

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

2012 General Elections

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INTRODUCTION

This is a generalized descriptive statistical analysis of the 2012 General Elections. Using 2008 as the base year for comparison with the 2012 Elections, the analysis will scrutinize the electoral divisions by administrative district. Voter turnout will be targeted in place of pure numbers primarily for uniformity, as the voter populations of electoral divisions are not equal, and may cause the outcome to be perceived as misleading. For example in Toledo West, the variance of win is 1,297 and in Fort George it is 487. In terms of pure numbers Toledo West demonstrates a party popularity of nearly three times that of Fort George. However the outcomes for both are nearly the same when the percentage is utilized: the PUP candidate in Toledo West garnered 62.45% voter popularity and the PUP candidate in Fort George garnered 61.92%. Voter turnout and party popularity indicate voter participation at the polls and to a great extent communicates voter behaviour or attitude; and the outcomes in the examples clearly conveys that nearly two-thirds of the Voters wanted the PUP.

The data for this exercise come primarily from two tables in the Appendix, namely Appendix i “Summary Result of General Elections 1979 to 2012” and Appendix ii “Election Outcome by Division Party and Voter Participation”. Table ii compares the voter turnout of 2008 with that of the 2012 election by party and by division. The source for the tables and appendices are my recent publications and papers and the Elections and Boundaries Department for 2012 election result.

ABOUT VOTER TURNOUT

Voter turnout in Belize is high relative to other countries in the CARICOM region averaging 78.62% in post-independent Belize. The highest voter turnout was 90.14% in 1998 and the lowest 72.6% in 1989 and 73.2 % in 2012. The high voter turnout of 90.14% was primarily due to a new electoral list resulting from the 1997/1998 voter re-registration leading to the 1998 General Elections. Subsequently, the turnout decreased as the list balloons or become bloated. It was the same circumstance with a new list for the 1979 General Election, after the enactment of the Representation of the People Ordinance in 1978, and gradually waned to 72.6% in 1989 General Election prior to the re-registration exercise of 1997/1998 (Appendix i).

It has been determined that Belize City and the Southern constituencies historically have lower voter turnout and that the Western and the Northern constituencies in particular have consistently demonstrated high voter turnout. For example, in 2003 the four Corozal District constituencies had an average voter turnout of 85.49% and the ten Belize City Constituencies averaged 74.49%. Voter turnout in Belize City declined sharply in 2012 to 63.54%, the highest being Freetown with 70.90% and lowest Albert Division with 59.31%. Generally most of the constituencies demonstrated a drop in voter turnout relative to the 2008 elections (Appendix ii).

ELECTION OUTCOME

General—Collective

The performance of the PUP at the 2008 General election was extremely poor. The Party not only lost the election by not regaining the majority of seats, but also widened the margin of loss or decreased the margin win, both in popularity and number of seats. Of the 31 electoral divisions or seats in the House of Representatives the PUP garnered 6 and the UDP 25, representing a decrease of 15 seats for the PUP and subsequently an increase of 17 seats for the UDP who went on to form the government in 2008. Of the 6 divisions garnered by the PUP in 2008, 4 came from the 10 divisions in Belize City, namely Albert, Lake Independence, Fort George and Freetown Divisions. The other two were Corozal South East and Orange Walk Central Divisions.

The 2012 General Elections saw a major improvement relative to 2008 for the PUP. While the Party did not gain the majority in the number of seats or electoral divisions to form the government, the Party gained more voter popularity and seats. Two of the abovementioned 6 seats won in 2008 were lost in 2012, namely Albert and Lake Independence. However, the Party gained 10 more electoral divisions for a total of 14 of the 31 seats, as follows: all 4 electoral divisions from the South, 5 of 8 divisions from the North, 2 of 6 electoral divisions from the West, along with the two from Belize City. In essence the Party lost its hold in Belize City, but increased its hold in all other areas of the country. Cayo South widened the margin of win for the PUP tremendously and Cayo North a relatively UDP stronghold was won over by the PUP (Appendix ii).

In 2008 the PUP garnered 40.88% of the votes, while the UDP received 56.33% an increase of approximately 11% from 2003. However, in 2012 the PUP increased popularity to 47.08% and UDP's popularity declined to 49.88%.

Belize District Electoral Divisions

The PUP won 3 of the 13 electoral divisions in the Belize District, namely Freetown and Fort George which represent repeated wins and Belize Rural Central was regained. Two of the divisions, Lake Independence and Pickstock were lost relatively narrowly by 177 and 82 votes respectively. Fort George and Freetown Divisions each increased its margin of win and party popularity. Belize Rural North and South divisions have both narrowed the margin of loss from 2008.

Three divisions Queens Square, Mesopotamia and Collet show a distinct trend of garrison divisions, the UDP having gradually increased popularity at each election to abnormal/unusual amounts. For example Queens Square now at 79% up from 76.1% in 2008, Mesopotamia now at 81% from 76.95% in 2008; and Collet went from 57% in 2008 to 64% in 2012. Garrison constituencies in other parts of the Caribbean region form a sort of social control and are created specifically to guarantee victory for the controlling political party. While in Belize intimidation is not yet the primary incentive to vote or not to vote for the designated party, social handout is being used. Due to these incentives Voters are denied the right to vote freely and fairly and in so doing predetermine the election outcome. These three divisions will need special interventions after understanding the issues that may have caused this direction.

