

## Comments

### Duclos et al. "Assessing the absolute and relative pro-poor growth with an application to selected African countries"

The paper finds a neat solution to the long-standing debate about absolute and relative pro-poor growth by proposing a methodology that ranks growth according to both criteria. The methodology is not new and seems derived from the literature on multidimensional indexes but the application is new and a good idea.

#### Introduction

It would be useful to refer from the outset to the Ravallion-Kakwani pro-poor growth debate best depicted in the UNDP poverty centre notes. While for Ravallion growth *per se* is a sufficient condition for pro-poor growth, for Kakwani the sufficient condition is restricted by imposing the relativity condition. This simple difference is not too clear in the first paragraphs.

It would also be useful to illustrate the relation between absolute and relative pro-poor growth as opposed to absolute and relative poverty lines. In principle, an absolute poverty line is sufficient to determine the difference between absolute and relative pro-poor growth. The pro-poor growth debate focuses on (temporal) growth and does not need a two-dimensional (cross-section) approach.

Distinguishing between GDP growth and household income growth would clear the ground to possible confusion. The two may diverge widely in the short and medium term and the paper clearly refers to household incomes growth.

#### Part 2

The discussion in section 2.1 reports the discussion by Duclos et al. (2006). Here it would be helpful to provide more details. For example, illustrations of what  $\alpha$  and  $r$  may be in practice, a definition of  $\lambda$  and a better definition of  $\pi$ . Figure 1 was more helpful to understand what the authors had in mind than the initial text.

The inter-temporal stochastic dominance approach does not say much about the size of growth. This is a shortcoming that should be discussed by the paper. Consider three different scenarios. In the first scenario the poor grow by 2% and the rich grow by 1%. This growth would be pro-poor in absolute and relative terms. In the second scenario the poor grow by 10% and the non-poor by 5%. This growth would be again pro-poor in absolute and relative terms. In the third scenario, the poor grow by 15% and the rich by 15%. This would be pro-poor in absolute terms but not in relative terms. Surely, the poor would have a clear preference set with the third scenario coming first followed by the second and first scenario in this order. However, the methodology proposed would rank scenarios one and two above scenario three and would not be able to tell the difference between scenarios one and two. This seems quite different from the poor's preference set. In a sense, the absolute and relative views do not have the same "weight" for the poor.

### **Part 3**

The application in section 3 mixes data sets of original individual data and data sets reconstructed using Lorenz curve coordinates. There is no need for that given that individual data sets are now available for plenty of African countries (see for example the World Bank LSMS database). This also poses a problem of comparability between the two types of data sets as noted by the authors is relation to the estimation of the standard errors.

The paper claims to compare countries using PPPs and a consistent poverty line but countries are not really comparable because of the use of individual data and Lorenz reconstructed data and because of many other reasons such as differences in the construction of welfare aggregates or differences in price spatial adjustments. There is also no need to compare countries given that the analysis that matters is within countries and across time. The authors themselves are forced to use two poverty lines to show the advantage of the approach across countries.

### **Minor points**

Equation 14 is not too clear. Why double integrals but only one reference plane?  $d(a,r)$  instead of  $dadr$ . I guess this should be one integral since the paper refers to  $(a, r)$  as one space.

In section 3.2. Figures 3-7 should be better discussed and also referred to in the text.

The bidimensional graphs are nice but remain difficult to read. If printed in black and white they are not readable. It would be useful to annotate the graphs by explaining how the unidimensional graphs are in fact the lateral views of the bidimensional graphs.