performance of financial markets. In this area of research known as “behavioral finance”, researchers examine the psychology behind the behavior of investors and quantitatively measure this behavior. It involves the analysis of the impact of investors’ mood on their judgment, which would strongly influence their investment decision making, thus ultimately affecting the overall market performance. By using investors’ mood as a link, researchers have found significant relationships between various major events and the market performance. Specifically, this paper looks at holidays as the major event, and examines its impact on the performance of two Arab stock markets.

The literature on finance is currently witnessing an increase in the documentation on the link between investor’s mood and the performance of equity markets. This area of research is most commonly known to be a part of the studies in “behavioral finance”. There exists a large body of research in psychology that documents a link between people’s moods and emotions, and their subsequent judgments and decisions.

Forgas (1995) provides evidence that people who are in a good mood tend to rely more on heuristics, whereas people in a bad mood tend to use more careful information processing. Other studies show that happy people make optimistic judgments, whereas unhappy people make pessimistic judgments (Bower, 1981; 1991; Isen, Shalke, Clark and Karp, 1978; Johnson and Tversky, 1983; Kavanagh and Bower, 1985; Mayer, Gaschke, Braverman and Evans, 1992; Mayer and Hanson 1995; Shwarz and Clore, 1983; Wright and Bower, 1992).

Mood has also been linked to individuals’ level of confidence (Kramer, Newton, and Pommerenke, 1993; Oakley, 1999), and to their performance on intelligence tests (Samuel, 1980). Clore, Schwarz, and Conway (1994) showed that mood has greater impact on abstract judgments for which people have no solid information. Schwarz (1990) found that bad moods tend to motivate people to go into detailed analytical activity whereas good moods are coupled with rules of thumb and less sophistication of information processing. Schwarz and Bless (1991) demonstrated that people in good mood tend to produce more atypical associations and perform better in creative problem solving tasks.

Another area of research in psychology suggests that holidays, in different cultures and religions, have an effect on people’s moods. In North America, there is some evidence that people’s moods are more positive than normal prior to holidays (e.g. Mitchell, Thompson, Peterson and Cronk, 1997). Consistent with these findings are studies that have investigated suicide rates (e.g. Gabennesch, 1987; Phillips and Wills 1987), during holiday periods – weekends, Christmas, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day and the like. These studies tend to report decreases in suicides in the days prior to and during a holiday, and increases in suicides after the holiday. The notion that there is some link between holidays and negative moods is also consistent with the concept of “holiday blues”, which refers to sadness and anxiety that may be associated with holidays (Baier, 1987). The most prominent explanation of these findings is the “broken promise effect”. Prior to the holiday or weekend, people have high expectations and are in a positive mood. When the event does not live

up to its promise, negative moods increase and suicide rates go up.

Ritter (2003) introduced the world of behavioral finance, which, as he stated, covers research that drops the traditional assumptions of having rational investors maximizing their expected utility in efficient markets. He defined “cognitive psychology” and the “limits to arbitrage” as the two building blocks of behavioral finance. Cognitive psychology deals with the human cognitive biases and their effect on human behavior, rather than just following the “arrogant” approach that these biases should be ignored. Ritter (*op.cit.*) listed and explained different cognitive biases that have been documented by cognitive psychologists. They are: Heuristics, Overconfidence, Mental Accounting, Framing, Representativeness, Conservatism, and Disposition Effect. As for the limits to arbitrage, it refers to foreseeing the conditions where the arbitrage forces would be effective as opposed to the circumstances where they wouldn't.

Hirshleifer and Shumway (2003), emphasized the idea that both psychological evidence and casual intuition expect that weather condition on a given day, is associated with the mood condition of any individual on that day. They looked into the relation between morning sunshine at a country's leading stock exchange and its market index returns on that day at 26 stock exchanges internationally from 1982-97. Their results revealed that sunshine and stock returns are strongly and significantly correlated while rain and snow are unrelated to returns after controlling for sunshine, and that the use of weather-based investment strategies leads to positive net-of-transaction costs profits.

Mitchell, Thompson, Peterson and Cronk (1997) looked into people's mood and behavior around holidays. They examined people's anticipation of holidays, their actual experiences and their following recollection of the event. The study presents evidence that people's mood, prior to holidays, is in general, more positive than normal, albeit, usually the actual experience doesn't live up to their expectations. Their memory recollection of the event is also more positive than what they actually experienced. The study concludes that people's mood around holidays affects the performance of stock markets. Kamstra, Kramer and Levi (2001) showed a significant impact of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) on stock returns. Yuan, Zheng, Zhu (2001) argued that the lunar cycle affects market returns. In a recent study, Lucey and Dowling (2005) surveyed the research on the influence of investors' feelings on equity pricing and whether variations in feelings that are widely experienced by people influence investor decision-making and lead to predictable patterns to equity pricing.

The hypotheses of this paper are based on two major components. The first is the literature on behavioral finance which deals with the impact of cognitive biases and mood conditions on investment decisions that ultimately affect the performance of the financial markets. The second deals more specifically on the effect of holidays on peoples' mood and judgments. The combination of these two areas of research gives room for setting strong hypotheses on the significance of the impact of holidays on the performance of the financial markets.

Psychological studies have shown that there is a link between holidays and people's mood. These studies show that people's moods are more positive than normal prior to holidays (e.g. Mitchell, Thompson, Peterson and Cronk, 1997). Different psychological concepts try to explain the mood and behavior of people over three successive periods: (a) before; (b) during; and (c) after the holidays. Although these different concepts tend to agree on the idea that people usually have a positive and more than normal anticipation for the holidays, they differ in explaining people's mood experience after the holidays. For example, Mitchell, Thompson, Peterson and Cronk (1997) reported that in addition to the more than normal positive state of mood before holidays, people have a better memory recollection of the holiday experience, even if their actual experience usually

does not live up to their expectations. Baier (1987) introduced the “Broken Promise Effect” which shows an increase in negative state of mood in the period after the holidays when the experience of the holidays does not live up to expectations.

In this paper, there are four different sets of hypotheses which are differentiated based on the types of holidays examined:

- The first set looks at the relation between *all holidays* in a certain country and that country’s stock market performance.
- The second set of hypotheses examines the significance of the relationship between *religious holidays* and the stock market performance.
- The third set of hypotheses examines the significance of the relationship between *non-religious holidays* and the stock market performance.
- The fourth set of hypotheses looks at the significance of the relationship between *unofficial holidays* and the stock market performance⁽¹⁾.
- Having noted the above, the remainder of this paper is organized in four sections dealing respectively with data and methodology, hypotheses, empirical results, and, a conclusion.

Data and Methodology

In this study, two sets of data are used from two Arab emerging markets: (a) Jordan and (b) Egypt. For each country, the relationship between the holidays of that country and the performance of its stock market is examined.

Amman Stock Exchange (ASE)

Public shareholding companies and share trading existed long before the creation of the Jordanian Securities Market, which dates back to the early thirties⁽²⁾. However, it was only in 1976 that the Amman Financial Market (AFM) was established. Later, as part of a restructuring process, the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) took charge of running the market.

On March 11, 1999, three institutions were established including the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) that took over the operation of the twenty-year old AFM. The other two institutions are the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) and the Securities Depository Center (SDC). The ASE, which is an independent non-profit organization in the private sector, is in charge of managing the market operations. The ASE follows the international standards of fair practice in supervising the systematic transaction operation of the market. The SDC is likewise a non-profit organization in the private sector that supervises settlements and maintains records of ownership. The JSC however, is part of the government body, and is in charge of regulations. As such, it has a clearly defined authority to develop and monitor the market.

There are three separate levels of stock trading at the ASE. The reason behind establishing the three-tier system at the exchange is to enable the investors to be readily informed about the financial position of the company they wish to invest in, and the requirements it has fulfilled. The

⁽¹⁾ Unofficial holidays are defined as the holidays on which the market is not closed. They could be holidays for certain sects only or holidays on which the market no longer closes.

⁽²⁾ Official website of the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE): www.ammanstockex.com

system also promotes the transparency of the ASE as well as the companies traded on the exchange. A company is required to meet certain strict requirements before being listed on the first level of the ASE. Among these listing requirements, a company has to show a positive net profit in its performance. Also, a payout of cash dividends or bonus shares should have occurred at least once during the last three years. Finally, investors should be able to easily sell the company's stock in the secondary market. The second tier is an intermediary level in which listed companies have yet to fulfill certain requirements needed to move up to the first tier. The third tier allows investors to invest in unlisted companies on the ASE. The companies found at this level are working on fulfilling the requirements to become among the listed companies.

ASE is one of the largest stock markets in the region that allows foreign investment. The exchange has a capitalization of \$5 billion with 590,000 shareholders⁽³⁾. Jordanian corporate and individual investors hold 52% of the shares in the market, in addition to a 42% of share ownership held by foreign investors. The remaining 6% is held by the government through the Jordan Investment Corporation. Most of the traded securities are equities. There are also debt securities listed on the ASE. They include Treasury Bonds, development bonds issued by the Central Bank, "Public Entities" Bonds issued by the Electrical and Water Authorities, as well as bonds issued by corporations from the private sector.

The equity trading in the Jordanian First- and Second-tier markets may be divided into following sectors: 33% in the banking sector, 52% in the industry sector, 13% in the services sector, and 2% in the insurance sector. The ASE has 30 brokerage firms as members in the exchange. Some of the members are major Jordanian banks, or affiliated with major Jordanian banks, while other members are independent. Investors consist of both at home and abroad Jordanian citizens, as well as Jordanian and international institutional investors.

ASE indices are used to depict the movement pattern of stock price and to determine the return performance of the ASE. Back in 1980, an Unweighted Price Index was constructed by the now defunct AFM. Sub-indices accompanied the index for the four sectors: (a) the Banking and Finance Companies sector; (b) the Insurance sector; (c) the Services sector; and (d) the Industrial sector. Thirty eight stocks were listed at that time, and a base value of 100 was set for the Unweighted Price Index on the opening session of January 1, 1980.

In 1992, the AFM began computing a Market Capitalization Weighted Price Index after going through a long statistical study. The index listing was 50 stocks at the time, and increased to 60 stocks in 1994, then to 70 stocks in 2001. A base value of 100 points on December 31, 1991 was set for the Weighted Price Index. ASE indices are computed using the latest closing prices, and they are published on a daily basis. There are now over 160 companies listed on the ASE according to the official site and the selection of these companies is based on five criteria that signify the companies' size and liquidity: (a) market capitalization; (b) the number of days during which the stock has been trading; (c) the turnover ratio; (d) the value traded; and (e) the number of shares outstanding and trading. In addition, the industry sector of these companies is taken into account for the listing. The total market capitalization was equivalent to US\$4.95 billion as of 31 December 2000 and the traded volume was equivalent to US\$472 million⁽⁴⁾.

Adjustments to the ASE indices are conducted to preserve their continuity and to maintain them from unusual events. Components of the ASE indices are assessed and adjusted every year. In addition, non-periodic adjustments are usually conducted for stocks, whose trading will be stopped permanently or at least for long time. These adjustments make sure that the indices

⁽³⁾ Data on the ASE. Available from <http://www.ammanstockex.com>

⁽⁴⁾ Data on the ASE. Available from <http://www.ammanstockex.com>

accurately reflect the market trend.

ASE Daily Returns and Jordanian Holidays

Date Coverage. For the Jordanian market, the daily data set of the ASE market price index was used. The daily stock price index data series was taken from the period between Saturday January 1, 1992, which is the start of the Weighted Price Index and Thursday May 6, 2004. The source of these data was the official internet site of the ASE. The next step was to identify the country's official and unofficial holidays, and then match them with the data series of the index. It is important to identify whether a holiday occurred on a weekend or with another holiday; thus, the corresponding day for each date in the data series between January 1, 1992 and May 6, 2004 was identified. For example, January 1, 1992 was a Saturday and May 6, 2004 was a Thursday.

There were 18 types of both official and unofficial holidays identified in Jordan between 1992 and 2004 in addition to the weekends (Table 1). Eight out of the 18 types were holidays with fixed date throughout the years, whereas the dates of the remaining 10 moved from year to year. Seven out of the 18 types of holidays were non-religious, whereas the remaining 11 were religious. Eight out of the 18 types of holidays had always been official holidays between 1992 and 2004, 5 out of 18 types had been official holidays for a significant time between 1992 and 2004, whereas the remaining 5 had never been official holidays between 1992 and 2004.

Table 1. Jordanian Holidays (1992-2004)

	Holiday	Type	Official vs Unofficial *	Date: Gregorian Calendar	Date: Hijri Calendar
1	Independence Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	25-May	
2	Birthday of HM King Hussein	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	14-Nov	
3	Labor Day ¹	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	1-May	
4	Army Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official between 1992-1999	10-Jun	
5	Accession of HM King Hussein ²	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official between 1992-1999	11-Aug	
6	King Abdullah's Birthday ³	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official between 2000-2004	30-Jan	
7	New Year's	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official between 1996-2004	31-Dec & 1-Jan	
8	Christmas Day ⁴	Fixed, Religious, Christian	Official between 1997-2004	25-Dec	
9	<i>Eid Al-Fitr</i> ⁵	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		1 st of <i>Shawwal</i>
10	<i>Waqfat Arafat</i> and <i>Eid Al-Adha</i>	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		9th & 10th of <i>Thw al-Hijjah</i>

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11	<i>Eid Al-Mawlid</i> or Prophet's Birthday	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		12 th of <i>Raby` al- Awal</i>
12	<i>Hijri</i> New Year ⁶	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		1 st of <i>Muharram</i>
13	<i>Lailat Al-Mi'raj</i>	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		27 th of <i>Rajab</i>
14	Start of <i>Ramadan</i> ⁷	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Unofficial during All Period		1 st of <i>Ramadan</i>
15	Palm Sunday ⁸	Moving, Religious, Christian	Unofficial during All Period		
16	Good Friday ⁹	Moving, Religious, Christian	Unofficial during All Period		
17	Easter ¹⁰	Moving, Religious, Christian	Unofficial during All Period		
18	Easter Monday ¹¹	Moving, Religious, Christian	Unofficial during All Period		
*A Holiday is defined as Official vs. Unofficial based on whether the market is open or not on that day.					

¹ When there is one regular day between Labor Day and the weekend, the holiday is taken on that day instead of, and for a couple of times with the original holiday, thus bringing the weekend and the Labor Day holidays together. When Labor Day occurs on a weekend day, an adjacent regular day is taken as a holiday. These events occurred in 1992, 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

² It was an official holiday until 1999, when King Hussein passed away on the 7th of February.

³ This holiday started and became official at King Abdullah's accession to the throne in 1999 after the death of his father, King Hussein.

⁴ Although the original source of the Jordanian Holidays suggests that the Christian holidays are official only for Christians, the market price index series shows that from 1997 to 2004, the market was closed during Christmas days.

N.B. The Islamic religious holidays follow the Islamic or *Hijri* calendar year system. The date of occurrence of the different Islamic holidays changes from year to year. The Islamic year is comprised of 12 lunar months: *Muharram, Safar, Raby` al-Awal, Raby` al-Thany, Jumada al-Awal, Jumada al-Thany, Rajab, Sha`ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Thw al-Qi`dah* and *Thw al-Hijjah*. A website that converts dates from *Hirji* to Gregorian calendar was used to convert all the occurrences of the Islamic holidays to Gregorian dates between 1992 and 2004. These conversions are rarely subject to a small error of one day, especially that the actual date of some of the Islamic holidays is decided based on the observance of the moon. However, the matching of these occurrences with the data series of the market index helps in confirming the exact date of the holiday.

⁵ *Eid Al-Fitr* denotes the end of Ramadan.

⁶ It is the start of New Year in the *Hijri* Calendar system. It represents the day when the Prophet first left the city of Mekkah and migrated to the city of Yathrib, which is a very important religious event to the Moslems. *Hijri* is an Arabic word that means migration.

