

# Brazil

## *Ethnicity in Brazil*

### *Group selection*

According to the 2010 census, 47,7% of the population identifies as white, 43,1% identifies as Pardo (mixed white and black), 7,6% is Black. 1,1% of Brazilians identify as Asian (<sup>529</sup>). According to scientific practice, we consider Pardos and Blacks as Afro-Brazilians . So, for the first time in Brazilian history, Afro-Brazilians form with 50,7% the majority of Brazilian population. As in many Latin American countries census figures are based on self-identification questions. This means that for the first time, more people consider themselves to be Pardo or black than white. 0.4% of the population is indigenous (<sup>530</sup>).

We identify the following politically relevant ethnic groups: **Afro-Brazilian, Indigenous peoples** and **White**.

### *Power relations*

#### *1978-2002*

Ethnicity was not politically salient in Brazil until 1977. The year 1978 marks the political opening of the military regime in Brazil, and with this came the emergence of an organized Afro-Brazilian “movement (the first Afro-Brazilian organization being the Negro Unificado - Black United; <sup>531</sup>, 200) that had not been evident since its organizations were closed in the 1930s (along with many others) by Vargas. Burdick (<sup>532</sup>) and Loveman (<sup>533</sup>) note, and as Hanchard (<sup>534</sup>) laments, this movement has had difficulty convincing non-whites that they are “Afro-Brazilians (and in convincing them accordingly to mobilize on this basis, such as by choosing “pardo” on the census form). Nonetheless, this movement fits the coding criteria of an organized political group, as it claimed to represent the interests of an ethnic group. Moreover, it has not been without consequence. The 1988 Constitution has an anti-discrimination clause (a notable change in a country known historically for the robustness of its racial democracy “myth), and the movement has compelled the collection of government data on ethnicity, a practice that had been eliminated by the military regime. At the sub-national level, the movement has had some success in compelling “positive discrimination. For example: The 1982 state elections of Rio de Janeiro made PDT leader Leonel Brizola governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro. Once in office, Brizola fulfilled an earlier promise made to black

<sup>529</sup> [Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2010]

<sup>530</sup> [IWIGIA, 2010]

<sup>531</sup> [Skidmore, 2010]

<sup>532</sup> [Burdick, 1998]

<sup>533</sup> [Loveman, 1999]

<sup>534</sup> [Hanchard, 1998]

activists of his party by appointing blacks to important positions within his cabinet (<sup>535</sup>, 134). Still this influence does not rise to the level of “regional autonomy - hence, the “powerless designation.

<sup>535</sup> [Hanchard, 1998]

As indigenous peoples faced increased external threats, they started to mobilize at the end of the 1970s. As Levinson (<sup>536</sup>, 327) notes, “the status of American Indians has become a major issue in the last two decades. This led to the creation of the Union of Indian Nations (UNI) in 1980. In the 1980s the indigenous movement was highly visible through demonstrations and lobbying in the capital. As a result, in the 1988 Constitution cultural, legal and territorial rights of the indigenous peoples were recognized (<sup>537</sup>). The Constitution gives Brazil’s indigenous peoples the right to inhabit their ancestral territories but not to legally own them. Indigenous peoples are considered “powerless” during this period.

<sup>536</sup> [Levinson, 1998]

<sup>537</sup> [Perz, Warren Kennedy, 2008]

Brazil’s first affirmative action quotas were introduced by decree by the Cardoso government in 2001. They applied to all federal ministries in the field of personnel recruitment, not only for Afro-Brazilians but also women and other minority groups. Other actions directed towards a more just representation of Afro-Brazilians (and other vulnerable population groups) consisted in the creation of the preparation program for the diplomatic corps and the National Affirmative Action Program (a decree addressing government agencies and companies with government contracts) (<sup>538</sup>, 223).

<sup>538</sup> [Skidmore, 2010]

### *2002-2010*

Lula Inacio da Silva of the Worker Party (PT) was elected in October 2002 and reelected in October 2006. The Lula governments allowed a wider participation of formerly excluded social groups. Lula appointed four Afro-Brazilian ministers, officially recognized the racial discrimination problem and initiated various affirmative action programs to reduce racial inequality (i.e. quotas at university, Special-Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality). This kind of public policy does not produce sudden changes and can lead to growing frustration if racial inequality continues (<sup>539</sup>). But under Lula, the black movement has had a greater influence at the national level than ever before (<sup>540</sup>).

<sup>539</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008]

<sup>540</sup> [Campos de Sousa Nascimento, 2008]

Lula da Silva stalled many land titling initiatives and left the government with Brazil’s worst indigenous rights record since the military regimes (<sup>541</sup>). During this period, whites are coded as “senior partner” and Afro-Brazilians as “junior partner”. Indigenous peoples continue to be powerless.

<sup>541</sup> [MRGI, 2014]

*2011-2017*

Even though the new government under Dilma Rousseff, elected in 2010, keeps on strengthening and broadening the existing affirmative action programs (e.g. in 2012 a law was promulgated that requires all federal universities to enact admission quotas; before there was no national law regulating admission quotas) (<sup>542</sup>, 4) the political influence of Afro-Brazilians did decrease in comparison with the Lula legislature period (there are two Afro-Brazilian cabinet members, but no minister; and there is no Afro-Brazilian governor; from 513 deputies 22 are Afro-Brazilian and from 81 senators there are 3 Afro-Brazilian) (<sup>543</sup>).

<sup>542</sup> [Dávila, 2012]

During this period, indigenous peoples and Afro-Brazilians are both considered “powerless”, and whites as “dominant”.

