

University of Mississippi

eGrove

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Graduate School

2014

Maintaining Community On Hardship Island: A Case Study Of Demographic Change And Community Agency

Jamiko Vandez Deleveaux
University of Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd>



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Deleveaux, Jamiko Vandez, "Maintaining Community On Hardship Island: A Case Study Of Demographic Change And Community Agency" (2014). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 851.
<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/851>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

MAINTAINING COMMUNITY ON HARDSHIP ISLAND: A CASE STUDY OF
DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND COMMUNITY AGENCY

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
The University of Mississippi

By

JAMIKO V. DELEVEAUX

May 2014

Copyright Jamiko V. Deleveaux 2014
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to address how a community survives in the context of sustained population loss in an international context. Crooked Island, located in The Bahamas, has experienced a steady population decline over the last several decades. This research focused on how family networks and communication technology are used by Crooked Island residents to develop relationships and build community in the face of population loss from out-migration. The causes and effects of population loss are examined, and then community field theory and the interactional approach are used to understand the processes residents engage in to address place-relevant problems such as demographic changes. Mixed-methods were employed in this study. The study applied available secondary demographic data from The Bahamas Department of Statistics to assess trends in population change. Additionally, the research included field observations and 16 in-depth interviews with people abroad and residing in Crooked Island. The demographic changes caused by out-migration are due to underdeveloped infrastructure and high unemployment. Several significant benefits of community agency and the homecoming (a biennial planned social events) were identified that facilitate keeping the sense of community alive and community attachment strong. Community actors use grassroots efforts to sustain the community identity despite population loss in hopes of supporting an annual island wide homecoming.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my late grandmother and uncle, Olive Deleveaux and Terry Deleveaux. Even after your death, I still aspire to be the man you envisioned me to be. I also dedicate this work to my mother and uncle, Sharon Deleveaux-Bastian and Daniel Deleveaux, for their unwavering support and belief in me in over the years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. John J Green, for taking time to read my various drafts and recommend relevant revisions. Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee, Dr. Kirk A. Johnson and Dr. Minjoo Oh, for their insightful comments and recommendations. Furthermore, this would not have been possible without the Crooked Island community. The people provided me access and support in a truly wonderful place. This research was aided by the willingness of community members to share their precious time during the interview process. The University of Mississippi's Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the staff of the Center of Population Studies furnished me with support and advice during this process. I also thank the Graduate Student Writing Center for reading over and editing countless versions of this document. The process would not have been completed without friends Delmaro Duncombe, Sanchez Brooks, Charles Newbold III, Alice Sacks, Bobby Moore, LaTierney Frazier, Club 1600, and fellow graduate students for providing words of encouragement and humor to get to the finish line. Finally, I would like to thank my family for always believing in me, no matter the circumstance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	4
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
RESEARCH METHODS.....	24
FINDINGS.....	30
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	49
REFERENCES.....	57
APPENDIX A.....	65
VITA.....	79

LIST OF TABLES

1. Births and Death By Island of Occurrence Crooked Island.....	69
2. Births and Death By Island of Permanent Residence Crooked Island.....	69
3. Crooked Island Total Population 1980-2010.....	70
4. Crooked Island 2000 and 2010 External and Internal Migrants.....	77
5. Crooked Island Internet Access 2000 and 2010.....	77

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Total Population Crooked Island 1980-2010.....	71
2. Male and Female Population of Crooked Island 1980-2010.....	71
3. Crooked Island Internal and External Migrants 2000 and 2010.	72
4. Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 1980	72
5. Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 1990	73
6. Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 2000.....	73
7. Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 2012.....	74
8. 2000 Population Density Crooked Island, The Bahamas (Map 1)	75
9. 2010 Population Density Crooked Island, The Bahamas (Map 2).....	76
10. Crooked Island Where Internet is Access 2010.....	78

I. INTRODUCTION

Residents' emigrating from rural areas to urban centers is a major demographic phenomenon, both domestically and internationally. After residents migrate, the community may be dramatically impacted in both negative and positive ways. The subsequent changes act as catalysts pushing residents away from once vibrant towns and cities in rural areas, relocating to more prosperous urban and developed areas. This process has battered rural communities. However, in some places, community members have been resilient in their attempts to maintain a sense of community. This research focuses on the demographic processes and their effects on an international region and on what happens in local communities after residents relocate to more prosperous areas. How do community members attempt to help their community survive in the face of significant population loss? In order to explore this phenomenon, I used community field theory to investigate how people from Crooked Island, The Bahamas, develop and maintain relationships in their attempt to rebuild and maintain community despite population loss from out-migration.

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas consists of 700 islands, yet only 30 are inhabited. One of the inhabited islands in the southeastern archipelago is Crooked Island. The island was settled by American loyalists in the 1780s seeking to make their fortune in cotton. Historians

estimate there were 40 plantations with 1200 slaves that populated the island during the height of cotton production (www.bahamas.com/islands/acklins). Today, Crooked Island is known for fishing and as a tourist attraction because of the abundance of bird life that thrives on the cliffs, reefs around the island, and magnificent limestone caves (www.bahamas.com/islands/acklins). Still, the population of Crooked Island has been in decline. According to The Bahamas Census Department, the population of Crooked Island was 766 in 1963 (<http://statistics.bahamas.gov.bs/download/091852500.pdf>), and the most recent data showed the population was 330 in 2013 (www.statistics.bahamas.gov.bs).

Crooked Island is a shell of what it once was. However, its natural beauty and people's identification with this place as "home" continues. Population loss in Crooked Island has influenced the socioeconomic sustainability of the island and forced members of the community to come together in various ways to work for a common purpose. Therefore, it is important to ask critical questions concerning the ongoing development/redevelopment and maintenance of community. Do family networks and communication technology allow Crooked Island residents to build relationships and their sense of community despite population loss from out-migration? If so, in what ways? The relationships between family and community on Crooked Island can be examined through two avenues: 1) the familial networks as they relate to community identity and attachment which are augmented via communication technologies; and 2) the annual Crooked Island Family Homecoming as an illustration of community action and development in which families participate using familial networks and technology.

Some might wonder why the population trends of less developed regions are important to study and better understand. In addition to advancing sociological, demographic, and development theoretical perspectives through study of particular cases, this type of information

can be used by government agencies and nonprofit organizations to address the causes and consequences, both positive and negative, of out-migration and mitigate problematic outcomes. The shift of populations between islands and foreign countries is essential to understand for cultural reasons as well. Additionally, out-migration has social and economic implications. The reduction of human capital and financial transactions in a home place may result in limited economic development, but out-migration also results in benefits. One such benefit from out-migration is remittances sent home to help improve the living conditions of family and friends. Furthermore, the newcomer may benefit the host region by bringing in new talent and skills. Overall, this study of Crooked Island, The Bahamas, explores efforts to keep a community alive in the face of population loss.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this research I attempt to better understand the issue of out-migration, how it affects a community, and the responses from community members. This can be illustrated with the use of “push” and “pull” factors of migration. Push and pull factors were conceptualized by Lee in (1966) as the forces that “push away from place and pull towards place” (Dorigo and Tobler 1983:2). Several “major push factors influencing migration include, but are not limited to, general crime and violence, an unstable economy which in turn affect an individual’s social and economic opportunities and career advancement” (Parkins 2010:12). Therefore, the pull factors, “better wages and employment conditions, better information, recruitment and cheaper transportation, encourage skilled migrants to seek jobs and opportunities” (Parkins 2010:12).

To discuss the ways in which people interact in attempts to maintain a sense of community in the face of population loss, I employ community field theory, which combines field theory and the interactional approach, focusing “on local citizen interaction, mobilization, and residents working together as they address place-relevant matters” (Bridger, Brennan, and Luloff 2009:85). This framework provides a lens through which to explore and make sense of social interactions and efforts connected to the broader community. Through the work of

Kaufman (1959) and Wilkinson (1991), this research views social interaction as a cornerstone for building community, the social arena labeled as a community field.

Over the last several decades, many domestic and international locations have seen large portions of their population relocated through out-migration. However, even with the reduction of population, many communities have survived. This can be partially explained by the concept of community agency. From this perspective, “corresponding development can be seen as the process of building relationships that increase the capacity of local people to come together to act” (Bridger, Brennan, and Luloff 2009:90). Rural areas and less developed regions with small populations and geographic isolation often compel residents to address common needs through the interactions of the various extended families’ networks.

Among other avenues, extended familial networks have provided a way for people to maintain ties and have ongoing interactions. This form of “community action refers to the process of building social relationships in pursuit of common community interest and maintaining local life” (Bridger, Brennan, and Luloff 2009:91). For example, events planned by community members help provide an economic boost to the area and strengthen the social bonds to the community for both current and former residents.

Community field theory offers an approach to community studies that is useful for exploring and understanding community structures and processes as they are applied in real-world settings, such as demographic change. Additionally, this research helps to inform and elaborate community field theory by providing supplementary information from a unique case study. The information that this research provides covers several areas, including applying field theory to an international location. This research explores the roles that familial networks and communication technology play in maintaining people’s connections to the place that they have

left. Data on the use of technology as it relates to field theory offers challenges, and we need to “conceptualize and empirically investigate the relationship between communication technology and the emergence of community” (Bridger, Brennan, and Luloff 2009:93).

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing out-migration of both knowledgeable, well-educated skilled professionals and unskilled workers from The Bahamas, and more specifically Crooked Island, is a serious dilemma for the nation. Research highlights the negative and positive benefits that out-migration can provide to regions such as The Bahamas and the migrant's new host country/island. As the populations of The Bahamas and Crooked Island fluctuate in size, there are new social and economic development concerns. Presently, there is limited research available for scholars looking to study the effects of out-migration on The Bahamas and Crooked Island. The current research explores aspects to help researchers improve understanding in the field by adding information. The major themes emphasized in the various articles are concerned with social, economic, and population movement trends.

Historical Background

The current trend of out-migration affecting the Caribbean region in general and The Bahamas in particular dates back to 1865. Especially notable is the fact that, "between 1900 and the Great Depression well over 150,000 Afro-Caribbean migrated" (Bonnett 2009:11). Bahamian contract workers were essential to the American and British efforts during World War II by

laboring in the agriculture sector and joining the British Army.¹ This period in the history of The Bahamas has been under-documented. For residents of Crooked Island the ability to work on the contract² provided economic benefits to themselves and their families. At the conclusion of World War II, many residents of Crooked Island remained in the United States as this served as a pathway to gaining citizenship.

Two major American immigration acts, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (also known as McCarran-Walter Act) and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (also known as Hart-Celler Act), helped to “liberalize the nation’s immigration policy, resulting in new immigration, which still continues today” (Bonnett 2009:11). For reasons similar to those that caused the Great Migration out of the American South, West Indian immigrants saw similar “opportunities for self-improvement and material advancement that their homelands have proved incapable of providing” (Bonnett 2009:10). The Caribbean began to experience this similar trend of out-migration starting in the 1960s. The labor force in Jamaica was “reduced by more than 10 percent due to emigration to the United States between 1970 and 2000” (Mirsha 2007:4). This trend continues across the Caribbean today.

Community

A community is a place, consisting of streets, business, government buildings, parks, and homes, but also of individuals, groups, and organizations. It is only through the interplay between social structure and interaction that a community can be developed and sustained.

Researchers have often debated about the most effective measure to provide an accurate

¹ Bahamian citizen’s efforts during World War II is common knowledge within the Bahamas and is often shared through oral history.

² The Contract was a “formal agreement between the United States and Bahamian governments [which] stipulated that the workers could be employed only in agriculture and would not be liable for military service” (Craton and Saunders 2000:293).

depiction of what creates a community. However, there are two leading definitions accepted as what constitutes a community. First, “human ecology defines community as the structure of relationships through which a localized population meets its daily requirements” (Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan 2012:294). Second, “system theory defines community as the combination of social units and systems that perform major social functions” (Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan 2012:294). This research applies the system theory definition because it provides for the flexibility to view the community “as a system comprised of status and roles, and groups and institutions that are closely articulated with one another” (Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan 2012:294). Drawing on these theories, this research uses the following definition of community:

[C]ommunity as a locality comprised by people residing in a geographical area; the resources such people require to subsist and progress; and the processes in which such individuals engage to distribute and exchange such resources to fulfill local needs and wants (Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan 2012:295).

When people who reside in a geographical area are able to create solidarity and friendship within that area, a unique bond is created to the community. Scholars consider this bond a person comes to form as “community attachment” which is “an emotional connection to a place that emerges in the context of residence and belonging” (Hummon 1990, cited in Buta, Brennan, and Holland 2012:26). Residents’ community attachment provides a base that encourages them to be involved in community building. That is because community attachment “[consists] of items capturing feelings of being at home in the community, knowing what is going on in the community, and feelings about moving (sorry or happy) being widely used” (Gursoy and Rutherford 2004:505). This feeling eventually leads some residents and

organizations to engage in community action and seek to provide positive contributions to the maintenance and/or further development of the community.

There is a formation of attachment to the community which allows for individuals, families, and organizations to grow roots through social interactions. With daily interactions, there is an exchange of social capital and also the culture of the community. Residents continue to leave a community in search of new opportunities. However, their attachment to family and community often remain active. This may be expressed through support in the form of remittance/reciprocal exchange and interactions now fostered through communication technology.

Transnational Family

At the heart of any community foundation lays the family, an institution in which morals, societal norms, and values are produced and reinforced by its members. The traditional concept of the family, where the father, mother, and children live under the same roof, is changing. Family dynamics are being altered due to migration giving rise to what has been termed the transnational family. A transnational family is where one or more adult members of the family leave their country of origin in search of work in another country. Advances in communication and transportation have made it easier for people to move freely between borders in the hopes of creating a better life for themselves and their families. While scholarship centering on transnational families is relatively recent, family separation due to migration is not a new phenomenon. In order to fully understand this phenomenon, a systematic review of literature was conducted to identify the relevant issues related to transnational families. By reviewing a small sample of the current literature, one important component was identified concerning the change in the family dynamics in transnational families and the role of grandparents. A brief history of

the development of study related to the transnational family is discussed here, followed by new aspects that have helped to shift the family dynamics.

Sociology has generated numerous studies to address transmigration and transnational family dynamics over the past 23 years. “It is not possible to date their origin, but we can technically speak of transnational families in any situation that makes people negotiate and maintain family relations across the boundaries of empires, kingdom, or nation state” (Skrbis 2008:232). The term transnationalism has evolved over the past few decades from being associated solely with business to now incorporating issues such as family, culture, and migration. Research on the transnational family has become important for several factors. Sociologists are shifting their research interest to look beyond the economics of remittances to investigate the importance of the social processes. The transnational family offers the opportunity to examine social, cultural, and demographic factors within the same research. Social sciences afford a greater freedom to investigators to conduct research in relatively new field because of the need for research.

