FROM COLONIAL DOMINATION TO THE MAKING OF THE NATION: ETHNO-RACIAL CATEGORIES IN CENSUSES AND REPORTS AND THEIR POLITICAL USES IN BELIZE, 19TH-20TH CENTURIES[1]

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Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of the processes of classification and racial-ethnic categorization of Belize's population during the 19th and 20th centuries, based on population censuses and government reports. We are not too interested in figures as such but in the categories of counting and their evolution, as indicators of the political rationale of building a colonial and later a national society. While the censuses for the 19th century relate to different forms of population management (transition from slavery to freedom, affirmation or denial of ethnic and racial diversity), the administrative reports paint a static and stereotyped demographic-territorial model as a tool of the political project. For the 20th century, we analyze the difficult road to independence and the changes introduced by the new Belizean state (categories, methods) in the process of creating a "national identity."

Keywords: racialization, census categories, Belize, politics of difference, nation

Resumen

Este texto presenta un análisis de los procesos de clasificación y categorización étnico-raciales de la población de Belice a lo largo de los siglos XIX y XX, apoyándose en los censos demográficos y en los informes de gobierno. No nos interesamos tanto en las cifras como tales, sino en las categorías de conteo y su evolución, como indicadores de las lógicas políticas de construcción de una sociedad colonial y luego nacional. Mientras que para el XIX los censos dan cuenta de las distintas formas de definición de la población (transición de la esclavitud a la libertad, afirmación o negación de la diversidad étnico-racial), los informes administrativos dibujan un modelo demográfico-territorial estático y estereotipado como herramienta de gestión política. Para el siglo XX, se analiza el difícil camino hacia la independencia y los cambios introducidos por el nuevo Estado beliceño (categorías, metodología) en el

proceso de construcción de una "identidad nacional".

Palabras clave: racialización, categorías censales, Belice, políticas de la diferencia, nación

RÉSUMÉ

Ce texte présente une analyse des processus de classification et de catégorisation ethnico-raciale de la population du Bélize au cours du XIXème et XXème siècle, en s'appuyant sur les recensements géographiques et les rapports du gouvernement. L'article ne s'intéresse pas aux chiffres en soit, mais aux catégories de comptage et leur évolution, en tant qu'indicateurs des logiques politiques de construction d'une société coloniale puis nationale. Alors qu'au XIXème siècle, les recensements rendent compte des différentes formes d'appréhension de la population (transition de l'esclavage à la liberté, affirmation ou négation de la diversité ethnico-raciale), les rapports administratifs dessinent un modèle démographique et territorial invariant et stéréotypé utilisé comme outil de gestion politique. Au XXème siècle, l'analyse concerne la difficile marche vers l'indépendance et les changements introduits par le nouvel Etat bélizien (catégories, méthodologie) dans le processus de construction d'une « identité nationale ».

Mots-clés : situation raciale, catégories de recensement, Belize, politiques de la différence, nation

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Introduction

Because of its recent national construction (it became independent in 1981), its history of intensive and diversified migrations and its small size (322,000 inhabitants), Belize offers exceptional conditions for analyzing the contexts of the introduction, dissemination and appropriation of terms and categories referring to the concepts of race, ethnicity and nation. The existing sources make it possible to analyze relations between the socio-historical contexts and the census rationale, as well as follow the counting strategy implemented over time and evaluate the capacities of the colonial or national state to build population-monitoring tools such as the censuses.

In this article, we will focus on the racial and ethnic categories used in population censuses. We will not be working on the categories created and used by social actors in their daily interactions or in specific mobilizations, which led to the publication of numerous works (Daugaard-

Hansen 2002; Moberg 1997; M. Palacio 1995; J. Palacio 2005; Stone 1994; Wilk Chapin 1990). Nor will we present an ethnography of the colonial and later national administration, something which remains to be done. Our main objective is to study census categories, not as a result or a cause of social dynamics (what they are of course), but in their autonomous administrative rationale in two ways:

— Making a long term genealogy of the construction of ethnic and racial census categories, while questioning what these tools teach us about the capacities and strategies of the colonial, then national state apparatus. This is the analysis of the implementation—or non-implementation—of "national regimes of otherness" (López Caballero 2011) which involve forms of domination, the definition of otherness and the demands of citizens / citizenship.

— Stepping away from the "all-ethnic" or "all-racial" vision of most studies on Belize, while showing that ethnic and racial argumentations appear and disappear, and change in their uses and meanings.

Several authors, for the most part Belizean, U.S. and British, have explored the question of nation building in Belize, emphasizing history, geo-political negotiations, international relations, and more recently globalization, that is to say the main areas relating to the formation and recognition of "the Nation" in classical terms. In his work, Nigel Bolland (1986, 1997, 2003) analyzed the configurations of a colonial society marked by slavery and capitalist extractive exploitation, the concentration of power and the emergence of a "Creole culture." Assad Shoman (1987, 1995, 2000), a major player in the political transition of the 1970s and 80s, studied the history of the 20th century and showed interest in the long road to independence and the institutional and political construction of the new nation. Joseph Palacio (2005) emphasized the country's ethnic diversity, from the standpoint of the Garifuna. Anne Macpherson (2007) highlighted the role of women in the hectic decisive period of the first half of the 20th century, while Richard Wilk (2006) placed the emerging national dynamics in the broader context of globalization(s). With these studies as a starting point, we wish to emphasize here some of the concrete practices of the "construction of the nation," in this case those practices used to describe, name and thus distinguish "one" from the "other" in a country inhabited by peoples and groups of extremely diverse backgrounds known today as "Creoles," "Garifuna," "Maya," "East Indians," etc. (see below).

We propose an approach based on criticism of the specific instruments of colonial and later national construction, in particular the

administrative techniques of the description and classification of society. As Benedict Anderson reminds us, the very definition of the borders of the State supposes the identification and counting of the individuals and groups comprising it. “The fiction of the census is that everyone is in it, and that everyone has one—and only one—extremely clear place” (Anderson 2003:166).

Three general sets of questions guided our thinking:

— How is the concept of “diversity”—of origin, nation, religion, “race,” ethnicity, etc.—adjusted over time? How do the instruments of population control take into account (or not) the diversity of the population?

— How do these instruments and objectives vary depending on the political-institutional framework (colony, self-government, independence) that produces them?

— If we consider that the question of the census is at the core of the techniques of “making the nation” in the sense expressed by Anderson, how is the question of the Nation, which traditionally equates a territory with a “people” and a “shared culture,” expressed in a particularly original colonial context that does not correspond or corresponds wrongly with this scheme?

