

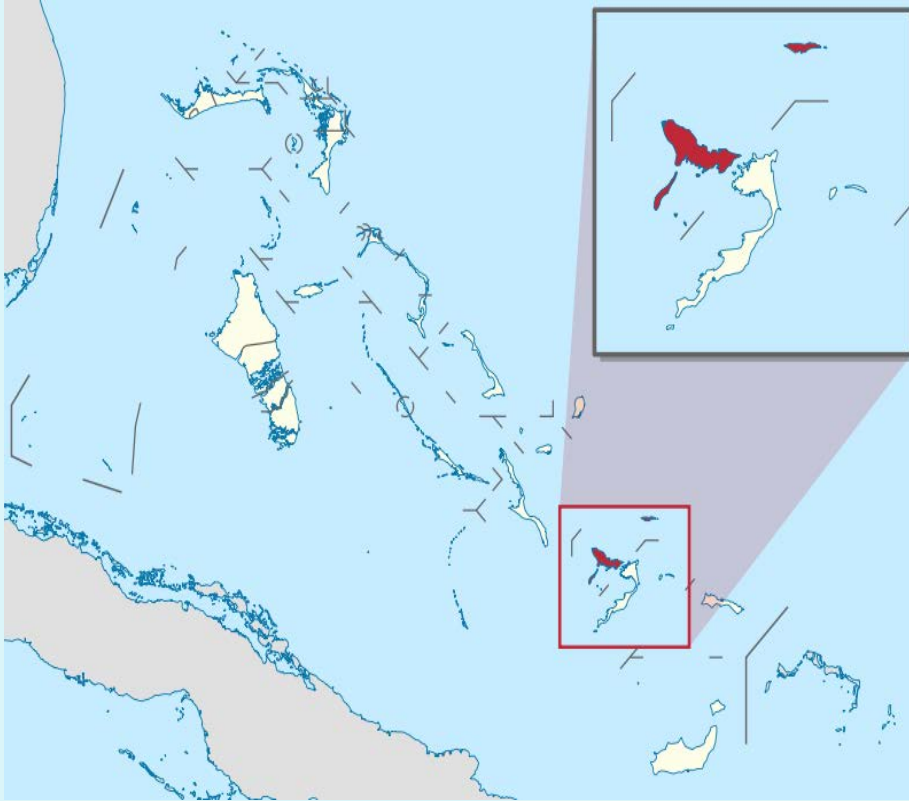
# **CROOKED ISLAND, THE BAHAMAS: A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY**

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2014 Applied Demography Conference

# Overview of Research

- ▣ Residents' emigrating from rural areas to major metropolitan cities is a major demographic phenomenon, both domestically and internationally. In order to explore this phenomenon, this study uses community field theory to address how family networks and communication technology allow residents of Crooked Island, The Bahamas to develop relationships and continue to rebuild community despite population loss from out-migration.

# History of Crooked Island, The Bahamas



- One of the 30 inhabited islands in The Bahamas is Crooked Island
- It is located in the southeastern archipelago
- It was first settled by American loyalists in the 1780s
- During the height of cotton production there were 40 plantations with 1200 slaves
- Crooked Island population reached its highest point in 1901 at 1,597
- According to the 2010 Bahamian Census the population of Crooked Island was 323

# Research Question

## **Primary Question**

- Do family networks and communication technology allow Crooked Island residents to build relationships and their sense of community despite population loss from out-migration?

# Research Question

## Secondary Question

- 1) How does familial networks relate to community identity and attachment which can be augmented via communication technologies?
- 2) Does the annual Crooked Island Family Homecoming act as an avenue for community action and development in which families participate?

# Community Field Theory

- ▣ “Focus on local citizen interaction, mobilization, and residents working together as they address place-relevant matters” (Brennan, Bridger, and Luloff 2009:85).
- ▣ Community Agency is that “corresponding development can be seen as the process of building relationships that increase the capacity of local people to come together to act” (Brennan, Bridger, and Luloff 2009:90).
- ▣ Community Action “refers to the process of building social relationships in pursuit of common community interest and maintaining local life” (Brennan, Bridger, and Luloff 2009:91).



# Methodology

Mix-method approach

- ▣ Quantitative Research
  - ▣ Available Secondary Data
    - Bahamas Department of Statistics Census Bureau
    - [www.statistics.bahamas.gov.bs](http://www.statistics.bahamas.gov.bs).

# Methodology

## ▣ **Field Observation**

- I became actively involved in the Nassau chapter of the Crooked Island Association.
- I also traveled to Crooked Island for four days to attend the Crooked Island Homecoming.



