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Migration Schedules and Transition in Rusinga Island, Kenya: Application of Demographic Surveillance System (DSS) Dataset

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Abstract:

Macro-data generated from censuses and surveys have often been used for migration analysis in Kenya; however, for the first time, this study uses Demographic Surveillance Systems (DSS) data collected from Rusinga Island (i.e. a DSS site of the Population Studies and Research Institute of the University of Nairobi). The objective being to establish: the prevailing migration schedules; prevailing migrant characteristics and migration patterns; reasons for migration, and; who makes decisions for migration to occur on Rusinga Island. The study established that even with the use of DSS data, migration schedule in Rusinga Island was two-humped and similar to those often generated using Kenya censuses and survey data; the major reasons for migration were for purposes of education, marriage and settlement, and; the family being the major decision-maker of migration. Recommendation being that the use of DSS data be enhanced as it positively impacts on the timeliness and undertaking of area specific migration analyses. In addition, undertake more development ventures in Rusinga Island the area was noted to be in post-tradition development stage.

Keywords: Demographic Surveillance Systems (DSS), migration schedule, migration characteristics, reasons for migration, migration decision-making.

1. Introduction

Migration has become a topical subject of discussion at national, regional and international levels. This has been exacerbated by the large numbers of migrant populations moving internally and across borders, either as economic migrants, trafficked persons or refugees. The discussion is fuelled further by the mushrooming numbers of conflicts and strives that have continued to engulf various regions of the world, making migration be at the top of the political and social agenda across Africa, Europe, America, Asia and Oceania. In the same note, migration researchers advocate for inclusion of migration issues in the processes of development planning. Conceptualization of migration issues requires understanding of social, economic, demographic, environmental, and technological issues as migration is a major contributor to technological transfers from developed countries to the developing and emerging economies. Labour migration is also an important ingredient in the development of economies as it bridges the gap in capacities of countries/regions with inadequate labour supply. The African Union Strategic Policy Framework on Migration in Africa reinforces that AU Member States do integrate Migration and Development policies particularly in their National Development Plans. Often the benefits of migration are viewed from both the sending and receiving areas, as migrants benefit in terms of skills, experiences and incomes, while the receiving countries benefit from cheap labour. Already there exist analyses on migration using survey and censuses data in Kenya. This study therefore focuses on the use of Demographic Surveillance System dataset to establish comparability of results to those from macro- data, in establishing the resultant migration schedules and patterns in Rusinga Island in Kenya.

1.1. Past Studies on Migration

Patterns and major migration flows in Kenya have been influenced partly by colonial policies and major drivers being the land policy, demand for labour in European settlements and taxation. Not only were Africans denied access to the then existing vacant land, they were also prevented from growing cash crops, such as coffee, tea, and pyrethrum. According to Rosberg and Nottingham (1970, pp. 20-21 cited in Rempel, 1981), the colonial administration accepted the position that the role of the African in the economy was to be confined to providing wage labour. The period immediately after post independence saw the opening of high-wage jobs in the urban

areas, following the removal of controls on urban in-migration in 1959 and rural-urban migration increased to a level beyond the absorptive capacity of the urban economies (International Labour Office 1972, p. 85).

In the first decade of post independence period the structure of the economy did not change significantly, while conditions that contribute to rural-urban migration intensified. Population growth was rapid, educational opportunities expanded considerably in the rural areas, and the well educated had increased access to those high-wage jobs previously held by Europeans and Asians. Given a limited ability to absorb the urban in-migrants in productive employment, the government found it necessary to resort to various indirect means of controlling the extent of rural-urban migration (Rempel, 1981). Given the above scenario, the migration patterns in Kenya can be summarized into six broad areas during since 1969-79 and 1979-89 and 1989-99 intercensal periods. These broad areas are migration in: (a) resettlement areas, (b) cash crop growing areas, (c) nomadic areas, (d) border areas, (e) Western and Eastern regions of Kenya, and (f) migration in metropolitan areas.

1.2. Data and Analysis

The Population Studies and Research Institute (PSRI) of the University of Nairobi established a Demographic and Surveillance System site in Rusinga Island in the year 2001 as training and research site; and, to date, it is on its 22nd round of data collection. This article used the 22nd round dataset for the analysis of short and long distance migration in the Island. This study used a 3-months period (after change of residence) instead of 6-months period was used to determine whether one was a migrant or not. The following variables were collected and used in the analysis, namely: age at migration; sex of the migrant; sex of migrant; relationship with head of household; educational Level; marital status; activity status of migrant; nature of migration; reasons for migration, and; migration decision making (Annex 3).

Persons counted in a cluster, having changed their residence in the last three months and above prior to the survey were considered to have had an inward mobility, while those moved outside the cluster but within the Island were counted as having had outward mobility. To the contrary, persons enumerated in the Island, but had come from outside the Island were referred to as in-migrants into Rusinga Island, while those who migrated to outside the Island were referred to as out-migrants. The concepts inward and outward mobility and in-migrant and out-migrant were modified, considering the scope of study. Data was collected on the number of migrants, but not the number of migrations. Equally, it was not possible to establish first or second time movers, or/and the number of return migrants, just as was the number of deceased migrants, as only data on live migrants was available. The analysis focused on migrants' characteristics, migration schedules, reasons for migration, and migration decision-making.

2. Results

The level of net migrants is obtained by subtracting out-migrants from in-migrants. It represents the net effect of population movements. Regions that experience positive net migration have the immediate burden of providing various social amenities required by the new population, notwithstanding some gains that may be brought by the migrants. Migration trends are the result of demographic contexts, economic and social conditions, political choices, international links, historical ties and cultural factors at different levels.

2.1. Migration by Residence

Figure 1 and Annex 2 depicts net migration flows by rural, urban and beach settlements for all the clusters in the Island.

