

Point-to-Point Migration from the 1999 Kenya Census:
A methodological Look at Push and Pull Factors in Space and Time

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Background

Kenyan censuses have traditionally collected information on place of birth, place of enumeration, and place of residence 12 months before the census. From these data analysis has often been limited to two-point migration – usually long-term or lifetime migration (place of birth versus place of enumeration) and short-term migration (current residence versus residence 12 months before the census) (ROK 1977 1982 1988 1994 1996 2001). More scholarly studies, both direct and indirect, have similarly been based on the two-point migration framework (Beskok 1981; Odipo 1994; Ominde 1968; Oucho 1988; Oucho and Omogi 1991; Oucho and Odipo 2000; Rempell 1977 1981; Wakajummah 1987). These studies serve to highlight movement of people around the country. No doubt, they have made important contribution to the analysis of migration statistics, as well as recommendations on which some key policies are based. However, they do not fully utilize the data collected in the censuses. They fail to track the frequent back-and-forth migratory flows that are now commonplace in Kenya and most African countries. In particular, they fail to track people at three different temporal points in space, that is place of birth, place of enumeration, and residence 12 months before the census, thereby missing out all the return migrants – people who migrated but moved back to their place of birth before the enumeration date. This does not augur well for planning, policy, and research, especially as far as recent migratory patterns as well as the characteristics of the migrants are concerned.

In this study, we re-examine the 1999 Kenyan Census data to tease out point-to-point migration – tracing moves between place of birth, place of enumeration, and residence a year before the census. We look first at the numbers of migrants by age and sex on a province by province basis, to see the population flows between the provinces, from birth to previous residence, previous residence to current residence, and birthplace to current residence, but also from birthplace to previous residence to current residence. Additionally, we look at trends in age, educational attainment, labor force participation, and unemployment to study the various pushes and pulls involved in migration decision making. The census also collected information on the duration of residence at the current place of residence. This added piece of information helps to screen migrants and distinguish long-term movers from short-term or temporary ones.

Preliminary results

Because the question on residence a year before the census (in 1998) could only be asked of persons one year and older, the total population considered in the analysis was 27,260,651, less than the 29 million for the enumerated population (Table 1). The table shows the distribution of the population by province, and by the various migration categories. A larger table will include persons not resident in the province being considered in the columns, and permits analysis of out-migrants from the province as well as in-migrants. But, for the rows shown here, we find that about 26 million (95 percent of population, as seen in Table 2) not moving in the year before the census, with about 5 percent moving. The table also shows that about 23.3 million were residing in the province of birth (86 percent), compared to the 4.0 million who had moved since birth.

Table 1. Place of Birth by Place of Residence in 1998 by Place of Residence in 1999: Kenya, 1999

Places	Total	Nairobi	Central	Coast	Eastern	NE	Nyanza	Rift Valley	Western
Resident in this province	27,260,651	2,025,724	3,591,106	2,364,163	4,451,441	812,000	4,201,271	6,602,055	3,212,891
In this province in 1998	25,995,549	1,683,761	3,450,807	2,248,755	4,332,890	802,149	4,037,049	6,314,994	3,125,144
Not in this province in 1998	1,265,102	341,963	140,299	115,408	118,551	9,851	164,222	287,061	87,747
Born in this province	23,304,736	591,303	3,191,801	1,991,143	4,268,335	791,361	3,930,229	5,510,581	3,029,983
In this province in 1998	22,872,567	564,625	3,143,544	1,959,669	4,193,385	785,730	3,825,210	5,422,045	2,978,359
Not in this province in 1998	432,169	26,678	48,257	31,474	74,950	5,631	105,019	88,536	51,624
Not born in this province	3,955,915	1,434,421	399,305	373,020	183,106	20,639	271,042	1,091,474	182,908
In this province in 1998	3,122,982	1,119,136	307,263	289,086	139,505	16,419	211,839	892,949	146,785
Not in this province in 1998	832,933	315,285	92,042	83,934	43,601	4,220	59,203	198,525	36,123

Source: Unpublished data from the 1999 Kenya Census of Population and Housing

Additionally, this analysis provides the third point in the migration process. About 23 million people were born and lived in the same Province in 1998 and 1999 – basically, they did not move (although they may have moved in the interim, they were found in the Province of birth at both times). At the other end of the continuum, about 800,000 people were born in one province, lived in a different province one year before the census, and lived in a third province at the time of the census; these were the multiple migrants.

Table 2 provides additional information on a percentage basis, and allows for easy comparisons between the provinces. Fully 17 percent of Nairobi's population in 1999 had lived in a different province one year before, in 1998. And, while 84 percent of each of the other provinces' population was born in that province, only 29 percent of those living in Nairobi in 1999 were actually born there.

