

Dominican Republic

Ethnicity in Dominican Republic

Group selection

We do not consider ethnicity as politically relevant in the Dominican Republic. While there is widespread and strong social and state-led political discrimination against Haitian immigrants and their descendants (¹⁴⁰²), the vast majority of this group are labor migrants and therefore is not considered an ethnic group within the Dominican Republic, according to EPR coding rules. This holds even though Haitian immigration dates back to the turn of the 20th century (¹⁴⁰³, 345).

In 2013, a constitutional court ruling considerably worsened an already difficult situation for the immigrant population in the Dominican Republic. According to it, Dominican-born descendants of immigrants illegally residing in the country - mostly of Haitian descent - are excluded from entitlement of Dominican citizenship or even retroactively revoked their citizenship (¹⁴⁰⁴: 1). With a 2014 naturalization law the government aimed to counteract the harsh consequences of the retrospective character of the ruling. However, this law has not been implemented comprehensively and a majority of the affected people remains without nationality documents. Nevertheless, deportations have started in 2015 and are being continued (¹⁴⁰⁵: 5; ¹⁴⁰⁶, ¹⁴⁰⁷: 1).

Apart from Haitian migrants, the Dominican population is stratified by class which, as in (probably) all Latin American countries, strongly overlaps with skin color. Like other Caribbean populations, Dominicans can be categorized into blacks (11%), mulattos (73%), and whites (16%) (¹⁴⁰⁸) with the blacks forming the lowest socio-economic stratum. The ruling economic and political circle is constituted by a small number of white families (¹⁴⁰⁹, 345). However, these class-color-based differences have not been politicized so far.

Indigenous peoples are also not a politically relevant ethnic category. Due to a racist and xenophobic ideology towards the Afro descendant population coming up in the mid-19th century, an idealization of indigenous elements in Dominican culture took place (it were Taíno-Arawak groups that originally inhabited the island; ¹⁴¹⁰). This results in ethnic perceptions that are very different from U.S. American or Europeans ones: while blacks are declared to be "indios oscuros" (dark indigenous people) most Dominicans are considered to be white ("blanco"), Indian ("indio") or a mixture of both before

¹⁴⁰² [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

¹⁴⁰³ [Levinson, 1998]

¹⁴⁰⁴ [USDS, 2017]

¹⁴⁰⁵ [BTI, 2016]

¹⁴⁰⁶ [COHA, 2017]

¹⁴⁰⁷ [USDS, 2017]

¹⁴⁰⁸ [CIA, 2014]

¹⁴⁰⁹ [Levinson, 1998]

¹⁴¹⁰ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

mentioned ethnicities ("mestizo"). It is especially the indigenous component that helped to construct a Dominican national identity – that nowadays is defined as white, Catholic and Hispanic – by distinguishing it from Spanish and Haitian culture (¹⁴¹¹, 150-151).

¹⁴¹¹ [Duany, 1998]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Dominican Republic

From 1946 until 2017

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Dominicans	1.0	IRRELEVANT

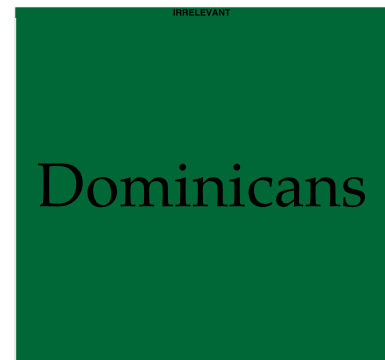


Figure 266: Political status of ethnic groups in Dominican Republic during 1946-2017.

Conflicts in Dominican Republic

Starting on 1965-04-23

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Dominican Republic	Military faction (constitutionalists)	Dominicans	1965-04-23	No	Yes, from EGIP	Split