⁷ It is the start of the month during which Moslems exercise their religious duties of fasting.

^{8, 9, 10, 11} Christian businesses can close down during these holidays. The date of occurrence of these holidays is based on the calculations of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It varies from year to year on the Gregorian calendar.

The days of the weekends which are official non-religious holidays, changed during the period under study between 1992 and 2004. This fact was discovered after the identification of the corresponding day for each date that was mentioned earlier. Between January 1, 1992 and February 26, 1999, weekend days were Thursdays and Fridays. After that date, weekend days became Fridays and Saturdays.

Finally, after matching the holidays with the ASE price index series, a number of holidays were identified as a one time event. For example, King Abdullah's accession to the throne was on June 9, 1999, and thus, the market closed on that day. Nonetheless, the event did not become an official holiday, at least not before 2004. Additionally, the data series revealed that the market was closed on November 8, 1993 and November 4, 1997. These days turned out to be the days on which there were elections of the House of Representatives in Jordan. On October 26, 1994 when Jordan concluded its Peace Treaty with Israel, the market was closed. Also, the market appeared to be closed on 10 other different days over the whole period between 1992 and 2004, for which no clear reason was identified. These could be exceptional events, due to the political instability in the region for example, which led to a closing of the market. All of these events mentioned above differ in nature from the holidays identified earlier, and thus were not considered as holidays when examining the impact of holidays on the stock market performance.

Table 2 presents the Jordanian average daily returns: Holidays vs Regular Days. It is observed that average daily returns are positive during Holidays. These returns tend to be higher during religious Holidays and tend to be negative during regular days.

Cairo and Alexandria Stock Exchange (CASE)

It is known that Egypt has the oldest stock market in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region⁽⁵⁾. In 1888, the Alexandria Stock Exchange was officially established. After 15 years, the Cairo Stock Exchange followed the Alexandria Stock Exchange and was launched on May 21, 1903. By 1907, and after having 228 listed companies and a market capitalization of EGP91 million, both the Alexandria Stock Exchange and the Cairo Stock Exchange rose to become among the world's top five markets. In 1907 however, the market was hit by a crisis that became later known as the worldwide 1907 crash.

Table 2. Jordanian Average Daily Returns: Holidays vs Regular Trading Days

Type/Nature of Market Day	Average Daily Return
Regular Trading Day	-0.0088%
1 Day Before a Official Holiday	0.0896%
1 Day After a Official Holiday	0.0872%
1 Day Before an Official Religious Holiday	0.2343%
1 Day Before an official Non-Religious Holiday	0.0932%
1 Day After an Official Religious Holiday	0.1909%
1 Day After an Official Non-Religious Holiday	0.1030%
1 Day Before an Unofficial Holiday	0.2182%
1 Day After an Unofficial Holiday	0.0385%
Unofficial Holiday Market Day	-0.0153%
*A regular trading day is defined as a day where there is no Holiday around it (from day	

⁽⁵⁾ www.arabfinance.com

-1 to day +1)

After the Free Officers' Revolution in 1952, and due to the resulting series of nationalizations, the Egyptian capital market became inactive for a relatively long period of time, until the government started a market restructuring program in the 1990s. This restructuring included the founding of the joint Cairo and Alexandria Stock Exchanges (CASE). An election of a new board of directors was conducted along with the establishment of a number of board committees to work on a complete market reform that was initiated based on two main pillars. The first was concerned with conducting the necessary legislative and organizational changes, and the second involved working on improving the efficiency in trading and putting into practice the needed developments in the market infrastructure.

Four regulatory bodies manage and regulate CASE. The first regulating body is its own board of directors, which is in charge of running and supervising the operations of the stock market. The second regulating body is the Capital Market's Authority (CMA). CMA was established in 1980, and is considered as an independent regulatory body in charge of setting laws and regulations to run the market. CMA is also responsible for granting licenses to brokerage firms, mutual funds and portfolio managers. In 1992, the CMA initiated a comprehensive price-weighted index to follow market performance. The third regulatory body is the Egyptian Capital Market Association (ECMA). ECMA is the first non-profit private capital market association initiated in 1996. ECMA is regarded as a market participant's representative and as a counseling medium for capital market related issues. Finally, the Misr Clearing Settlement and Depository (MCSD) is the fourth regulatory body responsible for transaction clearing and settlement. Launched in 1996, it is a private company that provides the purchased stocks or bonds for the buyers and the money for the sellers when the trading session is over.

Non-Egyptians are allowed to fully invest in CASE without any restrictions. A foreigner may own 100% of a listed company, given that the company's by-laws do not state otherwise. Individuals are not taxed for capital gains and interests earned on bonds. The same rule applies for corporations, mutual funds, and international funds. However, corporate gains made from securities trading are not tax-exempted. Individuals, corporations, mutual funds and international funds are all exempted from taxes on dividends, capital gain, and interest on bonds.

The CASE has two kinds of schedules for the companies listing requirements, an official schedule and an unofficial one. In general, a company is eligible to be listed on the CASE if its by-laws have no absolute trading restrictions on its shares in the stock market. In addition, a company that wishes to be listed has to include its shares in the central depository system. Besides these general listing requirements, the official schedule requires that at least 150 shareholders, including foreigners, should hold a company. It should also have at least 30% of its shares outstanding issued in a public offering. Finally, companies are required by the unofficial schedule to have a paid-up capital of no less than 50% of its total capital. Companies found on the unofficial schedule must present their financial statements for at least one year of operation.

EFG Daily Returns and Egyptian Holidays

For the Egyptian market, the daily data of the Egypt Financial Group (EFG) Index is used since there was no access to historical daily data for a more comprehensive index. The EFG Index is an index that follows the price changes of Egyptian companies, with large capitalization, and with shares that are the most actively traded on the CASE.. The index lists only 9 companies, to wit: Commercial International Bank, Eastern Tobacco, Egyptian Company for Mobile Services, National Societe General Bank, Orascom Construction Industries, Orascom Telecom Holding,

Oriental Weavers, Suez Cement and Vodafone Egypt Telecommunications.

Date Coverage. The set of criteria for the inclusion of a company in this index is basically the level of market capitalization, the average daily value traded, the average daily number of transactions, and the total number of days traded during a calendar quarter. The index is weighted according to capitalization and is rebalanced quarterly. The daily stock price of the EFG index data series was taken between Wednesday, June 9, 1993 and Wednesday, December 17, 2003. Similar to the process applied on the Jordanian data, Egypt's official and unofficial holidays were identified and then matched with the data series of the index.

There are also 18 types of both official and unofficial holidays identified in Egypt between June 1993 and December 2003 in addition to the weekends⁽⁶⁾ (Table 3). Eleven out of the 18 types were holidays with a fixed date throughout the years, whereas the dates of the remaining 7 moved from year to year. Nine out of the 18 types of holidays were religious, whereas the remaining 9 were non-religious. Ten out of the 18 types of holidays had always been official holidays between 1992 and 2004; 3 out of 18 had been official holidays for a significant time between 1992 and 2004 and the remaining 5 had never been official holidays between 1992 and 2004. It may be noted that after matching the holidays with the EFG index series, the market appears to be closed on 26 different days with different dates over the whole period between 1992 and 2004, for which no clear and common reason was identified. These may have been exceptional events, due to the political instability in the region. Due to the ambiguity of the reason behind the closing of the market on these dates, they were not considered as holidays, and thus were omitted from the observations when the impact of holidays on the stock market performance was examined.

Table 3. Egyptian Holidays (1993-2003)

	Holiday	Type	Official vs Unofficial *	Date: Gregorian Calendar	Date: Hijri Calendar
1	Sinai Liberation Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	25-Apr	
2	Revolution Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	23-Jul	
3	Armed Forces Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	6-Oct	
4	Labor Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	1-May	
5	Bank Holiday	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official during All Period	1-Jul	
6	Suez Victory Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official Only in 1996	24-Oct	
7	Evacuation Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official between 1993-1996	18-Jun	

⁽⁶⁾ The weekend days, which are official non-religious holidays, are according to various sources, the days of Friday and Saturday. However, it is observed that until the end of the year 2000, the market was also closed on Sunday, thus creating a three day weekend between 1993 and 2000. After 2000, the weekends are identified as Friday and Saturday.

8	New Year's Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Official between 1998-2003	1-Jan	
9	Victory Day	Fixed, Non-Religious	Unofficial during All Period	23-Dec	
10	<i>Eid Al-Fitr</i>	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		1st of <i>Shawwal</i>
11	<i>Waqfat Arafat and Eid Al-Adha</i>	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		9th & 10th of <i>Thw al-Hijjah</i>

... Continue

Table 3 Cont.

12	Prophet's Birthday	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		12th of <i>Raby' al-Awal</i>
13	<i>Hijri New Year</i>	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Official during All Period		1st of <i>Muharram</i>
14	Easter Monday ¹	Moving, Religious, Christian	Official during All Period		
15	<i>Lailat Al-Mi'raj</i>	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Unofficial during All Period		27th of <i>Rajab</i>
16	Start of <i>Ramadan</i>	Moving, Religious, Islamic	Unofficial during All Period		1st of <i>Ramadan</i>
17	Coptic New Year's	Fixed, Religious, Christian	Unofficial during All Period	11-Sep	
18	Coptic Christmas	Fixed, Religious, Christian	Official between 1997-2003	7-Jan	

*Remark: A Holiday is defined as Official vs Unofficial based on whether the market is open or not on that day

¹ It varies in date from year to year and its occurrence matches the calendar of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Table 4 presents the Egyptian average daily returns: Holidays vs Regular Days. It is observed that average daily returns for non-religious Holidays are positive and for religious Holidays, negative.

Table 4. Egyptian Average Daily Returns: Holidays vs Regular Trading Days

Type/Nature of Market Day	Average Daily Return
Regular Trading Day	-0.0375%
1 Day Before a Official Holiday	0.0958%
1 Day After a Official Holiday	0.1709%
1 Day Before an Official Religious Holiday	-0.0988%
1 Day Before an Official Non-Religious Holiday	0.0954%
1 Day After an Official Religious Holiday	-0.2821%
1 Day After an Official Non-Religious Holiday	0.1769%
1 Day Before an Unofficial Holiday	0.8010%
1 Day After an Unofficial Holiday	-0.0800%
Unofficial Holiday Market Day	-0.0144%
* A regular trading day is defined as a day where there are no Holidays around it (from day -1 to day +1)	

Hypotheses

Examining the relationship between the holidays in a country and that country's stock market performance involves the study of the relationship between two variables over a certain period of time. The first variable is the daily return on the country's stock market index. The second is a dummy variable that distinguishes between regular trading days and trading days right before or after a holiday, depending on the hypothesis being tested.

The distinction between the different sets of hypotheses developed is also based on the type of the holidays under study. For example, one hypothesis examines the impact of religious official holidays, whereas another examines the impact of non-religious official holidays on stock market performance. Thus, for each hypothesis, there is a different dummy variable definition that distinguishes the type of holidays examined.

First Set of Hypotheses. The first set examines the significance of the relationship between official holidays, religious and non-religious, and the stock market performance. In this set, there are two hypotheses:

- One that examines the significance of the stock return performance one day before an official holiday, and
- Another one examines the significance of the stock return performance one day after an official holiday.

In the first hypothesis, for each open market day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the next day is a holiday, and a value of 0 if it is another regular trading day, and is called HDB (*HoliDay Before*). In the second hypothesis, for each open market day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the day before is a holiday, and a value of 0 if it is another regular trading day, and is called HDA (*HoliDay After*).

Second Set of Hypotheses. The second examines the significance of the relationship between official non-religious holidays and the stock market performance. In this set, there are again two hypotheses:

- One that examines the significance of the stock return performance one day before a non-religious holiday, and
- Another one examines the significance of the stock return performance one day after a non-religious-holiday.

In the first of these two, for each open market day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the next day is a non-religious holiday, and a value of 0 otherwise, and is thus called NHDB (*Non-religious HoliDay Before*). In the second hypothesis, for each open market day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the day before is a non-religious holiday, and a value of 0 otherwise, and is called NHDA (*Non-religious HoliDay After*).

Third Set of Hypotheses. The third set examines the significance of the relationship between official religious holidays and the stock market performance. In this set, there are two hypotheses:

- One that examines the significance of the stock return performance one day before a religious holiday, and
- Another one examines the significance of the stock return performance one day after a religious holiday.

In the first of these two, for each open market day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the next day is a religious holiday, and a value of 0 otherwise, and is thus called RHDB (*Religious HoliDay Before*). In the second hypothesis, for each open market or working day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the day before was a religious holiday, and a value of 0 otherwise, and is called RHDA (*Religious HoliDay After*).

Fourth Set of Hypotheses. The fourth set examines the significance of the relationship between unofficial holidays, both religious and non-religious, and the stock market performance. In this set, there are three hypotheses:

- One that examines the significance of the stock return performance one day before an unofficial holiday,
- Another one examines the significance of the stock return performance during the day of an unofficial holiday, and
- A third one examines the significance of the stock return performance one day after an unofficial holiday.

In the first of these three, for each open market day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the next day is an unofficial holiday, and a value of 0 otherwise, and is thus called UHDB (*Unofficial HoliDay Before*). In the second hypothesis, for each open market or working day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if that same day is an unofficial holiday, and a value of 0 otherwise, and is called UHDD (*Unofficial HoliDay During*). In the third hypothesis, for each open market or working day, the dummy variable takes a value of 1 if the day before is an unofficial holiday, and a value of 0 otherwise, and is called UHDA (*Unofficial HoliDay After*).

To test the above-mentioned hypotheses, Autoregressive Conditional Heteroscedasticity (ARCH) type of regressions was performed with the following equations:

$$R_t = a_0 + a_1 R_{t-1} + b_1 D_1 + b_2 D_2 + \varepsilon_t \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

$$R_t = a_0 + a_1 R_{t-1} + b_3 D_3 + b_4 D_4 + b_5 D_5 + b_6 D_6 + b_7 D_7 + b_8 D_8 + \varepsilon_t \quad (\text{Equation 2})$$

Where:

$$R_t = \text{Log} (P_t/P_{t-1})$$

D_1, D_2 are dummy variables for HDB and HDA

$D_3 \dots D_8$, are dummy variables for RHDB, UHDB, NHDB, RHDA, UHDA, NHDA

Means tests (t-tests) were invoked to find the significance between each of the holiday categories and regular trading days.

Finally, following Hirshleifer and Shumway (2003), logit regressions were conducted to relate the probability of a positive daily return to holidays. This type of examination involves testing the relationship between the daily market returns and the occurrence of a holiday.

Empirical Results

Table 5 reports the regression results. It has been observed that: day before a holiday (HDB); the day before a religious holiday (RHDB); and the day before a non-religious holiday (NHDB) are significant and positive for the ASE and EFG indices. However, the remaining variables: day after a holiday (HDA); day after non-religious holiday (RHDA), day before non-official holiday (UHDB); day after non-official holiday (NHDA); and day after unofficial holiday (UHDA) are non significant. These results are consistent with previous psychological studies that show that people's moods are more positive than normal prior to holidays (e.g. Mitchell, Thompson, Peterson and Cronk, 1997). On the other hand, the results for the days after holidays and for unofficial holidays are insignificant. This is a clear indication that the positive mood effect is present only before the holidays. It should be noted that the results for EFG index are in general less significant than for ASE index.

Table 6 provides difference of means tests between different types of holidays and regular trading days. The results remain significant for the same variables. To investigate whether the nature of a holiday (religious vs non-religious) has any implication on the results, RHDB and NHDB returns were compared for both indices but found to have insignificant statistical

differences. It is concluded that the significance of the Holiday effect is not different for Religious Holidays.

