

Ethnicity in Guinea-Bissau

Group selection

We identify the following politically relevant groups in Guinea-Buissau: Balanta, Manjaco, Papel and Cape Verdean. The Peul and Brame (Mancanha) ethnic groups are not considered politically relevant according to the definition of EPR. Group sizes are coded according to figures provided by the CIA World Factbook and the Encyclopedia of the Nations (2279).

²²⁷⁹ [Nations Encyclopedia, 2014]

Power relations

1974-1980: Luiz Cabral's rule

After the independence war, the small Cape Verdean minority the ethnic group favored and installed as administrative elite by the Portuguese colonialists assumed a dominant role in the country's politics. President Cabral himself a Cape Verdean relied heavily on them in both the government and the party leadership to secure his power (2280). Furthermore, he also gave promotions to the leading positions in the army to trusted confidants, mainly Cape Verdeans although the vast majority of the army was composed of Balanta (2281 ; 2282).

Regarding the distribution of funds, the situation was essentially the same as during colonialism, and the rural population did not experience any improvements. Although only 16% of the total population lived in Bissau, 50% of all investments and 80% of the budget were allocated to the capital (2283).

As political power was still dominated by the same elite after independence, there was increasing resentment among other ethnic groups (2284 ; 2285 ; 2286), especially the Balanta who had already constituted the bulk of the soldiery during the war but did not see themselves sufficiently rewarded for their important contribution to the country's independence (2287). The Cape Verdean minority was thus coded as "dominant" and all other ethnic groups as "powerless" in this time period.

1981-1999: Vieira's rule after his coup d'état at the end of 1980

After coming to power, Vieira ousted the Cape Verdeans from the important, upper-level positions in the government (2288; 2289; 2290). They then stopped to play a significant role in the country's politics.

²²⁸⁰ [Forrest, 1992]

²²⁸¹ [Forrest, 1987] ²²⁸² [Galli, 1987]

²²⁸³ [Lopes, 1982]

²²⁸⁴ [Enders, 1994]
²²⁸⁵ [Galli, 1990]
²²⁸⁶ [Forrest, 1992]

 $^{2287}\left[\mathrm{Forrest},\ 1987\right]$

²²⁸⁸ [Forrest, 1987]
²²⁸⁹ [Enders, 1994]
²²⁹⁰ [Forrest, 1992]

Thus they are coded as politically irrelevant in all periods after the first one.

The ruling institutions became now well balanced among the other ethnic groups (2291). However, many Balanta military men were disappointed of Vieira as he did not promote them as much as they had expected after his rise to power (also leading to several coup attempts by Balanta) (2292,2293, 2294). With the president and intermittently also the Vice-President from this group (and at the same time sharing their power with other groups) (2295), the Papel are coded as "senior partner". The Balanta although not content with the size of their "piece of the cake", and despite the attempted coups and subsequent retribution measures do now have considerably more access to executive power (2296). Thus they are coded as "junior partner" of the government. The same applies to the Manjaco group. The period ends with the military coup in May 1999, and Vieira fleeing the country.

2000-2005

After the military coup against Vieira (following the civil war) and an interim government, power is transferred to a democratically elected president, Kumba Yala. He rules the country until September 2003 when he, too, is ousted by another military coup. Both Yala and the military officers that replace him are Balanta. According to Prof. Joshua Forrest (personal correspondence) the 2000-2005 period is "largely dominated" by the Balanta which hold the presidency and are appointed to "positions of dominance in the security and military apparatuses". In contrast, the Papel have "dramatically less influence" during this period and are "out of central power" - as well as the Manjaco group. The Balanta are thus coded as "dominant" during this time period.

According to the same source, both the Papel and the Manjaco still have to be regarded as politically relevant. The Manjaco apparently retain "dominance over their own region" (Cacheu, one of the country's most important political regions) and "de-facto control over local affairs". However, no signs have been found for any kind of institutionalized regional autonomy with core competencies of the state, which is why no regional autonomy is coded.