Albert, Lake Independence, Caribbean Shores and Pickstock Divisions have excellent chances of being turned around into a win for the PUP given the right Standard Bearer. The first three had late entrants into to the electoral race ranging from 5 weeks to 3 weeks before Election Day and the fourth lost by 82 votes against a politically seasoned incumbent. The Albert Division also saw an unusual low voter turnout of 59.31%. This represents the lowest voter turnout in any electoral division for all elections conducted in post-independent Belize. The prospects for the Belize District based strictly on the statistics are below:

Fort George	Increased % of win
Freetown	Increased % of win and some work in 3b
Albert	An anomaly for 2012—late entrance etc.,
Lake Independence	An anomaly for 2012—Late entrance etc., need to work on 17b
Belize Rural Central	Increased % of win and some work on #30
Pickstock	Increased party popularity, need to work on 17a & 16a

Although the 6 divisions above are classified as prospects for a win, Belize Rural North, Belize Rural South and Port Loyola are good possibilities for a win in the future given the right candidate as all these divisions demonstrate a narrowing of the margin of loss since 2008.

Cayo District Constituencies

Going into the 2012 elections, the PUP had zero seats out of the six in the Cayo District. However, besides garnering 2 of the 6 divisions in the 2012 general elections, three others demonstrate great prospects for victory for the PUP. Cayo North and Cayo North East each lost by 17 and 44 votes respectively, and at 51.33% and 49.34% voter popularity have improved greatly over 2008. Similarly Cayo Central and Belmopan have both increased voter popularity by 9% and 10% respectively. Of the 6 electoral divisions, Cayo West continues to pose a challenge for the PUP in the immediate future as the UDP increased its popularity to 62.86% from 61.2% in 2008. In other words, the presence of a stronghold and one that resembles some form of social control appears obvious.

Northern District Constituencies

Generally voter turnout declined in 2012, for example Orange Walk Central experienced 82.11% in voter turnout in 2008 and 77.65% in 2012. However the number of seats increased from 1 in 2008 to 5 out of 8 in 2012 and so did the Party popularity for each of these divisions. Of the 3 divisions that were lost by the PUP Corozal North and Corozal Bay Divisions both have good prospects, particularly the North if focus is placed on polling area #44. Corozal Bay increased Party popularity by nearly 8% from 39.8% in 2008 to 47.12 in 2012, but lost slightly in all polling areas totaling 148 votes. Orange Walk East is strong in all polling areas. Corozal South East, the one division won by the PUP in 2008 repeated the victory in 2012 with a larger margin of popularity from 50.07% to 53.47% and increased voter turnout of 85.65%. It also represents the highest voter turnout in the country in 2012.

Southern Constituencies

The Southern constituencies have a history of swinging widely from one party to another. In 1998 and 2003 General Elections, the 4 southern constituencies voted for the PUP and in 2008 all 4 voted for the UDP. 2012 shows a dramatic swing back to the PUP by the entire south of the country and at present standing very strong for the Party. Dangriga will need to make inroads into polling areas 96 and 98.

CONCLUSION

2012 was a win for the PUP, notwithstanding not having enough seats to form the government. The Party out rightly garnered 14 seats and came close in three other Divisions, namely Lake Independence (82 votes), Cayo North East (17 votes) and Cayo Central (44 votes). The Party

also came relatively close in two other Divisions, namely Lake Independence (177 votes), Corozal Bay (148 votes). Nationally, the Party secured 47.08% of the popularity vote, a determination made by 61,329 Voters, up from 40.88% in 2008. With the UDP at 49.88% or down from 56.33%, one can determine that both Parties are presently sharing an equal stance on the political popularity platform. The UDP being the incumbent for the second time, the PUP is in a comfortable place to win the next election.

The Third Party continues not to factor in all the elections and represents a decline in popularity votes garnered from 2% in 2008 to .52% in 2012. This was reflected in the performance of candidates and leaders in the 2012 elections.

