

WHO and WHAT in BELIZEAN ELECTIONS
1954 to 1993



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FOREWORD

Because Glessima Research and Services Ltd. was built on a strong social commitment, it performs not only for pure profit by subsidizing skills training and disseminating the results of many socio/cultural surveys at several public fora. This monograph extends our purview from socio/cultural issues to research on political information. But why politics?

As a research and grassroots training institution we have been scientifically quantifying, analyzing and documenting election results since 1988. Most of us have at the back of our minds an awareness of socio-economic and political profile of Belize; but this awareness is based on innate feelings only. In a rapidly growing society as Belize, such gut reaction has its limitations. We need to start regular, systematic studies of our various situations—quantifying, documenting and sharing the results. Our politicians, development planners, educators, even our media should be doing this, if nothing else but to better serve their public.

Politics is a social science like anthropology, sociology, and economics. Anthropology allows us to analyze cultural practices; politics allows us to look at government, its structures and processes—the constitution, current affairs, political and voting history, and public policy. While there is frequent research in economics, and anthropology, very little effort is placed on political behaviour or politics as a science in Belize. Information on economic growth and ethnicity are just as important as information on voting behaviour; for example voting behaviour towards political leaders. After all these leaders make public policy on housing and other urban/rural concerns that affect the basic living standards of the electorate.

Knowledge is power and political knowledge may help the electorate to engage in critical thinking. In a political system that is tied directly to economics through the dispensing of scarce resources such as jobs, housing, land; in a political system where voter interest is shrinking; a politically educated electorate could inject the level of seriousness voting warrants in Belize.