One of the first early works that examined the transnational family appeared when Thomas and Znaniecki (1958) released their book titled *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* 1958 in 1918. In this work, the authors used personal correspondence between family members who had migrated to America and their remaining kin in Poland. However, it was not until the 1980s “that the interest in globalization opened up possibilities for new theoretical configurations in the field of migration, culture and mobility, as well as for ways for thinking, and talking, about transnational phenomena” (Skrbis 2008:232). Assimilation into the host country versus maintenance of cultural identity became topical areas of interest in 1980s.

During the 1980s and 1990s more universities began to offer courses in Asian and Latin American studies. These courses served as a bridge to help fuel the need for additional research and to understand cultural identity. Additionally, immigration became a political, social, and economic issue within many industrialized and developing countries in the globalizing years of the 1990s. Developing countries saw the influx of remittances as a positive economic indicator for their development, while developed countries viewed immigrants as a strain on infrastructure. As cultures, ethnicities, and identities intermingle, the field of sociology has attempted to understand these changes within the larger framework of globalization and migration. Sociologists have articulated the need for transnational families to be the topic of study within various areas of sociological research.

Social Capital

A family is not isolated within a community. Instead, people build relationships and become active participants within the area. By creating relationships with fellow residents, individuals and families are able to build social capital. There are many definitions of social capital. One definition focuses on “an accumulation of various types of intangible social, psychological, culture, institutional, and related assets that influence cooperative behavior” (Uphoff 1999:216). This can be executed in either a formal or informal institutional method. “The formal institutional capital refers to the structural elements – roles, rules, procedures and organizations” and “facilitates collective action by reducing transactional cost” (Dhesi 2000:202). According to Dhesi, “informal institutional capital refers to values, attitudes, norms and beliefs that predispose individuals towards collective action” (2000:202). The accumulation and maintenance of social capital within a community act as catalysts for social action.

Community agents engage in social action by raising social awareness and involvement within the community.

According to other scholars, social capital is “the driving force of civil society and the basis of democratic governance” (Grillo, Teixeira and Wilson 2010:451). Based on this interpretation, social capital plays a pivotal role in creating and supporting residents’ civic engagement as a collective unit in the enhancement of their community. Civic engagement can be described as individuals coming together in a collective action that identifies and seeks solutions to public issues. When residents use social capital toward some broader goal, this action is exhibited in the form of civic engagement. The presence of civic engagement bodes well for the community because it can contribute to higher levels of residential satisfaction. Community residents experiencing high residential satisfaction are more likely to participate in close-knit social networks that help to build trust with fellow residents of the community.

Social network theory “examines specific dynamics within webs of interrelationships among people and firms” (Sacks and Graves 2012:81). Recent literature applies social network theory to many different areas of focus such as people’s interactions and relationships on social media. Rural sociologists are using social networks as a linkage to explain migration patterns. For example, according to Brown, “the volume and direction of migration are affected by information, ideas, and resources embedded in networks that link family, friends, and neighbors across origin and destination communities” (2002:8). This helps to produce social capital as, “Economists and other social scientists have shown that social networks, once established, reduce the cost and risk associated with migration, thus making positive returns on residential relocation more certain” (Brown 2002:8). Through participation, members of these networks are able to secure benefits in the form of social capital. More importantly, these “networks provide not only

information and sociability, but also a sense of belonging and social identity” (Grabner-Kräuter 2009:510). Members are able to build social capital if there is a clearly established base of social trust within their network.

There is no one tool that can be used to give a clear indication of the levels of social trust within a network. Instead, researchers often use the General Social Survey to provide a basic measure, which has drawn, “...critics [due to the fact] that it neglects the formation of group-specific trust, including self-reported trust in specific racial/ethnic groups or particular social groups...” (Uslaner and Conley 2003:352). However, the General Social Survey provides the basic measure for trust, which is “defined as a belief or expectation about the other (trusted) party, or as a willingness to rely on another party, coupled with a sense of vulnerability or risk if the trust is violated” (Grabner-Kräuter 2009:506). Social trust is important in networks, more specifically communities, because “when citizens trust one another, they are more likely to participate in voluntary organization, interact with members of their community and fulfill the obligations of democratic life” (McCabe 2012:389). In order for a community to build a foundation, first networks must be formed based on trust that occurs with constant face-to-face interaction. Through repeated face-to-face interaction, social capital is exchanged with the various members of the community. This contributes to the possibility of collective community action.

Festivals

Each year, urban and rural communities across the world hold annual festivals with themes encompassing music, arts, culture, and food. Festivals can be described as “themed public celebrations that include a large range of events, such as sports, concerts, participatory recreation, consumer shows and sales, hospitality places for sponsors and educational events”

(Getz 2000 cited in Anil 2012:255). The common goals of these festivals include “developing tourism and economic regeneration and that of meeting the cultural needs and improving the quality of life” (Foley and McPherson 2007:144). Currently, there is a large volume of literature available on festivals that focus on “satisfaction and loyalty” while “little attention has been paid to small, local and municipality organized festivals with almost no participation of tourists from abroad” (Anil 2012:256).

Festivals provide community partners with opportunities to improve economic conditions while showcasing the community in a positive light. Festivals seek to make visitors temporary residents of the community. According to Schwarz and Tait, “tourism helps build a sense of community as tourism is an integral part of the interrelationship and interdependence of individuals in a specific setting, and is a significant influence on social capital” (2007:129). The use of social capital helps to determine the success of the festival and also serves to build a sense of community. Two features that influence the success of festivals regarding social capital are “manager’s network of work relations” and “the quality of those relations” (Schwarz and Tait 2007:129). It is important for managers to effectively run the organization but also be skilled in advertising the event and also be effective communicators when describing the vision of the festival within the community. “This in turn would serve to build a sense of community and hence a following” (Schwarz and Tait 2007:130). Once a following has been created by the festival with visitors it “[increases] awareness and [enhances] the sense of community” (Schwarz and Tait 2007:130).

One important characteristic of festivals is that they provide the opportunity to improve a community by bringing visitors into a central location which helps to generate economic activity. The number of visitors the festival is able to generate plays an important role on the economic

impact that a community can expect. Large cities that play host to festivals see a sizeable portion of visitors expenditures,

...swallowed up in ticket prices. Free community events where money is spent predominantly on accommodation, food and souvenirs. The largest commercial music festivals, with camping incorporated, can involve major outlays but mean less money left over for discretionary purchases. (Gibson 2013:147).

Whereas in “smaller places the relative boost to the regional economy may be far more influential, with a greater proportion of the resident population benefiting from increased trade and visitors expenditures” (Gibson 2013:147). Effectively running a festival requires community residents to do volunteer or paid work, such as catering and handling music for festivals organizers. Also, local entrepreneurs are responsible for lodging and restaurants that see spikes in sales. As Gibson states, “festivals – even small ones – have a catalytic effect-they are a ‘glue’ of sorts for local economies, generating networks and reciprocities with local councils, suppliers, charities, non-profit organizations, music associations and clubs” (2013:150).

Remittance/Reciprocal Exchange

Festivals can help to generate income for communities; however, families may still need financial assistance when members leave the community. Secondary data offer a wealth of information about economic, social, and population concerns. A person could conclude that the economic effects of out-migration are primarily negative. However, that assumption would be incorrect because of the unique benefit out-migration offers in the form of remittances, which entails the act of migrants sending money and gifts back to the home country in hopes of providing for their families and building social capital as key community financial contributors. According to the United Nations, “more than 170 million people in developing nations live outside their home countries, sending back more than \$80 billion in the early 2000s” (Lu and

Treiman 2011:1120). The remittances sent back home “[have] become a major source of external development finance” for the migrants’ home countries (Bonnett 2009:15).

Viewing remittance simply as a transfer of money excludes the significant social and political dimensions it represents. Flores argues that, “although remittances are largely viewed as monetary or in-kind contributions, they also can be viewed as cultural and social transfers” (2005:23). Migrants sending money back home serves as a vehicle in which to uplift family members through increased monetary means and also to maintain close social ties with family. For example, the social ties that are maintained to the homeland help to provide a mother’s children adequate care in her absence while working in another county. The mother also uses a “system of gifts” in which “to symbolize gratitude and upward social mobility, to express maternal love, and to affirm their place and existence in the family” (Fresnoza-Flot 2009:258). Migrants use remittances to “attempt to reconnect with their ‘homelands’ [and family] not only nostalgically, but in order to reconstruct ‘home’” (Bonnett 2009:26). They are able to reconstruct home through their ability to help in the development by offering aid to their family and home country.

In the last several decades, reciprocal exchange has been recognized between a person, his/her family, friends, and community. Reciprocal exchange can be characterized in the following way:

[A]ctors contributions to an exchange are separately performed and non-negotiated. Actors initiate exchanges individually, by performing a beneficial act for the other (such as giving assistance or advice), without knowing whether when, or to what extent the other will reciprocate (Molm, Whitham, and Melamed 2012:143).

This can be accomplished by providing monetary funds, knowledge, gifts, and information. The idea of reciprocal exchange is grounded heavily on the notions of social capital and social norms

helping to inform courses of action. Many times people acquire such gifts because of their relationships within a larger social group. Being part of a social group, members must follow social cues that “dictate the extent and type of the reciprocal obligations incurred among group members and the expectations that may follow from an understanding of them” (Parks-Yancy, DiTomaso, and Post 2008:240). The overall effect of this pattern helps to “create new relationships [which] can effectively...establish the unquestioning mutualism characteristic of morally binding social ties” (Lewis 2003:197).

Recent literature explains that there are several underlying structural factors that influence the extent of the exchange, including “social identity, group size, intra-group and inter-group interactions tendencies, and individual level factors” (Parks-Yancy et al. 2008:243). The social identity of members is determined by the social structure, one’s goals (status protection or status enhancement), and the feasibility of achieving them. People build relationships with hopes of gaining an opportunity to move up the social hierarchy to reach high social status within society. Group size plays a pivotal role in how people provide access to gifts and knowledge to fellow group members (Parks-Yancy et al. 2008:243). Parks-Yancy and colleagues argue “that resources are more likely to be shared within the group than between the groups” (2008:244). Intra-group and inter-group relations can be defined as follows: “intra-group interactions broadly refers to membership within a social group and inter-group interactions with members of different social groups” (Parks-Yancy et al. 2008:245). Reciprocal exchange helps to build relationships based on trust established within social groups and enforced through those group norms.

Culture

Communities establish culture within their walls that come “to represent entire ways of life including rules, values, and expected behaviour” (Williams 1970:27). Culture and the shared commonality of the community through interaction over time help to foster attachment to community and members of the community. As some scholars have pointed out, “culture is a motivating factor in the creation of social identity and serves as a basis for creating cohesion and solidarity. Solidarity is often seen as the central element for uniting and motivating communities” (Brennan, Flint, and Luloff 2008:100). Therefore, without a culture of solidarity, a community is ineffective in creating capacity and achieving its long-term goals.

The community should be viewed as a “dynamic process [that] represents complex social, economic and psychological entity reflective of a place, its people, and their myriad relationships” (McGrath and Brennan 2011:342). The communication and interaction of the various generations are of vital importance to a community as members try to maintain and advance elements of the community’s culture. One way in which community culture is able to flourish is through promoting the significance of intergenerational relationship building (McGrath and Brennan 2011:350). For example, elderly community members in some communities in the Appalachian Mountains have used quilting as a way to benefit the community. Some people,

[W]elcomed the legacy they left in quilts that are special to family life and imprint upon the memory of family; and the women valued their contribution to wider community effort, for example, donating quilts for annual auctions to support community services such as the local fire department, to pay community school taxes or for local medical services (Cheek and Piercy 2008:21).

However, the most critical aspect is the shared expertise and knowledge that once handed down helps to teach and reinforce culture to younger generations. These interactions are not only

beneficial for the spread of culture and community traditions. They also serve as a means for building community identity and solidarity.

As communities continuously face outside forces, such as social and economic difficulties, it has become harder to maintain local culture. Still, people are carriers of their cultures to new places. The spread of culture due to the out-migration of citizens to new host countries is one of the byproducts of this phenomenon. Two main areas of focus are the family and social interaction. When people move to a new host country/state, the cultural ties to their ancestral homeland are not thoroughly broken. Instead, new ethnic enclaves are formed. The ethnic enclaves act “as a motivating factors in the creation of social identity with considerable potential for creating cohesion and solidarity among community members” (Phillips 2004:113). Because culture needs solidarity and interaction to sustain itself, “without channels of communication, interaction and agents to interpret the creativities and customs of people within place, then tradition becomes fractured, and as this occurs, the nature of well being can be adversely affected” (McGrath and Brennan 2011:345). For example, West Indian immigrants “since 1965 have settled in the Northeast corridors creating urban communities in Boston, Newark (New Jersey), Hartford (Connecticut), and New York City, with large communities in Miami as well” (Adams 2006:12). These types of communities help in the formation of strong cultural ties in which access to vital assets and resources are present to sustain cultural traditions.

Communication Technology

Advances in communication technology have influenced family and community dynamics. The impact of communication technology in relations to mothers separated by migration patterns offers them the opportunity to maintain relationships with their children. Through the use of cellular phones and Internet service, parents have frequent access into the

lives of their children, maintaining family and social ties. In Jamaica, “the mobile phone has been particularly important in increasing access and communication between relatives, partners and families living abroad” (Horst 2006:148). The typical “topics of conversation are family projects, children’s education and well-being, and important events in the community and family circle” (Fresnoza-Flot 2009:261). These conversations have dramatic effects on strengthening the emotional ties between parent and child. Digital communication has helped to restore the voice of the mothers and fathers within the family during his/her absence. The new advances in communication technology have helped to reduce the distance between loved ones by providing a method for more regular and inexpensive contact, which has allowed parents to maintain their position in the family as the nurturers and comforters to their children.

One of the questions that often arise when exploring communication technology is the shifting power dynamics in family relationships. For example, “the increasing rate of parental presence on Facebook may inevitably fuel some conflict between parents and children as their private lives become integrated in a public forum” (Kanter, Afifi, and Robbins 2012:902). Oftentimes parents use social networking sites (SNSs) as ways to stay informed and keep an open forum of communication open with their children. According to research by Doty and Dworkin, parents tend to use SNSs as tools “to communicate with their children and with extended family” (2014:352). Interestingly, “parent age did not significantly predict the use of SNSs in any of the models” (Doty and Dworkin 2014:354). How parents navigate the use of social media and a child’s use of the Internet helps to shape family dynamics.

The opportunities created by advances in communication technology go beyond individual family members. Communities can use the Internet for the creation of online bulletin boards and websites. An example of this can be seen in the New Zealand community of St.

Albans, which created a “web based [site] explicitly on a philosophy of community development that drew on community communications media to enable local people to build up local connectedness” (Ashton and Thorns 2007:222). The attempt to bridge the community to the World Wide Web also helps to keep the community active because community bulletin boards and web sites increase the awareness of events happening within the community and fosters a forum for discussions.