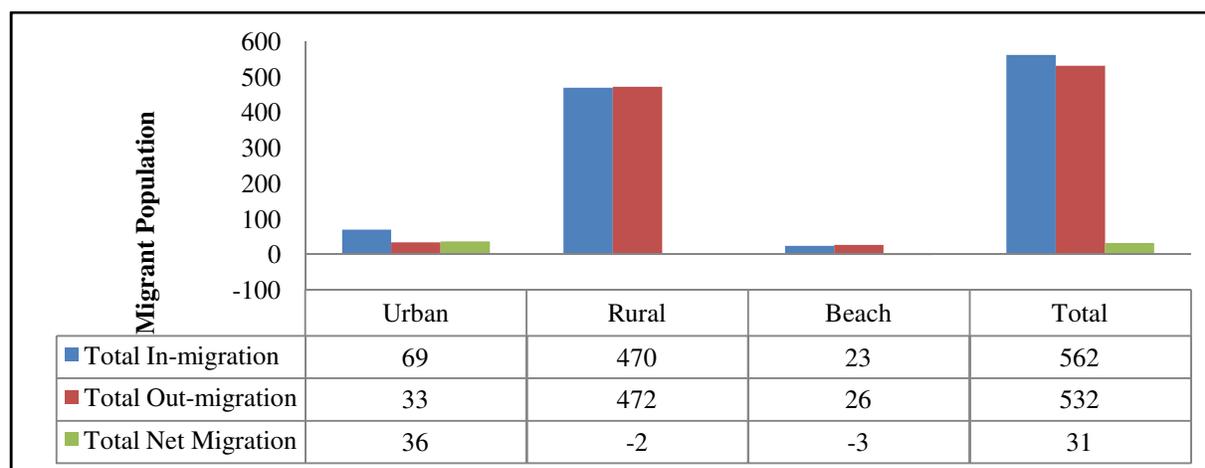


Figure 1: Total Net Migration by Residence

Source: Computed by author

Migration has been at the fore of the changing population dynamics in Kenya, not to mention fertility and mortality, in determining population size, structure, and population distribution. The emerging trend in human mobility is contributing to expansion of urban settlements and household sizes and composition by age and sex. On the other hand, Figure 2 shows that there were more female

migrants in the rural areas than in both the urban and beach areas. Nonetheless, in the urban areas there were more in-migrants than out-migrants.

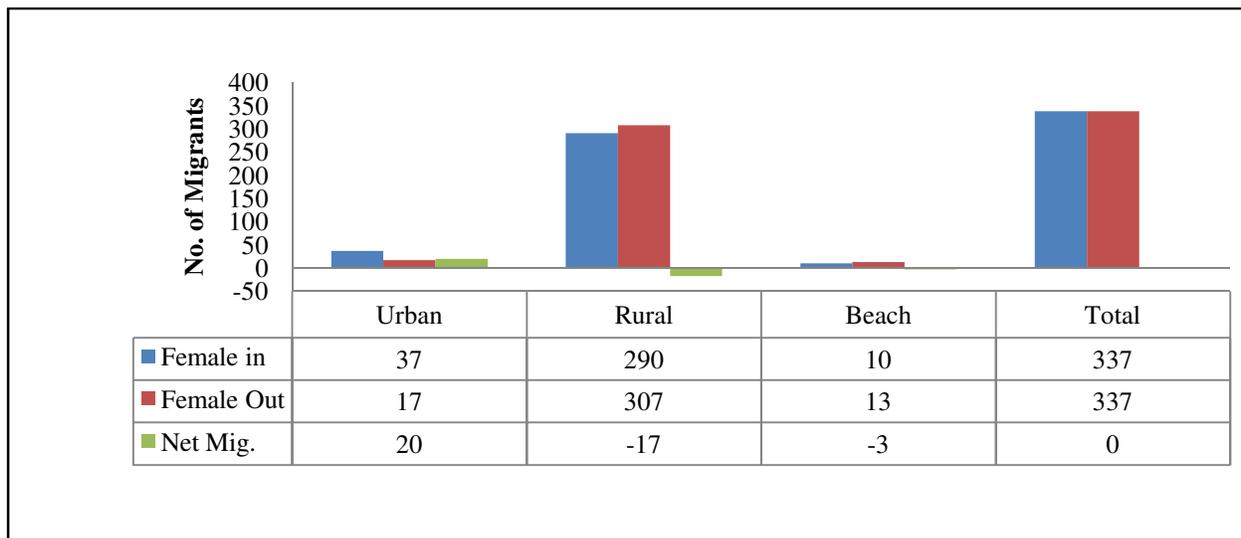


Figure 2: Female Net Migration by Residence
Source: Computed by author

This implies that urban areas in Rusinga Island are net in-migration areas as expected. This can be attributed to those moving in for labour and business purposes. Alternatively, it is evident that in the rural areas, there were more female out-migrants than in-migrants. This could be attributed to moving out in search of employment opportunities, educational facilities or moving out for marriage in other areas. Mobility in the beach areas was almost the same; however there were more female out-migrants than their in-migrant colleagues.

It was, however, conspicuous that the magnitude of male migration in Rusinga Island was lower than that of their female counterparts (Figure 3). However, it is worthy of note that there were more in-migrants in the urban areas than the out-migrants. Equally, true for migration in the rural areas, were there were more in-migrants (180) than the out-migrants (165). In the beach areas, there were same number of in-migrants and out-migrants.