Coming from academic fields where the references to race and ethnicity are problematic, including France (see CARSED 2009) and Mexico where they were dissolved in post-revolutionary nationalism before drawing new relations to the state in the multicultural context of the end of the 20th century (Florescano 1996, Reina 2008, Lomnitz 2001), our epistemological starting point differs from the Anglo-Saxon studies, in which race and ethnicity appear more like “data” (Cunin 2001). We do not start from the definitions of “race,” “ethnicity” or from the competition between “substance” (which would be only from race) and “culture” (unique to ethnicity), but from the ethnicization and racialization processes that lead to these notions and keep them alive (Poiret, Hoffmann, Audebert 2011). Difference is thus created through a balance of power, sometimes mobilizing one dimension over another while modifying its content and outline as needed.

Belize[2] is a small country in Central America, with the Caribbean Sea to the East and its giant neighbor, Mexico, to the North, Guatemala to the West and Honduras to the South. It is also an Anglophone country in the heart of Spanish-speaking Central America, with a high percentage of Blacks and Creoles[3] in the midst of countries with indigenous and Mestizo traditions. It officially became a British colony in 1862, half a century after its neighbors had achieved independence, and it became

independent only towards the end of the 20th century (1981), long after the final wave of decolonization that began in the 1960s. Belize is often viewed as a piece of the Caribbean stuck in Central America, with a Caribbean façade and a Latino interior, a mosaic of Creoles, indigenous peoples and Mestizos, as well as Garifuna, Chinese, Indians and Mennonites, a country out of sync with the rest of Central America; there are plenty of contrasting—and often stereotyped—images that seek to describe this territory and its population that do not fit into the neighboring countries' models.

In fact, although geographically located in the Viceroyalty of New Spain from the 16th century, this region evaded Spanish control from the beginning. It was, however, quickly reached by fluctuating populations of sailors, pirates and smugglers, very few in number, who did not seek to found a colony of people but rather to create a "settlement," a living space protected from European military incursions. Faced with these newly-arrived residents, the indigenous Mopan and Kekchi Maya were so discreet that they remained ignored by the administration almost until the 20th century (a report by the colonial administration of 1912 ignores them completely, Land in Crown Colonies, 1912). In the North, although they were very few in numbers and relatively inactive, the Yucatec Maya Indians intervened continuously in the daily and political life of the territory (see successive Mayan rebellions until 1872, Bolland 2003). For several decades until 1834, the population was officially composed of a majority of slaves, some free Blacks and "Colored," and a minority of "White" woodcutters (about one tenth of the population). Their British origin allowed them to have a powerful ally, the British Crown, defending them to the extent of founding a "colony" in 1862, which nevertheless had to confront Mexican and Guatemalan territorial claims. Some decades earlier, at the beginning of the 19th century, a minority Garifuna people (descendants of African and indigenous people from St. Vincent Island (see González 1969; Cayetano & Cayetano 1997) had settled in the South. Although few in number even today (they are predominantly present in only five locations), the Garifuna community is important for its political and cultural roles. Other communities, representative of classic diasporas in the Caribbean (East Indian, Chinese, Syrian-Lebanese) have also been present in Belize since the 19th century.

The demographic dynamics, extremely "weak" for centuries, began taking off with a massive influx of refugees from the North, namely Mexico, fleeing the Caste War of Yucatán in the second half of the 19th century. Several indigenous Mayan groups, "*Ladinos*," "*Mestizos*," "*Criollos*," "Spanish" and "Yucatecan," became temporary or permanent migrants, many settling in the northern half of Belize[4] where they developed farming. In 1893, the Mariscal-Spencer treaty appeared as a

solution to the border problem between the two countries. Belize did not frown on the demographic consolidation of this portion of its territory, while Mexico sought above all to pacify the territory and accepted, albeit reluctantly, this redistribution of the population. On the other hand, tensions remained strong between Belize and Guatemala, even after independence in 1981 and until today. But that is another story. In the first half of the 20th century there was strong popular mobilization against extreme poverty and colonial domination, leading to obtaining universal adult suffrage in 1954, the status of "self-government" in 1964, and finally independence in 1981.

The interpretation is indeed based on a diachronic analysis of the censuses of Belize, from the first "count" of the population in 1816 to the 2001 census, but more than the "results" (figures)[5], what interests us here are the elaboration of the censuses, the categories used and the recommendations that accompany the censuses. Thus, from our point of view, the census questionnaires provide as much or more information than the tables of results. This approach follows a proposal by David Kertzer and Dominique Arel (2002) in their work on the role of censuses in the production of collective identities, in particular through ethnic and racial categories. The censuses go far beyond their status as "technical instruments" and reflect the state of knowledge of the technical and institutional elites of the country at the time of the census. Thus, the categories become an expression of the "collective," colonial or national, as it is perceived and represented by the elites. But in turn they can influence, and even determine, the relationships between groups thus constructed and classified by the censuses, based on "criteria" presented as ethnic, racial, religious, regional, national, etc. As specified by the two authors, "the use of identity categories in censuses—as in other common mechanisms of state administration—creates a particular vision of social reality. All people are assigned to a single category, and hence are conceptualized as sharing, with a certain number of others, a common collective identity. This, in turn, encourages people to view the world as composed of distinct groups of people and may focus attention on whatever criteria are utilized to distinguish among these categories" (Kertzer, Arel 2002:5-6).

It is necessary first to consider the diversity of sources and their relationships to each other. During the British period, censuses are accompanied by very informative annual reports. We will then examine the long process of decolonization and the role of the censuses in building the nation. The tables (see appendix) indicate the sources consulted: Table 1 presents the list of censuses from 1816 to 2001 with reference to their "authors," *i.e.* the institutions which conducted them; Table 2 gives the list of colonial reports, a tool of the Belize administration which

provides, in particular, numerous descriptions of the population; Table 3 presents the changes of categories since 1946. The data were obtained from the National Archives of Belize in Belmopan, the Ministries and competent administrations. National experts on these matters are not very numerous and their interest in our research was not very evident. The production of categories and data is seen as a very technical issue, carried out by "technicians" supported by people of "good will," that is to say the local political elites. It was only through informal talks and numerous digressions that we managed to make our research objectives understood thereby gaining access to relevant sources, in particular the corollary documents that accompany the censuses (methodology, commentaries, etc).[6]

Part One: 19th Century-First Half of the 20th Century: Defining Population and Territory, Constructing Differences.

We begin this account based on the first population censuses at the beginning of the 19th century. At this time, rivalries between European powers did not allow one to speak of a British "territory," and Britain's commitment was limited first to accounting for the population within its immediate ambit. Gradually, the fixing of borders and recognition of Central American countries (end of 19th century) led Britain to favor the economic and political control of territory. Data show that censuses tend first to define and control the population (slaves and later freemen, Yucatec refugees) before they changed their orientation and ethnic and racial categories disappeared. At the same time, British administrative reports built a static model of society, based on an association between identity and territory which ignored the changing categories of censuses.

