



The Rise of External Voting in the Bahamas

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Applied Demography in Policy Setting

Background

- In 2011 a year before the 2012 Bahamas General Election the government amended the voting bill to allow Bahamians living aboard to be eligible to vote.
- May 1st, 2012 Bahamian migrants voted for the first time in Bahamian history.
- The 2012 Bahamas General Elections saw 171,932 Bahamians register to vote out of 231,903 (74.13%) eligible voting aged Bahamians.
- Out of the 171,932 registered voters for 2012 a total of 156,088 (90.78%) citizens voted in the Bahamas General Election

Purpose of Research

- Create an estimate of potential Bahamian emigrant voters from the period of 2000-2014 that would be eligible to vote in the Bahamian General Election.
- Secondly, project the future voting patterns of Bahamian migrants forward by twenty years.

Literature Review

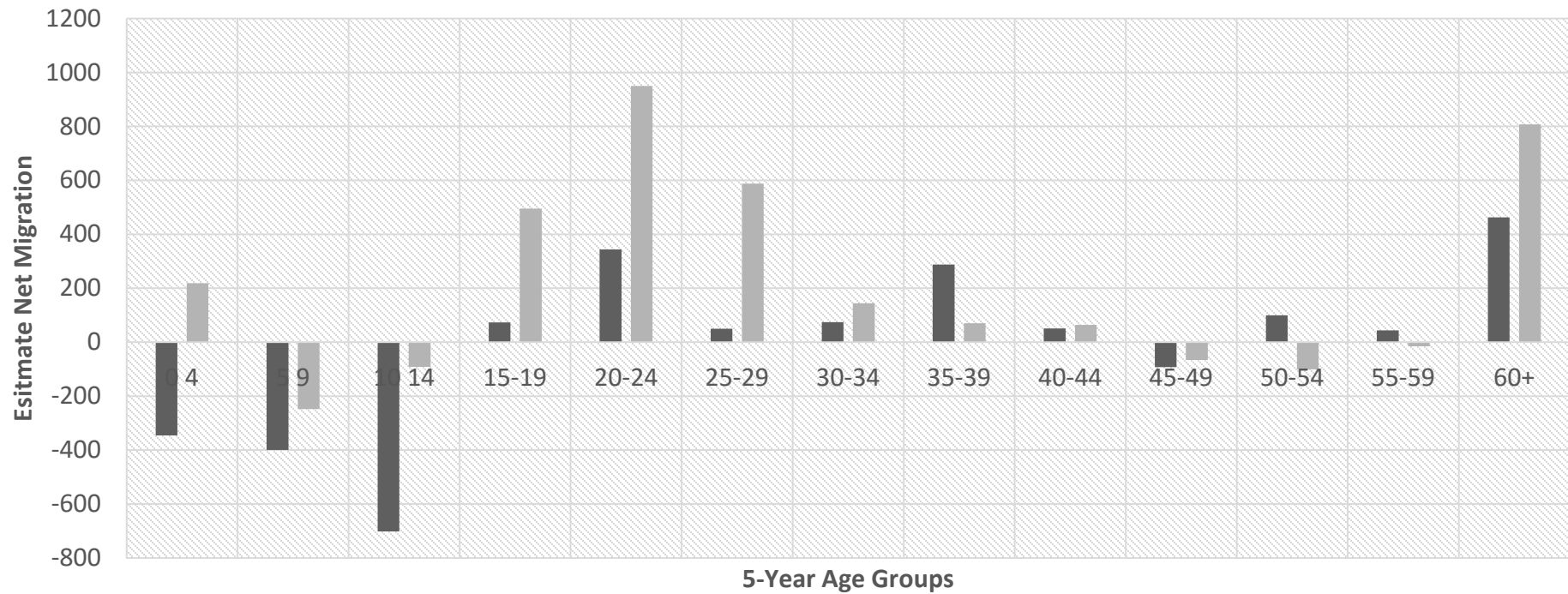
- Three institutional actors supports transnational politics.
 - One of the key avenues available to emigrants is the use of social networks which has led to the creation of immigrant organizations in the receiving country better known as Hometown Associations (HTAs).
 - political parties seek the involvement of HTAs to garner political and financial support
 - three main reasons why more countries have moved towards transnational political participation is: as a reward for participation in wars; a desire for participation in nation building; and changing attitudes towards emigrants

