

Why is growth less poverty reducing in Africa?

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Paper presented at the 2016 Jobs & Development Conference, 2- 3 November. This paper analyses the economic impacts of growth on poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, exploiting a rich and unique dataset covering 56 countries between 1990 and 2012. Albeit the high economic growth rates of the last decades, there have been increasing concerns that growth is not benefiting African population at large. In line with the view that certain sectors are more poverty reducing than others, we find that during the period 1990-2012 productivity gains in agriculture played a smaller role in Africa than elsewhere. At the same time, employment shifts out of agriculture have contributed only half as much to poverty reduction than in the rest of the world, and especially there has been no impact of movements into manufacturing employment, which instead have been at the basis of the poverty reducing strategies of South and East Asia in the past decades. Forecasted projections for the years to come suggest that African governments would need to double their efforts towards structural transformations in order to achieve sustained poverty reduction.

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