Table 7 presents the statistical results obtained from conducting logit regressions on holidays and market returns for the Jordanian and Egyptian markets. For each logit regression, the table reports the value of the return coefficient β , the Standard Error, the Z-score, the p-value and the significance of the results. In this case, the null hypothesis that the probability of the occurrence of a holiday is equal to zero is tested. The empirical results of the Jordanian data show that there is a significant positive relationship between the Jordanian official holidays, both religious and non-religious, and the ASE stock market returns one day before these holidays. This result confirms earlier results for the ARCH regression that the index returns are significantly related to the day before holidays. On the other hand, significant results were found for the days following Holidays (HDA, NHDA). These results indicate that by looking at index returns, one may observe that “this return is telling me that tomorrow (yesterday) is probably a holiday”.

Table 5 . ML-ARCH Regression Results for Jordanian (ASE) and Egyptian (EFG) Indices

	ASE (1)	ASE (2)	EFG (1)	EFG (2)
Day before holidays (HDB)	0.000652***		0.001358**	
	(0.0002)		(0.0006)	
Day after holidays (HDA)	0.000216		0.000994	
	(0.0002)		(0.0005)	
Day before religious holidays (RHDB)		0.001266**		0.002369*
		(0.0007)		(0.0017)
Day before unofficial holidays (UHDB)		0.000925		0.001929
		(0.0008)		(0.0015)
Day before non-religious holidays (NHDB)		0.000553***		0.001718***
		(0.0002)		(0.0007)
Day after religious holidays (RHDA)		0.000724		0.000194
		(0.0005)		(0.0015)
Day after unofficial holidays (UHDA)		0.000321		0.003019
		(0.0008)		(0.0020)
Day after non-religious holidays (NHDA)		0.0000735		0.000839
		(0.0002)		(0.0005)
Return (lagged one day)	0.258038***	0.256282***	0.142418***	0.142055***
	(0.0180)	(0.0180)	(0.0200)	(0.0201)
*** Significant at 1%, ** Significant at 5%, * Significant at 10%				

Table 6. Mean Difference Tests Between Holidays and Regular Days for ASE and EFG Indices

	Two Sample t-test Statistic	
	ASE (Jordan)	EFG (Egypt)
Day before holidays (HDB)	2.188 **	1.942**
	(0.029)	(0.046)
Day after holidays (HDA)	1.036	1.003
	(0.301)	(0.109)
Day before religious holidays (RHDB) ⁽⁷⁾	2.259**	0.673*
	(0.024)	(0.501)
Day before unofficial holidays (UHDB)	1.584	0.18
	(0.113)	(0.371)
Day before non-religious holidays (NHDB)	2.436 ***	1.726**
	(0.015)	(0.047)
Day after religious holidays (RHDA)	1.231	1.202
	(0.222)	(0.235)
Day after unofficial holidays (UHDA)	0.027	0.445
	(0.979)	(0.657)
Day after non-religious holidays (NHDA)	0.241	0.764
	(0.025)	(0.097)

*** Significant at 1%

** Significant at 5%

* Significant at 10%

⁽⁷⁾ Comparison of RHDB (religious Holiday before) and NHDB (non-religious Holiday before) returns was done for both indices. Findings reveal no statistical significant difference.

Table 7. Logit Regressions on Holidays and Market Returns for the Jordanian and Egyptian Markets

Variable	ASE index (Jordan)					EFG Index Egypt				
	B	Std. Error	Z	p-value	significance	β	Std. Error	Z-score	p-value	significance
HDB	12.862	5.887	2.185	2.89%	(**)	1.982	2.859	0.693	48.83%	-
NHDB	13.613	5.940	2.292	2.19%	(**)	1.944	2.882	0.675	49.99%	-
RHDB	34.455	15.031	2.292	2.19%	(**)	-5.598	8.298	-0.675	49.99%	-
HDA	12.132	5.987	2.026	4.27%	(**)	5.407	2.895	1.868	6.18%	(*)
NHDA	15.736	6.006	2.620	0.88%	(***)	5.659	2.904	1.949	5.13%	(**)
RHDA	27.593	15.461	1.785	7.43%	(*)	-12.448	8.311	-1.498	13.42%	-
UHDA	0.626	23.422	0.027	97.87%	-	-4.849	10.880	-0.446	65.58%	-
UHDD	-0.105	0.261	-0.402	68.79%	-	-2.455	10.816	-0.227	82.04%	-

Robustness of Results

The results for the EFG index in Table 7 are significant only for HDA and NHDA. A possible explanation for the non-significant results for the Egyptian stock market could be the fact that the EFG Index represents only nine companies. Hence, it may not properly reflect the true price movement of all companies whose stocks are traded on the exchange. In order to confirm the robustness of these results, the discussion of two relevant issues is in order.

- The seasonality in returns may be responsible for the observed or supposed impact of holidays on the stock market return. The study of Affaneh and Boldin (2001) on day of the week and seasonal effects of five regional markets including Jordan and Egypt, presents clear evidence in favor of the Monday effect, and other seasonal effects. In a recent study, Alper and Aruoba (2004) reported that when holidays vary from one year to year (e.g. Islamic Holidays), the traditional ways of extracting seasonal effects become weaker. They concluded that when Holiday variation is present so that the dates of certain holidays change from year to year, standard procedures may fail to extract all of the seasonality since the holiday effects are not confined to the seasonality component.
- The Holiday effect may not be restricted to influencing returns. It might also affect transactions volume and higher moments such as skewness. Since the data set used in this study does not contain information regarding transactions volume for both the Jordanian and Egyptian stock markets, it will remain a limitation of this current study.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper is to test whether holidays have a positive effect on people's moods, which in turn, affect their judgments and investment decisions. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the performance of equity markets is affected by the mood of investors during holiday periods. Four sets of hypotheses on the relation between holidays and market

returns were developed and tested by examining empirical evidence from the Jordanian and Egyptian markets.

It is observed that the day before a holiday (HDB), the day before a religious holiday (RHDB), and the day before a non-religious holiday (NHDB) are significant and positive for the ASE and EFG indices. However, the remaining variables are insignificant. These results are consistent with previous psychological studies showing that people's moods are more positive than normal prior to holidays (e.g. Mitchell, Thompson, Peterson and Cronk, 1997)

On the other hand, the results for the days after holidays and for unofficial holidays are insignificant. This is a clear indication that the positive mood effect is present only before the holidays. The empirical results obtained from conducting logit regressions on holidays and market returns for the Jordanian and Egyptian markets indicate that by looking at index returns one may observe that "this return is telling me that tomorrow (yesterday) is probably a holiday". These results are consistent with those of Hirshleifer and Shumway (2003) who affirm that sunshine and stock returns are strongly and significantly correlated.

In an era of globalization, the conduct of such a research on the different financial markets would not only enhance our understanding of the phenomenon in these markets, but it could also be of great interest to the international portfolio managers. In particular, by recognizing the different market trends around various holidays, an investor may improve his/her portfolio's timing of trades by taking advantage of mood-enhanced market performance worldwide.

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Efficiency Analysis of the Banking Sector in Kuwait

**Wadad Saad
Chawki EL Moussawi**

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.

* Associate Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Lebanese University, Hadat, Lebanon; e-mail: wsaad@ul.edu.lb

** Lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Lebanese University, Hadat, Lebanon; email: chmoussawi@yahoo.com

Economic activity in Kuwait continues to rely highly on oil. Despite the large fluctuations in oil prices, regional threats and large swings in the local equities market, the authorities have successfully used regulations and supervision to safeguard the stability of banks.

To date, no bank in Kuwait has been closed or had its license revoked. Structural reforms and regulations have been established to face the challenges resulting from changes in the international economic environment and, for the banking sector, to be in line with international standards. Thus, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has introduced a system of market risk analysis in the assessment of capital adequacy. The Kuwait stock market exchange law was liberalized in August 2000 to allow foreigners to participate in the market. The CBK has indicated that it would not bail out a troubled bank in the future. The strategy of the authorities has been to accelerate non-oil activity growth through increase in the role of the private sector, including foreign direct investment, privatization

of government assets, deepening and widening of the financial sector by opening the domestic market to foreign banks. Under these considerations, the banking system should be able to face competition pressures, technological progress and consumer demand.

The aim of this paper is to explore the production performance of commercial banks operating in Kuwait over the six year period between 1999 and 2004 using two approaches: (a) a non parametric approach – Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) – to assess the productive efficiency of these banks; and (b) a parametric approach – Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression – to investigate the determinants of the obtained efficiency scores.

Methodology

To measure the efficiency of commercial banks operating in Kuwait, the Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) is utilized. This technique involves measuring the performance of each bank. The obtained efficiency scores are decomposed into technical, allocative, scale, and cost efficiencies. Given these measurements, a regression is employed to identify the determinants of the efficiency scores.

Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA)

DEA is a linear programming-based technique used for measuring the relative efficiency of a fairly homogenous set of decision making units (DMUs) that use multiple inputs to produce multiple outputs. Examples of such DMUs to which DEA has been applied are: banks, hospitals, insurance companies, libraries and university departments.

A unit is said to be efficient relative to another if: (a) It produces the same level of output with fewer inputs; or (b) It produces more output with the same inputs. The efficiency of a unit is evaluated by comparing its efficiency to the " best practice " units of the sample. "Best practice" units

form the efficiency frontier. The efficiencies are called the efficiency scores. After the evaluation of the relative efficiency of the entire DMUs, subsequent analysis would show how inputs and outputs may be changed to be in line with the "best practice" units.

DEA suggests the benchmark for each inefficient DMU at the level of its individual mix inputs and outputs. The idea of efficiency was first developed by Farrel (1957). This was later put forward by Charnes, Cooper, and Rhodes in (1978) and received then the name of Data Envelopment Analysis. The latter proposed a model for assessing the efficiency of a unit under the assumption of constant returns to scale (CRS). This model was further extended by Banker, Charnes, and Cooper (1984) to allow for a production (cost) frontier with variable returns to scale (VRS).

Two kinds of models are derived from the DEA approach: (a) An efficient output target model that seeks to identify technical efficiency as proportional increase in output production; and (b) An efficient input target model which measures technical efficiency as a proportional reduction in input usage. More precisely, input-oriented models are those where DMUs are deemed to produce a given amount of outputs with the smallest possible amount of inputs.

The choice of the orientation is obvious in some studies. For instance, in firms where the focus is on cost-control, the appropriate choice would be an input orientation. In this study, the input-oriented model that assumes variable returns to scale (VRS) is adopted. This DEA model is stated as follows:

DEA model	DEA model with slacks
$\text{Minimize } h^0$ $\text{Subject to } h^0 x_{ik} - \sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j x_{ij}$ $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j y_{rj} \geq y_{rk}$ $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j = 1$ $h^0 \text{ free}$ $\lambda_j \geq 0, \forall j$	$\text{Minimize } h_k = h^0 - \varepsilon \left[\sum_{i=1}^m S_i^{0-} + \sum_{r=1}^s S_r^{0+} \right]$ $\text{s.t. } h^0 x_{ik} - \sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j x_{ij} - S_i^{0-} = 0 \quad i=1, \dots, m$ $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j y_{rj} - S_r^{0+} = y_{rk} \quad r=1, \dots, s$ $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j = 1$ $h^0 \text{ free and } \lambda_j \geq 0, \forall j$ $S_i^{0-}, S_r^{0+} \geq 0 \quad 0 < \varepsilon < 1$ <div style="text-align: right;">(1)</div>

where:

h^0 is the efficiency score of the DMU⁰ under analysis

In banking, a bank constitutes a DMU

n is the number of DMUs under analysis

y_{rj} is the value of output r for DMU j

x_{ij} is the value of input i for DMU j

m is the number of inputs

s is the number of outputs

λ_j is the intensity factor showing the contribution of DMU j in the derivation of the efficiency of DMU_k in the envelopment model.

S_i^{0-}, S_r^{0+} are slack variables accounting for extra savings in input i and extra gains in output r . Efficiency is achieved only when $h^0 = 1$ and $S_i^{0-} = 0, S_r^{0+} = 0$.

If a DMU is inefficient, it may become efficient by adjusting output and input as follows:

$$y_{rk}^* = y_{rk} + S_r^{0+}$$

$$x_{ik}^* = h^0 x_{ik} - S_i^{0-}$$

However, leaving the constraint $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j = 1$ out of the model changes the VRS model to constant returns to scale (CRS). Moreover, a non increasing returns to scale (NIRS) model is obtained by substituting the constraint $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j = 1$ by $\sum_{j=1}^n \lambda_j \leq 1$.

This study is based on the input-oriented method under the assumption of VRS. The use of this approach allows the calculation of not only cost and technical efficiencies but also, the other two components of productive efficiency which are denoted as allocative efficiency and scale efficiency.

The economic efficiency which is referred to as cost efficiency is composed of technical and allocative efficiency. The technical efficiency is defined by Nunamaker (1985) as a measure of the ability of a DMU to avoid waste by producing as much output as input usage will allow, or using as

little input as output level will allow. Another decomposition occurs at the level of technical efficiency, which may be considered to be composed of scale and pure technical efficiency. The scale efficiency is the measure of the ability to avoid waste by operating at, or near, to the most productive scale. The way in which these efficiencies are related, is shown in Figure 1.

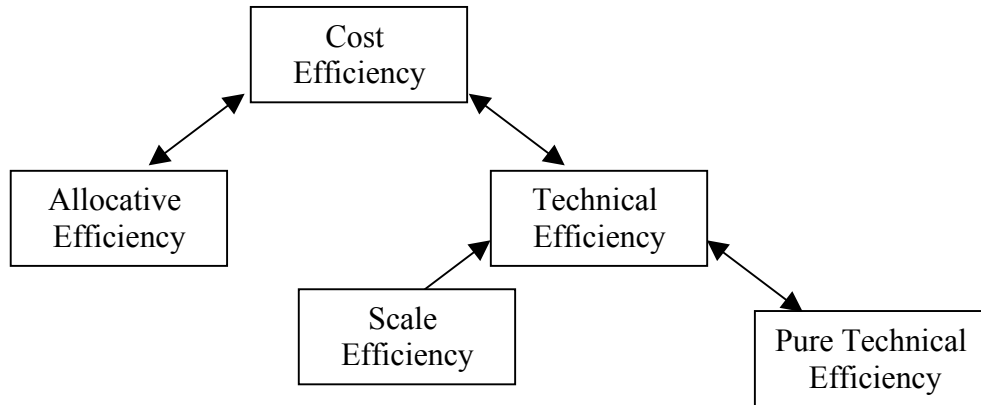


Figure 1. Efficiency decomposition.

Aly, Grabovsky, Pasurka and Rangan (1990), adopted this approach in their study and elaborated a four-step process that led to the assessment of the four types of efficiency: (a) cost efficiency; (b) technical efficiency; (c) allocative efficiency; and (d) scale efficiency.

Cost Efficiency (CE). The measure of cost efficiency is obtained via a two-stage assessment process. For each DMU, the following problem is first solved:

$$\begin{array}{ll}
 \text{Min } x \cdot p & \\
 \text{Subject to } & y \leq zY \\
 & x \geq zX \\
 & z \geq 0
 \end{array} \quad (\text{Model 2})$$

where:

p is a $m \times 1$ vector of input prices

x is a $1 \times m$ vector of observed quantities of inputs used by a specific DMU

y is $1 \times s$ vector of observed quantities of outputs produced by a specific DMU

Y is an $n \times s$ matrix of observed outputs

X is an $n \times m$ matrix of observed inputs

z is a $1 \times n$ vector of intensity parameters (weights) associated with each observation or DMU

n is the number of DMUs

This estimation (with the z only constrained to be non-negative) produces estimates of cost efficiency relative to a CRS frontier. The solution vector x^* of Model 2 is the cost minimizing input vector for the input price vector p and the output vector y .

Secondly, for each DMU, the following ratio is calculated to obtain CRS cost efficiency:

$$CE = \frac{x^* \cdot p}{x \cdot p} = \frac{\text{Computed minimum cost}}{\text{observed cost}}$$

This measure is the proportion by which the DMU could multiply its costs and still produce the same output.