# Methodology

## ▣ Interviews

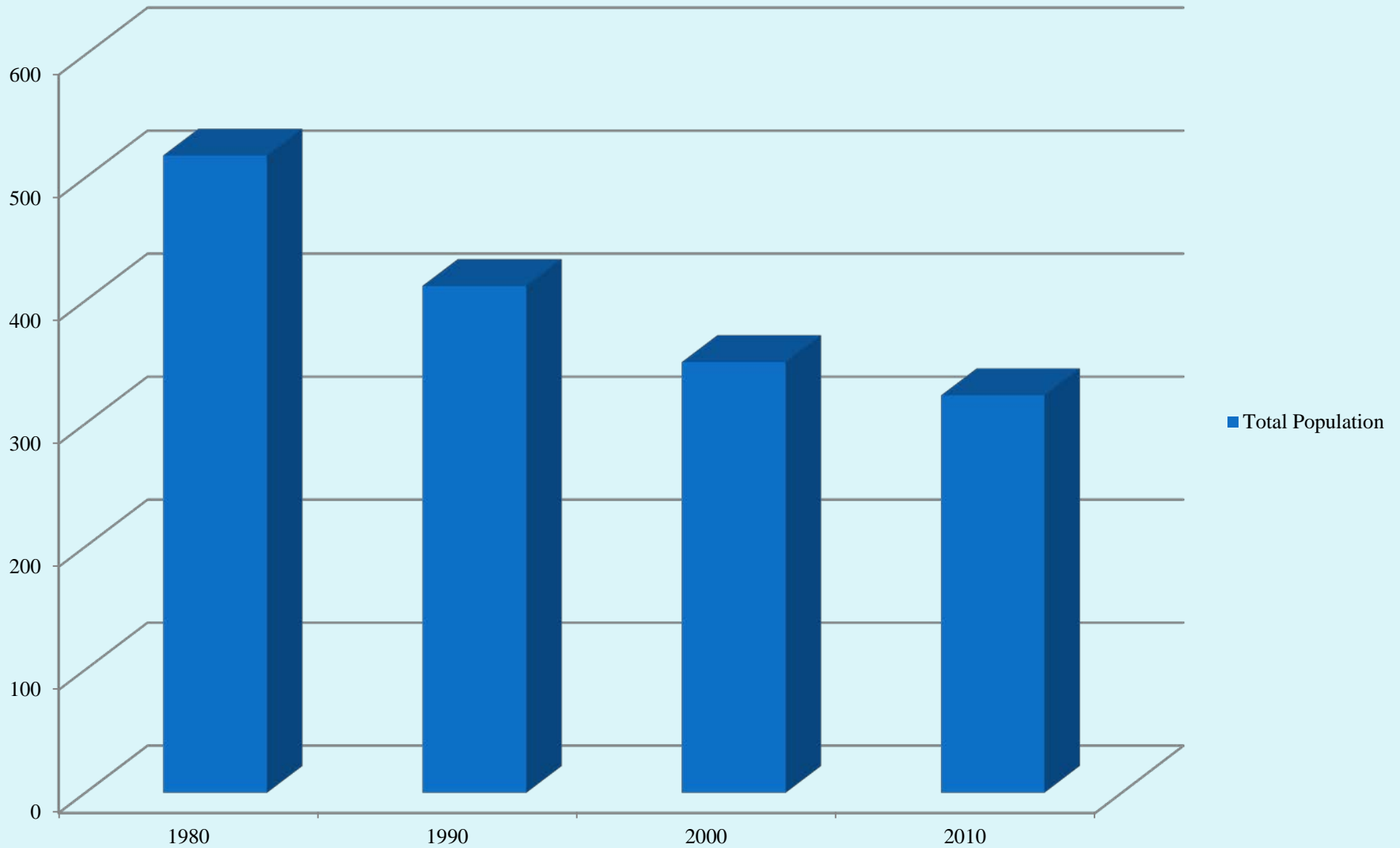
- The interview candidate pool included males and females ranging in ages from 18-80.
- The pool also consisted of both residents living in Crooked Island and those who have left.
- From this pool, I conducted 16 interviews, including 10 residents of Crooked Island and 6 former residents who have migrated from Crooked Island.