Lastly, what are the future prospects for the PUP? I am suggesting the following 22 electoral divisions, which represents the existing 14 plus at least 8 more:

South 4 of 4

Belize District 7 of 13

West 4 of 6

North 7 of 8

Appendix i

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"RESULTS OF GENERAL ELECTIONS 1979 - 2012"

Item	1979	1984	1989	1993	1998	2003	2008	2012
Registered Electors	50,091	64,477	82,556	98,371	94,173	126,202	156,993	178,054
# of Votes	44,971	48,311	59,954	70,431	84,889	100,340	121,168	130,258
% of Votes Cast	89.78%	74.93%	72.6%	71.6%	90.14%	79.51%	77.18%	73.16%
# of Votes Rejected	521	673	1,003	499	544	770	867	1259
% of Rejected Votes	1.2%	1.39%	1.67%	0.71%	0.64%	0.77%	1.72%	0.97%
Votes Garnered:								
PUP	23,309 51.8%	20,961 43.39%	29,986 50.0%	36,082 51.2%	50,330 59.29%	52,934 52.75%	49,531 40.88%	61,329 47.08%
IND	-	213 0.44%	65 0.1%	43 0.06%	372 0.44%	1,260 1.26%	72 0.00%	822 0.63%
CDP (Aranda)	-	***708 1.47%	-	-	-	-	-	-
UDP	21,045 46.8%	25,756 53.3%	28,900 48.2%	**34,306 48.7%	33,237 39.15%	45,376 45.22%	68,250 56.33%	64,976 49.88%
NRP (2008)	96 0.2%	-	-	-	-	-	1039 0.86%	1039 0.86%
VIP (2008)	-	-	-	-	225 0.27%	-	874 0.72%	382 0.29%
NABR -- NBA (2008)	-	-	-	-	174 0.20%	-	506 0.42%	-
NTRCP (2008) -- PNP (-	-	-	-	7 0.01%	-	29 0.02%	828 0.64%

Source: Myrtle Palacio Publication 1993 & 2011

1993 - Error in Tabulation due to Rejected Votes (Gazette July 10, 1993)

Summary Third Parties:

2008 -- 2,520 Votes (2.08%)

2012 -- 2032 Votes (0.52%)

Appendix ii

VOTER TURNOUT BY PARTY AND DIVISION

No.	DIVISION	%Voter Turnout by Division--2008	%Voter Turnout by Party—2008 *		%Voter Turnout by Division--2012	%Voter Turnout by Party—2012*	
			UDP	PUP		UDP	PUP
1	Albert	PUP 72.83	65.44	33.81	UDP 59.31	54.83	42.79
2	Caribbean Shores	UDP 73.49	62.90	35.96	UDP 65.72	59.50	39.40
3	Collet	UDP 71.62	57.29	39.05	UDP 65.83	63.99	34.80
4	Fort George	PUP 69.83	41.60	57.64	PUP 61.95	36.84	61.93
5	Freetown	PUP 74.98	49.00	49.58	PUP 70.90	46.95	51.95
6	Lake Independence	UDP 72.2	43.50	53.68	UDP 61	49.19	43.71
7	Mesopotamia	UDP 66.02	76.92	22.15	UDP 60.81	81.60	16.84
8	Pickstock	UDP 72.04	56.30	42.31	UDP 61.49	52.06	47.94
9	Port Loyola	UDP 64.1	74.05	21.05	UDP 63.33	63.22	34.98
10	Queens Square	UDP 69.02	76.10	23.53	UDP 65.08	79.12	19.01
11	Belize R. North	UDP 77.45	63.99	35.35	UDP 69.76	55.78	41.59
12	Belize R. Central	UDP 76.21	51.19	46.62	PUP 66.17	45.98	51.19
13	Belize R. South	UDP 73.95	61.51	36.17	UDP 68.46	51.00	41.68
14	Belmopan	UDP 75.25	55.68	35.37	UDP 72.02	49.53	45.64
15	Cayo Central	UDP 74.54	61.38	33.90	UDP 82.17	42.75	42.00
16	Cayo North	UDP 78	62.47	34.06	PUP 74.7	42.77	51.33
17	Cayo North East	UDP 77.66	53.64	41.22	UDP 74.3	49.76	49.34
18	Cayo South	UDP 77.3	52.42	40.97	PUP 67.73	45.09	54.91
19	Cayo West	UDP 80.56	61.2	36.48	UDP 77.12	62.86	35.63
20	Corozal Bay	UDP 77.65	59.36	39.87	UDP 74.59	50.30	47.12
21	Corozal North	UDP 85.14	54.70	44.89	UDP 82.66	51.88	47.83
22	Corozal S. East	PUP 87.49	49.74	50.07	PUP 85.65	46.12	53.47
23	Corozal S. West	UDP 84.68	57.97	41.41	PUP 81.36	45.36	46.06
24	Orange W. Central	PUP 82.11	45.85	52.16	PUP 77.65	41.48	58.52
25	Orange W. North	UDP 85.18	56.93	41.05	UDP 82.45	58.49	40.48
26	Orange W. South	UDP 83.15	50.78	47.73	PUP 82.21	46.34	52.80
27	Orange W. East	UDP 80.22	53.63	43.51	PUP 76.0	47.48	52.52
28	Dangriga	UDP 69.12	56.60	41.30	PUP 64.82	44.40	53.20
29	Stann Creek West	UDP 80.04	56.60	41.99	PUP 77.62	44.06	53.44
30	Toledo East	UDP 76.44	54.50	37.61	PUP 72.82	42.96	49.99
31	Toledo West	UDP 81.51	59.31	34.39	PUP 82.62	36.66	62.45

*Voter turnout will not add up to 100% due to those not included e.g. for Third Parties & rejected ballots