A slave colony: counting (part of) the population

Britain's victory against Spain in the Battle of Saint George's Caye, on September 10, 1798, marks, at least symbolically, the insertion of Belizean territory in the British Empire. But the rivalries between colonial powers for the control of Belize were still far from ended, and it did not translate into a new commitment by Britain to develop and administer the territory. This ambiguous situation, between a strategy of domination in relation to Spain and later Mexico and a lack of interest in the local society that was being established, is again reflected in the censuses: since Britain could not, or did not wish to control a land with problematic boundaries and which remained largely unknown and difficult of access, it was decided above all to focus on the population. The

censuses, quite numerous at the beginning of the century (1816, 1820, 1823, 1826, 1829, 1832, 1835 and 1840), draw the portrait of a unique model of slave society masterfully analyzed by Nigel Bolland (1997, 2003) and Assad Shoman (2000). This model gives priority to slave control (hence the large number of censuses) and the management of the slaves' freedom. The rest of the population (Mayan, Garifuna, Miskito) was therefore "forgotten" by these first counting tools. A strong socio-administrative consistency is perceptible during the whole period: the census status and the categories used rarely vary, except in accounting for the transition from slavery to post-slavery (Bolland 1997:101-130). In parallel, this consistency is the result of the lack of institutionalization, stressed by rivalries between the oligarchy of settlers and Crown representatives.

In the first half of the 19th century, what was at stake primarily was managing the transition from slavery to its abolition (the slave trade was abolished in 1807; slavery in 1834) and taking into account a new free non-white population. Thus, the censuses of 1816, 1820, 1823, 1826, 1829 and 1832 considered four categories: "Whites," "Coloured," "Black" and "Slaves." Society was conceived and organized around this structural distinction concerned only with populations of European and African descent (Bolland 1997). However, at this time other groups were already living in the area: Miskito (Bolland 1997:88), Garifuna (Bolland 1986:25; Palacio 2005) and Maya (Bolland 1986:11; Cal 1983; Shoman 2000:5). But these categories did not interest the British administrators, who focused on the port city of Belize from where they managed the exploitation of forest resources.

The censuses of 1835 and 1840 abolished the category of "Slaves" and replaced it by "apprenticed labourers": slavery was abolished, but the former slave continued to have a separate status that had to be indicated. Revealingly, the presentation of results is exactly the same before and after abolition (a standard double page table, with a change of name in the last column), and the category "Apprenticed Labourers" provides the same information (names, ages) as did the category of "Slaves." Two dynamics then seem to overlap: the management of slavery and abolition, and the introduction of racialized categories to describe the free population.

The 1861 census: the emergence of multiplicity

One event altered this mode of perceiving the population: the arrival, from 1847, of refugees fleeing the Caste War of Yucatán in neighboring Mexico (Cal 1983; Reed 2002; Villalobos González 2006), which becomes obvious in the census of 1861. Although the population was very

small in number[7] (5,653 people surveyed in 1826, slightly less—4,235—three years later), it increased significantly in 1861 (25,635 inhabitants), with nearly half the population in the North, on the border with Mexico.

The census of 1861 appears to be an exception, with its multiplication of categories of ethnic, racial, and national identity, and their components. It is also, as Michael A. Camille (1996) reminds us very well, the culmination of two centuries of history in Belize. Finally, it is the first attempt to take into account the diversity of the population.

In the census of 1861, the criterion described as "race" actually refers to a number of categories (42) that seek to take into account the diversity of the population. The designations mixed references to "race," language or nationality in lavish detail: "Anglo-Hispanic" distinguished from "Spanish-English," or "French-Portuguese" from "Portuguese-French," for example. There are only eight categories for the "English": "Anglo-Saxon," "Anglo-Honduran," "Anglo-African," "Anglo-American," "Anglo-Indian," "Anglo-Hispanic," "Anglo-French" and "Anglo-Carib." This census shows the emphasis on defining and describing the categories of mixes based on multiple non-hierarchical criteria. Many refer to nationality, but more generic ("Coolie") or ethnic ("Carib," "Indian") descriptions are interposed "as needed." Thus, while the early 19th-century censuses only took into account the "White" and "Black" populations and their mixtures, the census of 1861 introduced some of the categories that would last (with some adjustments that we will comment on later): "Anglo," "African," "Indian," "Spanish," "Carib," "Syrian," "Chinese," "Coolie." Finally, it should be noted that the nationalities mentioned all refer to European origins excluding Mexico and Central American countries, in particular. These "young nations" were, nonetheless, recognized by Great Britain from 1824-1825 for Mexico, from 1839 (end of the Federal Republic of Central America) for Guatemala. But they did not seem relevant for the administrators in charge of the census, with their strictly European focus. In 1859, a treaty between Great Britain and Guatemala set the border between the latter country and the future British Honduras. It was challenged in the 1930s and continued to fuel conflict between both countries to the point of causing the delay in Belize's independence (Shoman 2000). We can notice, with Camille (1996), that this critical time in the history of Belize (the decline of mahogany, the beginning of farming with settlements in the North and the migrations of foreign workers) was also a pivotal period for its political and diplomatic history, when it was formally declared a British Crown Colony in 1862. The census of 1861 falls within these changes. A number of the composite categories it produced would not be used later, but they reflect the dynamism of the population on the one hand, and the willingness to describe it on the other. At the

same time, and we will return to this point, the accuracy of these data does not really seem relevant within a scheme of population control and colonial administrators did not refer to this multiplicity of categories.

The turn of the 19th-20th centuries: consolidation of the colony

The second half of the 19th century witnessed a strengthening of the British presence in Belize, with the official adoption of the status of colony in 1862. According to Assad Shoman, political power at that time passes from the settlers to the Colonial Office in London (Shoman 2000:101). While the Central American neighbors were already independent, it became necessary to reaffirm the British presence in the region. Relations with the new Central American nations were normalized and, in 1893, the Mariscal-Spencer Treaty defined the border between Mexico and Belize. Having established the institutional (colony) and diplomatic (borders) framework, Britain could dedicate itself more directly to the control of its official territory whose geographic limits were recognized. Censuses of the time demonstrate this: in the late 19th century (1871, 1881, 1891) and early 20th century (1911, 1921, 1931), there is no mention of racial/ethnic groups.[8] This rationale was present throughout Central America at the same period when liberal governments tried to eliminate racialized categories (Gould 1998). It also aimed to assert the British presence, specified through control of the territory; identification with the colonial policy replaced ethnic-racial identifications. We find here the "classical" vision of 19th-century imperialism associating territory, people, state and nation—a vision crystallized in the Berlin Conference of 1890 and derived from the "Westphalian model" which imposed an international order made of strictly equal sovereign entities in the 17th century (Badie 1995). In fact, with the turn of the century, the prevailing rationale was above all that of management of the territory rather than of the population as before, and the political affirmation of sovereignty over the colony. Migration remained considerable (manual workers moving to the forest concessions of southern Mexico, workforce from India and China, white North-American settlers) but by then, it was largely controlled by the colonial administration. This administration took advantage of migration to develop the economy (small-scale farms, cane sugar, etc), increase tax resources (taxation of wood and chicle from Mexico) and consolidate its territory.