Residents who have migrated and want to remain in contact with their country now have the ability to use communication technologies as a tool to enhance their participation in the community. The Internet offers the flexibility and the opportunity to connect people separated by distance. Haitian immigrants in the United States have sought “out meaningful ways of sustaining their commitments to people in Haiti, many are discovering that the Internet is a valuable tool for helping them sustain identity and work in solidarity with those facing challenges at home” (Parham 2004:200). This new forum has allowed some members of the Haitian community to be active participants in the social, political, and cultural affairs of their native homelands (Parham 2004:200). The benefit of the extension of the community online helps to “generate new kinds of relationships and influences, which in turn have off-line effects on the lives of real people and communities” (Parham 2004:204). By using this forum, many residents can contribute to the infrastructure of their birthplace with the hopes of one day returning home to a more developed community. Migrants engaging in political, social, and economic discussions online often offer positive feedback through their analysis of community needs such as calls for international aid after a natural disaster. Furthermore, these venues may serve as places that “ethnic groups [can use] to maintain their commitment to supporting nationalist or nation building projects in their home country” (Parham 2004:210).

Research Focus

From this review, I was able to identify the history of Crooked Island while understanding the impact that out-migration has on social, economic, and population movement trends. One of the major drawbacks that can be seen in the various studies reviewed here is the absence of the people's voices. A report that relies strongly on interpreting data should include the voice of the people to offer a comprehensive understanding of the situation that forces some to leave their community. The focus of this research will be to fill the existing void, by focusing on the experiences and perceptions of citizens from one particular community: Crooked Island, The Bahamas.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

[T]he land [that] comes to possess us, to give us grounding, to allow us to know who we are, where we belong, we gain something of our identity, our sense of being connected not only to our families but to a larger constellation of things called place (Falk 2004:177).

The idea that Falk expresses on place provides a springboard for this research by linking the formation of identity to a person's homeland. People may move to new host locations. However, social relations often tie friends and family, influence personal identity, and connect them to place.

The study of communities influenced by out-migration has been the focus of theory and literature for several decades. During this period, researchers have developed many tools to equip themselves to address this phenomenon, most notably the push/pull factors associated with the causes and consequences of this migration and community field theory. Constructing a method that incorporates these components to answer the central questions of this research is critical. It is, therefore, necessary to incorporate the push/pull factors of migration and community field theory to answer the essential questions.

For this study, I used a mixed-methods approach to research. Secondary demographic data were used to assess trends in population change to provide a contextual backdrop for the study. Additionally, I used field observations and conducted qualitative interviews with people

living in and those who have migrated from Crooked Island. The combination of these methods helps to provide a nuanced picture of the Crooked Island community and the changes it is facing.

Secondary Data

The first component of the research consisted of analyzing available secondary data compiled by The Bahamas Department of Statistics. This source provided statistics on population trends in Crooked Island and The Bahamas. The years under review were from 1980 to present. The noticeable population trends highlighted in this period were percent changes in population across intervals. The Bahamas Census was accessed by using archival records at The Department of Statistics and through the website located at www.statistics.bahamas.gov.bs.

Interviews

The inclusion of interviews aids this study by adding a wealth of in-depth information from the community members' points of view. The participants were selected from a population with direct links to Crooked Island. Key informants, such as family members and family friends, were used to identify viable candidates for interviewing followed by the use of networking within the target group.³ The interview candidate pool included males and females ranging in ages from 18 to 80. The pool also consisted of both residents living in Crooked Island and those who have left. During the interview process, a total of four people declined to participate in formal interviews; three because of conflicting time schedules and one because the potential interviewee thought they could not adequately answer the questions. The young man who declined to be interviewed did, however, add a wealth of information in informal and casual conversations about the community of Crooked Island. The refusal of current and former

³ I am from The Bahamas and have family ties to Crooked Island. However, I did not interview any of my immediate family members for the research.

Crooked Island residents to participate in interviews was expected, but with an increased pool of candidates, the research was not hindered. From the pool, I conducted a total of 16 interviews, including 10 residents of Crooked Island and 6 former residents who left Crooked Island. There were a total of 8 male and 8 female respondents.

The questions asked during the interviews ranged across a variety of topics such as introductions, community, the overall perception of education and economy, family relations, and the homecoming festival. (For the complete list of questions asked during the interviews, see Appendix 1.) Each interview lasted for approximately one hour. In six cases, the interviews were conducted in Nassau at the homes of the interviewees, which is a migration destination for some former residents of Crooked Island. The interviews of current Crooked Island residents were conducted either at homecoming events or the interviewee's home/place of work on Crooked Island. The interviews were recorded with an audio device after requesting permission and obtaining a signed consent form from the interviewee. Detailed interview notes were taken as well. Transcripts were produced for more thorough analysis.

Field Observation

Over the course of summer 2013, I became actively involved in the Nassau chapter of the Crooked Island Association. My involvement included attending two meetings and other public events, such as church services and cook-outs the association held in Nassau, New Providence. I also traveled to Crooked Island for four days to attend the Crooked Island Homecoming. While attending the festival, I observed the community of Crooked Island and experienced the family homecoming first hand. I participated in the various planned events such as a cook-out, fun run/walk, opening and closing ceremonies, and tour of the islands. During this time, I also had the opportunity to interact with both current and former residents of Crooked Island, who helped

me to reach out to potential interview candidates. Traveling to the various events helped to highlight the infrastructure problems currently faced by residents of Crooked Island such as the deteriorating roads and docks. I took written field notes throughout all of these activities.

Analysis of Data

The use of the Bahamian Census does have limitations such as human error, suspected undercounts of the population, and some data are unavailable for researchers. However, the limitations are outweighed by providing the most complete source of demographic and vital statistics data on Crooked Island. I analyzed secondary data using Microsoft Excel. Increases and decreases in population over the course of 30 years in Crooked Island became evident through computation and analysis of time-series population changes in frequencies and percentage change. The secondary data from the Census years 2000 and 2010 were also analyzed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software to create maps highlighting population density. Immigration figures were then used to estimate the total number of residents who have migrated from Crooked Island to other islands in the Bahamas.

Qualitative interview recordings were immediately transcribed following the conclusion of each interview. Following the analysis of the transcripts from the 16 interviews, trends began to materialize. Codes were developed and counted from field notes as a secondary measure to help further aid in the analysis of the interviews. I looked for emerging themes, ideas, and patterns that occurred during the interviews. Observation notes were then analyzed in a similar fashion. The use of both coding and counting produced emergent themes. The best illustrative quotes or stories that summarized the themes were then used to highlight the ideas of the interviewees in this manuscript.

Research Ethics

To help reduce bias in notes and interpretation, I audio recorded all interviews after obtaining permission from the interviewees. The audio recordings helped to guarantee that the notes I transcribed were more accurate and represented the voices of the interviewees.

The risk and harm associated with this research were limited by adopting ethical standards in order to protect participants. The interviewees were made aware throughout the various processes that their participation was entirely voluntary. During each phase, I provided a briefing to each of the participant to detail what they could expect during our time together. Following the session, a debriefing occurred that lasted for several minutes. Having written information on the study and talking about the project with the participants reduced the chances for deception. The information compiled from the participants has and will remain in my possession for seven years, after which time, transcripts may be destroyed. Each subject was made aware that their participation in the project will be held in confidentiality. This was achieved by changing names and other identifying characteristics of the participants in the reports. While conducting field observations the people I interacted it were made aware that I was conducting research on the community of Crooked Island and the impact of the homecoming on the community.

The major issue that cannot be overlooked is that as a researcher in a new community may be considered an outsider. In Crooked Island, I was not viewed as an outsider because my maternal family has resided on the island for the past four generations. With a small population and close family ties within the island, I still had to reach out and focus on reconnecting and reestablishing relationships over the course of the summer. I asked personal questions about people's inner thinking and motivation. With such personal questions being asked, I hoped that

the interviewees felt comfortable being candid with me to open up and share their personal experiences. This was a tremendous responsibility that as a researcher I could not overlook or take lightly.

One of the major priorities of this research was to document and share the stories of the residents of Crooked Island that led to their migration from their community and how their community has been impacted. Therefore, I had to monitor closely how to provide an accurate depiction of the interviewees. The stories were aided greatly with the use of recording devices and the use of available data from The Bahamas Department of Statistics. I was not sure what trends would develop from the stories, but I felt that the issue was important to study and understand. The primary themes came through a detailed analysis of the interviews and available data. The detailed steps previously listed helped me to capture and share the voice of the Crooked Island community.

V. FINDINGS

The findings from this research provide the basis for elaboration of several major concepts identified in the literature. However, the findings are not limited solely to these concepts. The major issues in need of attention concerning the community of Crooked Island fall under the themes of structure and agency. Depopulation and economic decline have created hardships that must be weathered by residents as they attempt to maintain a sense of community. Action has occurred as a coping and adaptation strategy in the social and community fields. At the social level family relations, communication technology, and reciprocal exchange are of vital importance to maintaining community. Through observing the community field, the collective action of former and current residents is seen through the community homecoming. Each of these topics is explored in greater detail through the combined use of demographic data, interviews, and field observations.

Decreased Population

The island community of Crooked Island has unique push factors that relate to a rural island. The limited infrastructure development can be seen as one of the driving forces that push residents from the island, such as the historical lack of electricity and other essential necessities until the mid-1990s. One of those necessities is adequate health care in the form of a resident

doctor. Often the search for amenities pulls Crooked Island residents to the capital, Nassau, to seek medical care for childbirth, surgery, and other services not provided by the island clinic. According to the 1990 through 2010 censuses, Crooked Island residents were more likely to experience births/deaths outside their place of residence (see Table 1 and Table 2). Furthermore, young residents of Crooked Island wishing to pursue higher education must leave the island to attend educational institutions located in Nassau. And, better economic opportunities such as more productive farming or working for a major company, can only be accessed by leaving the island. The examples previously listed as pull factors are reasons why Nassau, Grand Bahama, and Acklins (islands in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas that have larger populations and more job opportunities) are all seen as resettlement destinations for residents of Crooked Island. It should be noted that an additional pull factor, the presence of trust networks such as extended families already established in the destination location, helps to decrease the burden of transitioning to a new location, thereby lowering the social and economic costs of migrating and stimulating out-migration.

As people leave Crooked Island in hopes of fostering a better economic future for their families, it has experienced a fairly continuous reduction in population over the past several decades. Between 1980 and 2010, there was an overall population loss of 37.6% (see Table 3) due to out-migration (see Figures 1 and 2).

Reflecting on these changes, a former resident stated that, “we left Crooked Island for a better way of living because you could do better farming in South Acklins.” The systematic problem currently faced by Crooked Island is that it is perceived as a “dying” community. According to a Crooked Island resident, “when the young people leave a place or organization, it is a dying place.” The community of Crooked Island is perceived as dying because of limited

economic and educational opportunities which push residents to relocate to more prosperous islands such as New Providence, Grand Bahama, and Andros. Since 2000, Crooked Island has lost 41.6% of its population due specifically to out-migration. According to the 2000 and 2010 Bahamian censuses, 280 residents of Crooked Island left the island, with the majority (231) choosing to relocate to the capital island of New Providence (see Figure 3 and Table 4).

Secondary data collected from The Bahamas Department of Statistics show that emigrating residents are most noticeably in the age categories of 20-54 (see Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7).

According to interviewees, this may be attributed to high levels of unemployment on the island and also to the fact that there is no higher education institution on the island. A resident of Crooked Island addressed this concern by stating,

Employment for the young people, when they are coming out of school, is necessary because not all of them are fortunate enough to go away to college. So we need to have things in place so that the younger people can be here and even if some of the people want to come out of Nassau we have employment opportunities in Crooked Island. Because the community is dying and it takes younger people to keep it active.

Unemployment on Crooked Island and in The Bahamas in general is of grave concern; however, in Crooked Island, the situation is a driving reason that forces people to relocate. Many of the younger residents are experiencing joblessness at a high rate. Through conversations during field observations with several residents under the age of 25, current unemployment was a major concern as were their future job prospects on the island. Current unemployment rates are unavailable for Crooked Island, but according to the latest records from The Bahamas Department of Statistics, the unemployment rate for the entire Bahamas was 15.4% in the fourth quarter of 2013. This high rate of unemployment, according to one respondent, is one of the reasons why he would leave Crooked Island to provide a better future for his growing young family. According to the respondent,

It is hard to make a living in Crooked Island. One time ago, like years ago when I used to go fishing, I used make a circle around town from Cabbage Hill to Major's Cay...by the time I reach back home in Cabbage Hill, I made like 400-500 dollars. But now like right now if come back from fishing and you make 70 dollars, 50 dollars, 30 dollars sometimes, you do good.

The community of Crooked Island may appear to be dying, given the loss of population.

Maps 1 and 2 highlight that between 2000 and 2010, SeaView and Thompson's Settlements became depopulated. This loss of population, most notably from the age groups of 20-54, has created an age difference on the island. The island has a high percentage of residents 19 and younger and 55 and over.

However, the residents of Crooked Island have found three ways in which to strengthen and maintain social ties to the community they call home. The three forms of community agency which have helped to build relationships and bring people together are the use of remittances, communication technology, and homecoming events.

Family Relationships

A sense of community has been maintained on Crooked Island over the course of several generations because of the close knit relationships established by each family as a social institution in connection with the place. In Bahamian culture, the nuclear family is central to the concept of family. However, like on most Bahamian islands, Crooked Island families place great emphasis on fostering and developing relationships with extended family such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives who reside both within and outside of the community.

Interestingly, several of the female interviewees discussed how they would send their children to their parents in Crooked Island for the summer. These trips helped their children to build a bond not only to their extended kin but also to the community.

In Crooked Island, being a part of a family lends support to the formation of a person's identity. One of the first questions I heard while conducting interviews and field observations was, "Who is your people?" The family is more than just a person's last name and who his/her mother and father might be; it also incorporates the extended family and community. The community of Crooked Island is similar to a village that supports and nurtures its residents and former residents. Therefore, the community and family become a central combined force in forming a person's identity by instilling values and a moral compass that are passed onto each generation whether residents grow up in Crooked Island or Nassau. As one respondent stated, "the fundamentals of the way I live and raise my children was learnt in Crooked Island. [These are] all fundamentals whether it be education, morals, and ethics which are substantially absent from the culture of Nassau nowadays."

The importance of family has helped residents and former residents to feel pride and form identity through attachment to place. According to a respondent, "...Crooked Island is still a village, and [as] such the family is relatively important on the island." The family is of vital importance because it is the institution that ties a person to place. As older family members become active participants in the affairs of the community, children learn about the importance of the symbiotic relationship between community and family. As one resident of Crooked Island stated, "people have to come together when there is a small population."