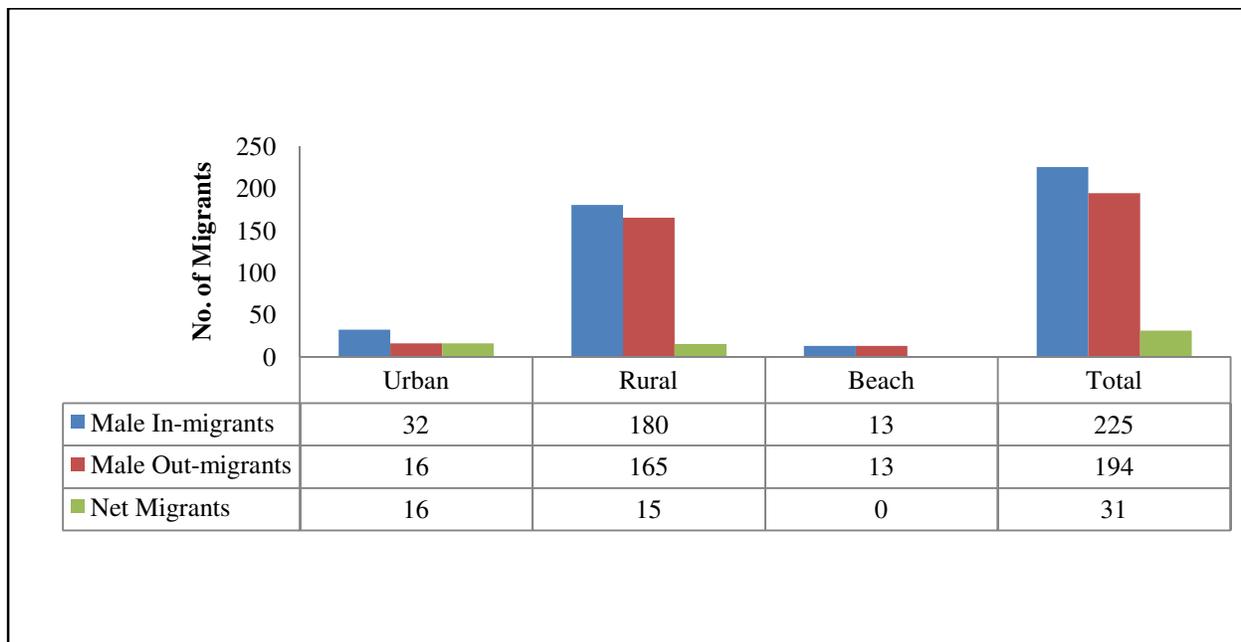


Figure 3: Male Net Migration by Residence
Source: computed by author

2.2. Migration Schedules

Figure 4 depicts male-age migration schedule that is consistent with the two-hump Kenyan Age Migration Schedule, particularly at the ages 5-9 when children migrate into the rural areas for school admissions, mainly accompanied by their parents.

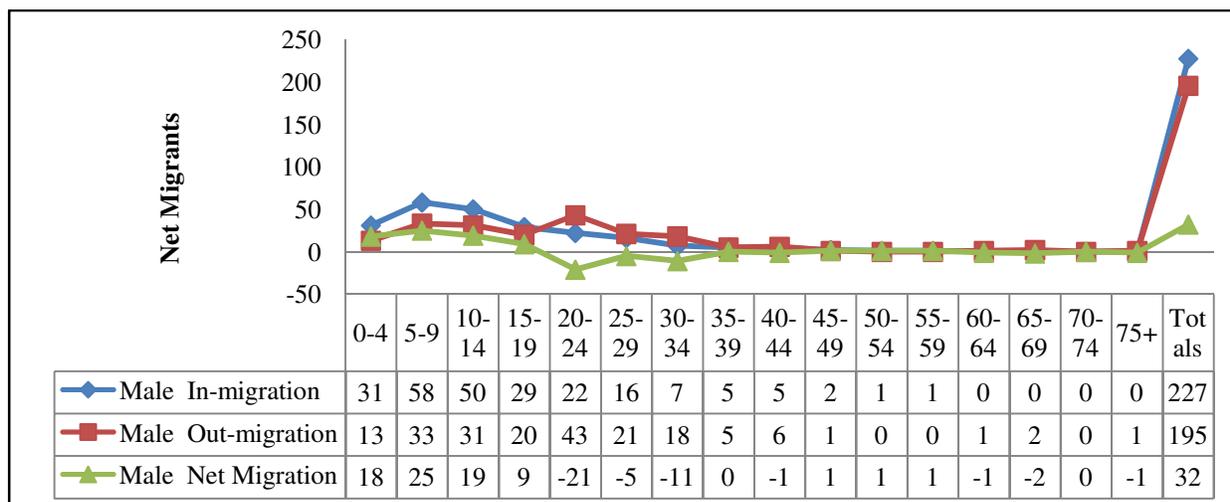


Figure 4: Male Net Migration by Age
Source: Computed by author

The second hump is witnessed at ages 20-24 when majority of school leaver and other adults who have gotten national identification cards move out to the urban areas in search of job opportunities, or to join tertiary institutions of learning. Other hump realised in Rusinga Island is at the age 75+ years, which could denote those who have either retired from their businesses or employment, moving to settle either in their farms in more fertile areas in the neighbouring localities of Suba and the larger Homa Bay and Migori Counties.

Figure 5 depicts a migration schedule of females, being similar to that of males but differs in magnitude; indicating, there were more out-migrating women than their male counterparts in the respective age groups of 20-24 and 25-29 years.

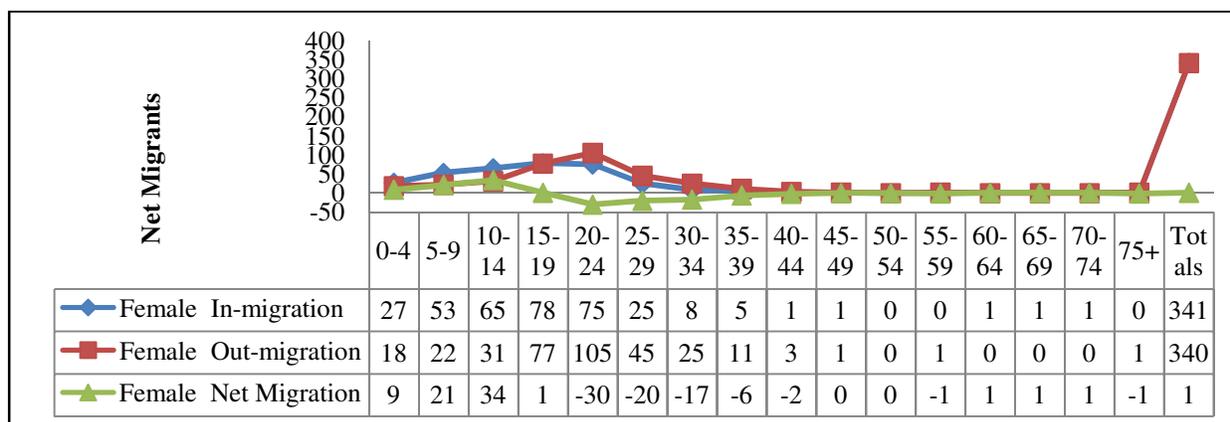


Figure 5: Female Net Migration by Age
Source: Computed by author

This could be attributed to the same reasons associated with the males. However, at the ages of 20-29, it also could be due to those moving out of the clusters due to marriage. Figure 13 (Annex 1) depicts migration schedule by total net migration, showing the highest net out-migration at ages 20-24 years.