Technical Efficiency (TE). The technical efficiency can be obtained by solving the following input-oriented VRS linear program for each DMU:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Min } T \\ \text{Subject to } & y \leq zY \\ & Tx \geq zX \\ & z \geq 0 \\ & \sum_{i=1}^n z_i = 1 \end{aligned} \quad (\text{Model 3})$$

where T is a scalar representing the technical efficiency score.

In Model 3, the summation constraint on intensity parameters z imposes VRS. Given a level of output, the obtained scores T^* indicate by how much inputs may be reduced for an inefficient observation to be comparable with similar, but more efficient DMUs.

Allocative Efficiency (AE). The cost efficiency may be decomposed into technical and allocative efficiency. The technical efficiency is given by solution $TE = T^*$ and the cost efficiency is CE. Following this, it becomes simple to calculate the AE by $AE = CE/TE$.

Scale Efficiency (SE). Again, in Model 3, the elimination of the summation constraint changes the model to CRS. The SE measure may be calculated as the ratio of CRS technical efficiency to VRS technical efficiency,

$$SE = TE_{CRS} / TE_{VRS}$$

where:

TE_{CRS} is the technical efficiency under CRS

TE_{VRS} is the technical efficiency under VRS.

Pure TE is measured relative to the VRS frontier.

The DEA method has been extensively used in banking literature to evaluate the performance of banking institutions. Sherman and Gold (1985) were among the first to present a study on the application of this method on banks. Pastor, Perez, and Quesada (1997) compared the efficiency of many European banks to the American ones. Maudos and Pastor (1998) also utilized the DEA technique to assess the efficiency of Spanish banks. Another study on the performance of the banking sector in Portugal was published by Canhoto and Dermine (2000). Alam (2001) evaluated the technical efficiency and the productivity of American banks with assets greater than 500 million dollars each. Recently, an assessment of between-country bank efficiency involving five European countries (France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and UK) was conducted by Casu, Girardone and Molyneux (2003), involving 2000 banks and adopting an output orientation analysis.

Regression Analysis

It is particularly important, however, not only to identify "inefficiency", but also to explain where it is derived from. Thus, the efficiency scores from the DEA model are regressed on

variables representing the financial performance of the banks under study. An OLS regression model is used for this purpose. This model may be written as follows:

$$y_{it} = \alpha + X_{it}'\beta + u_{it} \quad \begin{matrix} i = 1, \dots, n \\ t = 1, \dots, T \end{matrix}$$

with i denoting for banks, and t denoting for time. α is a scalar, β is $K \times 1$, y_{it} represents the efficiency score for the bank i at time t , X_{it} the it th observation on k explanatory variables (financial variables in this study), and u_{it} denotes the disturbance. The sign and the significance of the coefficients of financial variables indicate the direction and the influence. Standard hypothesis testing may be used to assess the significance and strength of the relationship.

Data and Variables

Defining inputs and outputs of a bank has been a challenging and controversial task in banking literature. Before discussing the selection of variables involved in this study, it is useful to understand the banking process. Three approaches in the banking literature discuss the activities of banks (Golany and Roll, 1989):

- The production approach which emphasizes the commercial activity at the bank, where they act as services providers for depositors and borrowers. The outputs are presented by, loans, savings and the number of transactions on these accounts. The production factors considered are physical inputs such as, land, labor and capital that needed to produce desired outputs (Ferrier and Lovell, 1990).
- The intermediation approach is complementary with the first approach and describes the banking activities as intermediating funds between savers and borrowers. In this approach, inputs and outputs are evaluated in money units. The inputs include the deposits collected and funds borrowed from financial market and the outputs are the volume of loans and investments (Athanasopoulos and Thanassoulis, 1995)⁽¹⁾.
- The modern approach has the novelty of integrating risk management and information processing into the analysis. One of the most innovative features of this approach is the introduction of the quality of banks' assets and the probability of banks' failure in the estimation of costs. In this approach, capital adequacy, asset quality, management, earnings and liquidity derived from the financial tables of the bank are used as variables in the performance analyses (Mercan and Yolalan, 2000).

Most banking studies have adopted either the production or the intermediation approach. There is debate in the literature over what approach is more appropriate. This dilemma has incited some authors, notably Nathan and Neave (1992), to adopt a hybrid approach considering deposits and loans as outputs without excluding the financing expenses of production cost. Based on this last approach, a number of variables are defined for the evaluation of productive performance of banks operating in Kuwait. The inputs and outputs are measured as follows:

Outputs:

⁽¹⁾ See also Sealey and Lindley (1977).

- Deposits
- Loans
- Off-balance sheet activities

Inputs

- Capital
- Labor
- Finance capital

Three inputs are considered:

- The capital input is proxied by the level of fixed assets.
- Labor is proxied by general and administrative expenses. The use of this proxy is necessitated due to the unavailability of data on employee numbers across the sample. The price of labor is measured by the ratio of staff expenses to total assets.
- The ratio of expenditures associated with the utilization of the bank equipment to fixed assets is used as the price of the capital, and the price of finance capital is assessed by the ration of interest paid to deposits.

Since DEA is a linear programming-based method for assessing the comparative efficiency of homogeneous organizational units, the study is focused on commercial banks operating in Kuwait. The Kuwait financial sector is made up of seven commercial banks that follow international banking standards. The empirical results of this study are derived from the analysis of the seven commercial banks for a six-year period between 1999 and 2004, except for the bank of Bahrain and Kuwait whose data were available over the period 2000 to 2004.

The banks covered in this study are:

1. Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK)
2. Burgan Bank (BB)
3. Bank of Kuwait and the Middle East (BKME)
4. Commercial Bank of Kuwait (COMBK)
5. Gulf Bank (GB)
6. National Bank of Kuwait (NBK)
7. Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK)

Panel data used in the study came from individual bank reports and the CBK for the years 1999-2004. The use of panel data is attributed to two reasons: (a) Pioneering DEA studies on the banking sector used a relatively small number of observations compared to the number of considered variables. As a result, there was a tendency to obtain high levels of efficiency scores for various DMUs (Sherman and Gold, 1985; Oral and Yolalan, 1990). To overcome this problem, panel data for seven banks over 6 years were used. Thus, the presence of 41 observations allows the calculation of more accurate efficiency scores for all commercial banks operating in Kuwait; and (b) The other reason is to analyze the movements in bank and overall efficiency over time. It allows for inter-temporal comparisons (comparing the efficiency score of a bank for a particular period with its

efficiency score for an adjacent time period). It also allows obtaining an estimate of overall efficiency scores for the entire sample.

Table 1 outlines some descriptive statistics of time varying inputs and outputs data used in this study. It shows the mean (m), the standard deviation (σ), the maximum (Max), the minimum (Min), and the coefficient of variation (cv) of the different inputs and outputs, over all commercial banks in Kuwait, for the 1999, 2001, and 2004 fiscal years.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Input and Output Data
(Variables are in millions of Kuwaiti dinars)**

	Mean	Max	Min	SD (σ)	CV(<i>cv</i>)
1999					
Loans	647.47	1291.47	333.19	337.14	0.52
Deposits	1426.40	3218.24	740.52	916.97	0.64
Off-Balance Sheet Activities	386.91	1073.53	129.02	343.88	0.89
Interest Paid	75.92	149.82	42.95	38.36	0.51
Staff Expenses	10.74	25.50	6.59	7.37	0.69
Fixed Assets	42.148	104.922	17.033	33.6036	0.79
2001					
Loans	778.37	1563.26	425.01	404.28	0.52
Deposits	1506.06	3834.90	651.69	1072.28	0.71
Off-Balance Sheet Activities	399.08	1259.93	145.54	388.91	0.97
Interest Paid	59.69	129.47	38.51	31.50	0.53
Staff Expenses	11.35	27.47	6.89	7.21	0.64
Fixed Assets	83.6148	335.71	15.418	117.942	1.41
2004					
Loans	1196.84	2774.72	764.69	722.15	0.60
Deposits	1409.80	3244.64	844.50	837.23	0.59
Off-Balance Sheet Activities	561.74	1560.98	165.44	470.21	0.84
Interest Paid	38.58	76.25	21.26	18.01	0.47
Staff Expenses	13.65	34.40	7.19	9.37	0.69
Fixed Assets	18.2529	40.942	6.345	10.9302	0.59

The coefficient of variation (σ/m) indicates that the dispersion of the data remains relatively constant over the consecutive four years. Moreover, this dispersion is relatively homogenous among the different considered variables. It may be noted in Table 1 that the coefficient of variation has its values within narrow intervals: [0.51, 0.89] in 1999, [0.52; 1.41] in 2001, [0.47, 0.84] in 2004.

DEA and Regression Results

To perform the efficiency analysis, an input-oriented mode is utilized which is consistent with the aim of attaining efficiency through cost minimization of Kuwaiti banks.

The DEA analyses were handled under the assumption of VRS and the obtained scores were decomposed into various measures of efficiency to provide additional insights on the contribution of each one to the total cost of inefficient bank.

Table 2 presents the time varying DEA efficiency scores for all banks. It consists of the full set of TE, AE, SE and CE, together with some descriptive statistics of the efficiency measures. It is

clear from Table 2 that the average of TE has improved over time. This upward trend may be noticed by the increase in TE score which goes from 63% in 1999 to 91% in 2004.

The overall mean of the TE is not very high, around 79%, indicating a mean of TE around 21%. This result is very much in line with previous DEA studies on financial institutions (Berger and Humphrey, 1997) and shows that there is a waste of 21% of the total cost assumed by the production technology. It is important to note that the dispersion is fairly high since the lowest ranked bank reveals a handicap of 59% with respect to the "best practice" ones. This inefficient bank could reduce its inputs by 59% while keeping the same level of outputs.

Table 2 Time Varying Radial Measures of the Productive Efficiency of Kuwaiti Banks under the Assumption of Variable Returns to Scale (1999-2004)

No	Bank	1999				2000				2001			
		TE	AE	CE	SE	TE	AE	CE	SE	TE	AE	CE	SE
1	ABK	0.64	0.81	0.52	1.00	0.65	0.87	0.57	1.00	0.65	0.71	0.46	1.00
2	BB	0.65	0.67	0.43	1.00	0.65	0.69	0.45	1.00	0.55	0.87	0.48	1.00
3	BKME	0.97	0.86	0.82	1.00	1.00	0.78	0.78	1.00	0.87	0.82	0.72	1.00
4	COMBK	0.62	0.99	0.61	1.00	0.65	0.95	0.61	1.00	0.72	0.99	0.72	0.98
5	GB	0.49	1.00	0.49	1.00	0.72	1.00	0.72	0.97	0.66	1.00	0.66	0.96
6	NBK	0.41	0.99	0.40	0.92	0.46	0.96	0.45	0.83	0.49	0.96	0.48	0.77
7	BBK	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.96	1.00	0.96	1.00
	Mean	0.63	0.88	0.55	0.99	0.73	0.89	0.65	0.97	0.70	0.91	0.64	0.96
	Maximum	0.97	1.00	0.82	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.96	1.00	0.96	1.00
	Minimum	0.41	0.67	0.40	0.92	0.46	0.69	0.45	0.83	0.49	0.71	0.46	0.77
	Standard deviation	0.19	0.13	0.15	0.03	0.20	0.12	0.20	0.06	0.17	0.11	0.18	0.08
	Coefficient of Variation	0.30	0.15	0.28	0.04	0.27	0.14	0.30	0.07	0.24	0.12	0.28	0.09

N.B. TE = technical efficiency
AE = allocative efficiency

CE = cost efficiency
SE = scale efficiency

Table 2 . Cont.

No	Bank	1999				2000				2001			
		TE	AE	CE	SE	TE	AE	CE	SE	TE	AE	CE	SE
1	ABK	0.67	0.57	0.38	1.00	0.87	0.69	0.60	1.00	0.78	0.78	0.60	1.00
2	BB	0.54	0.91	0.49	1.00	0.76	0.92	0.70	1.00	0.58	0.89	0.51	1.00
3	BKME	0.89	0.70	0.62	1.00	1.00	0.97	0.97	1.00	1.00	0.90	0.90	1.00
4	COMBK	0.78	0.98	0.76	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.83	0.83	1.00
5	GB	0.69	0.99	0.68	0.99	1.00	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.94
6	NBK	0.90	0.81	0.72	0.72	1.00	0.98	0.98	0.88	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.97
7	BBK	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.97	0.97	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Mean	0.78	0.85	0.67	0.96	0.95	0.93	0.89	0.98	0.91	0.91	0.83	0.99
	Maximum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Minimum	0.54	0.57	0.38	0.72	0.76	0.69	0.60	0.88	0.58	0.78	0.51	0.94
	Standard deviation	0.16	0.17	0.20	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.16	0.05	0.17	0.09	0.20	0.02
	Coefficient of Variation	0.21	0.20	0.30	0.11	0.10	0.12	0.18	0.05	0.19	0.10	0.24	0.03

The AE measures the ability of a bank to avoid waste by producing a level of output at the minimal possible cost. The mean of the AE goes from 88% in 1999 to 91% in 2004 with certain fluctuations. The overall mean is 90%. Thus, there is a waste of 10% in the total cost resulting from inappropriate allocation of the resources. The level of dispersion of the AE is lower than that of the TE since the coefficient of variation of the AE is 20% against 30% for the TE. According to this measure, only the allocatively efficient banks choose the optimal proportions of inputs according to the prices. In fact, the best banks operating in Kuwait are those

that, knowing the prices of resources, choose the less costly combinations of factors and offer the more profitable combinations of services. Such banks are allocatively efficient, because they adapt themselves better than the others to the competition constraints and, in particular, to the price constraints.

As to the CE, results show that it has considerably improved over the period 1999-2004. The mean of the CE lies between 55% in 1999 and 83% in 2004 (except for 2003 where the CE = 0.89). It is obvious that the Kuwaiti commercial banks reduced their total costs by 28%. This implies that the cost inefficiency is around 28%. This reduction is attributable to the improvement in the TE and especially the AE which went up from 88% in 1999 to 91% in 2004.

The dispersion of the CE is very high (coefficient of variation is equal to 30%). This is due to the fact that the least efficient banks present a handicap of 62% with respect to the "best practice" ones. This suggests that improving the overall efficiency of banks could reduce the bank cost by 62%. As a result, the Kuwaiti banks could reduce their total cost by 62% if they adopt the choices of the "best practice" banks. Therefore, this inefficiency evaluates the gains that inefficient Kuwaiti banks could realize if they used the same techniques and took the same choices as those which adopt planning that minimizes the costs of production.

As to SE, it has an overall mean of 97%. This high scale of efficiency reflects the homogeneity of Kuwaiti banks. The analysis of this measure shows that its contribution to inefficiency is not important. However, this is a part of the explanation of the inefficiency revealed in certain banks. The possible residual reduction in inputs has not yet been taken into account.

All inefficient banks can benefit by carefully examining best practices by banks in their peers groups. The slack variables introduced in the model are defined to express the input excesses S^- and the output shortfalls S^+ . The proportional (radial) reduction analyzed above does not lead to the efficiency defined by Pareto (see Koopmans, 1951) which states that a DMU is efficient if and only if: (a) Its efficiency score is equal to 1; and (b) It has zero slack values.

Solving a linear programming model that takes into account the presence of slack variables S^- and S^+ , for all banks, leads to the determination of the production frontier formed by efficient banks. The inefficiency of each bank is measured in a radial⁽²⁾ way with respect to the frontier. This allows for detection of the presence of similarities between banks by comparing the inefficient ones with their peers.

Table 3 presents TE and SE scores under the VRS along with the slack variables and the potential peer banks over the period 1999-2004. The sample banks are presented in an ordinal logic. The first choice involves banks that are strictly dominating the evaluated bank. At the second level, the proposed peer banks are virtual ones and are obtained by the reduction of all factors. At the third level, it is supposed that the hypothesis of a convex production frontier is verified.