The end of the Caste War and the new presence of the Mexican state at the northern border (creation of the territory of Quintana Roo) put an end to migration from Mexico to Belize and opened the way for return migration, this time from Belize to Mexico. The 1870s had already seen the end of the conflict with the Chichanhá Mayans by the defeat and

death of Marcos Canul in 1872 (Cal 1983; May Zalasar 2010), which led to the pacification of the North of Belize. The very image of the Mayans, who until then were excluded and regarded as potential enemies, began to change. Mayans and Garifunas then started to be integrated into history and national society (Bolland 2003:123), especially with the implementation of the system of "Alcaldes" (Bolland 2003:129, Moberg 1992) and their participation in the development of agriculture and fishing.

At the same time debates began to develop around these people of Mexican origin who decided to stay in Belize: rather than "Spanish" or "Ladino," they should be regarded as "British" and swear allegiance to the British crown. This is how, at the time of the celebration of the centenary of the Battle of Saint George's Caye (1798) and the birth of the "founding myth" of Belizean society (Macpherson 2003), the descendants of the Spanish were asked to adhere to the British Empire.

Building a permanent model

At the turn of the century, the emergence of a local elite who questioned British power (Unofficial Majority between 1890 and 1930) followed by the mobilization of workers in a dramatic socioeconomic context (Ashdown 1985, Soberanis & Kemp 1949, Macpherson 2007) facilitated the appearance of a "Creole society" (Shoman 2000:125) and the dynamics of "Creolization" (Bolland 1986:53, Judd 1990), both tending to integrate differences into a common political project (whether colonial or pre-national). The disappearance of ethnic and racial data in the censuses, however, did not prevent their continued use elsewhere; hence, it obviously did not correspond to the disappearance of ethnic and racial distinctions within society. It is precisely one of the issues we feel it is important to stress: there may be some discrepancies, even contradictions between some social behavior and rationales of action inspired by objectives, specific interests and multiple contexts. That is indeed where the driving force for social change lies.

Parallel to the population censuses, regular reports were prepared aiming to summarize the main information on Belize; these reports address many fields (history, economics, infrastructure, etc), including population. They were published regularly in London, then in Belize between 1888 and 1965, and are divided into three types: Colonial Reports, Handbooks and Blue Books (see Table 2). While the previously studied censuses aimed to provide an increasingly accurate account of the composition of the population (ending in the extreme case of 1861), and later ignored the ethnic and racial distinctions (from 1871 to 1931), these reports appear to construct a social reality without reference to the censuses. Thus, they forged an immutable stereotyped image of the

different groups, associating them with a delimited territory and the history of their arrival in Belize. This is expressed in a form of institutional repetition that draws an invariable model of the demographic configuration of Belize and justifies a standardized policy, known as "divide and rule." The reports of the British administration reveal an impressive continuity of ethnic and racial distinction, while the census categories and figures are perfectly discontinuous, in a discrepancy between the quantification tools and their use. We illustrate this with the case of the *Handbook of British Honduras, 1888-1889,* but the same conclusions could have been drawn from any other administrative document over the entire period (late 19th and mid-20th century) since their content is similar. The *Handbook of British Honduras, 1888-1889*, by Lindsay Bristowe and Philip Wright, representatives of the British Crown, describes four categories: "Native," "Ladino," also called "Spaniard" or "Spanish element," "Coloured" or "Creole," and "Carib." The former occupy the North of the territory, "they live in villages industriously and inoffensively scattered over the [Northern and North-Western] district, cultivating their patches of maize and pulse in small and neatly enclosed fields known as *milpas*." The *Ladinos*, also located to the North and of Spanish and indigenous descent, are characterized by a "freedom of thought and manners, as well as information and enterprise. To this class most of the artisans and operatives belong" (Bristowe & Wright 1888-1889:201-202). With regard to the Caribs of the Southern region, it is recalled that "the usual division of labour among savage nations is observed by them. The daily drudgery of the household belongs to the women, who also cultivate the small fields in which the cassava (...) and other crops are raised. The men pursue their hunting and fishing, and undertake the more severe labours attendant upon the building of their huts" (Bristowe & Wright 1888-1889:203). Finally, they state that the Creoles, "of European and African descent," live mainly in the center of the country and form "a hardy, strong, and vigorous race of people, who are the woodcutters of the interior, and the main instrument in keeping up the commerce of the colony" (Bristowe & Wright 1888-1889:202).

There is thus established a population/territory association based on a stereotypical classification of people (identity, occupation): Indians and "Spanish" *Mestizos* in the North, Blacks, Creoles and Garifunas in the center and South. This general pattern remained unchanged until 1965, the date of the last report on Belize obtaining the status of "self-government" (1964). In the *Colonial Reports*, this description is repeated in an identical manner for long periods (1931-1938, 1946-1950, 1954-1957) and the changes over the entire period (1898-1965) are negligible. The repetition seems to comply with a mandatory annual report function directed at the metropolis rather than an attempt at updated analysis:

"the Corozal and Orange Walk Districts are inhabited principally by the descendants of the Spanish and Maya peoples. The Stann Creek District is peopled, in the main, by Caribs, while in the Toledo District Caribs and Maya predominate. In the Cayo District are Guatemaltecans, Mexicans and a few Syrians. In the Capital the "Creoles" (descendants of the early settlers) are in the majority, but there are also a large number of people of Latin extraction from the neighbouring republics, and Syrians and Chinese. There is a limited number of Europeans and US citizens" (Colonial Report 1931).

However, a comment that is also repeated accompanies this description: "owing to intermixing, racial classification of the population is difficult and unreliable." The reports are therefore based on the repetition of an ethno-racial model, while insisting that miscegenation prevents the classification of people by racial criteria... Thus, there is both a recognition and denial of racial mixing; in fact, its evocation helps revalidate the "original" categories (Spanish, Creole, Carib, Maya), while integrating new groups defined on the basis of nationality (Mexican, Guatemalan, Syrian, Chinese). The British settlers are not contemplated in this scheme, while all "others" are considered migrants. This view includes the Maya, who are denied their autochthonous condition, as shown in a 1912 report addressed to the Colonial Office by Acting Governor Wilfred Collet: "It may, perhaps, be well for me to mention that the only aboriginal natives of America in the Colony are either immigrants or the descendants of persons who came to the Colony after it became a British possession" (Land in Crown Colonies 1912:39). While not escaping the assignation of an identity, Creoles, because they are closer to "Whites," represent the foundation of society: Creoles, "together with the whites, are, in fact, the backbone of the colony" (Bristowe & Wright 1888-1889:202).