2.3. Migrants by Marital status

The distribution of migrants by marital status by type of migration is summarized in Figure 6. The analysis shows that majority of the migrants had never been married at the time of migration.

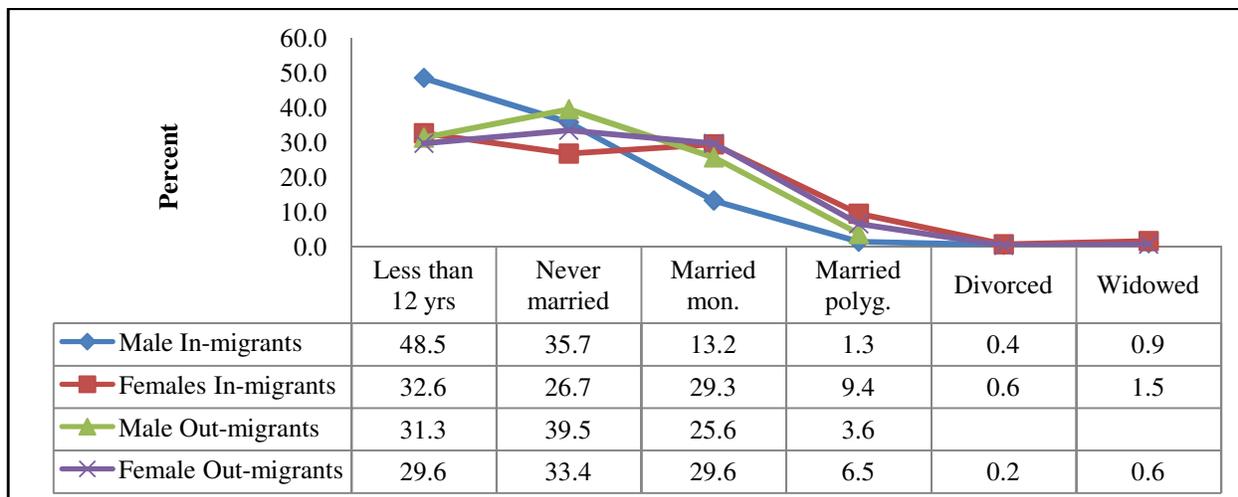


Figure 6: Percent Migrants by Marital Status
Source: Computed by author

This could be attributed to most migrants having migrated while accompanying their parents/relatives or for education purposes and/or settlement purposes with relatives. Those who were in marriage, the majority were in monogamous marriages. Equally, the widowed were more than the divorced. This could be attributed to either, the effects of natural attrition due to the effects of HIV and/or other related infections. While the negligible number of those divorced could be due to understatement, as the culture of the majority residing in Rusinga Island does not ascribe to divorce; since, whatever that could be a divorce is usually limited to separation.

2.4. Migrants by Education Level

Figure 7 depicts education attainment by in- and out-migration, respectively. It shows that in Rusinga Island, majority of both the in- and out-migrants had attained primary education level (49 and 40 percent, respectively). A significant proportion also had no education (19 and 15 percent, respectively) for the in- and out-migrants. Equally, those with secondary incomplete were more than those with secondary complete. Nonetheless, migrants with various categories of education level attainment were evident.

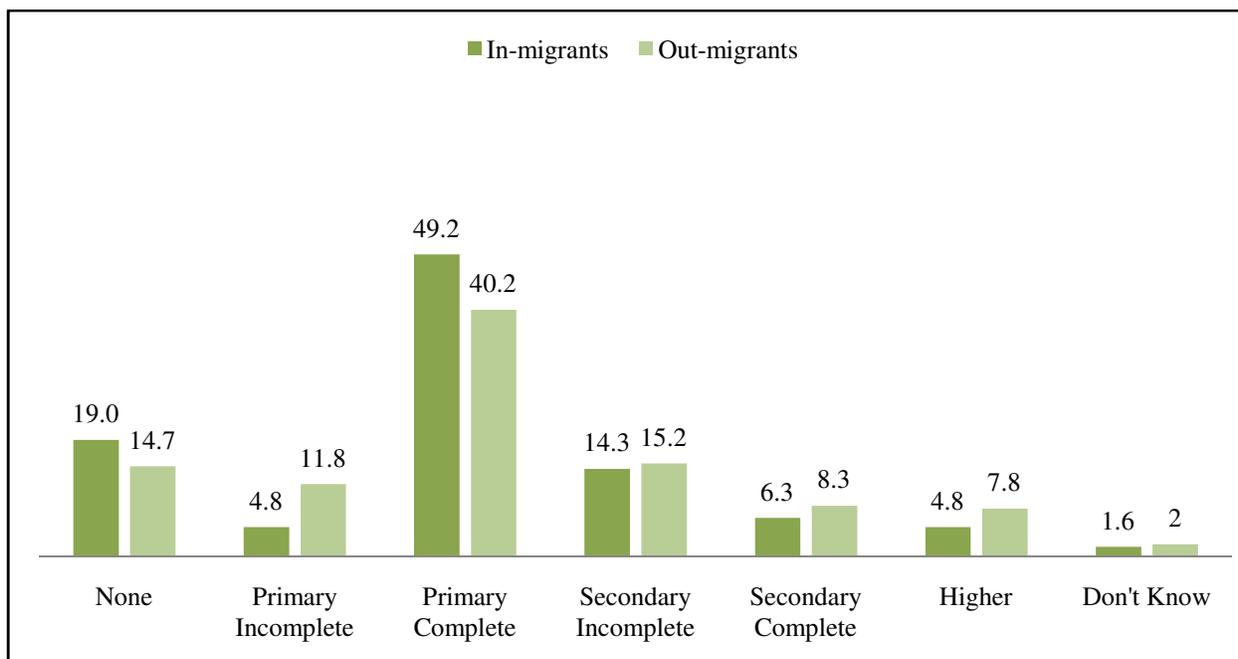


Figure 7: Net Migration by Education Levels in Rusinga Island
Source: computed by author