A former resident describes the work ethic that was instilled in her by her family while growing up in Crooked Island and utilized while attending college and pursuing a career. She stated, "work ethics goes back a long way that's the history of the people hard work." Growing up in Crooked Island was not easy. She further explained, "we would be up before sunrise to walk a long way to get to the farm several days a week." It is one of the driving forces that

pushed her. “The sacrifices other people made for me to succeed cannot be wasted.” As a tribute to the sacrifices made by her grandparents for her to obtain bachelor and master degrees, she wants to create a scholarship fund to help future students of Crooked Island gain the same experiences she once thought were out of reach while growing up in Crooked Island. Some people do not forget where they came from or the struggles they might have faced. Because of their connections to family and place, their identities continue to endure.

People may form their identities based on place and connection to family, which leads them then to develop a sense of pride in who they are and in their community. According to one male respondent, “...there is a sense of deep pride that you are from Crooked Island.” Crooked Island’s population ranks it as one of the smallest islands in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Nonetheless, past and current residents have contributed to the building of the country through entrepreneurship, education, and politics. One of the areas that this can be seen is the academic success of Crooked Island students. As one respondent stated, “the smaller class sizes help to place a focus on the student to help them reach their full potential.” A mother of three former students of Crooked Island High School stated, “the family and community place a high emphasis on education and children are expected to be good students.” This philosophy has helped to shape students’ determination and pride in producing quality work that exceeds family and community expectations. Undoubtedly, identity links back to one of the unwritten rules of Crooked Island that a person should not bring shame to their family and family name.

The normal class size of Crooked Island High School averages between 8-12 students per year. The school was destroyed in 2011 due to Hurricane Irene, but this has not stopped the determination of the students of Crooked Island High School to surpass the national average on exams such as the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE). According to

Bahamas Information Services for the 2008 national examinations, students from Colonel Hill High School have increased test scores as well as increased their grade point averages (http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/bis-newsupdates/BJC_and_BGCSE_Averages_Improve_printer.shtml). The 2013 results of the BGCSE examination, which is administered to high school seniors, The Island Administrator proudly announced, “seven of the students passed four or more of the subject tests with C or higher.” Crooked Island students have been repeatedly recognized as National Student of the Year Finalists for the Bahamas.

Reciprocal Exchange

Instances of family helping family and neighbor helping neighbor can be seen as daily exchanges on Crooked Island. And this extends to relationships off-island. This knowledge goes back several generations. As told by one respondent, “...because in days gone I was told by my parents up to their time that people were more connected...if I have a lot of groceries or if I bake bread, this one go to this house I’ll share it.” There has always been some form of community assistance on Crooked Island, whether it was locals helping locals or former residents helping current residents.

Crooked Island has been described by many of its current and former residents as one of the “hardship islands.” The term “hardship islands” refers to the most southern islands in The Bahamas archipelago. This hardship requires help and support from various family members no longer living on the island and by the community. Remittances occur in various forms such as the paying of medical insurance for relatives on Crooked Island, offering free housing for a nephew or niece while enrolled in The College of the Bahamas located in Nassau, or by sending necessary goods to family members. As one respondent stated,

Families support each other. For me personally, my grandchild lives in Crooked Island so I will send supplies for my daughter on the mail boat. If someone gets sick, family members will help getting them into Nassau or wherever to see a doctor.

Crooked Island residents have created, out of necessity, a broad exchange relationship that goes beyond the typical one-way direction of remittances. The sending and receiving of goods is often mutual as residents of Crooked Island send fresh seafood, such as conch, fish, and lobster, to family members living in Nassau. This interaction serves as an avenue through which family and community social ties are reinforced. The people of Crooked Island have fostered an independent mindset; however, they are quick to lend support to their fellow neighbor, even when that means crossing islands. While financial remittances are critical for the people of Crooked Island, they also provide important social and cultural connections to support those who have left.

The idea of reciprocal exchange can be a double edged sword for business owners in small rural areas. On one hand they live in the community and understand the hardships faced by many of the customers, and, on the other hand, they are trying to ensure that their business remains profitable to support themselves and their families financially. Grocery store owners in small communities are affected by this dilemma on a daily basis. One respondent who currently is a business owner said, “I have a food store where people always come and shop and get their grocery needs. When any local activities need help I will take part...especially in the community of Cabbage Hill...that’s really the community I live.” The experiences shared by a rural entrepreneur shows that as a business leader in a small town you must be civic minded.

However, he explained that,

Customers come into the store and ask for credit if you say no then they get mad. If they did not pay last time how can I say yes this time around? If I know that things are difficult, I will give them credit so that they can get the things, they need...Customers do

not understand that if they do not pay then I cannot order the next shipment of goods for the store. Being one of the only grocery stores on the island, I understand that sometimes I have to help even if I take a loss.

Communication Technology

Advances in technology over the past several decades have made it easier for families to maintain social ties and seek assistance from loved ones living outside of Crooked Island. In 2005, Crooked Island began to experience new advances in technology with local companies like The Bahamas Telecommunication Corporation providing access to the Internet to the island. The residents of Crooked Island embraced this new technology by becoming equipped with the latest smart phones and computers in their homes to travel on the information super highway (see Figure 8 and Table 5). A majority of people under the age of 65 have Internet access in Crooked Island. The general theme among several older respondent was as with most technology, the use of personal electronics has been embraced by the younger generations in the age groups between 10-44 years.

The primary use of communication technology for residents of Crooked Island is to maintain a social bond with relatives who have remained on the island and those who have migrated. Previously, the only ways to communicate regularly with family members either in Crooked Island or Nassau was through letters or costly telephone calls. Communication technology advancements occurring after 2005 have made it easier and more cost effective to establish and maintain social ties. As one respondent stated,

The Internet is like you're communicating with people all over the world, so that is a very important way of contacting family and its cheaper...instead of long distance phone calls...With the Internet you can send emails which is cheaper, and it's just like you are talking face to face.

Yet the basics are still essential. According to one interviewee,

[The] telephone is maybe the key really. Take my aunt for instance, she is 81 years old. She is not gonna learn how to use a cell phone, but I call her on the phone for an hour and a half, I ask her about the people there, friends, and the community and what's going on with people up there.

Another example of the use of communication technology helping to maintain social ties highlights the use of the Internet. As an interviewee stated, “mostly the young people use FaceBook and Skype but the older ones, because the young people use it so often, are starting to catch up to use them so that they can know what is going on with their family.” Communication technology is important because it helps families and friends separated by distance keep the family and community connection together and alive. These connections are necessary because there is a sense of community that residents have with Crooked Island, and the family is one of the central institutions nurturing that sense of community.

Communication technology on Crooked Island serves many different purposes. For example, two common functions it performs are as advertisement and promotional tools. The three main homecoming organizations – the Crooked Island Development Association, Crooked Island Up-Along Reunion, and the Cabbage Hill Reunion – have all integrated use of the Internet and tools such as FaceBook to spread information to their members separated by distance. The average FaceBook group members of the three reunion pages is 240 members with Cabbage Hill Reunion FaceBook group having the largest total with 423 members in October 2013. The FaceBook pages act as forums to update organizational members about upcoming events and serve as community announcement boards. With the Cabbage Hill Reunion Committee currently in the planning stages for its 2014 Reunion, FaceBook group activity has increased. Invitations to attend planning meetings are sent out two weeks ahead of the meeting date by the Nassau committee president. She starts to build up the anticipation and enthusiasm by writing:

Paging ALL descendants of Cabbage Hill, Crooked Island. This is the first official call for our meeting which is to be held on Sunday 13th October, 2013. This will officially launch our countdown to Summer, 2014 Reunion Meeting. We need new ideas for this glorious reunion. We have travelled to #2 Bay, Long Cay and French Wells, remember our personalized tour last meeting with our own now Late Pastor Linkwood Ferguson, how about a picnic at Regana Pond? or a trip in the Lancy to see Jingo Hill? How about a trip to ole Jim Pond? How about finding the late John Cunningham house from Macedonia or From Gerald Cunningham yard? We must make this a reunion to remember. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/299245416778071/>)

After the meeting is concluded, a recap of what has been discussed is issued over FaceBook, which encourages dialogue from members to be engaged in the planning process, but also to keep them abreast of the events as they transpire. FaceBook group posts also update members about the death of members from the Crooked Island community and offer condolences to the family on behalf of the committee and its members. In good times, the groups congratulate members for their accomplishments both on and off the island, such as recently announcing the installation of the new settlement church pastor who hails from Cabbage Hill and the success of a descendent of Cabbage Hill for having graduated at the top of her law school and being called to The Bahamas Bar Association.

The Internet and other communication technologies have been used to help provide advertisement opportunities for local attractions and local business owners to showcase their offerings to a diverse population. For example, Tranquility on the Bay, a local hotel, has been able to capitalize on the Internet to advertise services to a broader domestic and global market. According to one respondent, he “uses the Internet to promote the natural beauty of the island which draws visitors to my hotel to help me get guest from around the world.”

Community and Generational Change

A majority of interviewees believe that a strong and vibrant community exists in Crooked Island, yet some members of the younger generation see this disappearing. The youngest person I

interviewed, age 28, stated that a sense of community, “is gone pretty much. It has disappeared because everybody leaves, and the people who are here are so negative, the couple of people who are here are negative, so everyone just leaving piece by piece.” This highlights one of the major problems currently faced by Crooked Island – the age difference and how people view whether a sense of community exists on the island. Many former residents return to Crooked Island once they retire. One respondent stated, “I retired after 40 years from The Bahamas Customs and Immigration Department. After retiring I decide well I will come back to my birth island and invest a couple of dollars I received from my pension.” Another retired respondent returned home for different reasons, “I moved back to Crooked Island for personal reasons. My mother lives in Crooked Island, and I wanted to be here to help take care of her in her older years.” The widening age gap within the island is creating difficulties in the presentation of a new vision for Crooked Island.

The desire of the younger generation to cultivate a new vision for Crooked Island with the hopes of bringing prosperity to the island through enhanced infrastructure is in opposition to the older generation’s more traditional views and values. With an enhanced infrastructure, new jobs will be created on the island but will alter the charm of the island. However, some of the older residents are accepting of the younger generations views, as one interviewee stated, “...the grandchildren that is coming back home and a lot of them are getting interested in the island they love the island. I am looking forward to seeing some things happen here.” Still, young respondent has become disillusioned with the future of the Crooked Island community. One person stated, “ain’t nobody trying to motivate and trying to help anybody.” Even being disillusioned, this interviewee still has a passion and vision for the prosperity of his community, saying,

...People who got the money ain't got no vision; we have fishing and natural beauty on the island that we can use, I would get a new marina.... I would try to get a connect with one of the cruise lines and try get some tours going, dive sites, and historic sites...

This leads to what one resident views as the problem, "that our people are very complacent about the situation and are satisfied with too little and settle for too little."

For many people, Crooked Island is their home either by birth or it is where their family has migrated. Because of the high rate of migration, residents and former residents understand that, "a lot of natives from Crooked Island reside in Nassau [as do] descendants of Crooked Island. Therefore, if they want to come back to Crooked Island that should not be a problem." The presence of open and welcoming people of Crooked Island, according to one resident, "is like most family islands. It is very respectful to persons; we do not practice discrimination, segregation, or separation." Residents and former residents believe that you do not have to live in Crooked Island to be a part of the community because they see themselves as active members of the community even if they no longer reside on the island. One of Crooked Island's former residents summed it up by saying, "once you are connected to the people you can become a part of the community. Once you form a bond and friendship with the people you are adopted into the community." One such illustration that the former resident used is that of her, "brother who resides in Nassau and goes to Crooked Island every year and would consider himself to be a part of the community. Once you go to Crooked Island you fall in love with the island."

Generational rifts exist regarding the future of Crooked Island. However, there is still a common thread that bonds people to agree that this place is their home. Sitting in the airport waiting to travel to Crooked Island to join in the reunion, Up-Along participants continuously uttered one word: "home." For the many residents of Crooked Island, the close relationship to family and community has not only helped to create their identity but also formed citizens'

attachment to Crooked Island. One respondent stated that, “the island is home and means a lot in that way. Home will always have that special place.” That special place encompasses the cherished memories that a person creates over the course of a lifetime. The natural beauty and tranquility of Crooked Island are often some of the unique features that help to create a bond with Crooked Island and its residents. The small population that exists on Crooked Island forces people to be dependent on each other for the survival of their families and community. These common connections become important because of the shared common experiences with family and friends that serve as reference points to a life lived. The desire to maintain and sustain these relationships was the driving force that eventually led to the formation of the Cabbage Hill and Up-Long Homecoming events.

Homecoming/Reunion

The homecoming events help to focus current and former residents of Crooked Island on a common goal as they unite to address relevant issues concerning the island. Over the past several decades, Crooked Island has had some form of a homecoming festival. In the 1980s and 1990s, Crooked Island played host to an annual Regatta.⁴ Starting in the 1990s, a shift occurred with the help of the Crooked Island Development Association in which an emphasis was placed on creating an annual homecoming for the island. The association’s achievement of several consecutive annual homecomings every April would be the catalyst that led the Cabbage Hill, Up-Long, and Landrial Point Settlements to form their homecoming celebrations. The Cabbage Hill and Up-Long Reunions both started with the same concept for people to come together as a way to preserve the history of their families and communities by reconnecting people to Crooked

⁴ A regatta is a series of amateur sail driven work boat races held over the course of several days.

Island, fostering economic growth in the settlement, and contributing to community revitalization through enhancement projects.

According to one of the founders of the Cabbage Hill Reunion, “it was established to try to reunite all the younger persons of our age whom we knew, who we grew up with. We thought about trying to reunite us as a people.” This form of preserving family and community history is an interesting case in community development as it is aided through the use of community action and interaction. This initiative is a concrete example of what Wilkinson (1991) identifies with “community field.” Cooperative action is undertaken not only for personal and family benefit but also for the redevelopment of the island community.

These types of events are able to be moved forward because of the social capital that has been built up between families, friends, and the community as a whole. Another important reason why the homecoming has been successful is community attachment and a deep rooted sense of community. As one respondent stated, “this is my home, this is my roots, a sense of belonging. I have seen other parts of the world due to work commitments, but I love Crooked Island.” Because of this strong community attachment and understanding of the positive benefits, the homecoming offers the needed fuel for current and former residents to support the biennial event in Cabbage Hill and Up-Long.

