

1st Binational Seminar Mexico-Belize
Enhancing Connectivity: A Review of Contemporary Issues for Mexico-Belize
Trans-Border Relations

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Abstract

“Migration and Social Cohesion: Defining National Identity”

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Belize is a country of over 350,000 inhabitants of which over 90% identify with cultural communities that are part of a story of migration (willing or unwilling) into the territory due to local or external factors of their time. This migration has resulted in over 12 different cultures calling Belize their home; 12 different cultures that contribute to a richness in the traditions and flavors of Belize but that also has presented a challenge to the creation of social cohesion and a sense of national identity for our small nation.

This paper focuses on the socio-historical development of the multicultural society that is Belize; ‘the divide and rule’ approach to our colonization and how this contributed to our historical marginalization as communities. It will look at the social political and geographic factors of dividing all cultural communities that kept us separate and unequal and most significantly, distrustful of one another. This behavior and its resulting dysfunction we will see in context of many socio-historical challenges in our development.

This would then be followed with an analysis of the creation of the new nation of Belize and the challenge of making this new nation a united people as we labor to make our country a more successful place. Here we look at attempts at creating a national identity while at the same time seeing resurgence in cultural pride by the different cultural communities in Belize. We conclude with reviewing both the limitations and advances made in bringing about social cohesion in our country.

Bio

Cesar Ross is a lecturer of Social Sciences and History at the University of Belize, Belmopan Campus where he started as an Associate Lecturer a little under eighteen years ago. Mr. Ross holds a M.Sc. in Social and Cultural Anthropology from Vrije University, Amsterdam where his thesis focused how a local cultural community establishes the agency they see necessary to deal with the global interest in cultural tourism. He also spends a lot of focus on stimulating and/or nurturing his students’ sense of inquisitiveness and analysis.

Mr. Ross is also the president of the Maya Institute of Belize and vice chair of the Belize Commission: Initiative for Justice and Reparations. In these organizations he is part of the movement to give indigenous and marginalized communities new and empowered voices. In the past two years he is part of a process of promoting and understanding of the damage and dysfunction that the European colonization had on the native and migrant communities. Most significant in this movement is the work in trying to create social cohesion among these exploited cultures to develop a sense of national identity and shared responsibility for the development of all our collective communities.

Title: Determinants of Belizean Migration: Exploring Classical and Contemporary Theory

Submitted by: Melanie Smith Santiago

Abstract

The paper evaluates key classical and contemporary migration theories in the context of Belizean migration. A decade of research and data on Belizean Migration were reviewed to identify aspects of Neoclassical Economics and Push-pull theory, particularly the application of Ravenstiens “laws of Migration”, within the Belizean context. The paper also identifies Historical Structural Models especially aspects of the Dual-labour market theory, with particular emphasis on cumulative causation mechanisms. It is evident that Social Network Theory facilitates international movements. Interpersonal ties act as social capital for people in the place of origin, as well as, in the place of destination. Chain migration and transnational migrant families are also features evident in the migratory movements to and from Belize. Finally, the New Economics of Labour Migration is assessed in the context of Belizean migration identifying migration as a consequence of individual decision making and rational decision making.

Biography

Melanie Smith Santiago is a Lecturer at the University of Belize, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences. Ms. Smith lectures in Sociology, Ethics and Research Methods. Ms. Smith has authored and co-authored various sociological research papers, as well as, national and regional reports in areas of development, gender and migration. Previous work includes: the Children Issues National Research Agenda for Children and the Gender component of the National Millennium Development Goals Report. In the area of migration: the Diagnostic on Current Belizean Migration Trends and Migration Management Regulations; Public Policies on Migration and Civil Society Participation; Rapid Assessment of Migration Data Collection Systems in the English-Speaking Caribbean; Belizean Diaspora Groups and Organizations with a Focus on North America, the United Kingdom and the Caribbean; Characteristics of mixed migratory flows and Extracontinental migrants in Belize; and Intra-regional Flows of Labor Migrants to Belize: Current Situation, Challenges and Opportunities.

Title of Paper: Perceptions of borders, the Belize-Guatemala differendum among trans-border communities along the adjacency zone

Authors: John Emmanuel Dunn, Delmer Tzib & Carlos Quiroz

Abstract:

The research investigated the views of people from trans-border communities on the Belize-Guatemala issue. It was conducted on trans-border communities between Belize and Guatemala along the western region of the Cayo district. The communities include Benque Viejo del Carmen, Calla Creek, and Arenal from the Belizean side and Melchor de Mencos Peten, and Arenal from Guatemala. The research was focused on the perception of borders, social interactions and knowledge of the Belize Guatemala differendum. The researcher’s approach to the research with the hypothesis that the borders are not defined physically, that there are disrupted and instable relationships between communities, and that the communities were informed about the Belize-Guatemala differendum.