This scenario could be explained by none availability of education facilities in the area, creating an opportunity that can be explored for development of more education and tertiary level institutions in Rusinga Island or the larger Mbita sub-county. This means that the existing limited job opportunities that need highly skilled labour migrants in the area and the County of Homa Bay cannot be

favourably competed for by the migrant population. It implies that the migrants are majorly settled in beach and rural areas for fishing and/or menial jobs, particularly, in the urban centres to serve in service sector employment.

2.5. Migrants Activity Status

Economic reasons, such as searching for employment or better working conditions, play a significant role in the decision to migrate (Figure 8). It is worth of note that migration destinations are often not made at random, but are resultants of careful decision and choice; with migrants basing their decisions from previous discussions and debates about the viability and usefulness of the place of destination. Thus, movers already have some, if not full knowledge about the destination; which is usually a product of existing social networks and/or relationships between place of origin and destination.

Thus, unemployed and economically inactive persons are more likely to find work when they are migrants than non-migrants. Faced with great uncertainty at usual place of residence, many Kenyan families that could afford the initial financial costs began to view the sending of one or more of their members to another region on a long-term or permanent basis as an investment or a form of economic insurance

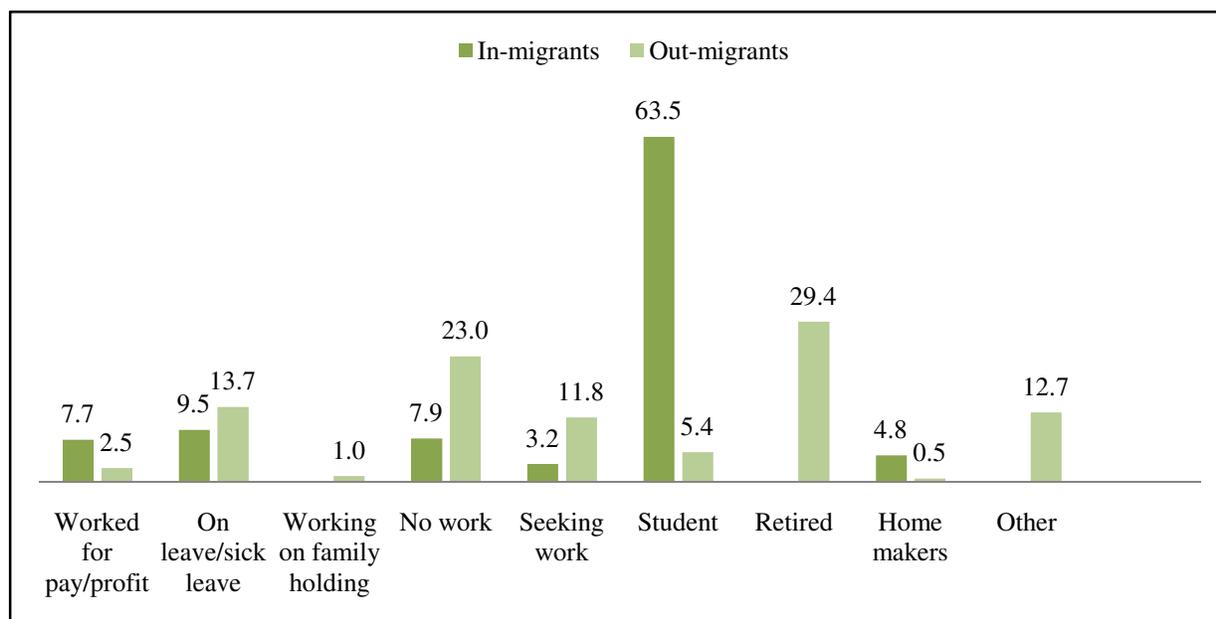


Figure 8: Net Migration by Economic Activity in Rusinga Island

Source: Computed by author

Figure 8 shows that of the migrants, at the time of survey, they were engaged in varied activities; whereby, among the in-migrants about 8 percent were engaged in work for pay, but the majority of the in-migrants were students (64 percent). To the contrary, most of the out-migrants were not engaged in more economic activity, as 14 percent were on sick leave, 23 percent had no work, 12 percent were seeking work and 29 percent were retired. It implies that, among those who out-migrated, did so either as a result of not having meaningful engagement in economic activity, or those who had either retired and going to settle elsewhere.

2.6. Reasons for Migration

Migration over time has always been for one reason or the other. Figure 9 depicts the main reasons for mobility in Rusinga Island. Analysis of reasons for in-migration shows that the main cause for in-migrating to Rusinga Island was for the purposes of settlement (43 percent) followed by going for education purposes (35 percent). It is noted that those who in-migrated for marriage purposes was significantly a large proportion (11 percent). While those who stated to have migrated for labour (6 percent) and business/trade purposes (5 percent) were also relatively significant.



Figure 9: Main Reasons for Migration
Source: Computed by author

Reasons for out-migration also take the same order, with settlement (29 percent) having been the main reason, followed by education (28 percent) and marriage (25 percent). Equally, about 10 percent had moved out of the Island to seek employment elsewhere, and 4 percent out-migrated to undertake business/trade ventures. This could be either in Homa Bay, Rongo, Migori and/or other centres outside the Island. This could have been prompted by the devolution to the counties that has encouraged more business ventures to provide services to the many county government personnel, both at the headquarter offices and/or in the sub-counties.

