Implications of Climate Change Risks on Rural-Urban Agricultural and Food Flows in Blantyre City, Malawi

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Abstract
The study explores rural-urban linkages in order to address temporal and spatial dynamics of vulnerability to climate change at the scale of local government, focusing on Blantyre City. The study sought to assess how different groupings of urban consumers access their food and how they are impacted by climate change risks. The study established that food consumed in Blantyre City largely originates from rural areas of Blantyre District (e.g. 80% maize), some districts in the southern region, other parts of Malawi, and other countries. The food is mostly accessed through market purchase and partially own production in surrounding rural areas. The high inter-annual rainfall variations and prolonged dry spells, which pose a major challenge for agricultural production in rural areas, affect food supplies and prices in urban markets. The occurrence impacts different urban groupings in different ways, with the disadvantaged groups being the most vulnerable because of high food costs combined with mobility constraints in searching for food. The study also established that household food security assessment at the local government level mostly links quantities of food in markets with household stocks, regardless of variations in the purchasing power of different categories of urban food consumers. The study recommends that the local government should recognise the significance of urban people's vulnerability to climate change and variability linked to rural-urban agricultural and food flows and that city development policies should cushion food insecurity at local levels.

Keywords
Climate change
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