An analysis of secondary sources will be conducted in order to understand the problem. Three methods of collecting data will be utilized; these include survey, semi-structured interviews, and observation. Quota sampling (random) was used for the interviews, fifteen interviews were conducted within the urban areas and ten within the villages (the same persons will be used for the surveys).

The research shows that participants knew the location of the border but did not see themselves separated by it. Importance is placed on maintaining relationships with the other communities, there is emphasis on trade, social interaction (religion, education), and recreational (sports, drinking, fiestas)

ties. The knowledge on the Belize-Guatemala differendum was vague, many misconceptions were identified and it was noted that both governments and the OAS might not be doing enough in educating their citizens.

Biography:

John Dunn is 35 years old, born on May 17th, 1980. He attended St Rafael's Elementary, in London, United Kingdom. He later pursued his secondary education at the Belmopan Comprehensive School. Mr. Dunn went on to do an Associate's Degree of Science in Agricultural Sciences, at the Belize College of Agriculture in Central Farm Cayo District, Belize. He then joined the University of Belize in the Bachelors of Science in History Program, within the Faculty of Education and Arts, in Belmopan Belize. He holds a Bachelors of Science Degree in History. He is presently pursuing a Master's Degree in History. He serves as Junior Executive to the Board of BHA, Belize History Association. He is currently an Adjunct lecturer within the Faculty of Education and Arts, in history.

Lopez Brown, P., (2015). *Perspectives and Motivating Factors: Second Generation Immigrants Pursuit of Higher Education*. Unpublished Paper. University of Belize, Faculty of Education and Arts.

ABSTRACT: This paper explores motivational factors of students enrolled in educational courses in the Faculty of Education and Arts, University of Belize. The convenient sample of university students was asked to state ethnicity, highest parent/guardian qualification, and to describe factor which motivated them to pursue tertiary education. Revealed is that 70% of the respondents were of Hispanic/Latin and were motivated by siblings and their mother. Despite motivation to pursue tertiary education, only 15% identified career choices beyond that of a Bachelor's Degree. Noted by this research is that of the 30% of students of Garifuna, Creole and other origins, 4% were self-motivated, 6% were motivated by siblings or others, and 1.5% identified career choices beyond their programs of study. Worth noting is that although a convenience sample of tertiary students was selected, there is imbalance between persons of Hispanic/Latin origins including second generation immigrants pursuing education programs compared to persons of "color". Motivation and resources also appeared to be key factors for pursuing and completing programs of study among respondents.

Key terms: Tertiary Education, Ethnic Divide, Student motivation and support

Biography

Dr Priscilla Brown Lopez

Dr Priscilla Brown Lopez was the Interim Dean of the Faculty of Education and Arts, University of Belize 2012-2014. She worked with the Ministry of Education as a Curriculum Coordinator leading the planning and implementation of Belize's National Primary School Curriculum from 1998-2000. Dr Brown- Lopez holds a Master's Degree in Secondary Education with concentration in Curriculum Planning and Instruction from the University of North Florida, U.S.A. and a Doctorate Degree in Assessment from Durham University in the United Kingdom. She has conducted research in educational areas such as the teaching of mathematics, leadership and change, and curriculum innovations.

Her doctoral thesis entitled, *"Analysis of the effect of a Constructivist-Based Problem Solving Model on the performance of Grade Five Student in Belize, Central America"*, has been described by professors of Durham and London Universities as a strong assessment of mathematical teaching and learning.

Recently, Dr Lopez has gained recognition internationally as a budding researcher whose work has been accepted for presentations in Germany, Spain, Nigeria, and India. In recognition for her outstanding performance in the *International Dean's Training*, Dr Lopez earned a place to present her paper at the International Deans of the Future Conference held in Saarburken Germany in June, 2013 entitled *Challenges of Overcoming Institutional Culture: Radical Perspectives of the Role and Culture of Institutional Change*. This paper challenges the theory of Micheal Fullan's *Five Critical Minds and sets of actions for 21st Century Leaders* and proposes that Leadership for Change includes:

- knowing how and when to address critical areas of change
- Informed decision making skills
- Shared decision making
- total involvement and lifelong learning opportunities
- within the culture of the institution to enact meaningful change/transformation

Dr Brown-Lopez is the writer and co-author of the Social Studies Series *Living Together* published by Cubola Productions. She has worked liaised with a number of international partners such as the Organization of American States, Common Wealth of Learning, Transport Road Limited in the UK, and she is leading a national initiative to align education programs to the CARICOM Qualifications Framework intended to develop regional and international guidelines and accreditation for tertiary institutions in Belize.

Dr Priscilla Brown Lopez is a Belizean born of humble beginnings as featured on *Restore Belize* in August 2013. She continues to contribute significantly to teacher education in Belize. Her motto is to "*succeed against all odds*".