While touring the various settlements of Crooked Island, I was able to observe several of the positive economic and social development benefits that the homecoming events provide the community. The arrival of visitors on Crooked Island to attend the homecoming/reunion provides an immediate boost to a struggling economy. Business persons who have car rental services, lodging, and restaurants see spikes in their profits during this time. Several bars on the island are impacted by increased business because most of the nightly activities are centered at

their establishments. Small merchants, such as the operators of the settlements grocery stores, are also able to make a profit during this time by selling food and personal hygiene items. Fishermen subsidize their incomes by taking visitors on fishing excursions or selling their daily catch to visitors. The two tour guides on the island to work with the homecoming committee to take visitors to historical sites such as the slave plantation ruins, caves, and the second highest point in the Bahamas. By broadcasting the events amongst families, according to the president of the Up-Long Association, the homecoming events in Cabbage Hill and Up-Long provide an instant boost to the local population of 50-100 people for the week. The Crooked Island Development Association has some 100-200 descendants come to Crooked Island for their event every April because the event encompasses the entire island.

Through the support of current and former residents, the homecoming committees are able to provide positive benefits to the community in various forms. With a high population of elderly residents on Crooked Island, the committee has made it a priority to ensure that the elderly are taken care of in their later years. Through collected funds, the committees have allocated money to repair elderly residents' homes and employed young men by helping them to utilize their craft and trade to make a living. The money raised stays in Crooked Island at least for some time and young residents are employed, even if just for a short awhile.

The people of Crooked Island are a proud people who are independent and are currently in the process of building a community center. They use the skills and knowledge of the entire population of Crooked Island to make sure that the community is improved for the positive. The community center shows that no one person can create and finish a project of this magnitude by him/herself. Instead, it takes the village to raise funds, create the plans, and finally build the

community center. The goals of the homecoming committee are not solely socially oriented but have a civic component intent on making a lasting visible impact on the community.

An event like the homecoming provides many positive benefits such as those listed above; however, it also has negative drawbacks for the community and participants of the homecoming. Not all residents buy into the idea of the homecoming because it serves to limit the overall enhancement of the Crooked Island community. The general perception of one respondent is that the homecoming serves to only benefit the settlement that is hosting the event. He explained in further detail that,

...I suggested [to the various committees] last year and again this year rather than have these individual homecomings there should be a combined homecoming to make one big festival. My reason for saying that is because the population is very small.

He went on to discuss his position further by using the current homecoming as an illustration.

Bearing in mind that the Major's Cay brought in quite a lot of people from Nassau, that's why they were able to support themselves. But that should not be the case. You want people who actually live here and from other settlements to go into Major's Cay and lend their full support. That's how you move ahead. Well, after tomorrow people who came leave and go back to Nassau and the people who live here stay here. There is a visible gap between the settlements.

Besides the tension that occurs, a respondent stated several examples how they believe that the whole idea of the homecoming goes against the goals of helping to empower the residents of Crooked Island by comparing the Crooked Island Development Association Homecoming to the Up-Along Reunion. For instance,

Frankly, right now homecoming don't offer any financial benefits to Crooked Island. I thought the whole idea of the homecoming would be to inject capital in the island right, but it is seen more as a fundraiser for these committees than a cash injection for the island. So it is really not beneficial for the island except that you got some people on the island. The only people that will actually make any kind of money on the island is the people who have rooms to rent, and I wouldn't even say restaurants, I would say bars. Because if you look at what is happening all the committees and the village homecomings they come prepared to do their own thing. Alright, in case of the annual

homecoming that somehow do more cash injection into the island because they rent booths to individuals on the island so that persons on the island be the one selling the food and stuff like that as opposed to the committee coming.

He adds on further by providing personal examples.

Experienced with this particular homecoming is that there seems to be a total factor of trying to control expenditures here on the island and even for the persons on the island because everything you offer is too expensive. But here is the case if you want to go boating, for instance, you are spending 7.50 dollars a gallon so you can't expect to go boating for 10 dollars. What you find out happening right now is that I've experienced it fully you give a price, and this is the best that I can do, but this is not the price that I would charge ordinarily. I would charge something else but because it is you, I would give and then you still turn around and get screwed.

One of the negative drawbacks to the homecoming is the limited entertainment according to one respondent who said, "my experiences with various homecomings are similar limited activities, food, and drinks are used to bring people together." The night life of the homecoming events is centered on the local bar establishments which supply patrons with alcoholic beverages. As one interviewee states, "this is one of the negatives about the homecoming. People drink a lot during this time, and it is not good for their health."

Even though, there is some tension among Crooked Island residents and among former residents concerning the benefits and challenges associated with homecoming events, they clearly serve as illustrative cases of community – focused collective action. People are working to mitigate the effects of population loss and build and maintain community identity and attachment.

Summary

Analysis of demographic data showed an overall decrease in the population of Crooked Island. One of the primary goals of this research was to ascertain the reasons for people's migration in their own words. This was achieved by conducting 16 qualitative in-depth

interviews that offered key insights concerning the reasons people have migrated from Crooked Island to more prosperous destinations along with problems in the community. Field observation provided the foundation for understanding the concerns and issues that residents conveyed during formal interviews and casual conversations. Several of the serious issues such as employment, health, education, and the overall sustainability of the community were common themes expressed by current and former residents of Crooked Island. The study looked to further interrogate the association between identity and place by observing the strong attachment to community by Crooked Island residents. Attachment to place sparks the motivation for current and former residents of Crooked Island to maintain and sustain the culture of the island in their daily lives and social interactions with family and friends. Although much of their effort centers around collective action in the form of a homecoming with the hopes of aiding in the development of the community, the process is not without critics.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study explored the reasons that residents of Crooked Island migrate, the impacts migration has had on the community, and strategies being employed to keep community alive. Many of the interviewees listed several “push” factors that have led to the exodus from Crooked Island, such as the limited employment opportunities and the need to gain access to higher educational institutions. Crooked Island and many of the outer islands in the Bahamas are facing perilous times with the loss of residents due to out-migration, similar to many rural areas around the world. These areas are now stigmatized as dying and no longer relevant. However, this study shows that rural communities are fighting to preserve their cultural identity, attachment to place, and relevance to the wider society. Community field theory provides an important lens for exploring personal and communal perceptions and interactions in the face of these challenges (Wilkinson 1991, Bridger, Brennan, and Luloff 2009).

To date, community field theory has not adequately attempted to “conceptualize and empirically investigate the relationship between communication technology and the emergence of community” (Bridger, Brennan, and Luloff 2009:93). By examining Crooked Island’s situation, this research helps to add evidence showing a link between “communication technology and the emergence of community” in community field theory (Bridger, Brennan, and

Luloff 2009:93). Maintaining ties to social networks is one of the benefits that communication technology offers to communities experiencing population loss. The use of these various forms of technology may be conceptualized as part of community agency. This can then be manifested into grassroots efforts by social actors to increase community action. This fuels the emergence of community when residents work together toward common goals and strengthens attachment to a community.

In order to be attached to a community, people must have some sense of tangible ownership or stake in community affairs. The process of building relationships that occur within community action projects may contribute to social norms and expectations of community members that further develop community identity. The existence of social identity is pivotal for people in the sense that solidarity is formed acting as a “central element for uniting and motivating communities” (Brennan, Flint and Luloff 2009:100). As solidarity takes place, norms and expectations are more firmly established, and community culture develops. This provides tangible ownership in the community through attachment as a reference point to identity, even if the community is decreasing through population loss.

Many communities have pursued ways in which to face these challenges in their attempts to sustain and maintain their communities as they face increases/decreases in population. In addition to initiatives aimed at reducing actual out-migration and increasing in-migration, if a community is to survive, efforts are needed to keep them alive through broader networks connecting identity and place in practical forms, especially during our global age. There have been new adaptations by family members. To the residents of Crooked Island, family is of great importance in helping to establish relationships to and within the community, and also for providing crucial assistance and support to their loved ones. Residents have taken the lead to

provide for their families and community without waiting on government assistance or international private business investments. The case study of Crooked Island highlights that families have implemented strategies to lend support to their immediate and broader kin-networks through reciprocal exchange/remittance of money and goods. These types of initiatives being undertaken by kin and social networks can only be successful through the accumulation and utilization of trust between members of the various families and social networks.

Crooked Island residents have also maintained community in other ways, most notably acting as ambassadors to recent migrants in new host locations. Through the use of social networks formed within the community of Crooked Island, residents are able to acquire information concerning employment and housing vacancies in places such as Nassau and other destinations. Many times family members moving from Crooked Island to Nassau are able to live with an uncle, aunt, or various other relatives until they are financially stable. The existence of social capital and social networks already established in host locations make it financially feasible for residents to relocate. However, this often contributes to further population loss.

In Crooked Island, former and current residents are using reciprocal exchange/remittance “to reconstruct ‘home’” (Bonnett 2009:26). The Cabbage Hill Reunion committee’s work to build a community center located in the settlement exemplifies the points made by Parks-Yancy et al. (2008) and their illustration of intra and inter group dynamics. Which settlements have access to the community center dictates if this action was an intra-group project for the sole benefit of Cabbage Hill or inter-group project for the overall enchantment and benefit of Crooked Island. This action addresses many of the residents’ concerns that the committee only seeks to develop their respective settlement instead of benefiting the entire island.

In order to maintain community while seeking to improve economic conditions for family, there has been a growing emphasis placed on the use of communication technology to keep people connected and aware of local and national concerns, issues, and events. This helps to nourish the emotional and cultural attachment that many residents feel towards their home. As residents and family members have spread across the length and breadth of the entire chain of Bahamian islands and move to international destinations, communication technology has taken on an even greater significance in helping to preserve and build social networks. The social capital established within the community and networks has allowed for greater freedom in the expression of community and social network interactions (McCabe 2012:389). No longer do social networks rely on maintaining “face-to-face” interactions; they have evolved to include the use of communication technology built on social trust.

The arrival of the Internet to Crooked Island in 2005 signaled a decisive step towards moving the island out of isolation. The Internet’s arrival to Crooked Island can partly be attributed to the build-up of political momentum and businesses being required to improve infrastructure development on family islands as part of a government mandate. One of the benefits of this is that the residents of Crooked Island have used the Internet for the purpose of community action. Residents now easily and affordably showcase the island beauty to the world and reinforce relationships to further foster social capital within their networks. Reinforcing these relationships is achieved through the use of FaceBook and Whatsapp on computers and cellular phones. Additionally, the use of communication technology has been beneficial to the local businesses in the promotion of their products and securing the needed merchandise that helps their businesses supply the needs and wants of local consumers.

Finally, residents and families connected to Crooked Island have built relationships through social capital within and across multiple networks in attempts to maintain their homes and identities in the face of great odds, using homecoming festivals as a common point of action. It is through this exchange where young and old mingle that the cultural identity of a rural area is reestablished and maintained. Playing dominoes while older gentlemen talk about the history of the island gives perspective of where the collective group has come from and where the community is headed. The exchange of oral history teaches the culture of the community, such as the benefit of bush medicine as a natural alternative to heal sickness. Sharing oral history act as a way to preserve the “[way] of life including rules, values, and expected behavior” (Williams 1970:27). The mutual respect and relationship formation between the younger and older generations help to equip residents with the necessary tools in order to maintain their home and identity.

Generational rifts occurring within social networks are of concern as they limit opportunities for the development and exchange of social capital. Differing views are necessary for a society to grow and mature, yet they must be negotiated and managed for collective action. This dynamic is affected by two major issues on Crooked Island. First, there are many retired residents on Crooked Island, who control much of the economic, political, and social capital on the island. Second, the use of communication technology creates a power hierarchy between those who have the necessary skills and can access the digital information and those who do not have the needed skills and access. There is a changing power hierarchy between the younger and older generation of residents on Crooked Island. This was highlighted by several of the older residents mentioning that they are following the younger generation’s lead on accessing different communication technology devices. The difference between the generations on the island is one

of the obstacles that must be addressed in order to achieve collective action that positively impacts all ages.

Once a community can focus on a common goals and issues, there is hope for rural areas to weather the shocks and stresses of migration and still build strong and lasting relationships between people and place. Many committee members feel that the homecoming showcases the overall improvements Crooked Island has experienced since a person migrated/last visited. What the committee members try to demonstrate is that Crooked Island is a viable place to invest and relocate. Their work may not reverse the overall trends of out-migration, but they do serve to keep the sense of community alive. The importance of the homecoming festival to Crooked Island and the other various islands that make up The Bahamas is just not economically based. Instead, the idea of the homecoming is a form of capacity building between residents, local businesses, and off island network members. Crooked Island, like many of the outer islands, requires the creation of a tight knit unit in order to have successful projects through community action and interaction for a common goal to be realized. The homecoming acts as a catalyst for such projects to be undertaken because residents and former residents have already created social capital and trust through their various networks that create a forum, accessed through communication technology, to address place-based issues and a system to address such issues.

Policy Change

In order to address the decrease in population currently suffered by Crooked Island and many of the outer islands in The Bahamas archipelago, a change in policy is warranted. Although many residents are leaving these islands for more prosperous locations, the need for infrastructure development and improvement can help to resuscitate so-called dying communities. Major enhancement projects such as an improved dock and harbor would improve

the quality of life for the residents of Crooked Island and aid in the success of the homecoming and other cultural events. A greater emphasis is needed in advertising and promoting the outer islands.

One of the common themes spoken by former and current residents is that the government has forgotten about them. Due to differing political party affiliations, some of the needed infrastructure development has been jeopardized in the fight over national politics. One such example of the political ramifications that Crooked Island has experienced within the last several years is the rebuilding of the Crooked Island High School following Hurricane Irene that severely damaged classrooms. Originally approved for funding by the Free National Movement (FNM) in 2011 to repair the damaged classrooms, Former FNM Minister of Education Senator Desmond Bannister claimed, “the PLP (Progressive Liberal Party) did nothing whatsoever and students are still housed in temporary facility” (<http://www.tribune242.com/news/2012/sep/10/bannister-claims-schools-unsafe>). However, in 2013 the school was thoroughly repaired. The words of Crooked Island residents are given credence when confronted with the state of despair and lack of government intervention of Crooked Island’s infrastructure.

Government intervention and encouragement in outer islands is imperative to rural areas within The Bahamas. The recruitment of local investors helps stimulate the necessary jobs that keep people invested and motivated to a particular location. This investment also helps to facilitate new jobs in rural areas, leading to a decrease in the overpopulation occurring in the capital city of Nassau. One way this can be accomplished is through political action by residents, creating one voice to express the needs of the community. Another method that can be introduced is for the government to streamline the process for citizens with direct ancestry to a

particular family island to apply and receive generational property to help in stimulating growth in rural areas.⁵ If the community is to grow, the different settlements must come together and seek the improvement of the entire island.

