

Governance and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: Errata

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Tables 1 and 2 in our article on African governance and growth (*Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13(3): Summer, 1999) contain errors that led us to overstate the extent of Africa’s growth shortfall and the contribution of slow productivity growth. The African aggregates are measured correctly in these tables; errors pertain to “other developing countries” and are the result of our having transposed some rows in an underlying spreadsheet. The correct data, which should replace the corresponding entries in Tables 1 and 2, appear below.

Period	Growth in real GDP per worker	----- Physical capital	Contribution of: Education	----- Factor Productivity
<i>Correction to Table 1: Unweighted Averages</i>				
45 Other developing countries				
1960-94	2.07	1.19	0.39	0.46
1960-73	3.14	1.44	0.33	1.34
1973-94	1.42	1.04	0.44	-0.07
 <i>Correction to Table 2: Unweighted Standard Deviations</i>				
45 Other developing countries				
1960-94	1.84	0.87	0.14	1.20
1960-73	1.64	1.05	0.20	1.04
1973-94	2.48	0.96	0.18	1.82

Comparing these with the African aggregates in Tables 1 and 2, Africa’s average growth shortfall from 1960 to 1994 was 1.7 percentage points on an annual basis, rather than the 2 ½ percentage points reported in the text on page 43. Slower growth in the residual accounts for just over half of this shortfall, rather than two-thirds as claimed on page 44. Since the corrected shortfall is now close to what one obtains using PPP-adjusted real incomes (as reported on page 42 and illustrated in Figure 2), our footnote 1, which ‘explains away’ the apparent discrepancy, is irrelevant except as a testimonial to our powers of rationalization(!).

These errors are large by the standards of growth accounting, and they feed what is already, in the literature, a very negative view of African growth performance. We are grateful for the opportunity to correct them in print. Our basic messages, however, are robust to these corrections. Africa’s growth shortfall has indeed been large, and slow productivity growth has been a very important contributor. These observations represent central challenges for researchers in growth and development. We argue in the paper that the study of governance represents one promising focus for coming to terms with them –

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and that developments now underway in many African countries hold the promise of making them irrelevant.