Table 2 portrays a strong urban pull – to Nairobi, the capital city – in the years leading up to the census. While 70 percent of Nairobi's population aged one year and above was born in another province, 55 percent of them were living in Nairobi in 1998, underscoring the primacy of Nairobi in Kenya's rural-urban pull and related social and economic development process. Population movement into the Rift Valley Province is considerable as well, but this represents rural-rural pull, mainly in search of land for agriculture and settlement.

Places	Total	Nairobi	Central	Coast	Eastern	NE	Nyanza	Rift Valley	Western
Resident in this province	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
In this province in 1998	95.4	83.1	96.1	95.1	97.3	98.8	96.1	95.7	97.3
Not in this province in 1998	4.6	16.9	3.9	4.9	2.7	1.2	3.9	4.3	2.7
Born in this province	85.5	29.2	88.9	84.2	95.9	97.5	93.5	83.5	94.3
In this province in 1998	83.9	27.9	87.5	82.9	94.2	96.8	91.0	82.1	92.7
Not in this province in 1998	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.7	0.7	2.5	1.3	1.6
Not born in this province	14.5	70.8	11.1	15.8	4.1	2.5	6.5	16.5	5.7
In this province in 1998	11.5	55.2	8.6	12.2	3.1	2.0	5.0	13.5	4.6
Not in this province in 1998	3.1	15.6	2.6	3.6	1.0	0.5	1.4	3.0	1.1

Source: Unpublished data from the 1999 Kenya Census of Population and Housing

Beyond simple counts and percentages, we can also look at differentials for various population characteristics by migration status. For example, Table 3 shows the same categories but contains the percentage of the adult population having attained at least Form 4 (secondary school) education. As expected more educated people have the highest rate of recent migration, while more urban provinces (Nairobi, Coast, Central and Eastern) are more likely to retain and attract more educated population.

Places	Nairobi	Central	Coast	Eastern	NE	Nyanza	Rift Valley	Western
Resident in this province	44.2	22.5	17.1	13.6	3.6	14.4	15.8	14.3
In this province in 1998	45.6	22.1	16.2	13.2	3.3	14.0	15.3	13.9
Not in this province in 1998	37.1	31.2	31.0	26.5	24.2	23.8	25.4	25.7
Born in this province	52.9	21.7	12.0	12.8	2.7	13.7	13.0	13.5
In this province in 1998	52.9	21.5	11.8	12.6	2.6	13.4	12.8	13.3
Not in this province in 1998	53.9	35.7	26.0	23.1	7.7	22.6	20.6	23.7
Not born in this province	42.7	27.2	33.9	29.3	30.1	23.1	24.5	23.3
In this province in 1998	44.1	26.8	34.2	28.4	27.0	22.3	24.0	22.1
Not in this province in 1998	36.3	28.6	32.5	32.9	41.1	26.3	27.2	29.1

Source: Unpublished data from the 1999 Kenya Census of Population and Housing

Finally, Table 4 shows that the higher propensity for the more educated population to move to the more urban provinces results in high unemployment rates, especially among the recent migrants. The table also suggests that this same group of people seem to move around a lot from one (urban) area to another, perhaps in search of economic opportunities.

Places	Nairobi	Central	Coast	Eastern	NE	Nyanza	Rift Valley	Western
Resident in this province	17.9	6.9	15.3	8.2	18.9	8.2	9.3	6.8
In this province in 1998	15.6	6.6	14.8	8.1	18.9	7.9	9.0	6.6
Not in this province in 1998	30.0	12.7	23.2	12.0	16.3	13.3	15.1	12.0
Born in this province	27.1	6.6	15.5	8.1	19.1	8.0	9.5	6.7
In this province in 1998	26.8	6.5	15.4	8.0	19.1	7.8	9.5	6.6
Not in this province in 1998	32.9	9.1	20.5	11.1	19.8	11.8	11.2	10.5
Not born in this province	16.4	8.8	14.7	9.7	12.5	10.4	8.9	8.6
In this province in 1998	13.6	7.3	12.5	8.6	12.3	8.9	7.3	7.3
Not in this province in 1998	29.9	14.8	24.0	13.8	13.1	16.2	16.5	14.6

Source: Unpublished data from the 1999 Kenya Census of Population and Housing

Concluding remarks

This paper explores a more comprehensive way of analyzing migration from the limited censuses data. By moving from two-point migration to three- and more-point migration, we get a fuller understanding of the counts, flows, and the characteristics of the migrants. Adding information on duration of residence (this will be done in the final paper) adds valuable information that can facilitate planning and research.

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