# Findings

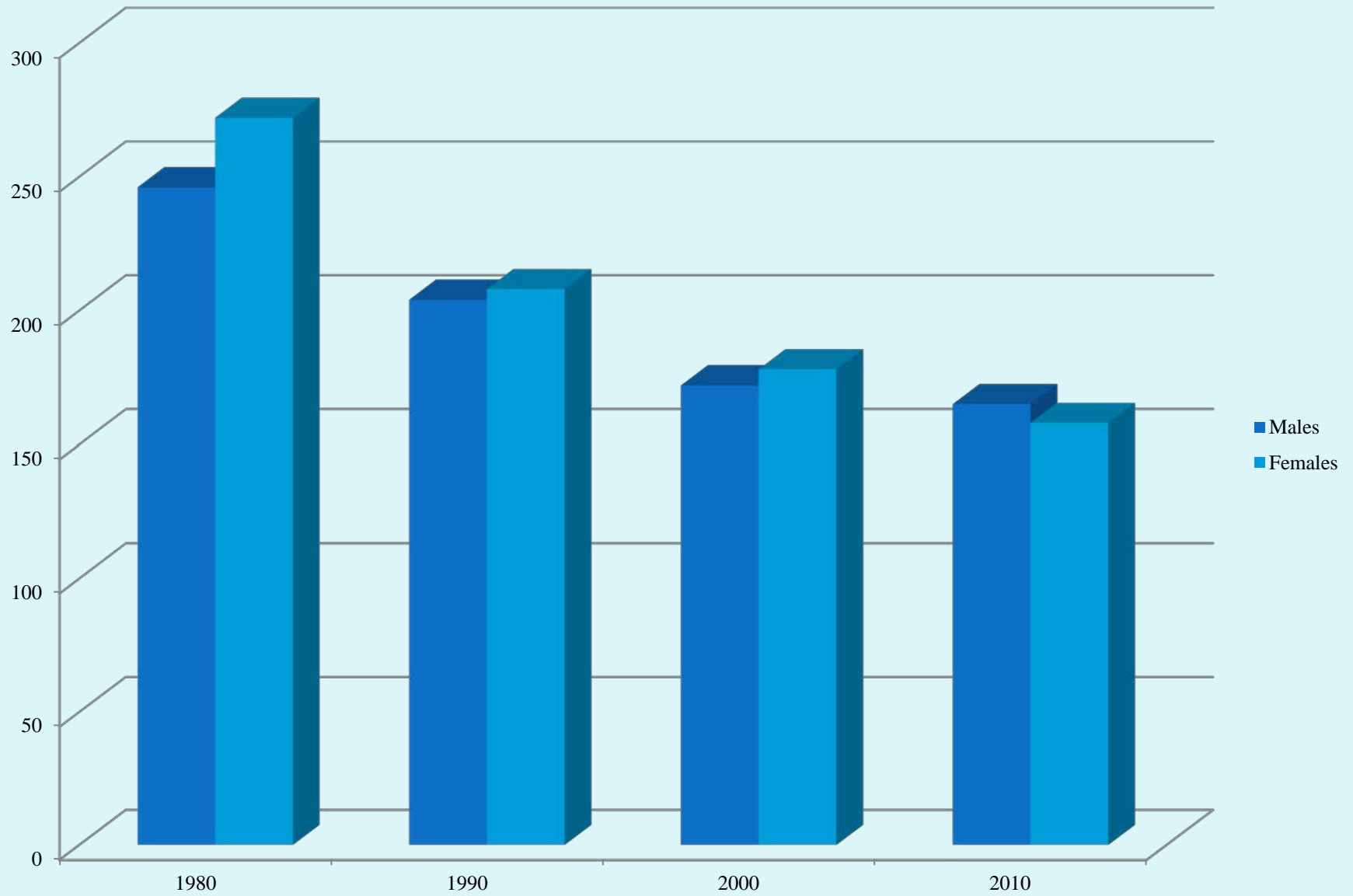
- ▣ The major issues in need of attention concerning the community of Crooked Island include:
  - ▣ Decrease in population,
  - ▣ Family relation,
  - ▣ Reciprocal exchange,
  - ▣ Communication technology,
  - ▣ Community and generational change,
  - ▣ Homecoming/Reunion.

# Decrease Population

**Total Population Crooked Island 1980-2010**



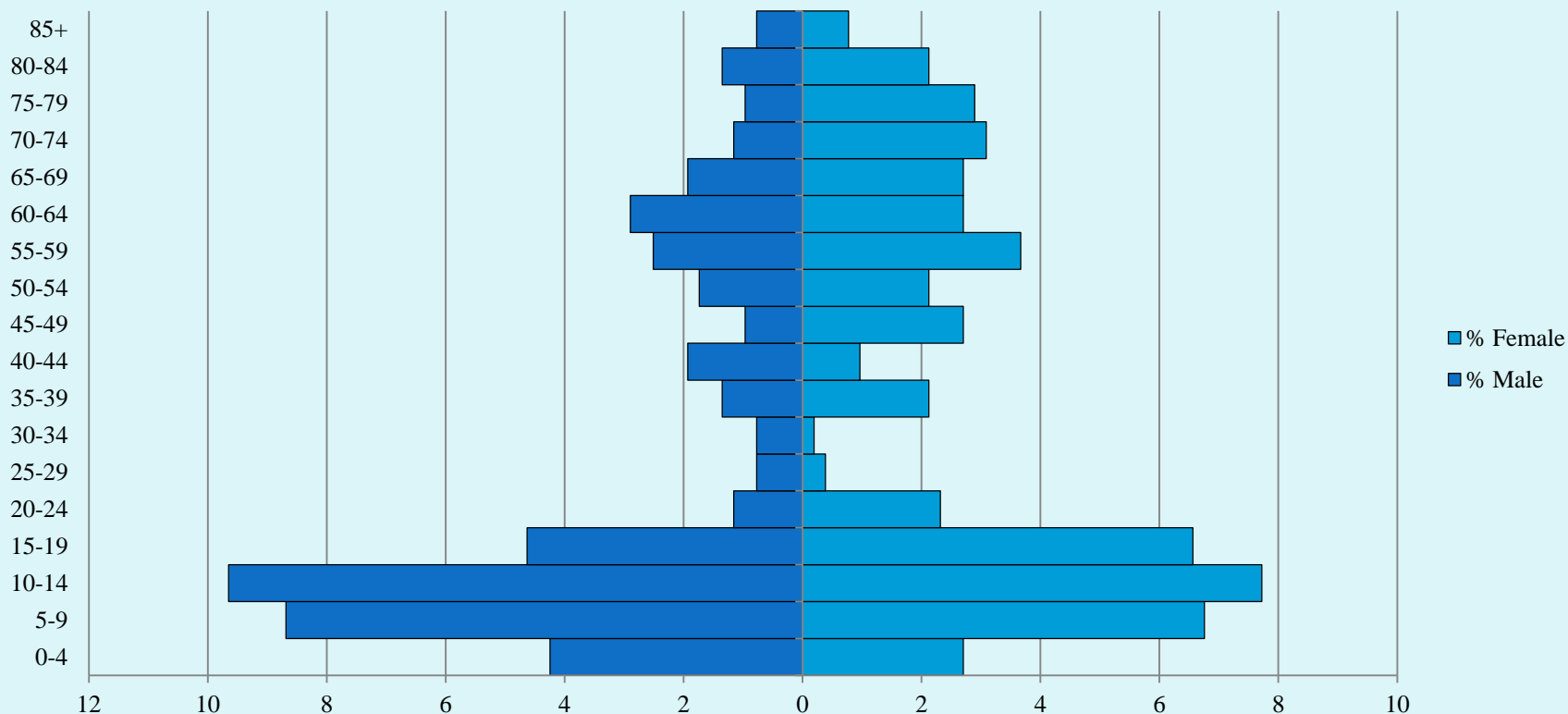
**Male and Female Population of Crooked Island 1980-2010**