In short, Great Britain establishes a model of society that blends racial, cultural and geographical characteristics and in which "everyone has his place" at the same time that the censuses abandon ethnic-racial categories (late 19th-early 20th centuries). This conception of otherness, based on the anteriority of migrations and the negation of autochthony, justifies the domination of a small group: the first European immigrants supported by the "Creoles," who have an ambiguous status, both "other" and founders of this society.

Part Two:
The slow march toward Independence. What Nation to construct?

Numerous works focus on this second part of the 20th century to analyze the emergence of an independent nation in relation to ethnic

and racial backgrounds (Bolland 1986, Wilk 1993, Price and Price 1995, Shoman 2010). The 20th century can also be considered, in the case of Belize, as a period of multiple ethnic and racial negotiations and arrangements. The articulation of the nation, race, and ethnicity, gave birth to the identification of three models of nationalism—pluralist, synthetic and hegemonic (Medina 1997)—which overlap and cross over depending on the context and the players involved, rather than excluding and following each other.

In the early 20th century, the first convulsions, mainly social and economic, acquired a political dimension. However, there was still no talk of independence. The priority was the phenomenon of extreme poverty, at times hunger, leading to race riots in 1919 (Ashdown 1985) and the birth of trade unions. As in the rest of Central America (anti-Garifuna demonstrations in Honduras, harshly repressed popular uprisings in El Salvador), the 1930s were agitated. In Belize, the hurricane of 1931 exacerbated popular mobilization. This was heightened after the Second World War, in reaction to devaluation (1949), and it was organized around the foundation of the first local political party, the People's United Party (PUP 1950) and the national strike of 1952. The colonial government conceded universal adult suffrage in 1954, proclaimed "self-government" in Belize in 1964 and, from the 1960s, approved the independence of the other territories of the West Indies. Belize's independence was delayed until 1981, principally because of the border dispute with Guatemala (Shoman 2000).

To what extent did the censuses interpret or report on these radical transformations of society, first organized under a colonial system and then in an independent nation? We shall proceed as for the previous period, analyzing the categories used and their evolution (see Table 3).

From 1946 until the eve of independence

This period is marked by three censuses, in 1946, 1960[9] and 1970. They were developed within the general framework of the West Indies and implemented in Belize, with the clear intention of comparison with the Anglophone Caribbean grouping. Thus, in 1946, the census was conducted simultaneously in Barbados, British Guiana, British Honduras (Belize), the Leeward Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. It was the first census planned for the whole of the West Indies and included a detailed list of identical instructions to all the colonies involved. It represented an intention to affirm the strength and unity of the British Empire. We are here faced primarily with a rationale of insertion in the imperial project and an almost mechanical management of territories and populations.

At the same time, however, the comments included in the census show the extent to which Belize differed from the rest of the West Indies. Thus, in the censuses of 1946 and 1970, a specific paragraph was directed generally at Belize (as well as British Guiana), recalling the difficulty of integrating it into the general pattern of the West Indies: it is considered "less racially homogeneous," the percentage of its Amerindian population was more important, and it was home to almost the totality of the "Caribs" (Garifuna) in the West Indies. Despite this, and if this situation of difference is properly diagnosed, Belize was too small, too sparsely populated and did not merit the development of new categories or adaptation of the general model of the census. This importation of categories reached ridiculous lengths, for example with the "Portuguese" appearing in the census of 1970 only because they were present in other parts of the West Indies (as in British Guiana, see Christopher 2005:108), but this did not correspond to any reality in Belize. The disappearance of the category Carib/Garifuna in 1960 and 1970 was similar because this group exists only in Belize and was not considered important enough to be recognized as a census category in the rest of the West Indies.

One of the liveliest debates concerned the issue of mixed categories. In effect, the criteria taking mixtures into account were transformed: in 1946, it was recommended that the children of "Mixed" and "Black" people be classified as "Black" (1946:16). This approach changed after 1970, however, and special care was taken with the "so-called Mixed group." Children born to "Mixed" parents or members of two different racial groups should be classified as "Mixed." Distancing itself in this way from the British policy of "divide and rule" that tended to distinguish each ethnic category, the census of 1970, drawn to the scale of the West Indies, preferred to insist on the mixed categories and not on those referring to a single origin. At that time, when many British colonies achieved independence (and Belize its "self-government"), we can wonder about this coincidence between the statistical appreciation of Mixed groups and the construction of national identities: disappearance of categories linked with colonization and slavery, emphasis on a Mixed population as a symbol of the new nation.

In the case of Belize, taking Mixed groups into account is even more complex. In effect, miscegenation in the West Indies related above all to people of African origin mixed with those of European or Asian origin. The classic works of Michael Garfield Smith (1965) would legitimate the idea of the dual nature of the composition of Belize, divided into a "Negro-White Creole" and "Spanish-Indian *Mestizo*" population, a legacy of the migrations caused by the Caste War. Despite their efforts to integrate the mixture of races, the censuses fashioned in the West Indies failed to grasp this "other" miscegenation referring to the descendants

of indigenous and Hispanic populations. Thus, in the 1970 census, a certain importance given to the category "Other Races," which includes individuals not recognized in any of the existing categories and amounts to 11.5% of the population.

Nor do the years of struggle for independence and workers' rights rely on any ethnic identification of the population.[10] Thus, there is a paradox or tension between two visions/practices: on the one hand, a mobilization toward independence seeking to overcome differences and, on the other hand, census categories produced by the British administration reasserting the existence of ethnic groups.

Independence. Censuses of 1981, 1991 and 2001

Did independence imply that the "Nation" should privilege "Creolization" to the detriment of the previous racial and ethnic classifications? Was there a desire to create distance from the association of territory-population so compelling in the colonial representations of the various reports, thereby forging a new vision of the national society? How do the censuses reflect this? In fact, we do not have all the elements necessary to answer these general questions; however, analysis of the changes in categories provides clues to understanding this nation under construction.

In general, the terminology used in the technical documents for the censuses, refers to the following categories: considered racial (1946, 1970, 1981), racial and ethnic (1960), racial, ethnic and national (1991) and ethnic (2001). Beyond the general classifications, the categories used generally mix references to "race," ethnicity, nation, and even religion. The census of 2001 seems closer to international standards promoted especially by international agencies, as shown in particular by using the category "Caucasian/White" or dropping references to "race."

For the period 1946-2001, the changes observed in some categories seem above all to be adjustments. Even if the name has changed, there seems to be no confusion about the boundaries that the appellation represents: for example, "White" (1946, 1970, 1981, 1991), classified as "European (or White)" in 1960 and "White/Caucasian" in 2001 (in 1861, the term used was "Anglo-Saxon"), the category "Syrian" became "Syrian-Lebanese" in 1970 before disappearing in 2001, the categories "Chinese" and "East Indian" (reminiscent of the "Coolies" of 1861) did not change, except in 1960 for the former ("Chinese" and "Japanese") and in 1991 for the latter ("Indian" instead of "East Indian"), the category "German/Dutch/Mennonite" appeared in 1991 and was transformed to "Mennonite" in 2001, dropping the European reference. These categories were never questioned, although the names varied.

