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Tocqueville as an Ethnographer of American Prison Systems and Democratic Practice

Ananta Kumar Giri

Abstract

Alexis de Tocqueville, a French aristocrat and magistrate, travelled in the USA in the mid-nineteenth century to write about that country's prison system. A keen observer of American society, he also then published *Democracy in America*. Was this a work of political theory or an ethnography of American democratic practice? Discussing the opinions of several critics of Tocqueville – the different ways of reading him which give rise to conflicting interpretations – as well as Tocqueville's own critique of American social mores and practices, this paper argues that, to understand the significance of Tocqueville's work, he should be perceived as an ethnographer who describes how democracy works in America, not as a political theorist. In the process, Tocqueville's observations on the American prison system – the primary aim of his travels – are first discussed. Moving on to his better known work on American democracy, various aspects are explored: the comparison made by some critics between Tocqueville and Marx; the optimism of the first volume of *Democracy in America* contrasted with the pessimism of the second; the tension between liberty and equality, etc. A brief survey of the different critical interpretations of Tocqueville help reinforce his ethnographic credentials.

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Mergers, Acquisitions, Market Structure and Industry Performance: Experience of Indian Pharmaceutical Industry

Pulak Mishra

Abstract

The present paper attempts to examine the structure and performance of Indian pharmaceutical industry in a multi-dimensional 'structure-conduct-performance-policy' framework with a focus on M&As as an important 'conduct' by the firms. The study finds that though the industry recorded a high rate of increase in concentration and a marginal rate of growth in market power, the level of concentration was very low, leaving the market structure highly competitive. Except on exports front, performance of the industry was also not so encouraging. While the level of market concentration was determined largely by a set of conduct (other than M&As), performance and policy variables, in addition to various demand-supply related market conditions and horizontally differentiated product structure, performance was influenced mainly by the extent of market concentration, import competition, marketing expenses and technology strategies by the firms. Since the market was highly competitive despite the wave of M&As, it can be said that M&As had very little impact on performance of the industry.

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Food Security: An Assessment for Tamil Nadu

Gajendra Singh, T.S Bhogal

Abstract

The concept of food security varies for countries at different stages of development. In India, because of the importance of food grains in the diet – as well as of pulses which are a major source of protein – security is seen as making available a minimum quantity of food grains and pulses to all the population. Factors which affect the achievement of food security are rate of population growth and levels of purchasing power, both of which can nullify the effect of increased production. This paper discusses means of assessing food security in Tamil Nadu by examining the gap between food supply and food requirement (based on calorific value) rather than the more usual demand gap (based on purchasing power and consumer preferences). It estimates, for the years 2005-06 and 2010-11, first food grains supply, then food grains requirement by age groups. Methodology is based on regression analysis of time series data and other forecasting techniques like Exponential Smoothing and Moving Averages. Using these to project the state of food security for these two years, it derives policy implications from the projection.

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Social Scientists or Development Professionals? Research-Policy Interface in a Rural Development Institute

Manish K. Thakur

Abstract

While underlining the essential asymmetry between the interests of policymakers and those of social scientists, this paper examines the much-debated role of social science research in policymaking, in the specific context of the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad, India. It argues that the power of the social sciences to inform public policy has never been self-evident. Rather than concerning itself with the grandiloquent theoretical understanding of the nature and character of social science research and public policy, it focuses on the ordinary details of everyday research in a concrete institutional setting.

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Policy Implications of Scale of Operations in Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation

Manisha Karne

Abstract

This paper studies the economies of scale for the regions of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) with a view to examining a proposal for organizing the regions as separate units. Empirical tests examine the scale economies for the regions of MSRTC. To study the impact of firm size on performance, scale economies are measured by using the concept of cost-output elasticity. Costs and revenues for different fleet sizes are measured, both for MSRTC as a whole and for its six regions. Findings indicate that, while there are no further economies of scale to be exploited for the Corporation as a whole, for the six regions economies of scale do exist. The implication is that decentralization is needed. A model of decentralization, involving splitting of the MSRTC into three autonomous corporations is examined.

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