- ▣ “We left Crooked Island for a better way of living because you could do better farming in South Acklins.”
- ▣ “When the young people leave a place or organization, it is a dying place.”

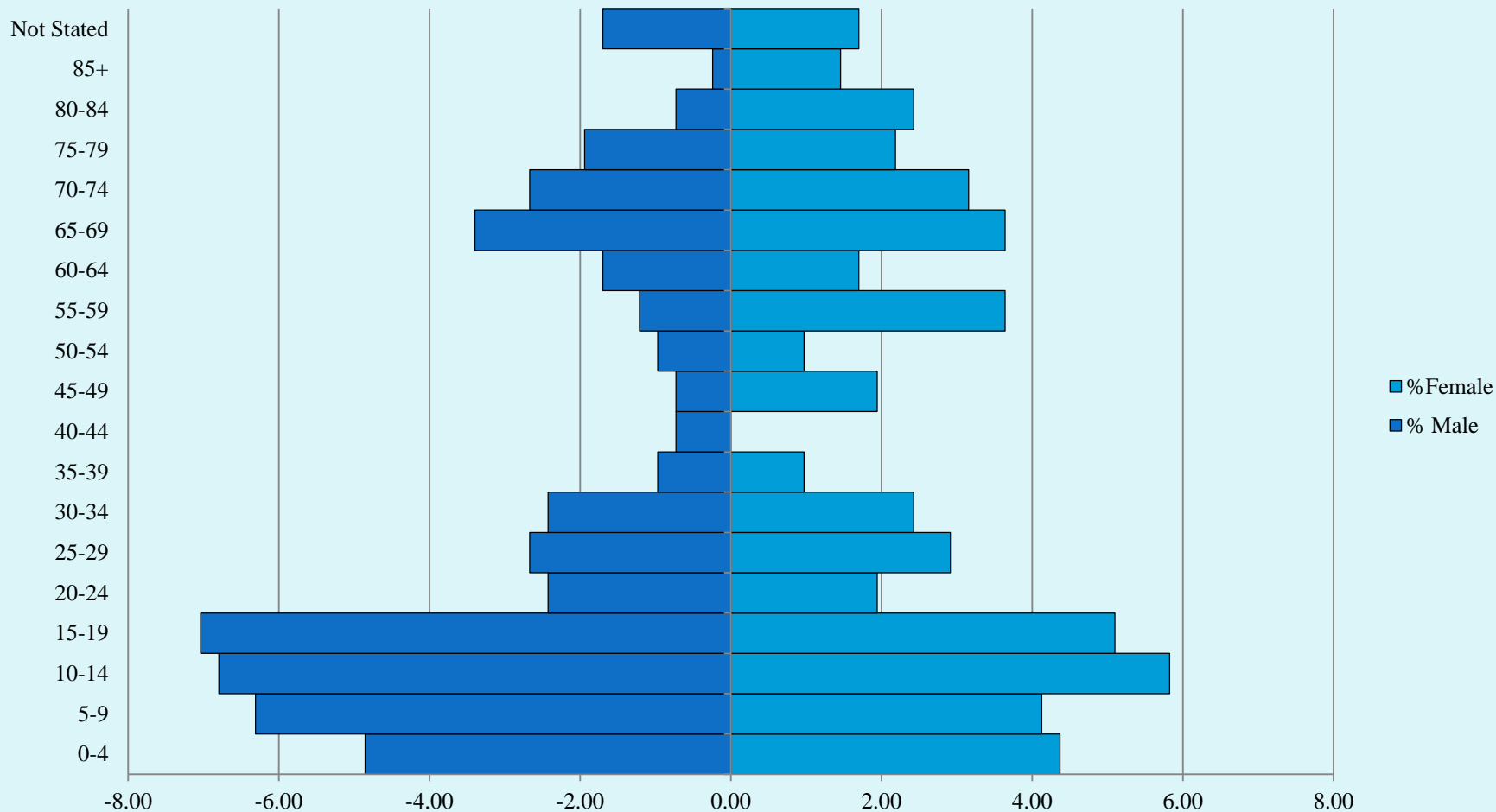
# Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, The Bahamas 1980, Data

