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Climate Change and Migration in Nairobi Environmental Migration and its Urban Manifestation at the Local Scale

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Abstract

This study focuses on environmental migration in Kenya. Personal interviews were conducted with a random sample in two major slums in Nairobi (Kibera and Mathare) assuming that most of rural migrants are likely to stay in affordable settlements. Migrants are classified as “environmental migrants,” if they mentioned at least one environmental related issue as a reason for their migration into Nairobi.

The main environmental reasons listed by interviewees were lack of rainfall or drought and floods. In that regard, a spatial pattern was also found, where droughts were mainly mentioned by people migrating from the southeastern region and floods from the Nyanza and western regions in Kenya. This paper will argue that there is evidence of environmental migration in Nairobi. Statistical significant changes in temperature and rainfall levels in Kenya between 1960-1989 and 1990-2008 are associated with the increased number of environmental migrants since 1990.