They were "natural" and naturalized. They resulted from a consensus on ethnic barriers as described by Wimmer (2008:973).

Two significant evolutions in our subject can be observed, however, noted in the change from categories developed in the framework of the West Indies to categories increasingly elaborated locally. While the 1981 census still partially depended on the institutions of the West Indies, the 1991 census was the first to be fully developed locally, causing some rivalries between two institutions of the new nation, the Central Statistical Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs, the first being finally left in charge of the census. These changes directly questioned the relationship between categories of the census and national independence.

First, there was the emergence of a rationale of ethnicization for two groups, the Garifuna and the Maya, based on the use of categories of self-designation. The former were identified with the colonial term "Carib" until 1946, disappeared in 1960 and 1970 only to return with the name of Garifuna in 1981, 1991 and 2001. The latter were labeled with the generic terms "Indian" in 1861, "American Indian" in 1946 and "Amerindian" in 1970 (they were not counted in 1960), then differentiated as "Maya" and "Kekchi" in 1970, "Mopan," "Kekchi" and "other Maya" in 1991, and finally "Mopan," "Kekchi" and "Yucatec" in 2001. This denotes an emphasis on multi-ethnicity (Wilk & Chapin 1990, Izard 2004) at the very time of the independence of Belize.

In contradiction with independence and the nationalist discourse, which aimed to transcend ethnic differences, censuses, already produced locally, promoted the consolidation/ development/redefinition of ethnic groups, a process confirmed by social dynamics. As if echoing the observed changes in the categories beginning with the 1981 census, there was a renewed assertion of the ethnicization of certain groups, mainly Garifuna and Maya. The appearance of two ethnic organizations, the National Garifuna Council (in 1981) and the Toledo Maya Cultural Council (created in 1978, but active mostly from the mid-1980s), was a symptom of these changes. If ethnicity was formerly synonymous with marginalization and inferiority, it became an identity vector valued by the Maya and Garifuna peoples themselves in the new globalized multicultural landscape of the 1980s and 1990s.

Regarding the Garifuna, the existence of a specific language, religious rites (*dügu*), the transnational community (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Belize and the United States) and the wealth of musical forms (*paranda*, *punta*, *punta rock*, etc) was used as an argument to highlight both their difference and their "authenticity" (González 1969, Foster 1986, Cayetano & Cayetano 1997, Izard 2004, Palacio 2005). Their language, dances and songs were given the status of Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2001. While working primarily on the retrieval

of Maya history and culture, the Toledo Maya Cultural Council was able to take advantage of developing heritage tourism (exploitation of Mayan archaeological and natural sites) and engage on a more assertive course, as witnessed particularly in the debates surrounding the creation of a "Maya homeland" in the 1980s or its participation in a network of Mesoamerican Mayan NGOs. As in neighboring countries, these initiatives came with extremely pragmatic claims, especially land and territorial claims (Berkey 1994, Tzec *et al.* 2004). The political dimension of this re-ethnicization was not expressed through an explicit political commitment (political parties, ethnic vote, specific claims) but served rather to weaken even more a model of "Creole society" established so far on the basis of inclusion regardless of the Garifuna and Maya: as Belizean citizens who did not embody the nation Belize.

The second development relates to two more problematic processes (at least in terms of analysis) we will dwell on at greater length: the change of the categories "African" (1861), "Black" (1946), "African (Black)" (1960) and "Black" (1970) to that of "Creole" as from 1981, and the change of the categories "Mixed or Coloured" in 1946, "other races and all other mixed races" in 1960 and "Mixed" in 1970, to the category *"Mestizo"* after 1981. This demonstrates a strong desire to change in 1981, resulting in the presentation of a country which is essentially "Creole" and "Mestizo," terms that appear because of a concern to account for the country's ethnic and racial composition and refer to categories in use in Belize. However, such a modification of the categories remains questionable, since it implies an equivalence between the terms "Black," "African," and "Creole," on one hand, and the words "Mixed" and "*Mestizo*," on the other hand.[11]

In Belize, the term "*Mestizo*" refers to a specific historical event that defines a population: the descendants of migrants who came from Yucatán in the second half of the 19th century, fleeing the violence of the Caste War. It may be a form of ethnonym, as opposed to "Mixed," which defines a state of mixture, and unlike the common meaning of the word "*Mestizo*" in Central America and Mexico, which refers to descendants of Spaniards and indigenous people. As we have seen, this category was introduced in 1981, when a wave of Central American migration entered Belize, starting at the end of the 1970s (political and economic migrants arriving mainly from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras): In the census, the ethnonym specifically designating refugees from the Caste War of the 19th century began to be used to designate all those who share the Spanish language or "Latin culture." Such an administrative assimilation based on origin and sometimes language is not a sign of social assimilation. Indeed, numerous *Mestizo* Belizeans do not consider themselves to be in organic solidarity with other Central

American *Mestizos*, but rather as being in competition for access to work, land and public services (Medina 1997, Moberg 1997).

The political context became heavily loaded at the time of the independence of Belize; the new nation had to deal with both ethnic claims and non-ethnic nationalism, at the very time relations between Creoles and *Mestizo* groups became tenser. In fact, in the 1991 census, the "*Mestizo*" population was larger than the "Creole" population.[12] Statistics being the order of the day, observers (the media, intellectuals) were concerned with this "ethnic shift" which was disrupting the face of the new nation (see Wilk 1993, for example). In this sense, far from being an instrument of population control, the censuses rather symbolized the birth of a state which did not yet perfectly master the instruments of power. The introduction of ethnic categories of self-designation (Garifuna, different Maya groups) and the use of the extremely heterogeneous term "*Mestizo*" statistically produced a society which corresponds neither to the integration of ethnic groups to overcome ethnic differences, nor to the hegemony of Creole society.

Conclusion

While Belize is systematically associated with ethnic issues, we wanted to demonstrate that ethnicity is unstable over time and, while it may often be structuring and mobilized, it can also be absent or underestimated at other times. Thus, the censuses confirm that ethnic and racial categories sometimes disappeared from the full range of tools for defining and checking the population and evolved considerably as institutions changed. The nationalist ideology of inclusion, with two main categories ("Creole" and "*Mestizo*") gave way to the assertion of ethnic and racial identity in the neo-liberal and multicultural environment of the 1990s and 2000s, but this renewed assertion is no longer compatible with the multiplicity of categories used in the 1861 census. Belize's grounding in the Anglophone Caribbean, which is directed towards an ethnic administration of populations, should not obscure the considerable variations in the management of ethnicity and the very definition of these categories. These variations may be related to the territory's precarious status, with disputes between Spain/Mexico and Great Britain until 1862, then a British enclave in the midst of independent Spanish-speaking countries.