Source: The Bahamas Department of Statistics



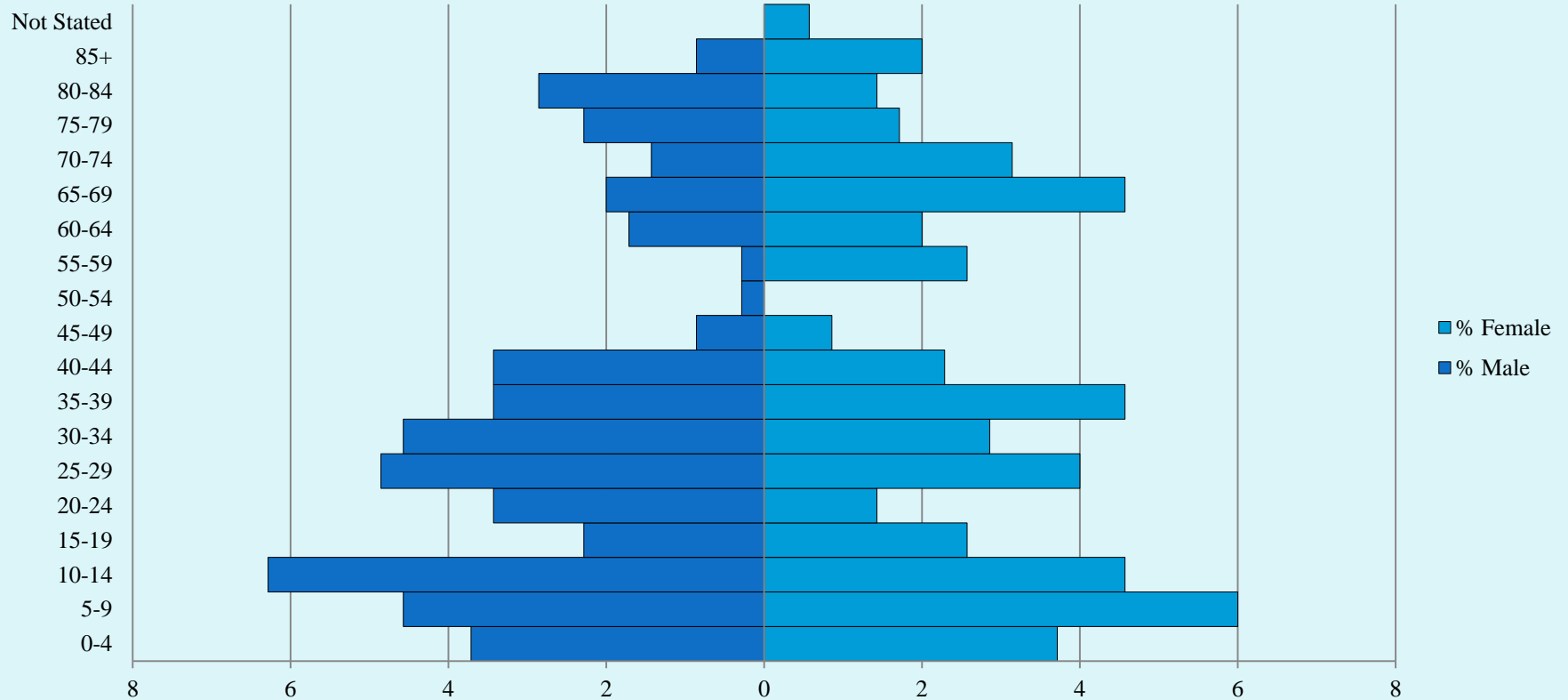
# Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, The Bahamas 1990, Data

Source: The Bahamas Department of Statistics



# Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, The Bahamas 2000, Data

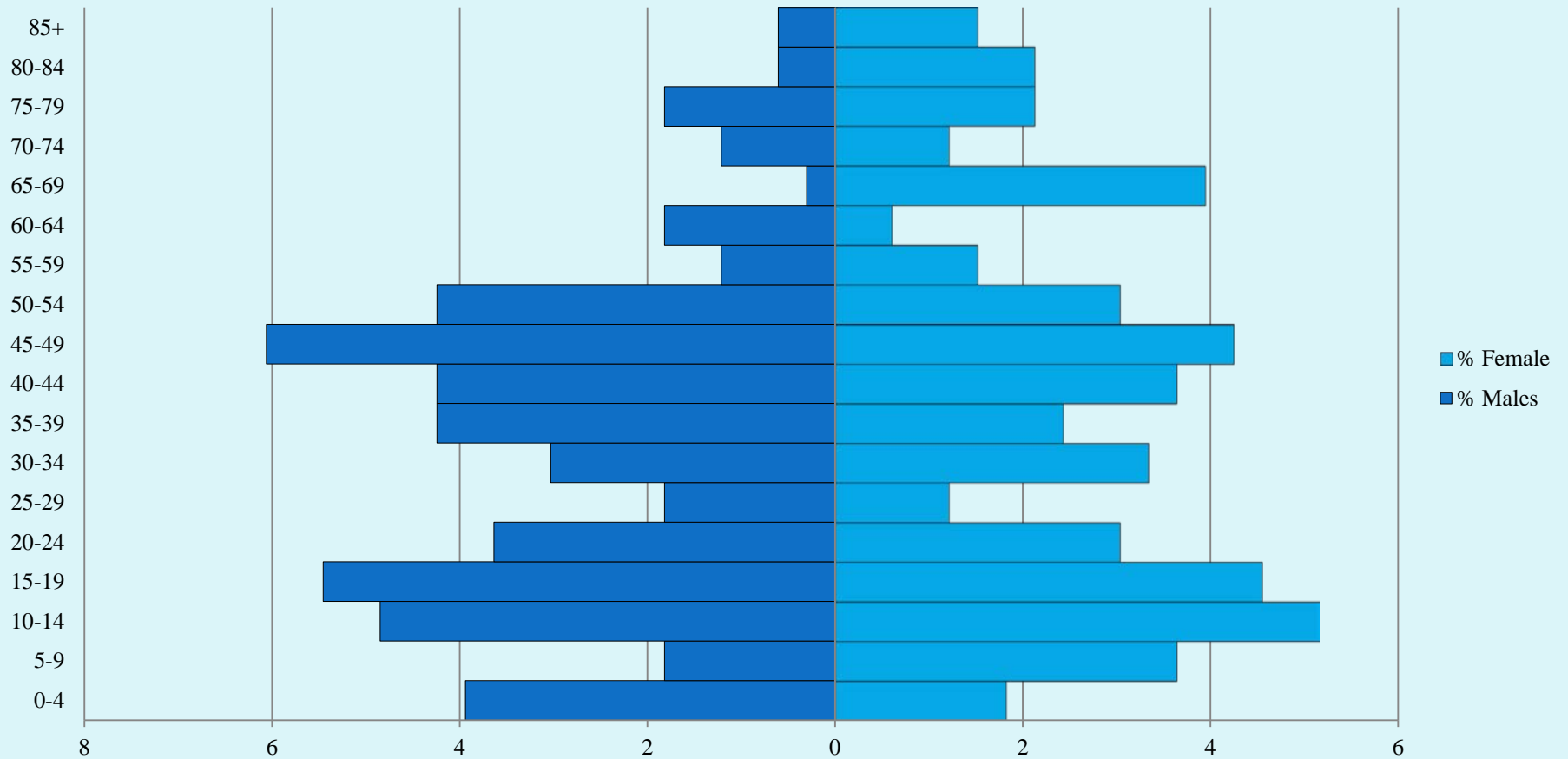
Source: The Bahamas Department of Statistics





