**The Competitiveness Puzzle: Interpretations, Misunderstandings, and Conceptual Reorientations towards Integrated Competitiveness Policy Approaches**

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**Abstract**

Competitiveness is a field of discord and controversies among economists from the very first moment it appeared in the theory and practice of economic policy. This article aims to identify how the concept of competitiveness evolves and find out possible points of convergence, divergence, and synthesis in contemporary scientific dialogue. It first presents older and recent approaches to competitiveness by identifying potential conceptual enrichments and reorientations at the meso-level of analysis. It finds that the rediscovery and deepening into the meso-economic approaches, which connect the micro and macro-economic levels of analysis dynamically, have the potential to offer new analytical content and interpretive potential on competitiveness. Growth poles, industrial districts, and innovation environments constitute such meso-level approaches. In conclusion, we propose a multilevel synthesis of competitiveness and an integrated form of industrial policy in the scheme of “competitiveness web” and “co-opetitiveness pole.”

**Keywords:** Competitiveness, Micro-meso-macro analysis, Growth poles, Industrial districts, Innovation environment, Competitiveness web, Co-opetitiveness pole

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