

# Electoral Politics

the naked truth

**BELIZE**



**Ballot Box**

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# FOREWORD

## ELECTORAL POLITICS Belize: The Naked Truth

Myrtle Palacio, 2011

The Naked Truth about electoral politics in Belize while self-revealing is still not being documented and analyzed. The Naked Truth about electoral politics is in the statistics on election outcomes. These figures demonstrate the determination of the electorate, which is voter behaviour, as indicated by the percentage of voter turnout at each Election. It is reflective of the politician's attitude in the response to the WIN or LOSS after an election. Information Communication Technology exposes the Naked Truth about electoral politics in Belize, as it discloses in real-time what politicians are saying or not saying, such as in stand-up interviews with the Media. The nightly local TV and radio newscasts followed by the hard copies offered on-line, establish a reliable databank, great for narrative and content analyses. The Naked Truth is in the current minority voter turnout to elect leaders for the country's largest metropolis, and the inability of "Third" parties to penetrate the acknowledged two-party-system of red or blue.

Politics is a social science such as anthropology, sociology and economics, and it allows one to look at government, its structures and its processes: the constitution, current affairs, political and voting history, and public policy. However, very few systematic studies of our political situation are being engaged so as, to document, quantify and share the findings. In a political system that is tied directly to economics through the dispensing of scarce resources such as jobs, housing and land, knowledge is power, and political knowledge may help the electorate to engage in some critical thinking.

"Electoral Politics BELIZE: The Naked Truth", offers three independent sections, two of which have been shared electronically in the earlier phases. The first section entitled "Belize @ Crossroads 2003 to 2010", takes a critical look at broadening democracy through the intervention of international election observation, strengthening democratic institutions, and building capacity for public engagement. The second section is entitled "A Review of Municipal Elections in Post-independent Belize", and shares viewpoints on Municipal Elections and political leadership in Belize after independence. It discloses trends in political ethnicization, the winner-takes-all effect, minority elected Councils, and voter behaviour as is reflected in the Electors' participation or lack thereof at the polls. The third section shares statistics of past election outcomes for all elections, Municipal, Parliamentary, and Referenda, held in Belize during the pre and post independence eras.

The data are not only about election outcomes, but also recognize a list of the leaders who have come forward from time to time, from 1947 in the Town of Belize to present. These statistics are presented in tables by type and year of election and are preceded

by some "Postscript Notes" on the chronological development of our various methods of governance, from the Public Meeting in 1765 to the first constitution in 1853, to our existing bi-cameral system as offered by the National Assembly.

Democracy should not be taken for granted and it is hoped that the readily available statistics will be utilized by students of political science for analysis on topical areas in voter and political behaviour. The current outcry on the scarcity of women in political leadership is not a new phenomenon for Belize. According to the statistics on participation even at the local level, this was always the case. We need to acknowledge this, determine the underlying reasons why, then find solutions and move on....and that is the Naked Truth.