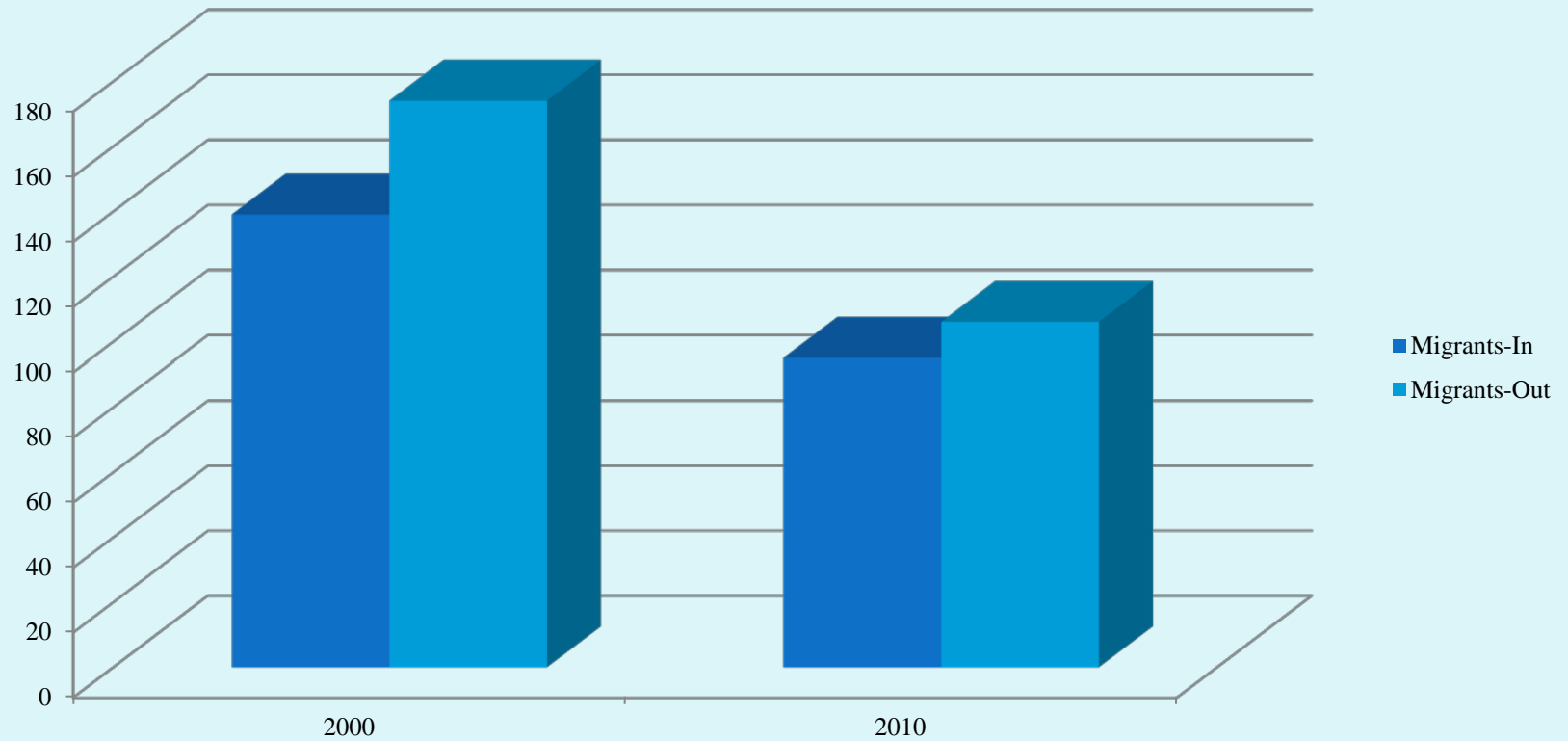
# Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, The Bahamas 2012, Data