The results of the radial measures presented in Table 3 show that COMBK, GB, NBK and BBK are technically efficient under the VRS. These banks constitute the production frontier and are used as peers for the remaining inefficient banks. The nominated banks are considered to be technically efficient, because they have better management of the technical aspects of the production than the others and, consequently, arrive at offering the maximum services with minimum resources.

The remaining banks are assumed to be relatively inefficient. Their inefficiency varies between 0.56 and 0.83. The lowest score 0.56 corresponds to BB which may be compared to NBK ($\lambda = 0.026$), and BBK ($\lambda = 0.974$). This one is followed by ABK which has a score of 0.63, and then BKME that assumes a score of 0.83. These last two banks may be compared to NBK. Both NBK and BBK lie on the technically efficient production frontier and are the closest to BB. Similarly, BBK is the closest one to ABK and BKME.

The presence of values for the slack variables P_1 , P_2 , and P_3 indicates an under-use of the funds allocated to these factors. The linear programming constraints related to these factors are not

⁽²⁾ Färe and Lovell (1978) proposed a non radial measure for efficiency.

satisfied. Thus, to improve its production and manipulation of the inputs, ABK should examine the practice of NBK and BBK, and especially BBK since it has a higher weight ($\lambda = 0.974$). The remaining inefficient banks, i.e. BKME and COMBK, are tackled similarly.

Table 3. Optimal Radial Measures of the Productive Efficiency of Kuwaiti Banks under the Assumption of Variable Returns to Scale (1999-2004)

No.	Bank	TE	SE	Reference banks (peers)		S_{y1}^+	S_{y2}^+	S_{y3}^+	S_{P1}^-	S_{P2}^-	S_{P3}^-
1	ABK	0.63	0.92	6 (0.026)	7 (0.974)	5.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	36.13	7.46
2	BB	0.56	1	7 (1.00)		5.00	0.00	20.07	0.00	72.09	5.60
3	BKME	0.83	1	7 (1.00)	-	4.00	0.00	156.97	68.03	0.00	8.50
4	COMBK	1	0.60	4	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	GB	1	0.5	5	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	NBK	1	0.48	6	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	BBK	1	1	7	-	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Mean	0.86	0.78			2.14	0.00	25.29	9.72	15.46	3.08

N.B. Banks are classified according to the total of balance sheet.
Numbers in parentheses are values of λ associated with reference banks.
TE and SE refer to technical efficiency and scale efficiency respectively.

It is now particularly important to investigate the determinants of variations in the efficiency scores. It is clear from Table 3 that there is noticeable difference in the efficiency among the commercial banks.

To identify the determinants of bank efficiency, an OLS model is estimated using panel data consisting of 41 observations. In this model, the OLS is integrated for the whole sample over a six-year period from 1999 to 2004.

The natural logarithm of the dependent variable (efficiency scores) and the explanatory variables are taken into account to reduce the disturbing influence of extreme values. Using the within regression, estimates of the regression parameters are taken. The explanatory variables used in the regression are: total assets (TA), loans to total assets ratio (LTA), return on assets (ROA), capital to total assets ratio (CATA), total cost to total assets ratio (TCTA), and provisions for doubtful debt to total assets ratio (PDTA).

Table 4 presents the results of the OLS model. Results show an insignificant relationship between the bank size (LnTA) and the production efficiency of Kuwaiti commercial banks measured by the TE, AE and the CE. Thus, the presence of economies of scale in Kuwaiti commercial banks, is not confirmed since the semi-elasticity estimates relative to the three specifications are not statistically significant. The presence of the size effect means that, having the

same score efficiency, the banks do not exploit in the same manner the production possibilities offered by their current sizes.

In other words, a part of the productive inefficiency of banks probably results from inadequate sizes. Thus, the case of Kuwait banks does not mean that these banks operate at their optimal scale. It means that these banks use, on the average, their current sizes to exploit in the same manner the production possibilities and other factors such as organization factor could explain the efficiency of commercial banks operating in Kuwait. It is possible that commercial banks in Kuwait operate under increasing returns to scale or their inefficiency is partly related to inadequate sizes.

Table 4. Explanation of the Variation of the Productive Efficiency of Kuwaiti Banks

Financial Variables	Efficiency scores		
	LnTE	LnAE	LnCE
C	2.189 (1.072)	-0.179 (-0.33)	1.434 (0.75)
LnTA	-0.679 (-0.675)	0.025 (0.09)	0.094 (0.09)
LnLTA	0.944*** (3.11)	0.234*** (3.27)	1.391*** (4.21)
LnROA	0.072 (1.00)	0.098*** (4.36)	0.099 (1.33)
LnCATA	-0.672* (-2.00)	-0.349*** (-3.663)	-0.912*** (-2.97)
LnTCTA	0.334** (2.26)	0.070 (0.98)	0.586*** (2.99)
LnPDTA	-0.008 (-0.33)	-0.035*** (-6.26)	-0.039* (-1.95)
R^2	0.57	0.62	0.66

Notes: 1. TE = technical efficiency, AE = allocative efficiency, CE = cost efficiency.

2. Values in parentheses are the t tests.

* 10% level of significance

** 5% level of significance

*** 1% level of significance

As to the LnLTA variable, it appears to be positively and significantly related to the three measures, at the 1% level of significance. This result is compatible with the findings of Allen and Rai (1996) which indicate that banks involved in loan activity are better managed.

Furthermore, the results show a positive relationship between the LnROA and the three efficiency measures. Accordingly, high return is due to good management of the productivity. Thus, the positive relationship between the activity of loans and the productive efficiency may be explained by the decrease of bad debts and the amount of provisions. This has the effect of reducing the level of costs and improving bank efficiency.

LnROA is a main variable of profitability considered in the analysis. As expected, the regression shows a statistically significant relationship between the LnROA and one specification,

the AE. In theory, a good productive efficiency, which indicates a good organization of the production, should lead to a good profitability. Moreover, the productive efficiency and the profitability are positively correlated. Good management of the costs is an important determinant of price and margin policy. The positive correlation between profitability and the productive efficiency may be explained by the fact that, to improve their profitability, the Kuwaiti banks are incited to enhance the productive efforts of and to improve the management of the production costs. The more a bank tries to improve its profitability, the more it has a tendency to lower its costs and therefore to improve its productive efficiency.

The sign of the estimates related to the LnCATA is negative and statistically significant at 1% level of significance in the two last estimated specifications and at 10% level of significance on the first one. The negative correlation between productive efficiency scores and the level of capitalization in banks may be explained by the high costs that represent this latter. However, when banks get funds on the national or international markets, they are indebted at a lower risk premium in their respective cost of debt. This advantage reduces the total cost of the banks and allows improving their productive efficiency. However, it is important to note that the ratio of capital to total assets is not really an appropriate measure of risk.

The coefficients of the LnTCTA are positive and statistically significant in two specifications. This implies that when banks adopt a more active policy in the remuneration of employees, it will result in an improvement in the productivity and hence, an amelioration of the organizational and managerial efficiency of the commercial banks operating in Kuwait

Finally, with the exception of the TE, the link between the risk indicator LnPDTA and the AE and the CE, is negatively significant. This translates the fact that banks with low risk activities are the more efficient over the period 1999-2004. This not surprising, since the increase in provisions for doubtful debts is one of the reasons that causes an augmentation of the costs. Mastering the level of provisions will allow good management of the costs and, hence, an improvement of the efficiency (Berger and De Young, 1997).

These results allow interrogating about the behavior of banks *vis-à-vis* risk. Theory and empirical studies indicate that banks show a neutral attitude toward risk (Hughes, Mester and Moon, 1995). Banks which limit their risks are supposed to have the best performance. In fact, their objective is not to maximize a pure profit but an adjusted profit to risk.

Some essential strategies of banks with high level of performance is to establish long-run bank lending relationships (Sharpe, 1990), select the best projects, and watch the behavior of their clients in order to reduce risk. However, these strategies will increase the operating costs of banks but could allow a decrease in the number of failures which subsequently, will be reflected in a rise in the profitability received from loans. Moreover, a good organization and a high quality of risk management are behind any decrease in operating costs and any improvement in the profitability.

The determinants of productive efficiency relative to commercial banks operating in Kuwait are numerous. Attention is focused on those supposedly to be most sensitive to changes. Examples of those currently affecting the Kuwaiti banking sector are reforms, liberalization and regulations, to name but a few. The influence of the chosen determinants on the efficiency is not unequivocal. The efficiency depends particularly on the global strategy of management of the bank and its ability to react well to changes in its environment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to examine the production efficiency of commercial banks operating in Kuwait after and within a period of structural reforms and regulations. A panel data set of 41 observations over the six-year period between 1999 and 2004 has been analyzed.

A two-stage procedure was used: (a) Efficiency scores were calculated for each bank using a DEA minimizing cost model under variable returns to scale (VRS), and (b) At the next stage, these scores were explained using a variety of financial factors that are expected to affect the observed inefficiencies. This task was achieved by using a regression analysis based on the OLS model.

The decomposition of the efficiency scores into four components – (a) technical, (b) allocative, (c) scale, and (d) cost efficiencies – provided additional insight on the scores of productivity change and also provided the analytical foundation for empirical analysis of the contributions of specific financial variables to productivity change.

Empirical results indicated that efficiency trend seems to be upward during the sample period with an overall average of 79%. This is despite the presence of inefficient banks that still need to raise their productive efficiency and improve the overall quality of management. The regression analysis resulted in conclusions that are well in line with other DEA studies on relative bank efficiency.

The importance of this study resides in the fact that it can provide useful insights and direction for improvement to the bank's management. It is also useful to economists and policy-makers in evaluating and improving the economic performance of the banking sector in Kuwait. However, the source of disadvantage for these banks is merely the local market structure and limited competition under which they operate. Their financial environment is characterized by highly protected markets and centralized regulatory regimes. Benchmarking commercial banks operating in such restrictive regimes against commercial banks in more liberalized financial environments can be extremely important for banks operating in countries expecting changes in their financial environments.

Further research should look into the development of between-Arab country efficiency comparison that can provide an empirical benchmark upon which banking institutions may assess their performance.

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

Riadh Ben Jelili

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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* Expert of Arab Planning Institute, POBox 5834, Safat 13059, State of Kuwait. Email : riadh@api.org.kw.

Introduction

Many international trade models have now been developed that account for imperfect competition. While some of these models provide insight into situations where trade protection may be welfare-improving, most indicate that imperfect competition provides additional sources of gains from trade. These gains result generally from the “pro-competitive” effect of trade, given that import competition increases the perceived elasticity of demand for domestic firms, consequently leading them to reduce their markups of price over marginal cost. Applied general equilibrium models suggest that these effects may be important quantitatively.

Early econometric studies analyzing the impact of trade on market power employ the markup of price over average variable cost – defined as revenues-variable costs/revenues – as a measure of non-competitive behavior. These studies generally find that import competition reduces average cost markups, particularly in domestically concentrated industries. Economic theory, however, predicts that import competition reduces the markup of price over marginal cost, which is not directly observable.

More recent studies draw on the work of Roberts (1984) and Hall (1988) to estimate price-marginal cost markups from equations derived from profit maximizing conditions and to analyze the impact of trade reform on competition. A number of studies for developing countries have found that increased exposure to import competition causes markups or profit margins in industries to fall, with the largest effect being in the highly concentrated industries and in large plants. These include studies undertaken for Chile, Columbia, Mexico, Morocco, and Turkey (Roberts and Tybout, 1996; Krishna and Mitra, 1998; Currie and Harrison, 1997)⁽¹⁾. That import competition reduces markups has been found also in two recent cross-country studies, covering both developed and developing countries (Hoekman *et al.*, 2001; Kee and Hoekman, 2003).

This paper empirically examines whether intensified international competition forces industries to price more competitively by examining six manufacturing sectors in Tunisia between 1972 and 1999.

The empirical method used in this paper to examine the response of the profitability of domestic industries to increasing competition from abroad is based on a modified version of the technique developed by Hall (1990) and Roeger (1995), which imposes no restrictions on returns to scale or the degree of competition in industries. The effects of economic integration on profits are then captured by relating the markups to trade penetration ratios to test whether import competition has been regarded as a disciplinary device to constrain market power of domestic manufacturing firms in Tunisia.

A Theoretical Background

Foreign Competition, Productivity Gains and Investment

The prospect of substantial firm-level productivity gains has been a driving force behind recent trade liberalization efforts in the developing world. A myriad of empirical studies seems to support the notion that trade liberalization induces productivity gains at the firm level (Krishna and Mitra, 1998; Harrison, 1994; Nishimizu and Page, 1991; Tybout and Westbrook, 1995; Corbo and

⁽¹⁾ For a review of literature, see Tybout (2000) and Epifani (2003)

De Melo, 1985; Roberts and Tybout, 1995), providing a framework for interpreting the conventional wisdom that “in creating competition for domestic products in home markets, imports provide incentives for firms [to invest] to improve their [productivity]” (Balassa, 1988).

Nevertheless, the question of how opening to foreign competition may affect domestic firms' decisions has been a comparatively unexplored one in the middle-income countries context. Goh (2000) examines the relationship between trade policies and technological effort, arguing that a firm investing in new technology bears an opportunity cost of not getting their product to the market as quickly. Lopez (2003) introduces a model where domestic firms may choose to respond to foreign tariff liberalizations by investing in the technology of a higher-quality export good.

Traca (1997, 2001) provides a theoretical model of the effects of protection on a domestic firm's output, isolating what he calls the direct effect, corresponding to the decreased market share, and the pro-competitive effect, corresponding to a lower markups result in more sales, of import competition on a domestic firm's output. If the domestic market is not perfectly competitive, a decline in import prices has two conflicting effects on the incentives to expand productivity and efficiency – the direct effect and the pro-competitive effect. The direct effect hampers productivity growth, implying the contraction of output from the decline in demand for the domestic good. Conversely, the pro-competitive effect fosters investment in productivity, reflecting the expansion of output due to the decline in domestic markups, from the loss of market power.

Until now, the theory has said very little on the outcome of the interplay of these two conflicting forces. Roberts and Tybout (1991) argue that simulation models have shown that the pro-competitive effect usually dominates, in particular, for the most efficient firms in the industry.

In a dynamic, infinite-horizon framework, the domestic firm has to continuously invest in productivity growth. This is to make up for the expansion of its foreign competitors and avoid exit. Implicitly, the growth of foreign productivity promotes domestic growth, as the decline of the price of imports expands domestic output and fosters investment in productivity. Thus, the pro-competitive effect dominates the direct effect in the steady state of the productivity growth path if the firm survives import competition.

However, when the initial productivity gap to foreign competitors is too large, the direct effect dominates, since the firm's market power is too small for the pro-competitive effect to be of first-order. In this case, the pressure of imports may prove too intense, leading the domestic firm to concede and exit the market in the long run. The imposition of a temporary tariff in this infant stage persuades the firm to fight and catch up, thus ensuring its long term competitiveness.

Moreover, given that the direct effect prevails, the temporary protection of an infant industry to ensure survival is welfare-increasing, thus suggesting that the firm's incentives to concede and exit are higher than the social optimal. Firstly, protection improves welfare, when it increases the output of a domestic firm with market power, i.e. when the direct effect dominates. Secondly, protection increases welfare by expanding productivity, since market power implies that investment is socially sub-optimal.

However, if the pro-competitive effect prevails, free trade is the best policy, as protection decreases output and productivity, thus adding to the distortion created by domestic market power. Given the predominance of the pro-competitive effect in the vicinity of the steady state, this implies that the optimal, time-consistent tariff path entails free trade in the long run (steady state).

The removal of existing tariffs has non-monotone effects. Starting from the steady state, small trade liberalization yields an increase in the productivity growth of the domestic firm. This increase is temporary, and allows the firm to compensate for the loss of protection by expanding its intrinsic competitiveness to catch up with its foreign competitors. In the long run, the domestic firm's profitability and market power return to their initial (steady state) level.

