Agricultural Transformation and Population Nexus: Some Theoretical and Empirical Lessons for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Author(s)
Niboye, Elliott P.
Kabote, Samwel J.

Abstract

This article reviews both Malthusian and anti-Malthusian schools of thought with regard to agricultural transformation in sub-Saharan Africa. It discusses empirical evidence emanating from sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in general and Tanzania in particular in relation to agricultural productivity, population growth, rural-urban migration and environmental degradation. Compared to other regions in the world, agricultural performance in SSA has for many decades been deteriorating and needs to be transformed. Anti-Malthusianists (Ester Boserup, Julian Simon) maintain that population growth increases demand for food, which encourages the adoption of new technologies and innovations to boost productivity. Importing Asian experiences of the Green Revolution per se would not transform agriculture in SSA. What is required is a combination of Asian Green Revolution technologies and experiences suitable for SSA and new ideas to enable and improve the African Green Revolution. The authors emphasize that the context of SSA is different from that in Asia. Moreover, a lot of variations exist within and between countries in terms of policy, structural and institutional arrangements deemed fundamental for enhancing agricultural transformation. Thus, comprehensive research needs to be conducted to investigate appropriate agricultural technologies suitable for SSA, both between and within countries.

Keywords
Agricultural development
Agricultural productivity
Population growth
Agricultural policy
Agricultural technology