Source: The Bahamas Department of Statistics



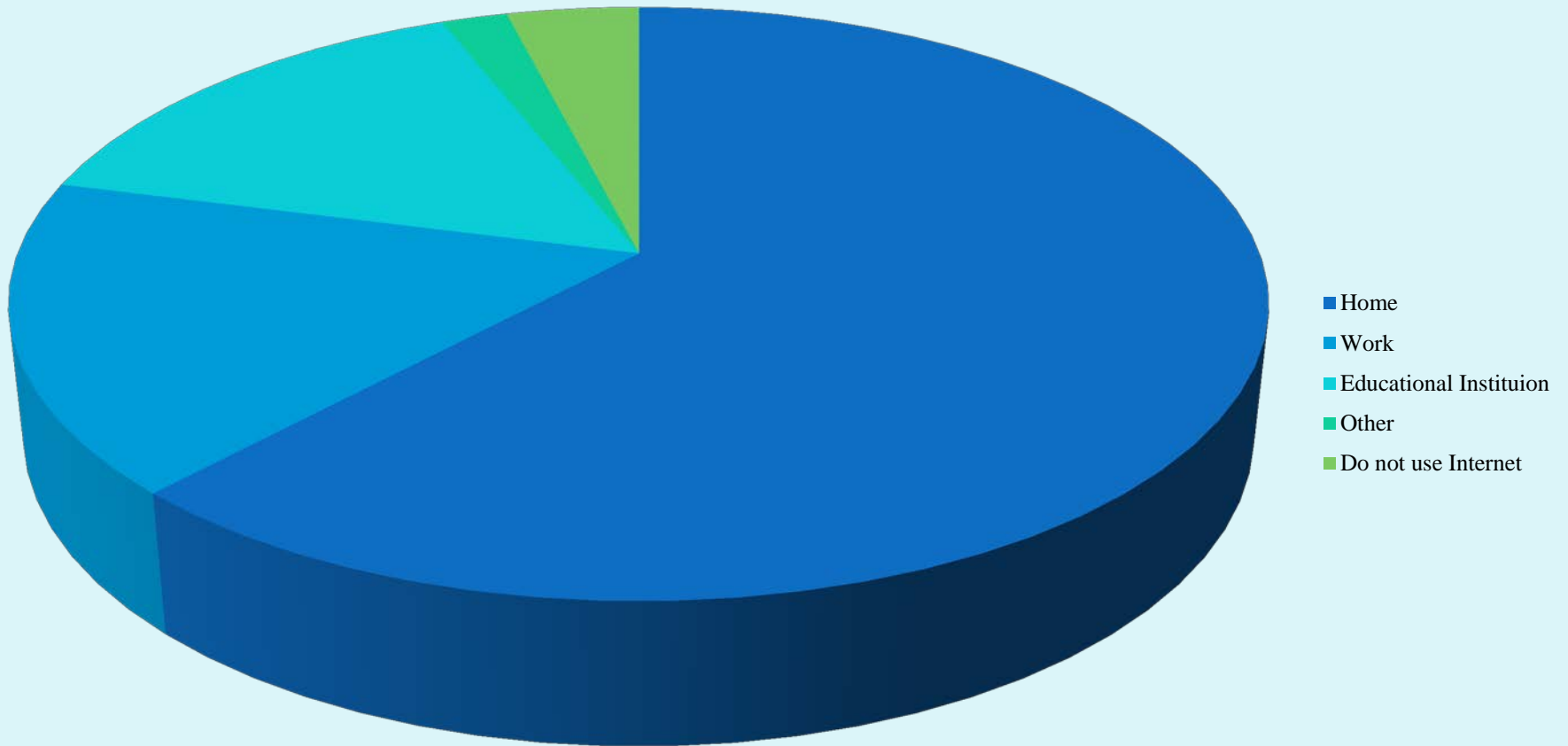
# People Leaving People Returning

## Internal and External Migrants



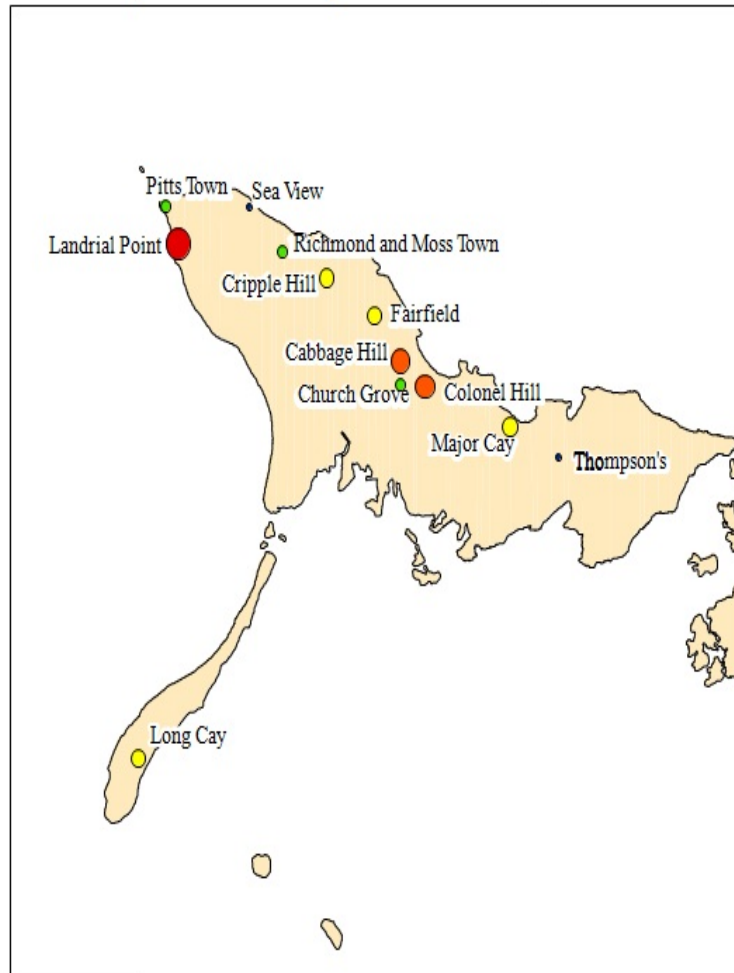
# Technology

## Internet Useage Crooked Island



# Settlement Decline

2000 Population Density Crooked Island, The Bahamas



**Legend**  
Total Population

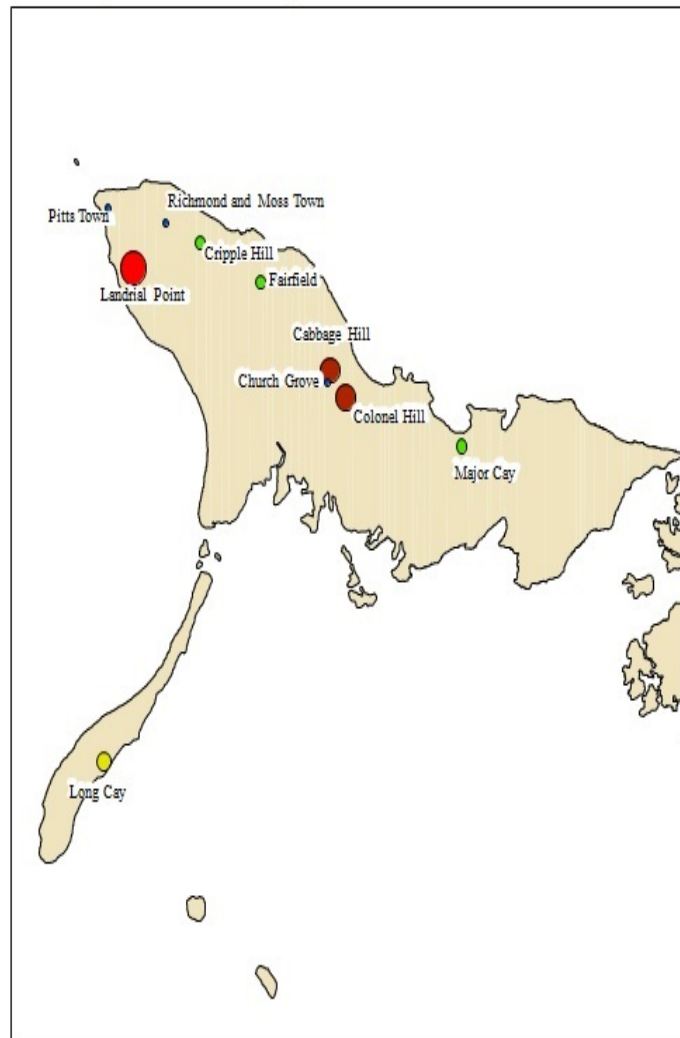
- 0 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 29
- 30 - 60
- 61 - 110



0 2.5 5 10 Miles

| 2000 Settlements And Population |    |                |     |
|---------------------------------|----|----------------|-----|
| Cabbage Hill                    | 60 | Landrial Point | 107 |
| Majors Cay                      | 22 | Pits Town      | 9   |
| Sea View                        | 3  | Thomson        | 5   |
| Church Grove                    | 10 | Colonel Hill   | 51  |
| Cripple Hill                    | 19 | Fairfield      | 18  |
| Long Cay                        | 29 |                |     |
| Richmond and Moss Town          | 15 |                |     |

# 2010 Population Density Crooked Island, The Bahamas



## Legend

### Total Population

- 0 - 13
- 13 - 19
- 19 - 29
- 29 - 56
- 56 - 107



0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

### Settlements and Total Population

|                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Long Cay 29               | Landrial Point 107 |
| Pitts Town 9              | Cripple Hill 19    |
| Fairfield 18              | Cabbage Hill 56    |
| Church Grove 10           | Colonel Hill 51    |
| Major Cay 18              |                    |
| Richmond and Moss Town 13 |                    |



# Findings

- ▣ Crooked Island highlights that families have found new ways to lend support to their immediate and broader kin-networks through reciprocal exchange of money and goods
- ▣ There has been a growing emphasis placed on the use of communication technology to keep people connected.
- ▣ Homecoming Festivals exhibit social capital formed through family trust networks.



# Discussion

- ▣ There are a myriad of factors that contribute to and affect the complex and dynamic process of out-migration from Bahamian family islands.
- ▣ We briefly discussed some of these factors and also detailed the issues and factors related out-migration within Crooked Island
- ▣ Expanding the research to look at other islands within The Commonwealth of The Bahamas.