However, when the tariff is high, a radical cut leads the firm to concede, cutting down productivity growth and eventually exiting the market⁽²⁾. Since a small liberalization induces the firm to catch up, a gradual approach to tariff reform increases the chances of survival for domestic firms, even if the reform schedule is fully anticipated.

Foreign Competition and Market Power Reduction

Greater exposure to foreign competition may come through three principal channels:

- The first channel is that of foreign firms locating in the domestic economy.
- The second channel looks at the effect of greater competition through the opening of a country to more imports. As quantitative restrictions and tariffs continue to fall, import penetration has increased dramatically in the formerly protected economies.
- A third channel is to look at the expansion of exports and of domestic firms as they enter foreign markets.

N.B. For the purposes of this paper, only the second channel is considered.

Barriers to entry, including explicit restrictions on foreign ownership or trade barriers, can foster conditions where domestic firms retain monopoly power. The opening of the domestic market to imports can thus help to break local abuses of market power. This may have three related effects. Firstly, the market structure can change, with greater numbers of firms producing goods. Secondly, if barriers to entry are lower, it facilitates the adjustment of resources to the most productive areas and encourages greater innovation. Thirdly, prices will likely come down as competition increases. This is of considerable benefit to consumers and to buyers of intermediate goods.

Market Structure and Barriers to Entry. As tariffs and investment restrictions fall, previously protected firms will face greater competition and loss of market power. With reduced barriers to entry, new innovative firms face fewer hurdles in starting up operations.

Numerous studies link greater competition to increased incentives to innovate. Pavcnik (2000) makes a direct link between greater trade competition and innovation. Using panel data on Chilean firms, she finds the import competing firms to be significantly more likely to adopt skill-intensive technology in the face of liberalization relative to both exporters and non-traded goods producers. Other authors look at the issue of incentives to innovate indirectly, trying to capture concentration ratios of industries pre- and post-reforms. In the short run, the concentration might rise temporarily as exits increase. But new entrants and the inclusion of imported goods should soon lower them.

However, other researchers find that if one controls for other sector characteristics, the relationship is not significant. Blomstrom and Kokko (1996) in their survey, conclude that the

⁽²⁾ Empirically, the exit of the firm creates a selection bias, since firms where productivity growth is hurt by the liberalization, will vanish from the sample. This will bias upwards the estimates of the average effect of trade liberalization on the firms' productivity growth.

balance of the evidence indicates Multinational Companies (MNCs) are more likely to crowd out local firms in Less Developed Countries (LDCs), leading to higher concentration ratios. But they continue to point out that some increase in concentration ratios may not be a bad thing – particularly if it means there is better exploitation of scale economies. Provided a significant number of competitors remains, a decrease in the total number may not be detrimental.

There are three sources for this outcome. The first is that if imports are produced more cost effectively than the domestic producers, some domestic producers will be driven out of that range of goods. Thus, it is possible that domestic production concentration increases, while the range of goods increases and the price of goods declines. In this case, greater concentration is consistent with greater productivity and lower prices.

Secondly, foreign presence and market structure can be endogenous, making it difficult to separate the effects of foreign entry on competition. A correlation between high concentration and a foreign presence may be due to MNCs being attracted to concentrated industries rather than MNCs serving to lower concentration ratios.

Thirdly, there is also a real danger that market power has been strengthened, particularly if the foreign competition takes the form of foreign direct investment. A foreign multinational could succeed in out-competing enough domestic rivals that it wields market power in the domestic market. Particularly, given MNCs' possession of intangible assets, the effect of MNCs on domestic competition should receive close scrutiny.

Such a danger is greatest if protectionist trade policies are in place. Tariffs give MNCs an incentive to 'jump' the tariffs and produce locally. However, once behind the protective barriers, they can then use them to shore up their own monopoly position. Thus, the best means of ensuring that such an MNC faces competition is the same as if it were a domestic monopoly – expose it to pressures from rivals abroad. Liberalized trade can be one of the most effective means of insuring against market power. Such a solution is most effective for traded goods. But even in areas such as non-traded services, openness to foreign bids can be a disciplining force. The effectiveness of the approach will also be determined by the strength of the domestic regulatory framework and international cooperation in addressing antitrust concerns.

Price Changes and Openness. Many authors find that greater openness to trade leads to lower markups. Some studies look at the relationship of price markup and import penetration or tariff levels, looking across industries at a point in time. More convincing studies have tested the "imports as discipline" hypothesis by looking at changes in markups as countries liberalize trade (Levinsohn, 1993; Roberts and Tybout, 1996). Both types of studies find a negative relationship between openness and markups.

Hoekman *et al.* (2001) examine 41 countries during the 1980s and 1990s. They estimate a single average markup for each country based on 29 sectors over the two decades. Even at this level of aggregation, they find a significant negative relationship between average markups and import penetration, controlling for market size, financial depth, intellectual property and barriers to entry.

Data from Mexico show that with the liberalization of the late 1980s, markups fell dramatically, particularly in industries with greater market concentration and a high proportion of large firms. Grether (1996) finds that a reduction in tariffs of 1% would lower markups up to 1.5% for large firms in more concentrated industries.

Levinsohn (1993) examines five industries in Turkey in the period immediately after trade was liberalized. In all five of the industries he examines, markups changed in the expected way, four of them, significantly so. In contrast, in more open countries such as Chile and Morocco, there is less correlation between markups and import penetration. However, De Melo and Urata (1986) do find a fall in industry markups in the pre- and post- 1976 reform in Chile.

In Cote d'Ivoire, trade was liberalized in 1985. Harrison (1994) uses firm level data to estimate the effects on markups and on productivity. She estimates that a 10% fall in tariffs lowered markups of domestic firms by 6%, although they had no significant impact on foreign firms' markups. However, a 10% increase in import penetration lowered markups about 2% for both domestic and foreign firms. She also makes a strong case for the importance of controlling for changes in the market structure when assessing the impact of trade reform. Ignoring this may lead to the underestimation of productivity gains.

Econometric Analysis of Markups of Price over Marginal Cost

In theory, the degree of monopoly power of a given producer may be viewed as the markup of product price (P_t) over marginal cost (MC_t). It may be defined as $(P_t - MC_t)/P_t$ which corresponds to the so-called *Lerner Index*. The greater the index, the greater is the degree of monopoly power.

The main problem associated to the empirical measurement of the *Lerner Index* and related measures, arises from the fact that while prices can be measured, marginal costs are not directly observable. Therefore, indirect measures have to be developed.

Hall (1988) has suggested markup rate estimation based on a model for the Solow residual which has been extensively applied in the empirical literature. Hall's approach has also been criticized and the results deemed somewhat dubious mostly because the estimation procedure requires use of instrumental variables which are difficult to find in the context of imperfect competition.

The Roeger-Approach

Roeger (1995) proposes an alternative method of computing markups founded on both the Solow residuals and the dual Solow residuals. For a firm enjoying technical progress in the use of labor and capital, a reasonable approximation of its marginal cost may be given by the following expression:

$$MC_{it} = \frac{w_{it} \Delta L_{it} + c_{it} \Delta K_{it}}{\Delta Q_{it} - \theta_{it} Q_{it}},$$

where θ_{it} corresponds to the rate of technical progress for each time period t and sector i .

Under the assumption of constant returns to scale and constant markup, Equation 1 may be rephrased as follows:

$$\underbrace{\Delta q_{it} - \alpha \Delta l_{it} - (1 - \alpha) \Delta k_{it}}_{\text{Solow Residual (SR}_t)} = (\mu - 1) \alpha (\Delta l_{it} - \Delta k_{it}) + \theta_{it}$$

where the markup of price over marginal cost is : $\mu = P/MC$, with Δ denoting the first difference, lower case denotes the natural log transform, q , l , and k denote real value added, labor, and capital inputs, α is the labor share in value added, and $\theta \equiv \dot{A}/A$ denotes exogenous (Hicks-neutral) technological progress. Under perfect competition $\mu = 1$, while imperfectly competitive markets allow $\mu > 1$.

Estimation of Equation 2 faces the difficulty that the explanatory variables ($\Delta l - \Delta k$) will themselves be correlated with the productivity shocks θ , and hence results in bias and inconsistency in the estimates of μ . One solution is to instrument, which in turn raises the requirement that the instruments are correlated with the factor inputs, but not technological change and hence, the error term.

An alternative approach to avoid the endogeneity bias and instrumentation problems has been suggested by Roeger (1995). By computing the dual of the Solow residual (DSR), a relation of the price-based productivity measure to the mark-up may again be obtained:

$$DSR_{it} \equiv \alpha \Delta w_{it} + (1 - \alpha) \Delta r_{it} - \Delta p_{it} = (\mu - 1) \alpha (\Delta w_{it} - \Delta r_{it}) + \theta_{it}$$

with w , r denoting the natural logs of the wage rate and rental price of capital respectively.

While Equation 3 is subject to the same endogeneity problems, and hence instrumentation problems as Equation 2, Roeger's insight is that subtraction of Equation 3 from Equation 2 would give us the nominal Solow residual (NSR), given by:

$$NSR_{it} \equiv \Delta(p_{it} + q_{it}) - \alpha \Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) - (1 - \alpha) \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}) = (\mu - 1) \alpha (\Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) - \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}))$$

in which the productivity shocks θ have cancelled out, removing the endogeneity problem, and hence the need for instrumentation.

Equation 4 is a rather tractable expression for the estimation of the markup ratio. Adding an error term, the markup may be estimated by standard OLS techniques. Alternatively, a markup coefficient could even be calculated algebraically for each year and each sector and a simple average computed over a given period:

$$\mu - 1 = \frac{\Delta(p_{it} + q_{it}) - \alpha \Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) - (1 - \alpha) \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it})}{\alpha (\Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) - \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}))}$$

Oliveira Martins and Scarpetta (1999) demonstrate that where the assumption of constant returns to scale is dropped, Equation 4 is actually:

$$NSR_{it} = \left(\frac{\mu}{\lambda} - 1 \right) \alpha (\Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) - \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}))$$

where $\lambda > 1$ denotes increasing returns to scale. From Equation 6, it may be seen that with increasing returns to scale, the Roeger's method produces a downward bias in the estimation of the markup. Thus, any estimate of mark-up that follows from Solow residuals should be interpreted as lower-bound values if increasing returns to scale are present.

Equation 4 may be easily extended to incorporate intermediate inputs and express the mark-up ratio over gross output (*GO*) instead of value added. This correction is important, insofar as the mark-up over value added induces a clear upward bias in the estimation. Indeed, Basu and Fernald (1994) show that the measurement of real value added assumes that the elasticity of output with respect to intermediate inputs equals its revenue share, which is only true if there were perfect competition. In the presence of market power, shifts in the intermediate inputs will be incorrectly attributed to shifts in value added and estimates of the markups will be biased.

Taking into account intermediate inputs, Equation 4 becomes:

$$\begin{aligned} NSRGO_{it} &\equiv \Delta(\tilde{p}_{it} + \tilde{q}_{it}) - \tilde{\alpha}\Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) - \tilde{\beta}\Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (1 - \tilde{\alpha} - \tilde{\beta})\Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}) \\ &= (\mu - 1)(\tilde{\alpha}\Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) + \tilde{\beta}\Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (\tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta})\Delta(k_{it} + r_{it})) \end{aligned}$$

where \tilde{p} and \tilde{q} correspond to logarithms of gross output and its respective price, m and p^m to intermediate inputs and their prices, and $\tilde{\alpha}$ and $\tilde{\beta}$ to the share of labor and intermediate inputs in gross output value, respectively.

The appealing feature of Roeger's approach is that it helps to overcome some availability problems associated with price data. As Equation 7 only requires nominal variables, there is no need to gather price indexes for intermediate inputs, an information that is not readily available. However, the treatment of capital costs still requires a separate computation for the growth rate of the rental price of capital, r .

The Open Economy Context

The discussion thus far, has ignored the impact of the open economy context. Yet tariff and other restrictions clearly carry implications for the degree of international competition to which domestic industry is exposed, and hence the magnitude of the feasible markup that domestic industry can maintain. By implication, the suggestion is that trade liberalization is a means by which inefficiency in production can be remedied.

Hakura (1998) offers one means of incorporating the open economy context into the estimation of markups over marginal cost. The starting point of analysis is the suggestion that tariff and other trade restrictions shield domestic industry from international competition. Hence, reduction in trade barriers should decrease the market power of domestic producers, through increased import penetration, decreasing mark-ups of price over marginal cost. The suggestion is thus that trade liberalization will reduce the pricing power of industry.

In order to see how changes in import (or export) penetration affect the price marginal cost markup, the weighted growth rates of inputs is interacted with the import (export) penetration ratios *IPR* (*EPR*) and the relationship tested by Hakura (1998) is given by:

$$dq_{it} = \beta_{it} d\tilde{x}_{it} + \gamma(IPR_{it} - \overline{IPR}_i) d\tilde{x}_{it}$$

where $dq_{it} = dy_{it} + \frac{s_m}{1-s_m} dm$ and $d\tilde{x}_{it} = s_l dl_{it} + s_k dk_{it} + \frac{s_m}{1-s_m} dm_{it}$

where dy denotes the log change in value added, s_J the share of factor J in value added (labor, capital and intermediate inputs) and i denotes the i 'th industry⁽³⁾. While β provides a measure of the mark-up, γ captures the impact of deviations of import penetration from the sectoral mean value of import penetration on the mark-up. Where $\gamma < 0$, rising import penetration lowers the mark-up, where $\gamma > 0$, rising import penetration raises the mark-up.

The specification given by Equation 8 is again subject to endogeneity problems, since production and input change decisions are likely to be simultaneous. Yet, it is again possible to subject the specification of Equation 8 to the transformations suggested by Roeger (1995).

A final extension proves necessary due to the use of panel data in the present study. Estimation of the mark-up on an industry-by-industry basis requires a control only for within-industry variation of import penetration to capture trade effects. In a panel data context, this is not sufficient since variation in import penetration between industries is not captured, thereby omitting an important source of heterogeneity between industries. For this reason, the following specification will be adopted to test for the impact of import penetration on the mark-up:

$$\begin{aligned} NSRGO_i = & (\mu - 1) \left(\tilde{\alpha} \Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) + \tilde{\beta} \Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (\tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta}) \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}) \right) \\ & + \theta_2 \left(IPR_{it} - \overline{IPR}_i \right) \left(\tilde{\alpha} \Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) + \tilde{\beta} \Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (\tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta}) \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}) \right) \\ & + \theta_3 \left(IPR_{it} - \overline{IPR} \right) \left(\tilde{\alpha} \Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) + \tilde{\beta} \Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (\tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta}) \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}) \right) \end{aligned}$$

where \overline{IPR}_i denotes the mean import penetration for the i 'th industry, and \overline{IPR} denotes the mean import penetration across all industries⁽⁴⁾. Thus, θ_2 captures the impact of within-industry variation of import penetration, and θ_3 the between-industry variation in import penetration on the markup.

The Impact of Market Structure

Differences in market power across manufacturing industries must be in part, due to differences in entry conditions into each industry. Traditionally, entry conditions and the resulting market structures have been related to technological conditions, such as economies of scale and scope. Another possibility is the existence of product differentiation. For example, under a regime of Chamberlinian monopolistic competition, a limited market power may arise from the combination of returns to scale and horizontal product differentiation. However, the entry of new firms may be expected to bring prices down to average costs over the long run. More recent research has focused on so-called "vertical" product differentiation where firms are able to influence the perceived quality of their products. In industries where firms engage in such product differentiation, product strategies may be able to influence entry conditions in the market; this influence could generate endogenous sunk costs, e.g. large advertising or R&D expenditures. These industries could not simply exist under a regime of perfect competition.

⁽³⁾ The panel employed in Hakura study employs both cross-country and cross-industry elements. The reported equation (8) has adapted this to the cross-industry panel context employed in the paper.

