

The Impact of Urbanisation on Agricultural Productivity in Sub Saharan Africa

Rapid urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa is unfolding amid persistently low agricultural productivity, sluggish structural transformation and escalating food demand. While theoretical frameworks posit that urbanization can foster agricultural growth by expanding markets, facilitating technology diffusion and enabling efficient labor reallocation, much of Africa's urban expansion is characterized as "consumption-led," with minimal industrial job creation to drive broader economic synergies. This study empirically examines the net impact of urbanization on agricultural productivity using a balanced panel dataset from ten Sub-Saharan African countries spanning 1990–2020. Employing fixed-effects models with robustness adjustments via Driscoll–Kraay standard errors to account for cross-sectional dependence, the analysis reveals a negative and statistically significant relationship. The study indicates that a unit increase in urban population share is associated with 0.37% decline in agricultural productivity. This adverse effect is primarily attributed to farmland conversion, deterioration in rural labor quality due to out-migration and intensified competition for essential resources such as water and infrastructure. These results highlight the imperative for targeted policy interventions, including stringent land-use regulations, enhanced rural infrastructure investments and strategic urban planning to safeguard agricultural zones. Ultimately, the study underscores that Africa's urban transition must be synchronized with agricultural modernization to bolster food security and sustainable development. Keywords: Urbanization, Agricultural Productivity, Land Conversion, Structural Transformation, Sub-Saharan Africa. A