Figure 10 shows that reasons for in-migration vary by age as noted at age 20-24 years, whereby this is the period in which migration is highest in Rusinga Island; noting too, that this is the age where there are various reasons explaining in-migration, with marriage, settlement and labour being the major reasons for in-migrating in Rusinga Island.

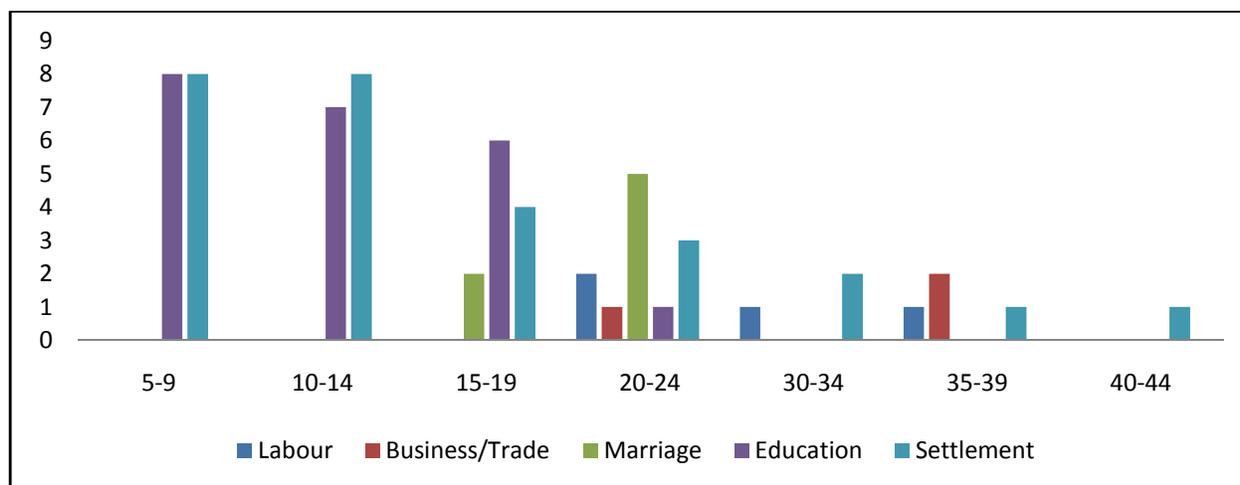


Figure 10: Reasons for In-migration in Rusinga Island
Source: computed by author

Ages 5-9 and 10-14 depict in-migration into the island as being mainly due to seeking education and settlement. This conforms to the age migration schedule hump observed for these ages, as it is elsewhere in Kenya and the counties. It is also noted that at ages 15-19 years there were those who in-migrated in Rusinga for marriages purposes; implying that they were either primary or secondary school dropouts, or those who had just completed secondary schooling and got married. Marriage, however, is a significant reason for in-migration at ages 20-24 years, while at age 30-34 years it was mainly due to labour and settlement, and at ages 35-39 the majority moved in for labour, business and settlement. It is, however, conspicuous that at ages 40-44 years, those who in-migrated were those due to settlement.

Figure 11 depicts that reasons for out-migration were numerous across all ages, from ages 5-9 through 75+ years old. Of significant note is that from age 15-19 through 30-34, most people out-migrated for marriage purposes.

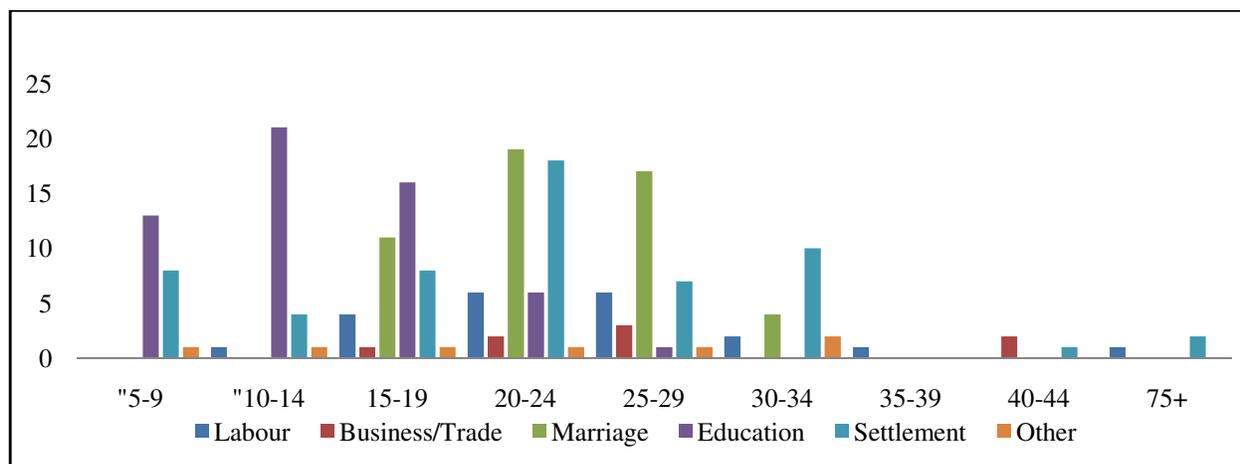


Figure 11: Reasons for Out-migration in Rusinga Island
Source: computed by author

Equally, settlement was a major reason for out-migrating. This could be due to search for good agricultural farmland elsewhere, either within Homa Bay County or in the neighbouring counties. Most so, being that a cluster was the administrative boundary considered in migration data analysis, it could be that 5 majority were migrating just to neighbouring or other clusters within the Island for either marriage, settlement, labour or education.

2.7. Decision to Migrate

Rusinga Island being mainly a rural area, the decisions to in-migrate and out-migrate as depicted in Figure 12 shows major decision-makers of migration. For instance, it is noted that for majority of in-migrants, parents and family are the prime decision makers; which could be as applies to children moving in for admission in schools and/or accompanied by their parents or moving in, to settle with their relatives. More so, it is noted that about 30 percent who in-migrated was as a result of self-decision making; which could be as a result of those moving in to provide labour in the fishing sector, working in other service industries such as hotels, financial institutions and starting own-businesses.