Conclusion

A mixed-methods design helped to document population change and to identify and explain the push/pull factors that have contributed to the high rates of out-migration in Crooked Island. Over the last few decades, the rate of population loss on the island is showing signs of subsiding. Interviews and observations provided an opportunity for me to better understand the intersection between demographic change and community action. The interview process also highlighted that social capital within specific networks can be exchanged between generations. Community field theory helped me to explore and better understand community structures and processes in Crooked Island by focusing on how the community has been able to progress even in the face of population loss. Community agency benefits from the close-knit family relationships and use of communication technology. This research aids in the advancement of community field theory by highlighting how community groups such as homecoming committees are able to help meet development needs. This is done by actively engaging residents and former residents through communication technology advancements such as cellular phones and the Internet to create tangible results that reinforce social relationships. However, these same tools may influence further population loss. Therefore, the continued combination of communication technology and community action is needed, but they must be coupled with policy changes to keep the Crooked Island community alive.

⁵ Generation Property – Land on the outer islands of The Bahamas that is not owned by one person alone but collectively by the family as a whole.

LIST OF REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Adams, Luther. 2006. "'Headed for Louisville: Rethinking Rural to Urban Migration in the South, 1930-1950.'" *Journal of Social History* 40(2):407-430.
- Anil, Nihat K. 2012. "Festival Visitors' Satisfaction and Loyalty: An Example of Small, Local, and Municipality Organized Festival." *Tourism (13327461)* 60(3):255-271.
- Ashton, Hazel and David C. Thorns. 2007. "The Role of Information Communications Technology in Retrieving Local Community." *City & Community* 6(3):211-229.
- Bahamas Weekly. 2008. "Bahamas Information Services Update BJC and BGCSE Averages Improve." Retrieved June 22, 2014 (http://www.thebahamasweekly.com/publish/bis-news_updates/BJC_and_BGCSE_Averages_Improve_printer.shtml).
- Bonnett, Aubrey W. 2009. "The West Indian Diaspora to the United States: Remittances and Development of the Homeland." *Wadabagei: A Journal of the Caribbean & its Diasporas* 12(1):6-32.
- Brennan, M. A., Courtney G. Flint, and A. E. Luloff. 2009. "Bringing Together Local Culture and Rural Development: Findings from Ireland, Pennsylvania, and Alaska." *Sociologia Ruralis* 49(1):97-112.
- Bridger, J.C., Brennan, M.A., and A.E. Luloff. 2009. "The Interactional Approach to Community." Chapter 9, p. 85-100 edited by J. Robinson and G. Green (eds.), *New Perspectives in Community Development*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.

- Brown, David L. 2002. "Migration and Community: Social Networks in a Multilevel World." *Rural Sociology* 67(1):1-23.
- Buta, Natalia, Mark A. Brennan, and Stephen M. Holland. 2012. "A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Community Attachment in Rural Romania." *Journal of Rural Social Sciences* 27(1):24-51.
- Cheek, C. and K.W. Piercy. 2008. "Quilting as a Tool in Resolving Erikson's Adult Stage of Human Development." *Journal of Adult Development* 15:13-24.
- Craton, Michael., and Gail Saunders. 2000. *Islanders in the Stream: A History of The Bahamaian People Volume Two: From the Ending of Slavery to the Twenty-First Century*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Dhesi, Autar S. 2000. "Social Capital and Community Development." *Community Development Journal* 35(3):199-214.
- Dorigo, Guido and Waldo Tobler. 1983. "Push-Pull Migration Laws." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 73(1):1-17.
- Doty, Jennifer and Jodi Dworkin. 2014. "Parents' of Adolescents use of Social Networking Sites." *Computers in Human Behavior* 33:349-355.
- Falk, William W. 2004. *Rooted in Place: Family and Belonging in a Southern Black Community* / William W. Falk. New Brunswick, N.J. ; London : Rutgers University Press.
- Flores, Juan. 2005. "The Diaspora Strikes Back." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 39(3) 21-40.

- Foley, Malcolm and Gayle McPherson. 2007. "Glasgow's Winter Festival: Can Cultural Leadership Serve the Common Good?" *Managing Leisure* 12(2):143-156.
- Fresnoza-Flot, Asuncion. 2009. "Migration Status and Transnational Mothering: The Case of Filipino Migrants in France." *Global Networks* 9(2):252-270.
- Getz, D. 2000. Developing a Research Agenda for the Event Management Field. In, J. Allen et al. (eds.), *Events Beyond 2000: Setting the Agenda, Proceedings of Conference on Event Evaluation, Research and Education*, pp. 10-21. Sydney: Australian Centre for Event Management, University of Technology, Sydney.
- Gibson, Chris. 2013. "Music Festivals and Regional Development Policy: Towards a Festival Ecology." *Perfect Beat (Equinox Publishing Group)* 14(2):140-157.
- Grabner-Kräuter, Sonja. 2009. "Web 2.0 Social Networks: The Role of Trust." *Journal of Business Ethics* 90:505-522.
- Grillo, Michael, Miguel Teixeira and David Wilson. 2010. "Residential Satisfaction and Civic Engagement: Understanding the Causes of Community Participation." *Social Indicators Research* 97(3):451-466.
- Gursoy, Dogan., and Denney G. Rutherford. 2004. "Host Attitudes Towards Tourism: An Improved Structural Model." *Annals of Tourism Research* 31(3):495-516.
- Horst, Heather A. 2006. "The Blessings and Burdens of Communication: Cell Phones in Jamaican Transnational Social Fields." *Global Networks* 6(2):143-159.

- Hummon, David M. 1990. *Commonplaces: Community Ideology and Identity in American Culture*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Immigration and Nationality Act, Public and Private Law 414-182 (1952).
- Immigration and Nationality Act, Public and Private Law 89-236 (1965).
- Kanter, Maggie, Tamara Afifi, and Stephanie Robbins. 2012. "The Impact of Parents 'Friending' their Young Adult Child on Facebook on Perceptions of Parental Privacy Invasions and Parent-Child Relationship Quality." *Journal of Communication* 62(5):900-917.
- Kaufman, Harold F. 1959. "Towards an Interactional Conception of Community." *Social Forces* 38(1):8-17.
- Lee, Everett S. 1966. "A Theory of Migration." *Demography* 3(1):47-57.
- Lewis, I.M. 2003. *Social and Cultural Anthropology in Perspective*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Lu, Yao and Donald J. Treiman. 2011. "Migration, Remittances, and Educational Stratification among Blacks in Apartheid and Post-Apartheid South Africa." *Social Forces* 89(4):1119-1143.
- Matarrita-Cascante, David and Mark A. Brennan. 2012. "Conceptualizing Community Development in the Twenty-First Century." *Community Development* 43(3):293-305
- McCabe, Brian J. 2012. "Homeownership and Social Trust in Neighbors." *City & Community* 11(4):389-408.

- McGrath, Brian and M. A. Brennan. 2011. "Tradition, Cultures, and Communities: Exploring the Potentials of Music and the Arts for Community Development in Appalachia." *Community Development* 42(3):340-358.
- Mishra, Prachi. 2007. "Emigration and Brain Drain: Evidence from the Caribbean." *B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy: Topics in Economic Analysis & Policy* 7(1):1-42.
- Molm, Linda D., Monica M. Whitham, and David Melamed. 2012. "Forms of Exchange and Integrative Bonds: Effects of History and Embeddedness." *American Sociological Review* 77(1):141-165.
- Parham, Angel A. 2004. "Diaspora, Community, and Communication: Internet use in Transnational Haiti." *Global Networks* 4(2):199-217.
- Parkins, Natasha C. 2010. "Push and Pull Factors of Migration." *American Review of Political Economy* 8(2):6-24.
- Parks-Yancy, Rochelle, Nancy DiTomaso and Corinne Post. 2008. "Reciprocal Obligations in the Social Capital Resource Exchanges of Diverse Groups." *Humanity & Society* 32(3):238-262.
- Phillips, Rhonda. 2004. "Artful Business: Using the Arts for Community Economic Development." *Community Development Journal* 39(2):112-122.

- Sacks, Michael A. and Nikki Graves. 2012. "How Many 'Friends' do You Need? Teaching Students how to Network using Social Media." *Business Communication Quarterly* 75(1):80-88.
- Schwarz, Eric C. and Robin Tait. 2007. "Recreation, Arts, Events, and Festivals: Their Contribution to a Sense of Community in the Colac-Otway Shire of Country Victoria." *Rural Society* 17(2):125-138.
- Skrbis, Zlatko. 2008. "Transnational Families: Theorising Migration, Emotions and Belonging," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29(3):231-246.
- Smith, Dana. 2012. "Bannister Claims Schools Unsafe." The Bahamas Tribune, September 10. Retrieved June 22, 2014 (<http://www.tribune242.com/news/2012/sep/10/bannister-claims-schools-unsafe/>).
- The Bahamas Department of Statistics Census Bureau. 1980. *The 1980 Census of Population and Housing Report*. Nassau, Bahamas. The Department of Government Printing.
- The Bahamas Department of Statistics Census Bureau. 1990. *The 1990 Census of Population and Housing Report*. Nassau, .The Department of Government Printing. Retrieved June 16, 2014 (<http://statistics.bahamas.gov.bs/download/091852500.pdf>).
- The Bahamas Department of Statistics Census Bureau. 2000. *The 2000 Census of Population and Housing Report*. Nassau, .The Department of Government Printing.
- The Bahamas Department of Statistics Census Bureau. 2010. *The 2010 Census of Population and Housing Report*. Nassau, .The Department of Government Printing.

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism. 2010. "Acklins and Crooked Island." The Official Website of

The Bahamas, August 2013. Retrieved January 12, 2014

(<http://www.bahamas.com/islands/acklins>).

Thomas, William I. and Florian Znaniecki. 1958. *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*.

New York, NY: Dover Publications.

Uphoff, Norman. 1999. "Understanding Social Capital: Learning from the Analysis and

Experience of Participation." Chapter 2, p. 215-249 edited by Partha Dasgupta and Ismail

Serageldin, *Social capital: A multifaceted perspective*. Washington D.C.: The World

Bank.

Uslaner, Eric M., and Richard S. Conley. 2003. "Civic Engagement and Particularized Trust:

The Ties that Bind People to their Ethnic Communities." *American Politics Research*

31(4):331-360.

Wilkinson, Kenneth P. 1991. *The Community in Rural America*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood

Publishing Group.

Williams, R. 1970. *American Society: A Sociological Interpretation*. New York: Knopf

Publishing.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CROOKED ISLAND AND FORMER RESIDENTS

Community Questions

- 1). How long have you resided in this community, Crooked Island, The Bahamas?
- 2). Does a person have to live in Crooked Island to be a part of the community? If yes/no, why?
- 3). Do you think people feel connected to each other on Crooked Island? Why or why not?
- 4). Do you consider yourself to be active in the community? In what ways are you an active member of the community?
- 5). What are the major concerns or challenges that you have noticed in the community over the past three to five years?
- 6). What advances or new opportunities have you noticed on the island over the past three to five years?
- 7). What are some of the areas of Crooked Island that need improvement in the future?

Migration

- 8). Have you ever left Crooked Island to live anywhere else for a year or more? If yes, for how long and why? If no, were there any particular reasons why you have not left?
- 9). Thinking of family, friends, and others you know who left Crooked Island, what do you think were their reasons for leaving?
- 10). How is the community affected by migration?
- 11). Do you think a decrease in the population of Crooked Island has had any negative and/or positive effects on the region? If so what are they?
- 12). Are people still attached to Crooked Island? Is there a sense of community here?

Overall Perceptions of Education and Economy

- 13). Does education on Crooked Island help to provide for students positive prospects in the future? (Probe for different levels of education.)
- 14). Can the natural and local resources of Crooked Island be used to enhance economic opportunities for the residents of the island? (Probe for different sectors of the economy.)

Family and Community Interactions

- 15). Does the size of Crooked Island influence people's interactions with each other local issues?
- 16). What role does family play in the everyday lives of people living in Crooked Island?
- 17). In what ways do you foster or maintain family relationships with those members who have left Crooked Island?
- 18). Do you send money or supplies to Nassau or other places for family members? Does this support help to maintain family ties?
- 19). What role do extended family members that have left Crooked Island play in the community?
- 20). When was the Internet first brought to Crooked Island? Has the use of the Internet helped in maintaining social ties outside of Crooked Island?
- 21). To what extent and in what ways are communication technologies, such as Skype, used to maintain ties in the community and out-migrants?

Homecoming Festival

- 22). How long has the Annual Family Homecoming been going on? And why was it first established?
- 23). When is the Homecoming Festival held in Crooked Island?
- 24). Who is responsible for maintaining and planning the event? Are most members of the community involved in the event, or is it a small group of leaders?
- 25). Considering events such as the Annual Family Homecoming, what positive and/or negative benefits do they offer Crooked Island?

Interview Questions for People Who have left Crooked Island

- 26). When did you first leave Crooked Island, The Bahamas? Have you been back for any period of time?
- 27). What were some of the factors that resulted in you migrating from Crooked Island in particular and The Bahamas in general?
- 28). When seeking to relocate, what characteristics did you look for in the new destination (country or island)?

- 29). If economic conditions in Crooked Island had been better, would you still have migrated? If yes, why?
- 30). Do you still feel a connection to Crooked Island? If so what is the connection?
- 31). What are some of the ways in which you stay connected to family, friends, and news from Crooked Island? Are these connections important to you?
- 32). To what extent and in what ways are communication technologies, such as Skype, used to maintain ties to the community of Crooked Island?
- 33). Do you send money or supplies back to Crooked Island for family and/or friends? Does this support help to maintain family ties?
- 34). Does a person have to live in the community of Crooked Island to be a part of the community? If yes/no why?
- 35). If you have been back to Crooked Island, what changes in the community have you noticed?
- 36). Have you ever participated in the Crooked Island Annual Family Homecoming? If no, why not? If yes, what was your experience?
- 37). Do you think a decrease in the population of Crooked Island has had any negative and positive effects on the region? If so, what are they?

Demographic Characteristics

- 38). What is your age?
- 39). What is your gender?
- 40). What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- 41). Are you employed? If yes, please describe your work.

Table 1. Births and Deaths By Island of Occurrence in Crooked Island

Vital Statistics	Years		
	1990	2000	2010
Births	12	3	0
Deaths	18	9	9
Natural Increase/Decrease	-6	-6	-9

SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Table Constructed by Author.