The earliest censuses in the 19th century managed the issue of the transition from slavery to freedom and focused on only a portion of the population, of European and African origin, concentrated in Belize City. The arrival of refugees from the Yucatán Caste War in the mid-19th century implied a change in perspective, and the census of 1861 aimed, with extreme precision, to reflect the diversity of the population

as a whole. In turn, this rationale was quickly dropped and, from 1871 to 1931, censuses were no longer interested in the ethnic-racial composition of the population. Belize was then officially a British colony, and the assertion of the British presence and control of the territory seemed to prevail over the administration of the various components of the population. Yet at the same time, in their many reports on Belize, the British administrators reproduced an invariable scheme, ignoring changes in statistics and drawing a stereotypical representation of the trilogy ethnicity-identity-territory. In this interim period between colony and independent country, ethnic diversity was both a component of the colony, an 'invariable' in the eyes of the British administrators, and a piece of statistical data without interest, because policies favored a territorial vision of administration.

After the start of a century marked by dramatic events (poverty, riots, hurricane) and the first anti-colonial demonstrations, the 1946 and subsequent censuses once again took account of ethnic and racial categories. They were far more technical and complete but, initially, there seems to have been a gap between the tool and the policy. In fact, the censuses were developed in the framework of the West Indies, with an explicit desire to impose uniformity in a region with increasingly centrifugal dynamics, and they were often ill-adapted to the particular situation of Belize. With independence in 1981, censuses tended to integrate local usage and give value to categories of miscegenation ("Creoles" and "*Mestizos*"), which embodied the new "national identity." The new administration was unable, however, to control its own tools and faced the emergence of an "unexpected nation" with a majority Hispanic population. In parallel, some ethnic categories moved from an exclusive hetero-denomination to a differentiated self-designation "standardized" at the international level (from "Carib" to "Garifuna," from "American Indian," "Amerindian" or "Maya" to the recognition of different Mayan groups: Yucatec, Mopan, Kekchi).

Notes

[1] This paper was prepared within the framework of the research project ANR Suds – AIRD Afrodesc (ANR-07-SUDS-008) "Afrodescendants and slaveries: domination, identification and legacies in the Americas (15th-21st centuries)" and of the European programme Eurescl "Slave Trade, Slavery, Abolitions and their Legacies in European Histories and Identities" <www.eurescl.eu>.

[2] Belize became the Colony of British Honduras in 1862, and retrieved

the name Belize in 1973. It has 322,000 inhabitants according to the 2008 estimate of the *Statistical Institute of Belize* <http://www.statisticsbelize.org.bz/>.

[3] In Belize, "Creole" refers to descendants of Europeans (principally British) and Africans.

[4] The categories are extremely complex, especially as regards the original inhabitants of Yucatán: those called *Mestizos* on the Mexican side are classified as "*Ladino*," "Spaniard," "Spanish" and "Hispanic" on the British side. The term "*Mestizo*" itself causes confusion, since in Yucatán it means recently "acculturated" indigenous people, while in the rest of Mexico it applies to individuals no longer recognizable as indigenous.

[5] Table 4 gives data on census figures after 1970 to show global trends and inform the discussion on the post-independence "ethnic shift."

[6] We conducted interviews with two groups of people: technicians who often come from abroad, stay for a short period of time and have no interest in the uses and consequences of ethnic and racial categories; high-ranking civil servants, almost never present at the Statistical Institute of Belize and characterized by a strong turnover from one administration to another. Our intuition is that individuals and groups alter census categories according to both political and social interests (Nobles 2000) and very personal, informal, contextual action rationales.

[7] And probably underestimated, as the British administrators themselves admit, particularly because of the poor return of questionnaires sent to forestry workers.

[8] It is interesting to note that the 1901 census includes a summary of earlier censuses (1826, 1829, 1832 and 1835): the division into the four categories already described is transformed into a very different classification of "free persons," "slaves" and "troops," as if the original racial rationale was reinterpreted in light of a focus privileging status over racial identification. The mention of "troops" is no accident in this period (1820-1830) when the territory of Belize acquired strategic commercial importance for all of Central America torn by Wars of Independence and their consequences. It was necessary to protect ports and transport vehicles.

[9] The results of 1960 census have not been published. This census might have been at the core of tensions between the British administration (which imposed a single model of census throughout the

West Indies) and George Price, leader of the independence movement, stressing national unity on the eve of obtaining the status of self-government in 1964.

[10] The position of George Price, "Father of the Nation," was quite ambiguous: he sought to forge national unity in a multi-ethnic society but was sometimes perceived as favouring the Mayas or, on the contrary, avoiding ethnicized politics (for example, in the organization and discourse of his political party, the PUP).

[11] The significant confusions that occurred during the 1981 census demonstrate that this transformation did not go without errors: while the questionnaire for 1981 introduced the new categories "Creole" and "*Mestizo*," some analyses of the census repeated the old categories "Black" and "Mixed" (1980-1981: iv, 110, 1991, Population Census. Major Findings: 6). Simultaneously, the results of 1970 were presented with the categories used in 1981 (changing "Black" to "Creole" and "Mixed" to "*Mestizo*").

[12] In a symbolic manner, the 2001 census presents its results beginning with "*Mestizos*" (who became numerically more important), whereas the first column of the tables was until then reserved for "Blacks/ Africans" or "Creoles."

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Table 1: Censuses from 1816 to 1931

Date	Title	Categories	Author
1816	*A census of the population of the British Order of Lieutenant Colonel George Arthur His Majesty's Settlement of Belize on the Bay of Honduras, taken by Superintendent Commandant, December 1816.*	White Coloured Black Slave	Superintendant, Belize
1820	*Census 1820 of the Slave Population for the British Settlement* (file title, original missing).	White Coloured Black Slave	House of Commons, UK
1821	*Census of the Slave Population of the British Settlement of Belize in the Bay of Honduras, 31st December 1821.*		House of Commons, UK
1823	*Census of 1823 of the Slave Population for the British Settlement* (file title, original missing).	White Coloured Black Slave	House of Commons, UK
1826	*Census of the Population of the British Settlement of Belize, Honduras, 1826* (file title, original missing).	White Coloured Black Slave	
1829	*Census of the Population of the British Settlement, Belize, Honduras.*	White Coloured Black Slave	
1832	*Census of the Population of the British Settlement of Honduras for the year 1832.*	White Coloured Black Slave	
1834	*Slave Register*		
1835	*Census of the Population of the British Settlement of Honduras for the year 1835.*	White Coloured Black Apprenticed labourer	
1840	*Census of the Population of the British Settlement of Honduras for the year 1840.*	White Coloured Black Apprenticed labourer	