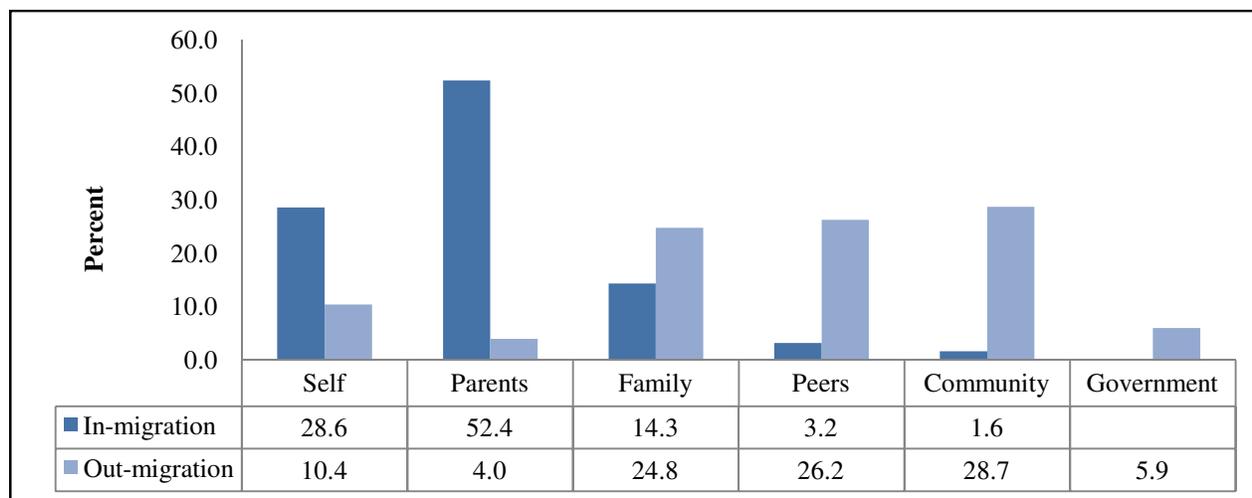


Figure 12: Main Decision-makers of Migration in Rusinga island
Source: computed by author

Out-migration was noted to be mainly a family affair, and/or as a result of peer/friends influence, community and Government influence. This implies that out-migration is not mainly a oneself decision as it has implications on family unification and cohesion. It also implies that, if the family, existence of social networks either with friends or in the community are often to a larger extent important in influencing decisions to migrate or not, as they are usually a safety net in funding transport costs, initial shelter at place of destination, and most so, information about the destination; not to mention, the initial connections to job placements at destination. It is also depicted that among the out-migrants than the in-migrants, the government placed a role in deciding who to migrate; of which, it could be mainly those working in the public service or government ministries or departments, such as in the provincial administration (uniformed officers and sub-county commissioners).

3. Discussion and Conclusion

Patterns and major migration flows in Rusinga Island can be traced to migration policies and patterns in Kenya, as were influenced partly by colonial policies and major drivers being the land policy and demand for labour in European settlements and taxation. The period immediately after post independence saw the opening of high-wage jobs in the urban areas, following the removal of controls on urban in-migration in 1959 and rural-urban migration increased to a level beyond the absorptive capacity of the urban economies (International Labour Office 1972, p. 85).

Nonetheless, as migration patterns in Kenya remains almost similar in many parts of the country, the main typologies of migration in Rusinga Island can be categorized into: rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban. Equally, there is a significant migration to the beach areas for fishing, businesses and or settlement; particularly, family members accompanying their relatives who have moved to the beach areas. Analysis of migration data shows that there is frequent movement among beach inhabitants, notably for reasons for moving to new fishing grounds among fishermen who migrate depending on the season patterns, which corroborates with fish migration from one part of the lake to the other in search of either feeding grounds or breeding areas.

Rural-urban migration, seasonal and temporary migration for agricultural employment is common in rural areas, and is used to increase family income. In the Lake Victoria Basin, the inhabitants' major economic activities include arable farming and livestock keeping, fishing and small-scale commercial activities/businesses. In areas where an increase in population has led to high population densities, thereby, high pressure on land, there has been subdivision of farm lands into small family-owned pieces of farmland that are uneconomical to manage. To that end, men move temporarily to gain waged employment in order to provide cash to support their families. The established pattern of migration is similar to study findings of Onian'go (1995), which established often seasonal migration by men in marginal areas who migrate to seek cash employment to support their families, leading to short term circulation patterns.

In explaining variation in migration schedules by age and sex, it is established that highest migration flows are at ages 0-9 and 20-24 years. Those at age 20-24 are due to labour mobility in search of jobs. This is plausibly attributed to higher levels of male education contributing to greater levels of migration amongst men than amongst women (Agesa and Agesa 1999). While those aged 0-9, migrate in company of their adult parents; hence forming another migration-hump. Nonetheless, the Rusinga Island data point to the contrary; whereby, it is the female that migrate more than male. An analysis of migration by male and sex in the Island show that mobility due to marriage, settlement, education and labour are the most notable causes for migration. Thus, most females migrated for marriage, while most men migrated into the Island for business purposes, notably in the fishing sector along the beaches and also starting small scale businesses, either in the urban and/or beach areas.

To a large extent, mobility in Rusinga Island is due to economic reasons, as explained by reasons for migration. This corroborates Agesa (1996) study that point at the economic determinants of joint migration of the whole family against sequential migration of the (male) head of household, followed by other members. The study concludes that due to women's lower earning abilities in urban areas, families are likely to engage in sequential migration to decrease the costs and risks taken and to increase the benefits and income.

The decision to migrate are linked to a form of inter-generational 'migration contract' between a migrant and his or her parents, in which the (usually male) migrant moves and sends remittances in expectation of a subsequent inheritance (Hoddinott, 1994). Similar analogy is corroborated in this study, as it is shown that in the case of in-migration, parents are the major decision makers, while for out-migration it is the family, peers/friends and community. This points to altruism in family-migration decision making, whereby there remains an attachment between the migrant and family, friends and community.