Table 2. Births and Deaths by Island of Permanent Residence of Crooked Island

Vital Statistics	Years		
	1990	2000	2010
Births	36	32	11
Deaths	25	17	21
Natural Increase/Decrease	11	15	-10

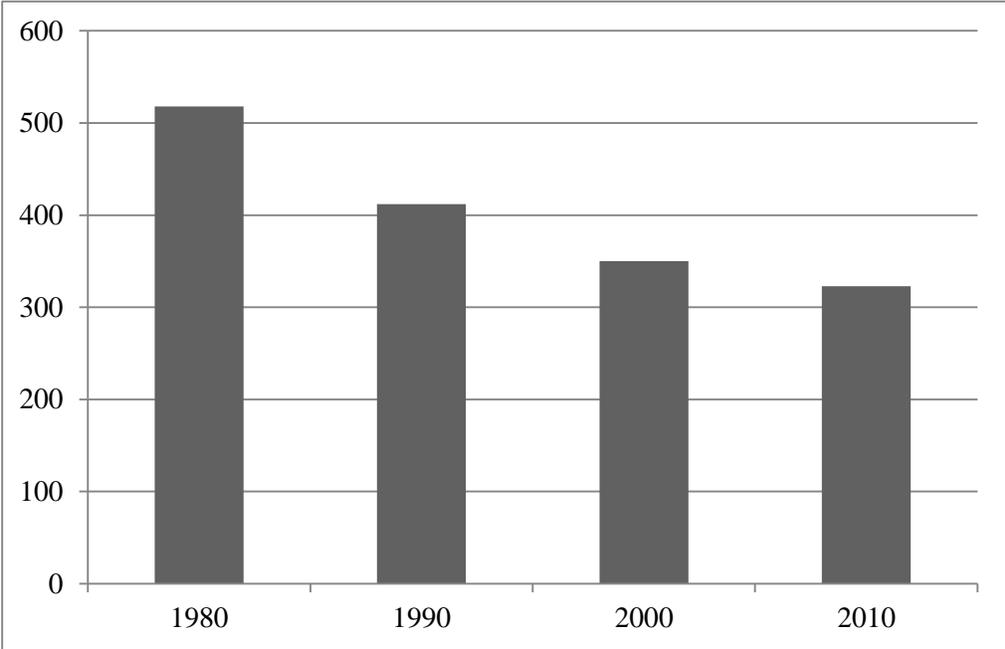
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Table Constructed by Author.

Table 3. Crooked Island Total Population 1980-2010

Total Population	Years			
	1980	1990	2000	2010
Males	246	204	172	165
Females	272	208	178	158
Total Population	518	412	350	323
Change in Population		-106	-62	-27
Population Percent Change from Previous Census		20.46%	15.05%	7.71%

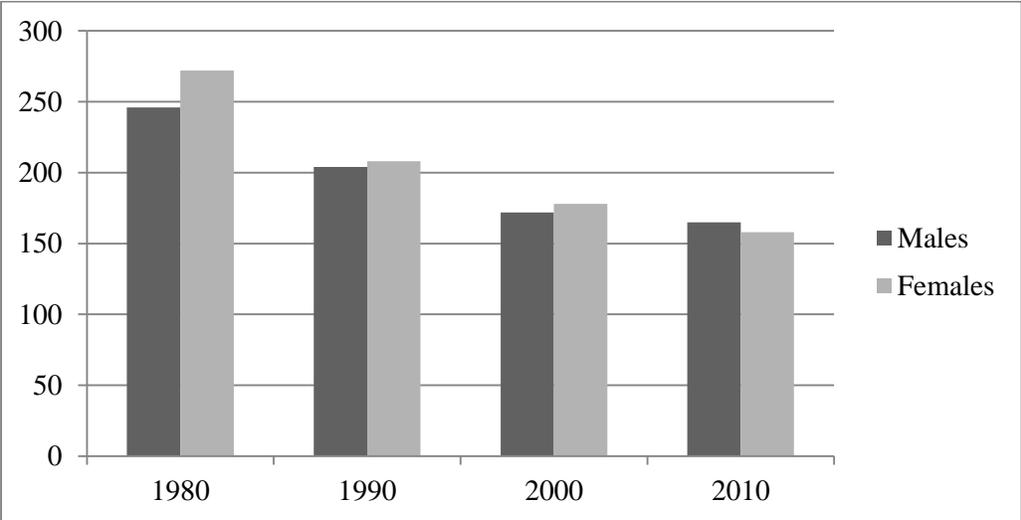
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Table Constructed by Author.

Figure 1: Total Population Crooked Island 1980-2010



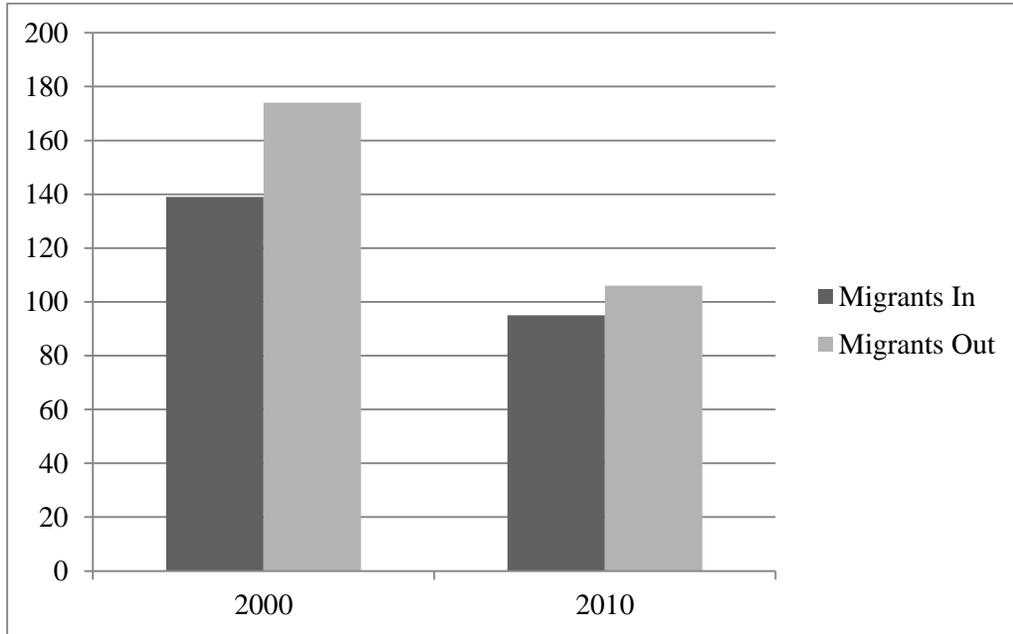
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Constructed by Author.

Figure 2: Male and Female Population of Crooked Island 1980-2010



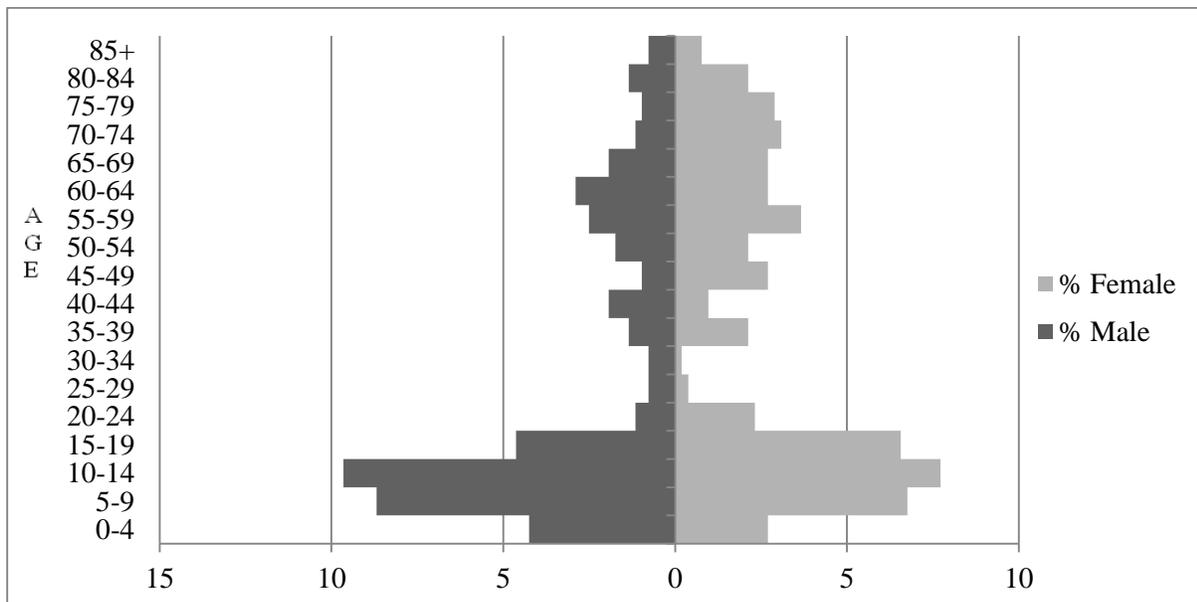
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Constructed by Author.

Figure 3: Crooked Island Internal and External Migrants 2000 and 2010



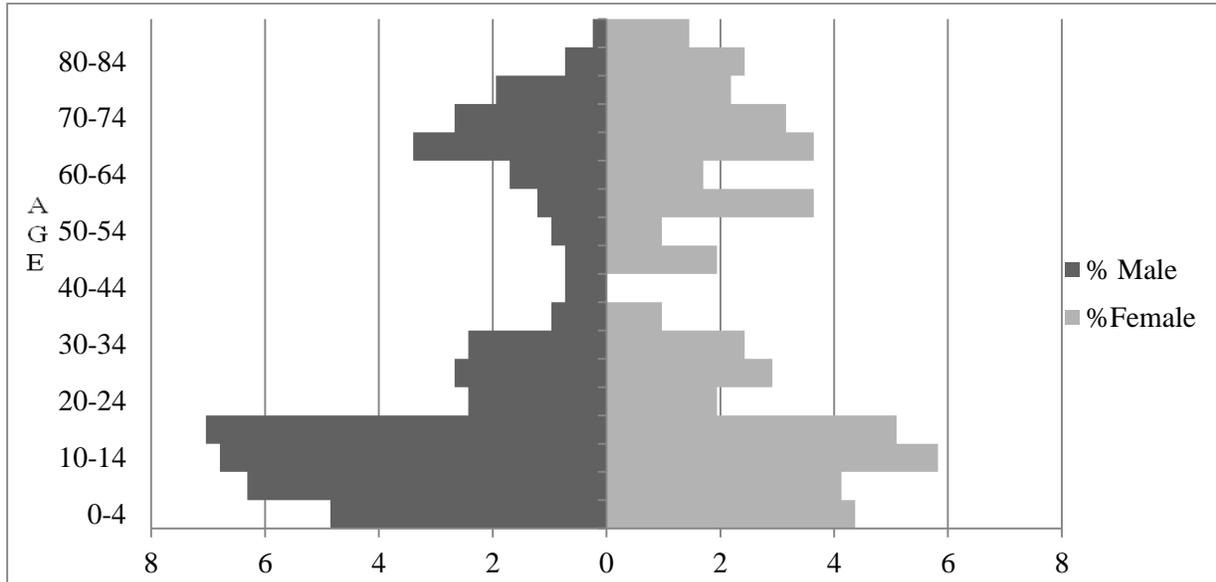
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Constructed by Author.

Figure 4: Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 1980



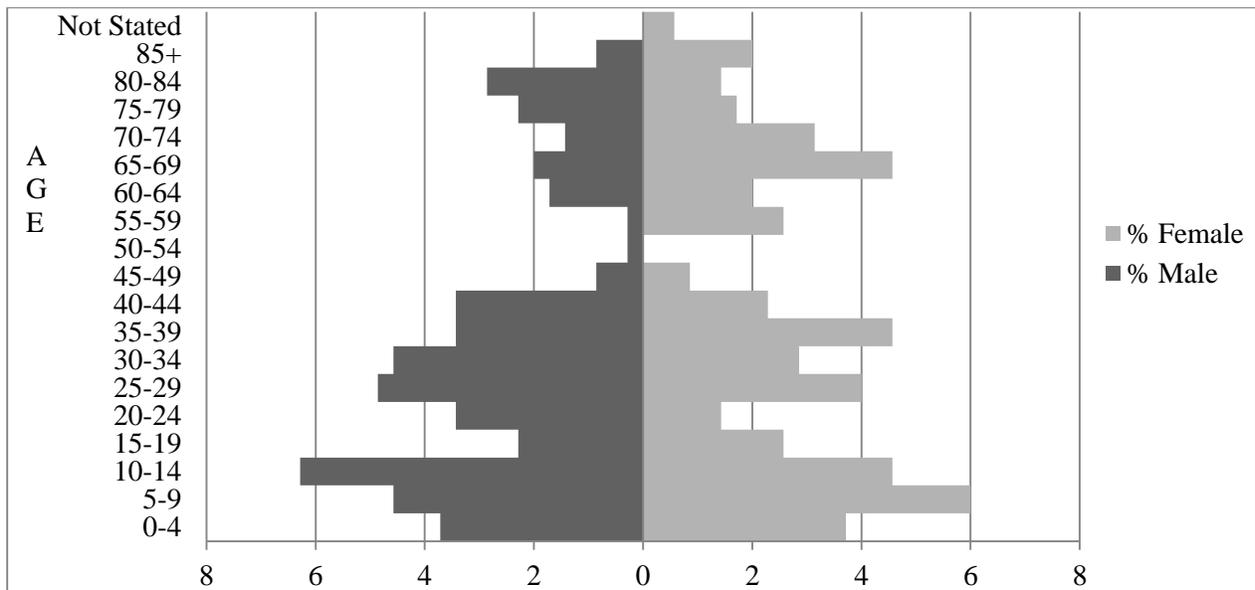
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Constructed by Author

Figure 5: Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 1990



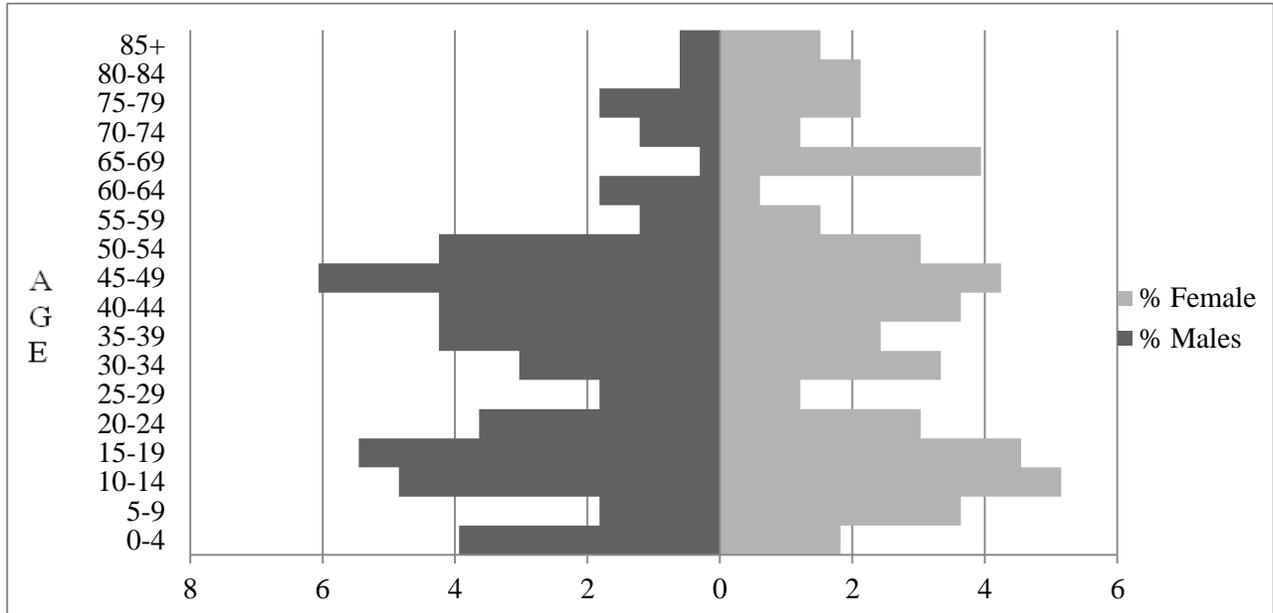
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Constructed by Author.