Data and Methods

- Secondary Data
 - 1990,2000,2010 Bahamas Decennial Census
 - World Health Organization (WHO)
 - 2012 Voter Registration
- Forward Survival Method
 - Ten year estimate
- Mathematical Models for Projections
 - Arithmetic Growth
 - Geometric Growth
 - Exponential Growth

Results

Bahamas Male and Female Forward Survival Method Ten-Year Estimate 1990-2000



Bahamas Male and Female Forward Survival Method Ten-Year Estimate 2000-2010

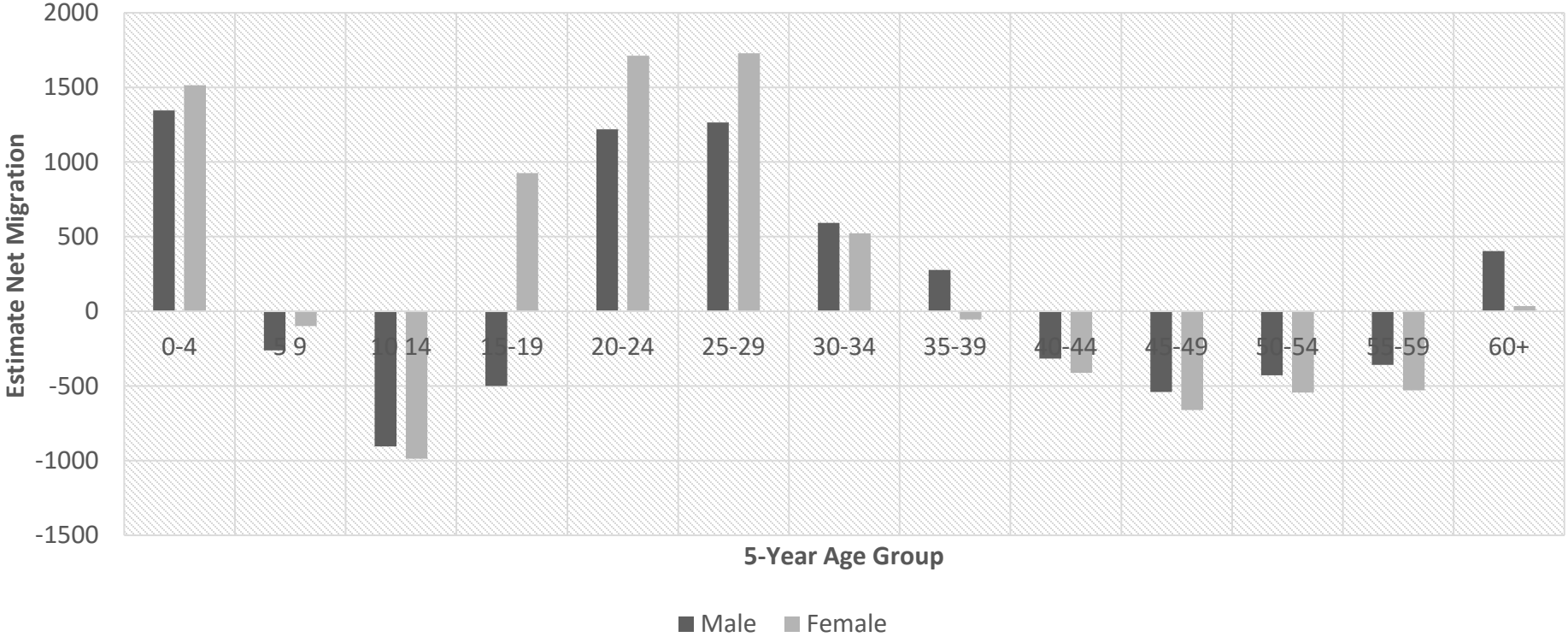
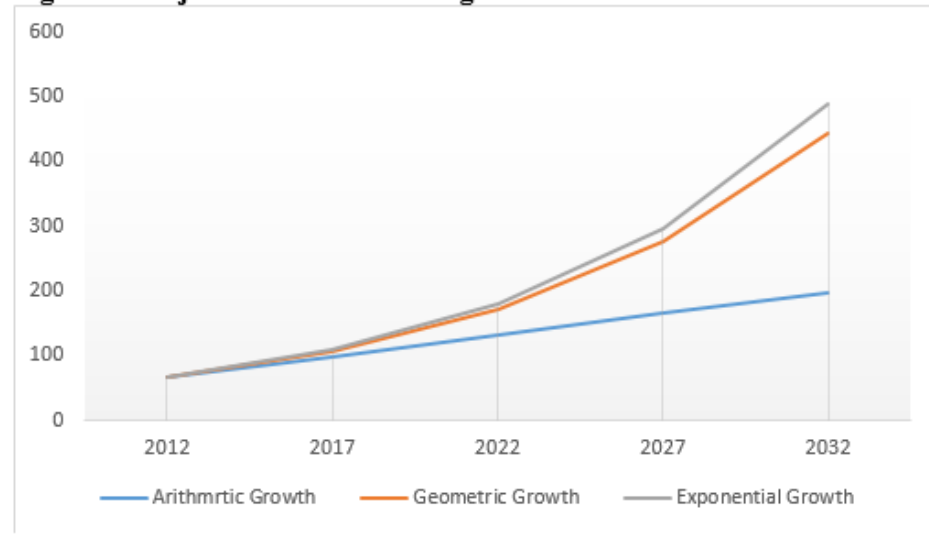
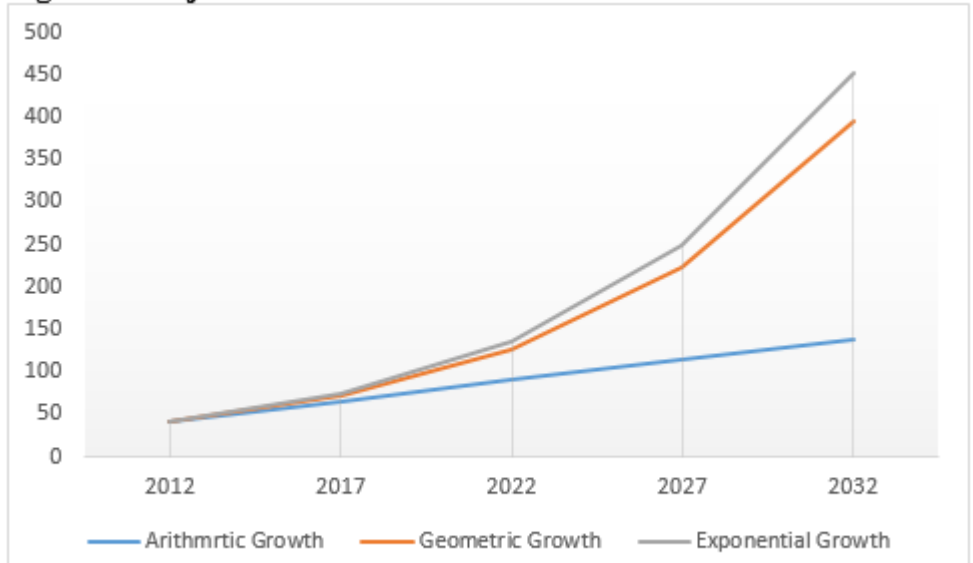


Figure 1. Projection of Bahamas Registered External Voters 2012-2032



Source: Parliamentary Registration Department of the Bahamas

Figure 2. Projection of Bahamas External Voters 2012-2032



Source: Parliamentary Registration Department of the Bahamas

Policy Implications

- The future of the Bahamas as it concerns external voting.
 - How will the government pay for the increased cost associated with conducting external voting?
 - How does the government ensure that the external voting is both transparent and accurate?
- New legislation must be enacted to ensure transparency and accountability.
 - The creation of campaign finance reform

Policy Implications (part. 2)

- Ensure full economic participation of emigrants in the local economy.
 - supporting investments by emigrants is imperative for economic development of the Bahamas
- How will the country measure and capture the migration of Bahamian citizens.
 - Creating an additional seat in the House of Assembly that represents external voters.

Conclusion and Discussion

- The rise of political influence on the political process of the Bahamas creates a great responsibility for external voters.
 - Increase in external voting patterns
 - How will they shape the direction of national discourse within the Bahamas?
 - Will civic association leaders within the emigrant community convert their influence to formulate potential political campaigns within the Bahamas?