4. References

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ANNEX 1: TOTAL NET MIGRATION BY AGE, RUSINGA ISLAND

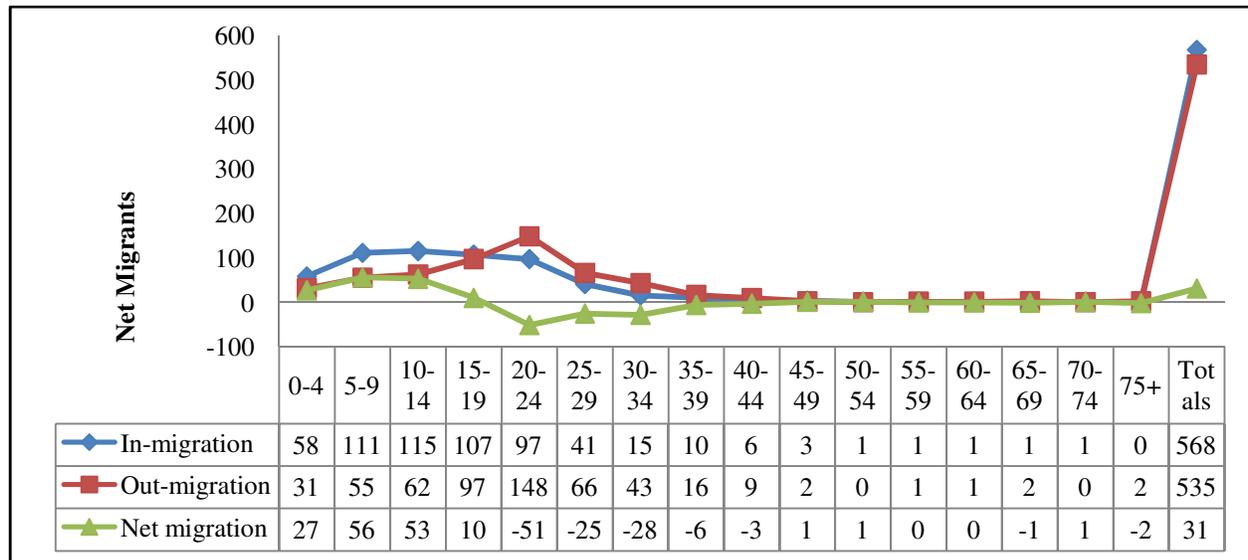


Figure 13: Total Net Migration by Age
Source: Computed by author

ANNEX 2: GROSS AND NET MIGRATION BY CLUSTERS, RUSINGA ISLAND

Cluster	Male			Female			Gross Migration			Total (Net Migration)		
	In -mig	Out-mig	Net	In-mig	Out-mig	Net	Male	Female	Total	In-mig	Out-mig	Net
Wakondo	2	11	-9	4	17	-13	13	21	34	6	28	-22
Kakrigu South	5	6	-1	7	16	-9	11	23	34	12	22	-10
Kakrigu North	13	11	2	14	14	0	24	28	52	27	25	2
Wariga	6	8	-2	10	13	-3	14	23	37	16	21	-5
Wasaria	23	7	16	25	18	7	30	43	73	48	25	23
Bondo B	9	1	8	9	1	8	10	10	20	18	2	16
Bondo A	5	4	1	4	4	0	9	8	17	9	8	1
Waregi East	1	1	0	3	0	3	2	3	5	4	1	3
Waregi West	3	0	3	7	1	6	3	8	11	10	1	9
Kolo B	8	1	7	9	4	5	9	13	22	17	5	12
Kolo A	12	4	8	10	6	4	16	16	32	22	10	12
Kamgere B	8	1	7	8	0	8	9	8	17	16	1	15
Kamgere A	3	2	1	3	2	1	5	5	10	6	4	2
Utajo B	17	22	-5	12	25	-13	39	37	76	29	47	-18
Utajo A	3	1	2	4	3	1	4	7	11	7	4	3
Lianda B	34	31	3	31	69	-38	65	100	165	65	100	-35
Lianda A	11	10	1	20	33	-13	21	53	74	31	43	-12
Sienga A	4	2	2	17	5	12	6	22	28	21	7	14
Sienga B	2	1	1	12	4	8	3	16	19	14	5	9
Kamayoge	4	0	4	8	6	2	4	14	18	12	6	6
Waembe	7	8	-1	18	9	9	15	27	42	25	17	8
Wamwanga	0	2	-2	2	5	-3	2	7	9	2	7	-5
Nyangera A	8	8	0	7	12	-5	16	19	35	15	20	-5
Nyangera B	5	2	3	15	6	9	7	21	28	20	8	12
Ragoo A	1	0	1	3	0	3	1	3	4	4	0	4
Ragoo B	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	3	0	3
Ukowe	9	1	8	20	6	14	10	26	36	29	7	22
Lwanda A	0	1	-1	3	2	1	1	5	6	3	3	0
Lwanda B	2	4	-2	8	9	-1	6	17	23	10	13	-3
Gunda	3	3	0	6	4	2	6	10	16	9	7	2
Kiagasa	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	1	1
Dier Aora	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Warengo A	2	2	0	4	2	2	4	6	10	6	4	2
Wakwala	2	1	1	1	0	1	3	1	4	3	1	2
Kakrunu	0	1	-1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	-1
Kaktemo	4	5	-1	8	3	5	9	11	20	12	8	4
Kabade	2	15	-13	3	14	-11	17	17	34	3	29	-26
Wayando	0	3	-3	2	6	-4	3	8	11	2	9	-7
Nyakrato	4	3	1	7	3	4	7	10	17	11	6	5
Wamwaya	0	1	-1	2	2	0	1	4	5	2	3	-1
Warengo B	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	2	2	0	2
Ngodhe	4	10	-6	8	16	-8	14	24	38	12	26	-14
Totals	227	195	32	341	340	1	422	681	1103	568	535	33

Source: Computed by author