Figure 6: Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 2000



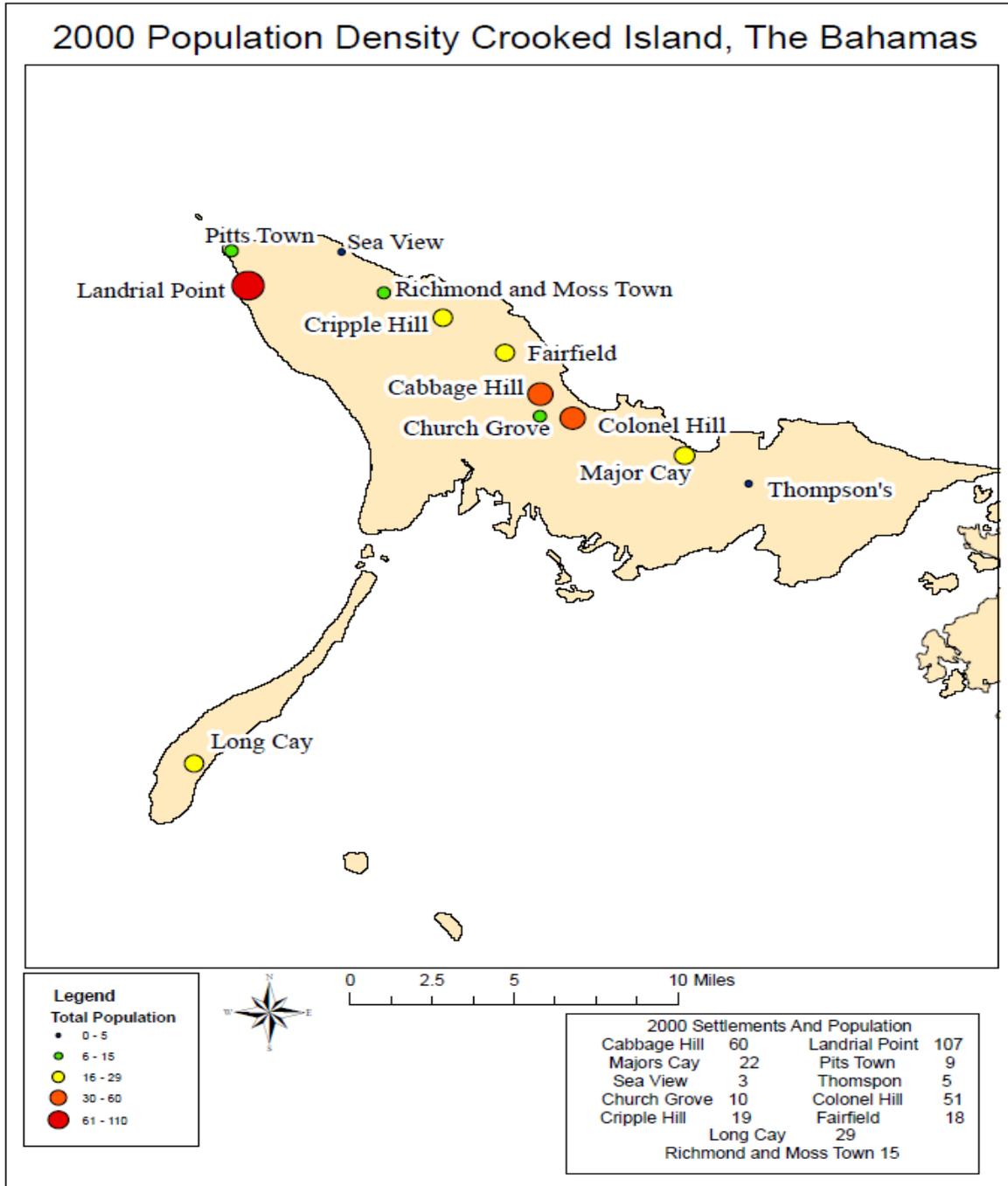
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Constructed by Author.

Figure 7: Population Pyramid for Crooked Island, Bahamas 2012



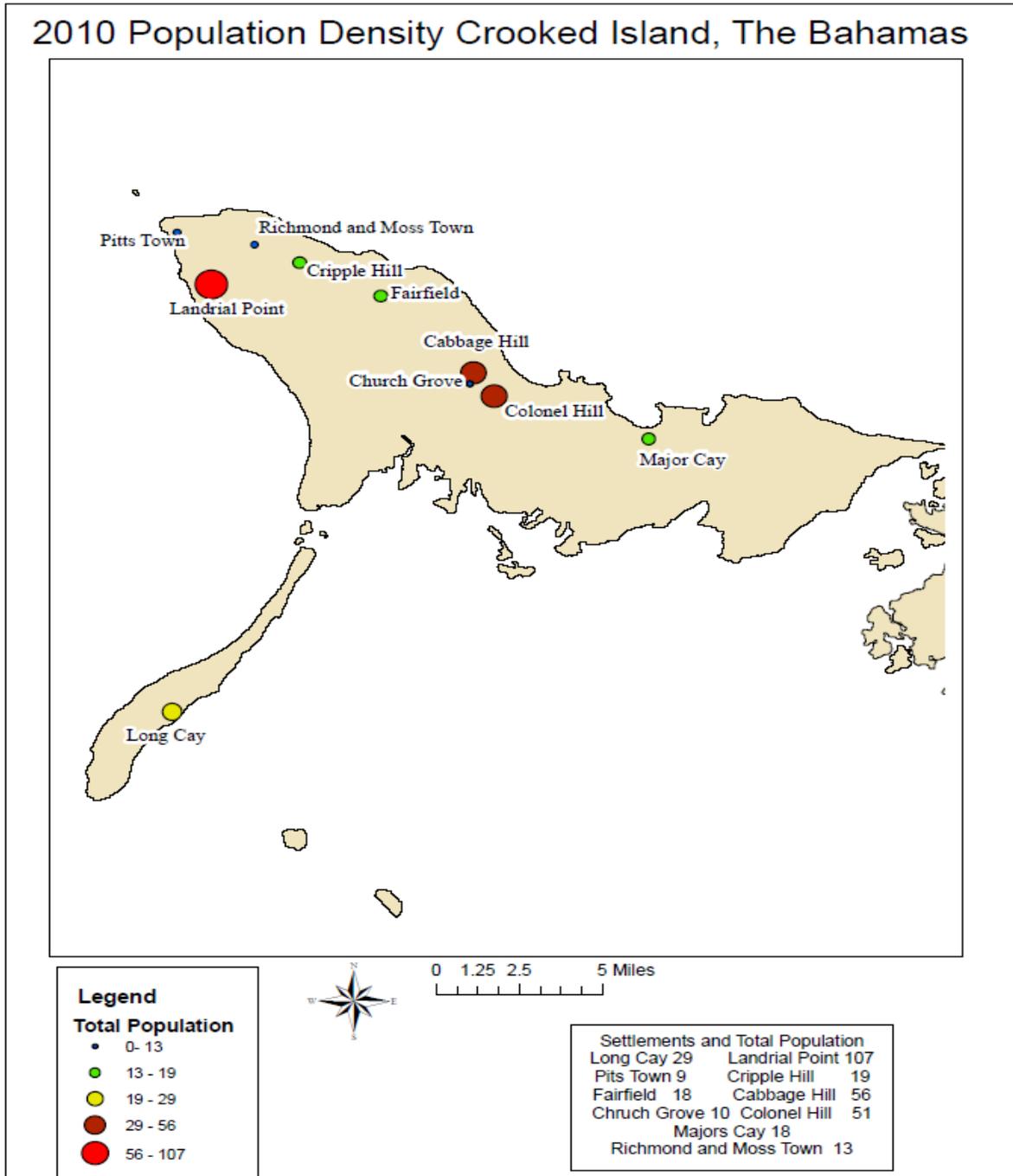
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Created by Author.

Map 1: 2000 Population Density Crooked Island, The Bahamas



SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Map Constructed by Author.

Map 2: 2010 Population Density Crooked Island, The Bahamas



SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Map Constructed by Author.

Table 4. Crooked Island External and Internal Migrants 2000 and 2010

Migration Patterns	Years	
	2000	2010
Migrants-In	139	95
Migrants-Out	174	106
Internal Migrants Net Gain/Loss	-35	-11

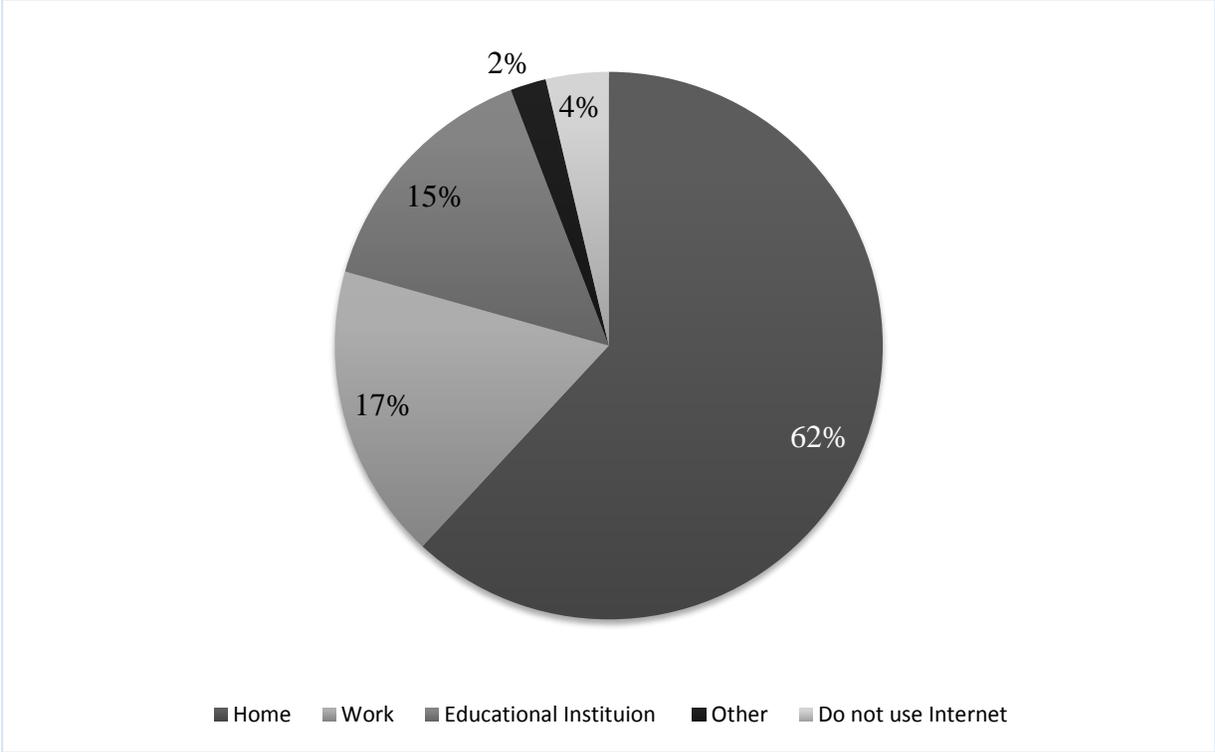
SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Table Constructed by Author.

Table 5. Crooked Island Internet Access 2000 and 2010

Internet Access	Years	
	2000	2010
Yes	0	189
No	0	129
Not Stated	0	1

SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Table Constructed by Author.

Figure 8: Crooked Island Where Internet is Access 2010



SOURCE: Bahamas Department of Statistics. Figure Constructed by Author.

VITA

Jamiko Vandez Deleveaux

P.O Box 1711
University, MS 38677

Email: jvdeleve@go.olemiss.edu

Cell: (678) 323-5898
Tel: (662) 915-8834

EDUCATION:

May 2014 M.A., Sociology, The University of Mississippi, University, MS

May 2012 B.A., Sociology, University of Mississippi, University, MS

RESEARCH: Demography, Community, Development, Latin America and Caribbean Studies
INTERESTS

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, and AWARDS:

2013 University of Mississippi Summer Research Grant

2012-2014 Underrepresented Minority Fellowship - \$1,000

2012-2014 University of Mississippi Sociology Graduate Assistantship

2014 A-MSA Graduate Paper Competition Award Winner

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS:

2014 “Maintaining Community on Hardship Island: A Case Study of Demographic Change and Community Agency”
Rural Sociology Society Annual Meeting New Orleans, LA, July

“Building Community through Population Loss”
Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Charlotte NC, April

“Crooked Island Homecoming: Maintaining Community on Hardship Island”

Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association 45th Annual Meeting, Raymond, MS, February

“Crooked Island, The Bahamas: A Case Study of Community”
2014 Applied Demography Conference, San Antonio TX, January

2013 “Man in the Mirror: Reflection of Black Masculinity”
Sarah Isom Center Student Gender Conference 13th Annual Meeting,
University MS, April

Association of Black Sociologists Conference 43rd Annual Meeting,
New York NY, August

“The Decline of the Caribbean Labor Force through Migration”
Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Atlanta GA, April

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Spring 2013 Teaching Assistant, University of Mississippi, *Applied Demography*

Spring 2013 *Teaching Sociology*, Course taken during Master’s

2013-2014 Teaching Assistant, University of Mississippi, *Methods of Social Research*,
Environmental Sociology

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

2012-2013 Research Assistant, University of Mississippi Center of Population Studies

SERVICE:

2013-2014 Senator, University of Mississippi Graduate Student Council

2013-2014 Committee Member, University of Mississippi Graduate Academic Affairs and
Professional Development Committee

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

2013 Online-Course Development, Certificate (Spring), The Graduate School
University of Mississippi

RELEVANT SKILLS:

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): ArcGIS, ESRI, Python

Linguistics: English (fluent), Spanish (intermediate), Portuguese (basic)

Microsoft: Excel, Word, PowerPoint

IBM SPSS

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

Southern Sociological Society

Association of Black Sociologist

Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association

Rural Sociology Society