⁽⁴⁾ It is probably better to relate the estimates of markups to direct measures of trade barriers such as quotas and tariffs. However, these data are not available in time series from each sector

Along these lines, the rationale for persistent markups is likely to differ according to the type of industry and form of competition. Following Sutton (1991) and a subsequent discussion by Schmalensee (1992), two major types of industries or types of competition may be identified:

- Industries with typical small average establishment size (Type I) are termed "fragmented" industries. In these industries, the number of firms typically grows in line with the size of the market.
- Sectors characterized by the existence of large establishments, covering a large proportion of employment and output, are termed "segmented" industries (Type II). In these sectors, concentration remains relatively stable or converges towards a finite lower bound.

This market structure taxonomy may also be related to more direct indicators of sunk costs and product innovation and to qualitative information about the different industries. Hence, market concentration may determine the pricing power of firms and the mark up of price over marginal cost. Of course, contestability of markets may limit the ability of domestic producers to exercise market power even in the presence of high degrees of industry concentration. Remove an ability to control for the contestability of markets, the effect of industry concentration on mark-ups is therefore ambiguous, and must remain a matter for empirical determination.

Unfortunately, in the absence of any industry concentration ratio covering all the sample period, only the impact of changes in the competition law and policy that took place in Tunisia since 1991, and more particularly from 1995, on the level of price markups will be investigated. For this purpose, a dummy variable (*CLAW*) which takes the value of 1 for the period 1995-1999 is introduced in Equation 7.

$$NSRGO_{it} = (\mu - 1) \left(\tilde{\alpha} \Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) + \tilde{\beta} \Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (\tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta}) \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}) \right) + \lambda CLAW_t \left(\tilde{\alpha} \Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) + \tilde{\beta} \Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (\tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta}) \Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}) \right)$$

A significantly negative coefficient λ would indicate the success of the competition law and policy in reducing the level of price markups.

The Tunisian Background

Significant structural changes in the Tunisian economy have taken place since the early 1960s. Between 1960 and 1999, the Tunisian economy grew at an average rate of 5%, quite a reasonable rate by lower middle-income country and regional standards. Agriculture's share of the GDP declined steadily from about 28% in 1960 to 9% in 1999. At the same time, the manufacturing sector expanded very rapidly, increasing its portion of the gross domestic product (at factor cost) from less than 8% in 1960 to 20% in 1999.

The manufacturing sector has been comparatively dynamic, growing at an average (real) rate of 6.1% since 1980. In 1999, manufacturing employed about 21% of the entire labor force and

accounted for 69% of total merchandise export earnings, making it the second nation's largest sector. However, this sector remains fairly small, particularly when compared to countries that have achieved fast economic growth. Furthermore, the Directory of Enterprises of the *Institut National de la Statistique* provides evidence about the prevalence of small enterprises in Tunisian manufacturing sectors. The size distribution varies by sector: firms in Chemical and Rubber, Woodwork, Paper and Diverse, and Food Processing sectors tend to be smaller. Firms in the Textile sectors are larger⁽⁵⁾.

The limited size of firms is due to two main factors: (a) family ownership, and (b) the highly protectionist policy that lasted over more than three decades. Tunisian entrepreneurs have so far, been very reticent to opening ownership outside family ties. Given limited financial resources, this attitude has restricted their choice of investment to small projects. The existence of high barriers to entry of imports has made many of such projects artificially profitable.

Despite their large number, small and medium enterprises and micro enterprises account for only a fraction of production in the Tunisian economy. Market concentration – as measured by the shares of the four largest firms in total value added in a given sector – is very high due to the small size of the domestic market and to the legacy of investment licensing, which was not discontinued until 1987. The most concentrated industries are Agro-industry, Chemicals, and the Mechanical and Electrical industries. The least concentrated and most export-oriented are Textiles, Clothing, and Leather Goods. Concentration in the Construction Materials industry varies, with Tile Making being the least and Cement Manufacturing the most concentrated activity (87% of production is by the four largest firms which were, until recently, all state-owned).

International trade is vital to the Tunisian economy. In 1999, export and import transactions, together, account for about 61% of the gross national product. Moreover, a high degree of diversification took place, enabling Tunisia to boost its export items from a few numbers of commodities in the early 1960s to a wide range of products in 1999. Indeed, the share of the first three commodities in the total exports of goods and services decreased significantly from 37% in the early 1980s to 20.7% in 1999. However, the market for the product, which is also important to evaluate the degree of diversification, remains dominated by three EU countries: France, Italy and Germany. These countries monopolize more than 70% of the Tunisian trading in 1999. Consequently, Tunisia's business cycle has shown a weak link with business cycles in these EU trading partners. In the near future, this link is likely to be stronger because of the expected increase in trade and investment with the progressive implementation of the 1995 Association Agreement.

In Tunisia, until the mid-1980s, a price regulation system was used. Investment licensing which restricted entry was the rule until the late 1980s. Domestic price controls were liberalized in 1986. Tunisia is a member of the World Trade Organization and is publicly committed to a free trade regime and export-led growth. Since the late 1980s, most goods may be imported without prior licensing.

To meet the terms of the EU Association Agreement, the government has continued the structural economic reforms initiated in 1987. As customs duties are eliminated over a 12-year period for a wide range of imports, Tunisian producers must become more competitive. In conjunction with the Agreement, the government has vowed to accelerate its privatization

⁽⁵⁾ In the industrial sector, firms with fewer than 20 employees account for almost 60% of all active private companies, and companies with fewer than 250 employees account for more than 94% of all companies. In addition, about 45% of manufacturing enterprises have a sales volume below 0.5 million Tunisian Dinars, and 77% below 2 million (*Agence de Promotion de l'Industrie, Tissu industriel tunisien*).

program, which has covered nearly 140 companies since it was launched in 1987, and brought in \$950 million by the end of 2000. Nearly \$660 million was in the form of Foreign Direct Investment. "Privatization" of a considerable number of state-owned companies has, in fact, only been a partial sale of state-owned shares. With the full privatization of two cement plants in 1998 and two more in 2000, the government has turned its attention to a variety of public assets, and about 40 companies have been selected for privatization in 2001 (US Department of State, 2002).

Competition is regulated in Tunisia by a law enacted in 1991 which was amended in 1993, 1995 and more recently in 1999 and 2003. The Tunisian Competition Law, which is very much influenced by the French Competition Ordinance of 1986, states that prices shall generally be freely determined by market forces, with some exceptions concerning basic commodities or services, activities where competition is lacking because of a monopoly position, of supply difficulties or because of the effect of legal or regulatory provisions.

The Tunisian Competition Law prohibits all concerted actions and agreements aimed at impeding, or restricting competition, in particular those that impede market price formation, restrict market access for other firms, restrict or control production, market outlets, investment or technical progress, share markets or sources of supplies. The abuse of a dominant position is likewise prohibited if it involves the domestic market. Abuse consists of the refusal to sell, tie-in clauses, the imposition of minimal prices or discriminatory sale conditions. The abuse of a dominant position on foreign markets is not prohibited by the Tunisian law, a feature shared with almost all anti-trust laws.

The amendment of 1995 brought an outright prohibition of selective and exclusive agreements. It runs against the dominant arrangements between foreign suppliers and local distributors. The new amendment brought by Law 99-41 of 1999 allows exceptions to this prohibition after consultation with the Competition Board by the Minister of Commerce and authorization of the latter.

Empirical Implementation Econometric Methodology

Utilizing Equations 7, 9 and 10 which belong to the following more general class of models that may be estimated using pool procedures:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_{it} + x'_{it}\beta + \varepsilon_{it},$$

where y_{it} is the dependent variable, and x_{it} and β are vectors of non-constant regressors and parameters for $i = 1, \dots, N$ cross-sectional units (six manufacturing sectors). Each cross-section unit is observed for dated periods $t = 1, \dots, T$ (sample from 1973 to 1999).

These data may be viewed as a set of cross-section specific regressions with N cross-sectional equations:

$$y_i = \alpha_i + x'_i\beta + \varepsilon_i,$$

each with T observations, stacked on top of one another. For purposes of discussion, stacked representation is as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + X\beta + \varepsilon ,$$

where α , β and X are set up to include any restrictions on the parameters between cross-sectional units.

The residual covariance matrix for this set of equations is given by:

$$\Omega = E(\varepsilon\varepsilon') = E \begin{pmatrix} \varepsilon_1\varepsilon_1' & \varepsilon_2\varepsilon_1' & \cdots & \varepsilon_N\varepsilon_1' \\ \varepsilon_2\varepsilon_1' & \varepsilon_2\varepsilon_2' & \cdots & \varepsilon_N\varepsilon_2' \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \varepsilon_N\varepsilon_1' & \varepsilon_N\varepsilon_2' & \cdots & \varepsilon_N\varepsilon_N' \end{pmatrix}$$

The basic specification treats the pool specification as a system of equations and estimates the model using system Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). This specification is appropriate when the residuals are contemporaneously uncorrelated, and time-period and cross-section homoskedastic:

$$\Omega = \sigma^2 I_N \otimes I_T .$$

The **fixed effects** estimator allows α_i differing across cross-section units by estimating different constants for each cross-section (industry). The fixed effects are generally computed by subtracting the "within" mean from each variable and estimating OLS using the transformed data. The coefficient covariance matrix estimates are given by the usual OLS covariance formula applied to the mean differenced model.

The **random effects** model assumes that the term α_{it} is the sum of a common constant α and a time-invariant cross-section specific random variable that is uncorrelated with the residual ε_{it} . The random effects model may be estimated using the Generalized Least Squares (GLS) procedure.

Cross-section weighted regression is appropriate when the residuals are cross-section heteroskedastic and contemporaneously uncorrelated:

$$\Omega = E(\varepsilon\varepsilon') = E \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_1^2 I_T & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ 0 & \sigma_2^2 I_T & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \cdots & \sigma_N^2 I_T \end{pmatrix}$$

It may be estimated by performing feasible GLS where σ_i^2 is estimated from a first-stage pooled OLS regression.

Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) weighted least squares, or Parks estimator, is the feasible GLS estimator when the residuals are both cross-section heteroskedastic and contemporaneously correlated:

$$\Omega = E(\varepsilon\varepsilon') = E \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{11}I_T & \sigma_{12}I_T & \cdots & \sigma_{1N}I_T \\ \sigma_{21}I_T & \sigma_{22}I_T & \cdots & \sigma_{2N}I_T \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \sigma_{N1}I_T & \sigma_{N2}I_T & \cdots & \sigma_{NN}I_T \end{pmatrix} = \Sigma \otimes I_T,$$

where Σ is the symmetric matrix of contemporaneous correlations.

The parameter estimates and the covariance matrix of the parameters of the model are computed using the standard GLS formulae.

Data Sources

A panel data set is employed for purposes of estimation, with observations from 1973 through 1999. The panel employs data for six manufacturing sectors in Tunisian economy. These sectors are: Food Processing (FPI), Construction Materials and Glass (CMGI), Mechanical and Electrical Goods (MEGI), Chemical and Rubber (CRI), Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods (TCLGI) and Woodwork, Paper and Diverse (WPDI). This provides a 27x6 panel with a total of 162 observations.

The series for gross output, employment, wage compensation, intermediate inputs and gross capital stock by industry were provided by the *Institut d'Economie Quantitative* (IEQ, 2000).

Following Martins *et al.* (1996), a simplified rental price of capital (r_t) was defined as follows:

$$r_t = ((\tau_t - \pi_t^e) + \delta)p_t^I$$

where τ is the nominal market interest rate and π^e is the expected inflation rate which is generated using the low-frequency component of the annual percentage change in the GDP deflator using the Hodrick-Prescott filter. The difference between these two terms represents the expected real cost of funds for the firm. The parameter δ corresponds to the economic rate of depreciation. It is set at 7% across all sectors which is equivalent to an average service life of 14 years and p^I represents the economy-wide deflator for the gross fixed investment by industry, and also obtained from the IEQ database.

The observed labor share and intermediate inputs share in total revenue are used in the definition of the dependent and explanatory variables.

Data on import (export) by type of manufacturing industry were provided by the *Institut National de la Statistique*. Import penetration or import intensity is defined as the share of domestic consumption accounted for by imports, where domestic consumption is calculated as “sectoral output – exports + imports”; all the variables expressed at a constant price.

Estimation Results

Roeger's Approach with Intermediate Inputs. In Tables 1 and 2, the estimation results for the manufacturing sectors given by Equation 11 are reported:

$$NSRGO_{it} = \gamma_{0i} + \gamma_i ROEGER_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (\text{Equation 11})$$

for $i = \text{FPI, CMGI, MEGI, CRI, TCLGI, WPDI}$; $t = 1973, \dots, 1999$

where:

$$ROEGER_{it} = \tilde{\alpha}\Delta(l_{it} + w_{it}) + \tilde{\beta}\Delta(m_{it} + p_{it}^m) - (\tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta})\Delta(k_{it} + r_{it}).$$

γ_i now measures $(\mu_i - 1)$, where μ_i is the markup for the sector i . Information about the structure of the pooled data in estimating Equation 11 may be used in a number of ways. A model with selected variables may be estimated that have common or different coefficients across cross-sections. Three estimations procedure will be employed: (a) pooled least squares; (b) weighted least squares with estimated cross-section weights; and (c) seemingly unrelated regressions (SUR).

**Table 1. Markup Estimates, Tunisian Manufacturing Industries
Roeger Specification with Common Cross Section Coefficients**

	Markup	Std, Error**	Log-Likelihood
Pooled Least Squares with Common Intercept*	1.221	0.022	416.505
GLS with Cross Section Weights*	1.211	0.010	449.078
Seemingly Unrelated Regression	1.193	0.015	463.566

* White Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors and Covariance

** Standard Errors reported concern the estimated margin (Markup-1), 1.221 corresponds to an estimated markup rate of 0.221 or 22.1%

**Table 2. Markup Estimates, Tunisian Manufacturing Industries
Roeger Specification with Specific Cross Section Coefficients**

	Markup	Std, Error	Log-Likelihood
Pooled Least Squares with Common Intercept*			422.273
Food Processing	1.218	0.022	
Construction Materials and Glass	1.306	0.056	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.117	0.044	
Chemical and Rubber	1.280	0.058	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.160	0.034	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.235	0.017	
GLS with Cross Section Weights*			455.312
Food Processing	1.217	0.011	
Construction Materials and Glass	1.305	0.075	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.116	0.032	
Chemical and Rubber	1.279	0.093	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.159	0.029	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.233	0.008	
Seemingly Unrelated Regression			470.928
Food Processing	1.223	0.019	
Construction Materials and Glass	1.243	0.055	

Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.084	0.030	
Chemical and Rubber	1.258	0.051	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.079	0.032	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.203	0.023	

* White Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors and Covariance

* Standard Errors reported concern the estimated margin (Markup-1),

** 1.218 corresponds to an estimated markup rate of 0.218 or 21.8%

Results indicate the presence of an aggregate plausible and moderate markup for the manufacturing sector over the sample period. The distinction between the estimation methods appears to make relatively little difference to the implied markup in Tunisian manufacturing. The aggregate markup defined over gross output is in the range of 19-22% and the sectoral markups are in the range of 8-31%. According to the SUR estimates, 8% in Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods sector, 8.4% in Mechanical and Electrical Goods sector, 20% in Woodwork, Paper and Diverse sector, 22% in Food Processing sector, 24% in Construction Materials and Glass sector and 26% in Chemical and Rubber sector (cf. Table 2)

Hakura's Approach with Intermediate Inputs. Tables 3 and 4 present the estimation results for the manufacturing sectors of the specification given by:

$$NSRGO_{it} = \theta_{0i} + \theta_{1i}ROEGER_{it} + \theta_{2i}(IPR_{it} - \overline{IPR}_i)ROEGER_{it} + \theta_{3i}(IPR_{it} - \overline{IPR})ROEGER_{it} + u_{it} \quad (\text{Equation 12})$$

**Table 3. Markup Estimates, Tunisian Manufacturing Industries
Hakura Specification with Common Cross Section Coefficients**

	Markup**	θ_2	θ_3	Log-Likelihood
Pooled Least Squares with Common Intercept*	1.219***	0.687	-0.157	419.729
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.021	0.413	0.090	
GLS with Cross Section Weights*	1.197	0.536	-0.138	452.397
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.011	0.258	0.046	
Seemingly Unrelated Regression	1.165	0.402	-0.263	473.883
<i>Std, Error</i>	0.015	0.251	0.043	

* White Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors and Covariance

* Standard Errors reported concern the estimated margin (Markup-1), *** 1.219 corresponds to an estimated markup rate of 0.219 or 21.9%

**Table 4. Markup Estimates, Tunisian Manufacturing Industries
Hakura Specification with Specific Cross Section Coefficients**

	Markup**	θ_2	θ_3	Log-Likelihood
Pooled Least Squares with Common Intercept*	1.166	-		424.731
<i>Std, Error</i>	0.055	-		
Food Processing			-0.193	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.148	
Construction Materials and Glass			-0.600	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.240	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods			-0.121	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.157	
Chemical and Rubber			1.113	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.613	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods			0.109	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.342	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse			-0.710	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.559	
GLS with Cross Section Weights*	1.209***	-		454.851
<i>Std, Error</i>	0.015	-		
Food Processing			-0.029	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.067	
Construction Materials and Glass			-0.434	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.269	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods			-0.248	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.104	
Chemical and Rubber			0.814	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.825	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods			-0.250	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.257	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse			-0.252	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.251	
Seemingly Unrelated Regression	1.156	-		477.919
<i>Std, Error</i>	0.023	-		
Food Processing			-0.269	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.100	
Construction Materials and Glass			-0.296	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.233	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods			-0.241	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.092	
Chemical and Rubber			0.734	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.327	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods			-0.994	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.256	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse			-0.688	
<i>Std, Error</i>			0.387	

* White Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors and Covariance

** Standard Errors reported concern the estimated margin (Markup-1),

*** 1.209 corresponds to an estimated markup rate of 0.209 or 20.9%

The magnitude of the markup parameter is consistent with that already estimated under the preceding section with the estimate ranging from 17 to 22% for the specification controlling for import penetration.