<sup>543</sup> [U.S. State Department, 2010]

*Indigenous peoples:* The political situation of the indigenous peoples in Brazil has not improved in recent years: On the contrary, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous peoples has noted a significant regression in terms of indigenous rights protection in Brazil (<sup>544</sup>, <sup>545</sup>: 19). Despite remarkable constitutional provisions, implementation in reality - especially concerning land and self-determination rights - has been stagnant and continues to be threatened by political decisions (<sup>546</sup>: 2; <sup>547</sup>: 176). The National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) - which plays a crucial role by operating in between the government and indigenous communities and is described to be the only government agency trusted by indigenous peoples - has been debilitated by significant cuts of its funds as well as by the politically motivated nomination of its directors (<sup>548</sup>; <sup>549</sup>: 8, 22; <sup>550</sup>: 19). A report of the Missionary Council for Indigenous Peoples (CIMI) stated that, by 2015, there had been no new ratification of indigenous territory since the Rousseff administration (see <sup>551</sup>: 2). According to Equal Times (2017), by mid-2017, the state has not approved a single indigenous territory for over a year. Additionally, deepest concern among indigenous peoples is triggered by the impending constitutional amendment PEC 215, which was approved by a parliamentary commission in 2015 and has reportedly never been as close to being adopted (<sup>552</sup>; <sup>553</sup>: 179). PEC 215 would transfer land rights recognition from the executive (the president, FUNAI and the Ministry of Justice) to the congress - where indigenous peoples have almost no representation - and thereby transforming a formerly technical process into a political one (<sup>554</sup>: 2; <sup>555</sup>: 14; <sup>556</sup>: 10). The new amendment even enables the reconsideration of land already recognized as indigenous in the past (<sup>557</sup>: 179). Besides these threats, indigenous people’s political influence on the national level is already marginal (<sup>558</sup>: 16; <sup>559</sup>: 14; <sup>560</sup>: 5). Furthermore, given the considerations above, in 2017 any sort of de facto regional autonomy is absent.

<sup>544</sup> [Equal Times, 2017]

<sup>545</sup> [UNHRC, 2016a]

<sup>546</sup> [MRGI, 2016]

<sup>547</sup> [?]

<sup>548</sup> [Equal Times, 2017]

Afro-Brazilians have not regained any significant political influence on national politics either and continue to be excluded from

positions of power and influence, according to the special rapporteur on minorities and indigenous peoples (<sup>561</sup>: 1; <sup>562</sup>: 1). After the Rousseff administration, which counted on one Afro-Brazilian minister, there is no Afro-Brazilian representation left in the cabinet of the actual government of Michel Temer (<sup>563</sup>: 3). There have been some government-led initiatives aimed at increasing Afro-Brazilians' influence, like a 2014 law, that reserves 20 per cent of federal civil servant positions for Afro-Brazilians (<sup>564</sup>: 22). However, as the special rapporteur states, important decision-making posts are excluded from this quota system (<sup>565</sup>: 10). The Afro-Brazilian population disproportionately suffers from social exclusion, low wages, a lack of education opportunities, and high levels of violence (<sup>566</sup>: 2; <sup>567</sup>: 1).

<sup>561</sup> [MRGI, 2014]

<sup>562</sup> [UNHRC, 2016b]

<sup>563</sup> [Freedom House, 2017]

<sup>564</sup> [BTI, 2016]

<sup>565</sup> [UNHRC, 2016b]

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## Political status of ethnic groups in Brazil

*From 1946 until 1977*

| Group name         | Proportional size | Political status |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Whites             | 0.54              | IRRELEVANT       |
| Afrobrazilians     | 0.45              | IRRELEVANT       |
| Indigenous peoples | 0.004             | IRRELEVANT       |

*From 1978 until 2002*

| Group name         | Proportional size | Political status |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Whites             | 0.54              | DOMINANT         |
| Afrobrazilians     | 0.45              | POWERLESS        |
| Indigenous peoples | 0.004             | POWERLESS        |

*From 2003 until 2010*

| Group name         | Proportional size | Political status |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Whites             | 0.54              | SENIOR PARTNER   |
| Afrobrazilians     | 0.45              | JUNIOR PARTNER   |
| Indigenous peoples | 0.004             | POWERLESS        |

*From 2011 until 2017*

| Group name         | Proportional size | Political status |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Afrobrazilians     | 0.507             | POWERLESS        |
| Whites             | 0.477             | DOMINANT         |
| Indigenous peoples | 0.004             | POWERLESS        |

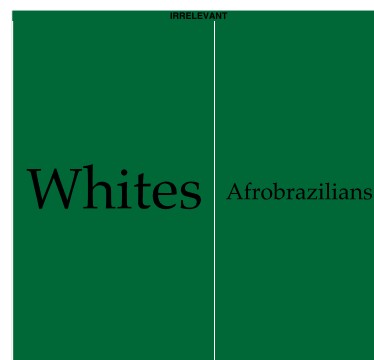


Figure 90: Political status of ethnic groups in Brazil during 1946-1977.



Figure 91: Political status of ethnic groups in Brazil during 1978-2002.



Figure 92: Political status of ethnic groups in Brazil during 2003-2010.



## *Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Brazil*

*From 1978 until 2017*



Figure 94: Map of ethnic groups in Brazil during 1978-2017.

| Group name   | Area in km <sup>2</sup> | Type             |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|
| <span style="color: red;">■</span> Afro-Brazilians       | 8 504 368               | Regionally based |
| <span style="color: purple;">■</span> Whites             | 8 504 368               | Regionally based |
| <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Indigenous peoples | 3 580 719               | Regionally based |

Table 31: List of ethnic groups in Brazil during 1978-2017.