Date	Title	Categories	Author
1861	*Population census for 1861* (file title, original missing).	Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Honduran, Anglo-African, Anglo-American, Anglo-Indian, Anglo Hispanic, Anglo French, Anglo Carib, African, African-English, African-Spanish, African Indian, African Carib, Indian, Indian African, Indian Spanish, Indian Carib, Spanish, Spanish & English, Spanish & African, Spanish & Indian, Spanish & Carib, Carib, Carib & English, Carib & African, Carib & Indian, French, French & Indian, French & Spanish, French & Portuguese, German, Danish, Portuguese, Portuguese & French, Belgian, Dutch, Syrian, Chinese, Coolies, Italian, French & Italian, Not Stated.	Census Comisioners
1871	*Census of 1871, enclosed in Robert Harley to Grant, 20 May 1872, CO123/148 (cited by Bolland 2003:154)*.		
1881	*Unavailable in the Belmopan archives.*		
1891	*Census of British Honduras taken on the 6th of April, 1891.*		HY. O. Usher, Chief Commissioner for the Census.
1901	*Report on the result of the census of the colony of British Honduras, Taken on the 31st March, 1901* Belize: Printed at Angelus Office, 1901.	Not used	
1911	*Report of the result of the census of the colony of BH,* taken on the 2nd April, 1911, Belize, printed at the Angelus Office, 1912	Not used	
1921	*Report on the Census of 1921, Part 2. Tables,* Taken on the 24th April, 1921. Prepared by Herbert Dunk, Register General and Superintendent of Census. Printed by the Government Printing Office, Belize, British Honduras.	Not used	Herbert Dunk, Register General and Superintendent of Census.
1931	*Census of British Honduras 1931.* Printed by the Government Press 1933.	Not used	Major Sir John Alder Burdon, Governor of the Colony of British Honduras.

Date	Title	Categories	Author
1946	West Indian Census 1946. Part E. Census of British Honduras, 9th April, 1946. Published by the Government Printer, Belize, British Honduras, 1948. Printed by the Government Printer, Duke Street, Kingston, Jamaica.	Black, Mixed or Coloured, American Indian, Carib, White, Syrian, East Indian (Hindu), Chinese, Not stated.	Central Bureau of Statistics of the Government of Jamaica.
1960	West Indies Population Census. Jamaica Tabulation Center. Census of British Honduras. 7th April, 1960. Volume 1. Department of Statistics, Kingston, Jamaica.	African, Black, Negro; European (or White); Syrian; East Indian; Chinese (and Japanese); Other races and all the Mestizo groups.	Central Bureau of Statistics of the Government of Jamaica.
1970	Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Volume 7, Race and Religion. Census Research Programme, University of the West Indies, 1976. Printed by the Herald Limited, 43, East Street, Kingston, Jamaica.	Black, Mixed, Amerindian, White, Portuguese, Syrian/ Lebanese, East Indian, Chinese, Other races, Not stated.	University of West Indies, Census Research Programme, Jamaica. Technical help from the Canadian International Development Agency.
1980-1981	Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean Belize, volume 1. Printed in Jamaica.	Creole, Mestizo, Maya, Kekchi, Garifuna, White, East Indian, Chinese, Other races, Not stated.	Regional Population Census and Regional Census Co-ordinating Committee (Caricom). Realized in Belize, with the help of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica. Technical help from UN.
1991	1991 Population Census. Major Findings. Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance, Belmopan, Cayo, Belize, C.A. Population and Housing Census, Administrative Report. Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance, Belmopan, Belize CA.	Creole, Mestizo, Maya Mopan, Kekchi Maya, other Maya, Garifuna, White, German/Dutch/Mennonites, Syrian/Lebanese, Indian, Chinese, Others, DK/NS.	Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance, Belmopan. Help of the Regional Census Office (Trinidad and Tobago).
2001	Belize. Abstract of Statistics 2001. Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance, Belmopan, November 2001.	Black/African, Creole, Mestizo, Maya Mopan, Kekchi Maya, Yucatec Maya, Garifuna, Caucasian/White, Mennonites, East Indian, Chinese, Others, DK/NS	Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance, Belmopan.

Table 2: Reports

Title	Years (available in the Belizean Archives)
Blue Book	From 1884 to 1944 Missing years; 1889, 1896, 1904, 1906, 1916 1918, 1919, 1929, 1921, 1939
Colonial Reports	1898, 1899, 1911, 1916, 1924-25, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959-1961, 1962-1963, 1964-1965
The Handbook of British Honduras	1888-1889 and 1925

Table 3: Categories from 1946 to 2000

1946	1960	1970	1981	1991	2001
Black	African, Black, Negro	Black			Black/African
			Creole	Creole	Creole
Mixed or Coloured		Mixed			
			Mestizo	Mestizo	Mestizo
American Indian		Amerindian	Maya	Maya Mopan	Maya Mopan
			Kekchi	Kekchi Maya	Kekchi Maya
				other Maya	Yucatec Maya
Carib			Garifuna	Garifuna	Garifuna
White	European (or White)	White	White	White	Caucasian/White
		Portuguese			
				German/Dutch/ Mennonites	Mennonites
Syrian	Syrian	Syrian/ Lebanese		Syrian/ Lebanese	
East Indian (Hindu)	East Indian	East Indian	East Indian	Indian	East Indian
Chinese	Chinese (and Japanese)	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
	Other races and all the Mestizo groups	Other races	Other races	Others	Others
Not stated		Not stated	Not stated	DK/NS	DK/NS

Table 4: Census numbers from 1970 to 2000

	1970	1981	1991	2001
Negro/ Black, Black/African	36,921 (30.8%)			582 (0.3%)
Creole		57,099 (39.7%)	55,051 (29.8%)	57,859 (24.9%)
Mixed or Coloured	39,319 (32.8%)			
Mestizo		47,698 (33.1%)	80,477 (43.6%)	113,045 (48.7%)
Amerindian/ American Indian/ Maya	22,390 (18.7%)	9,689 (6.8%)		
Maya Mopan			6,770 (3.7%)	8,980 (3.8%)
Kekchi Maya		3,953 (2.8%)	7,954 (4.3%)	12,366 (5.3%)
Other Maya/ Yucatec Maya			5,686 (3.1%)	3,155 (1.6%)
Carib/ Garifuna		10,816 (7.6%)	12,274 (6.6%)	14,061 (6%)
White/ European/ Caucasian	4,463 (3.7%)	5,998 (4.2%)	1,494 (0.8%)	1,758 (0.8%)
Portuguese	11			
German/Dutch/Mennonites			5,763 (3.1%)	8,276 (3.5%)
Syrian/ Lebanese	169		167 (0.1%)	
East Indian	2,695 (2.2%)	2,997 (2.1%)	6,455 (3.5%)	6,868 (2.95%)
Chinese	204	214 (0.1%)	747 (0.4%)	1,716 (0.7%)
Other races and all the Mestizo groups/ Others/ Not stated	13,797 (11.5%)	4,392 (3.6%)	1,884 (1%)	3,445 (1.5%)
Total	119,934	142,847	184,722	232,111