Observations reveal that only increased import penetration ratios across the manufacturing sector serve to decrease industry markups, since θ_2 is not statistically significant and θ_3 is significantly negative.

Between variation refers to variation of industry import penetration ratios from the all sector mean import penetration ratio. The implication of import penetration impacts is that an opening of the economy to competition from imports would serve to reduce the magnitude of markups over marginal cost.

More significantly, increasing the between-industry import penetration ratio from its mean value of 10% will lead to an estimated implied markup of 1,165 to drop to 1,139 ($1,165 - 0,263 \cdot 10\%$) in the SUR regression. Therefore, the estimated impact of changes in import penetration ratios on the margins is somewhat larger in the markup analysis. Thus, while small variation about an industry mean value of import penetration does not serve to lower markups, increasing import penetration relative to the manufacturing sector average does serve to exercise a few price discipline on industries. The no-effect of the within-industry variation is further corroborated by the statistical insignificance of the coefficient.

The panel estimation methodology allows the testing of heterogeneous impact of between-industry variation in import penetration on markup. According to SUR regression, import penetration ratios relative to the manufacturing sector average has a negative and significant influence in Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods sectors (estimated coefficient θ_3 of -0,994), in Woodwork, Paper and Diverse sectors (estimated coefficient θ_3 of -0,688) and in Food Processing sectors (estimated coefficient θ_3 of -0,269). However, increasing import penetration relative to the manufacturing sector average in Chemical and Rubber sectors seems to have a significant positive impact on markup (estimated coefficient θ_3 of 0,734).

The Impact of Competition Law. An examination of the impact of competition law on the markup by introducing a dummy variable *CLAW* in the Roeger's specification is in order. Tables 5 and 6 present the estimation results of the specification given by:

$$NSRGO_{it} = \lambda_{0i} + \lambda_{1i}ROEGER_{it} + \lambda_{2i}CLAW_iROEGER_{it} + v_{it} \quad (\text{Equation 13})$$

**Table 5. Markup Estimates, Tunisian Manufacturing Industries
Impact of Competition Law with Common Cross Section Coefficients**

	Markup**	λ_2	Log-Likelihood
Pooled Least Squares with Common Intercept*	1.220***	0.018	416.527
<i>Std, Error</i>	0.025	0.057	
GLS with Cross Section Weights*	1.205	0.081	449.910
<i>Std, Error</i>	0.011	0.029	
Seemingly Unrelated Regression	1.191	0.075	464.129
<i>Std, Error</i>	0.015	0.065	

* White Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors and Covariance

** Standard Errors reported concern the estimated margin (Markup-1),

*** 1.22 corresponds to an estimated markup rate of 0.22 or 22%

**Table 6. Markup Estimates, Tunisian Manufacturing Industries
Impact of Competition Law with Specific Cross Section Coefficients**

	Markup**	Λ_2	Log-Likelihood
Pooled Least Squares with Common Intercept*			422.908
Food Processing	1.216	0.031	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.024	0.040	
Construction Materials and Glass	1.311	-0.078	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.060	0.178	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.115	0.040	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.048	0.139	
Chemical and Rubber	1.286	-0.072	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.065	0.079	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.154	0.089	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.037	0.038	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.227	0.222	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.020	0.129	
GLS with Cross Section Weights*			457.524
Food Processing	1.211	0.044	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.012	0.019	
Construction Materials and Glass	1.304	-0.048	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.080	0.226	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.111	0.065	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.034	0.099	
Chemical and Rubber	1.282	-0.056	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.105	0.119	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.150	0.107	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.031	0.043	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.223	0.257	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.009	0.036	
Seemingly Unrelated Regression			
<i>Std,Error</i>			
Food Processing	1.214	0.080	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.020	0.076	
Construction Materials and Glass	1.244	-0.239	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.056	0.223	
Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.075	0.075	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.030	0.132	
Chemical and Rubber	1.246	-0.024	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.052	0.201	
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.065	-0.011	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.034	0.125	
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.189	0.212	
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.022	0.139	

* White Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors & Covariance

* Standard Errors reported concern the estimated margin (Markup-1),

*** 1.216 corresponds to an estimated markup rate of 0.216 or 21.6%

The impact of changes in the Competition Law and policy that took place in Tunisia in 1991-1995 on the level of price markups is also investigated by estimating Roeger's specification during the first period (from 1973 to 1994) and the same specification for the second period (from 1995 to 1999). The results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Markup Estimates, Tunisian Manufacturing Industries
Impact of Competition Law with Specific Cross Section Coefficients**

	Markup**	
	1973-94	1995-99
Pooled Least Squares with Common Intercept*		
Food Processing	1.217***	1.266

<i>Std,Error</i>	0.023	0.037
Construction Materials and Glass	1.319	1.032
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.058	0.152
Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.119	1.053
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.047	0.107
Chemical and Rubber	1.286	1.140
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.061	0.026
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.157	1.271
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.035	0.029
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.232	1.295
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.020	0.091
GLS with Cross Section Weights*		
Food Processing	1.213	1.265
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.011	0.020
Construction Materials and Glass	1.313	1.026
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.076	0.262
Mechanical and Electrical Goods	1.115	1.048
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.033	0.116
Chemical and Rubber	1.283	1.137
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.100	0.013
Textiles, Clothing and Leather Goods	1.154	1.266
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.029	0.009
Woodwork, Paper and Diverse	1.228	1.288
<i>Std,Error</i>	0.009	0.087

* White Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors and Covariance

* Standard Errors reported concern the estimated margin (Markup-1),

*** 1.217 corresponds to an estimated markup rate of 0.217 or 21.7%

The effect of the *CLAW* dummy variable, used to capture the impact of the introduction of a competition law, does not seem to matter in the full sample. The effect of this variable on industry markups is generally not significant. Even after controlling for the effects of foreign competition, the direct effect of competition law is not statistically significant⁽⁶⁾.

The first possible explanation is that competition policy is not effective. Alternatively, Tunisian firms behave competitively and the old price regulatory system together with import competition has been sufficient to discipline firm behavior. A third possible and most plausible explanation is related to the nature of the data used. Indeed, the econometric methodology adopted uses time series to estimate markups, which is assumed to be constant over time. Thus, it is assumed that competition that firms face is rather static in nature. However, the effect of competition policy on firm behavior should be approached from a dynamic perspective, rather than a static one, because the competitive process is itself dynamic⁽⁷⁾.

⁽⁶⁾ Estimation results are probably affected by the endogeneity of competition law. Specifically, it may be assumed that for any period, a country's decision to adopt or abandon a competition law depends on the perceived level of industry markups, which are affected by the current level of imports, total domestic output, and total number of firms in the industry.

⁽⁷⁾ Focusing on the evolution and the level of price markups of firms as suggested by Sutton (1991), equilibrium prices (P) or markups are a declining function of the number of firms (N) in the market. However, the slope may differ depending on the degree of competition in the market. In one extreme case, tacit collusion, the function P(N) is a flat line, i.e. when a new firm enters the market equilibrium prices are not affected. This is a situation in which firms face very weak price competition. The other extreme case is the one of Bertrand competition where prices fall to marginal costs once a second firm enters the market. This is referred to as the extreme case of very tough price competition. All other oligopoly models will have associated P(N) functions that lie between these two extreme cases. While the strategic interactions between firms may affect the position and the slope of the P(N) function, a number of exogenous parameters, such as the competition law can have an effect on the position of the P(N) function. In this sense, competition policy could lead to tougher price competition, which may in fact lead to less entry in the market because unit margins are reduced in case the competition policy focuses on the level of the margins.

Panel data at a firm level, are more appropriate than sectoral ones to look at the dynamic pricing behavior after a change in competition policy took place and to gain insights into the effectiveness and role of competition policy. With a rich firm level panel data, it is also possible to compare the level of markups across different sectors and to test whether there are other mechanisms that may discipline firms, controlling for common aggregate shocks and for common sectoral shocks.

At the sectoral level, it appears that the incidence of high markup has gone down in Construction Materials and Glass sectors (31.3% on the average in 1973-1994 and not significant markup in 1995-1999); Chemicals with 28.3% on the average in 1973-1994 vs 13.7% on the average in 1995-1999. However, markup increases instead of decreases over time, in Food Processing and Textile sectors with 15.4% on the average in 1973-1994 vs 26.6% on the average in 1995-1999 and in Woodwork, Paper and Diverse with 22.8% on the average in 1973-1994 vs 28.8% on the average in 1995-1999 (cf. Table 7).

Conclusion

This paper investigates the strength of trade discipline on the manufacturing sectors in Tunisia over the period 1973-1999. This period is particularly interesting because it captures the effects of many actions in favor of international trade liberalization on competition.

To estimate the markups, an extension of the approach put forward by Roeger (1995) where price margins are defined over gross output instead of value added is utilized. The main conclusions are summarized below.

The results are statistically robust and the markups estimated are in the range of 8-31% for the Tunisian manufacturing in the period 1973-99. These results are plausible and more in line with micro-economic evidence suggesting low profit margins in most manufacturing industries.

It is observed that increased import penetration ratios across the manufacturing sector serve to decrease industry markups. The implication is that integrating Tunisian manufacturing sectors into world markets has the effect of increasing price competition, and hence, lowering the size of the markup.

The regression results obtained here suggest that the direct effect of the Tunisian Competition Law on industry markup is not significant. Import liberalization not only has a more powerful and direct effect on competition, it also is a lower cost policy alternative, especially in the long run, given no recurrent administrative enforcement and compliance costs. However, further empirical research seems to be required to better understand the relationship between industry price behavior and market characteristics in Tunisian manufacturing industries.

Although the paper does not explore either the issues of heterogeneity within domestic industry or the productivity effect of trade liberalization in the Tunisian manufacturing sectors, this result opens a new scope for research in these matters. Some important aspects have to be investigated by adopting a structural model to evaluate the impact of trade liberalization on firm markups pricing in the context of uncertainty in the policy regime and the macro environment.

Along this line, since industry import-share can fluctuate greatly, focusing on "actual" foreign competition may paint a misleading picture of total foreign competition. To get the full picture, one must quantify "potential" foreign competition. Actual foreign competition could be proxied by the level of import-share as it is the case in the paper. However, assessing potential

competition requires estimating the intertemporal response of imports to changes in market conditions. Indeed, the degree of potential foreign competition will vary across industries depending on structural factors and economic conditions. Import-share and profit-margins are likely to be jointly-determined in industry equilibrium. Thus, a more structural estimation approach must control for reverse causality and purges both industry import penetration or import share and profit-margins of industry-specific constant and trend, and aggregate effects to obtain estimates of the industry specific response of import penetration to changes in profit-margins and to evaluate the dampening effect of import competition on industry profit-margins

The evidence supporting the “import-discipline” hypothesis is based on an econometric methodology which directly estimates markups of price over marginal cost and is more adapted than the traditional one based on the measure of the profit margins from the accounting data. In this context, the estimates of markups (only one point estimation by sector) are related to import penetration ratio. Although useful, clearly, the framework adopted has a number of important limitations to be borne in mind when interpreting the results.

Indeed, as noted by Roberts and Tybout (1996), a finding that higher import penetration subsequent to trade liberalization reduces profitability or markups does not necessarily imply that domestic producers were, prior to trade liberalization, engaging in anticompetitive practices. In a Heckscher-Ohlin world, if import-competing industries are relatively capital-intensive, trade liberalization will put downward pressure on the remuneration of capital; but this will reflect factor-price equalization rather than the elimination of anti-competitive practices. Indeed, the type of trade that can bring competitive discipline on domestic producers is intra-industry trade rather than Heckscher-Ohlin trade. Thus, the mechanism implicit in the estimated equation should be expected to work primarily in industries where intra-industry trade is substantial.

In transition economies, relatively low wage costs compared to those in the OECD have induced some degree of specialization in labor-intensive industries and consequent Heckscher-Ohlin trade in which capital-intensive industries in these countries are downsized as a result of trade liberalization (in transition economies especially, these industries were also characterized by large-scale managerial inefficiencies). This process by itself would have tended to reduce the remuneration of capital irrespective of any anti-competitive behavior prior to the trade liberalization.

Although import-penetration ratios are treated as exogenous in the estimated equation, they are likely to be endogenous. Variations in import penetration are affected not only by (presumably exogenous) changes in trade policy, but also by the ability of domestic producers to fend off foreign competition, which may be correlated with industry characteristics such as profitability. Thus, short of a full simultaneous-equation approach, import-penetration ratios should be instrumented by other exogenous or predetermined variables. However, relatively few studies do so. A notable exception is Grether (1996) who uses measures of trade incentives at the sector level (tariffs and their equivalents of Quantity Ratios) in a study of the effects of the Mexican trade liberalization of the middle 1980s.

Moreover, the endogeneity problem among the variables is likely to be more insidious. After all, the degree of competition is also potentially endogenous as well as the extent of collusive activity. This is why, theoretically at least, it has been recognized that a thorough testing of the import-discipline hypothesis should model as well the degree of competition and the extent of collusive behavior.

In summary, the results show that import penetration has a disciplinary effect on price-cost margins. In spite of the caution that must be taken in interpreting the results of the “import-discipline” hypothesis, it is well-established that trade liberalization achieves at least some of the result that competition policy seeks to achieve – namely putting a check on the ability of domestic producers to exploit consumers. Indeed, in an economic and political environment in which harmonized and/or delegated trade policies are less subject to capture by domestic lobbies (rent seeking and/or corruption), competition policies might be affected by increased lobby pressure. This means that the policy objective involves more than the maximization of a suitably defined domestic welfare function, and one should take into account the political pressures that are likely to shape the formulation of trade and competition policies.

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

Sebouh Aintablian
Bassel Chamseddine 5

Efficiency Analysis of the Banking Sector in Kuwait.

Wadad Saad
Chawki EL Moussawi 37

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

Riadh Ben Jelili 67

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Performance in Euro-Mediterranean Countries.**

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