2006-2009: Vieira's comeback as president after being elected in the 2005 elections

According to the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Reports from 2006 to 2009 (2297), his term constituted an improvement in democratic governance in Guinea-Bissau. In general, ethnicity still plays a significant role in national politics (2298, 2299). All relevant ethnic groups were included in the government according to the U.S. State Department's HR Reports (see reference above). Due to lack of other reliable sources, the coding decision is based on this information only. As president Vieira himself is a Papel, the Papel

²²⁹¹ [Forrest, 1987]

²²⁹² [Forrest, 1987]
²²⁹³ [Forrest, 1992]
²²⁹⁴ [Galli, 1990]
²²⁹⁵ [Forrest, 1987]

²²⁹⁶ [Forrest, 1992]

 $^{2297}\left[\mathrm{State\ Department},\ 1999\text{-}2016\right]$

²²⁹⁸ [Kohnert, 2010]²²⁹⁹ [Freedom House, 2006]

group is coded as "senior partner" of a power-sharing arrangement. This is in line with the coding of the 1981-1999 period (Vieira's first presidential era). The Balanta and Manjaco, the two other groups identified as politically relevant in the periods before, were coded as "junior partners" (also analogous to 1981-1999). No new evidence of any political relevance of the Peul and the Cape Verdeans (the former dominant group). They are therefore considered "irrelevant".

2010-2012

After the assassination of president Vieira in March 2009 and until the coming into power of the newly elected president Sanhá in September, there was extensive political violence—military intimidation, torture, and killing of politicians (e.g. of a presidential candidate)—and political opposition was effectively suppressed (²³⁰⁰, 2009 report). Guinea-Bissau's army is largely dominated by the Balanta (²³⁰¹, Report 2008 & 2009; ²³⁰²). According to the U.S. State Department HR Report from 2009 to 2011 (2303), the Balanta ethnic group, through its control of the armed forces, dominated the political system during this time. (Note that the president's assassination was the army's response to the killing of the army chief, the president's archrival, by armed militiamen. According to an article published by Reuters, this rivalry seems to have had an ethnic overtone with president Vieira being Papel and army chief Na Wai from the Balanta group. "A security source said soldiers from Na Wai's Balanta ethnic group led the attack on Vieira, who is from the smaller Papel community, and looted his home afterwards." ²³⁰⁴).

After the homicide of Vieira, the President of the National Assembly, R. Pereira (PAIGC) was nominated interim President (2305), to be succeeded by M. B. Sanha (PAIGC) (2306) who won against ex-President Yala (affiliated with the Balanta) in the elections of July 2009. The election results were accepted by Yala and the Balantadominated military. The PAIGC is regarded as a political party that does not mobilize supporters along ethnic lines but fosters an integrated national culture or a transethnic identity on the "creole" basis (2307;2308). Sanha is reported to belong to the Beafada ethnic group (²³⁰⁹). Prime Minister's Gomes Junior's ethnic identity is unclear; he was born in Boloma, an area where Manjacos, Papels and Mancan live (2310); the International Crisis Group reports him to be decried as a member of the Christian Mestico minority $(^{2311})$. However, given the absence of political organizations representing either the Beafada or the Mesticos, the government is best characterized as being interethnic, being well in line with the before mentioned nature of the PAIGC. This is also reflected in the difficulty of finding the ethnic identities of the executive elite. This suggests that their ethnic affiliation did not play an important role during the electoral campaign and the period. In parallel, the US State Department, in its yearly Human Rights Reports (2312), writes that all ethnic minorities are represented in the government. Although the military is

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<sup>2300</sup> [State Department, 1999-2016]
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    <sup>2301</sup> [State Department, 1999-2016]
    <sup>2302</sup> [Freedom House, 2006]
    <sup>2303</sup> [State Department, 1999-2016]
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<sup>2304</sup> [Reuters, 2009]
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<sup>2305</sup> [BBC, 2009]
<sup>2306</sup> [Jeune, 2009]
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    <sup>2307</sup> [Temudo, 2008]
    <sup>2308</sup> [Dias, 2013]
    <sup>2309</sup> [EUEOM, 2009]
    <sup>2310</sup> [O'Regan & Thompson, 2013]
    <sup>2311</sup> [International Crisis Group, 2012]
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<sup>2312</sup> [State Department, 1999-2016]
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dominated by the Balanta group, it has accepted the electoral results in 2009. No signs have been found for constant interference of the army in daily executive politics; it rather appears that PM Gomes tried to strengthen its control over the army. The latter might therefore be considered as constituting a constant "shadow of power". Given this assessment, it seems reasonable to code all relevant ethnic groups as being senior partners.

2013

After the (natural) death of President Sanha in January 2012, he was succeeded by R. Pereira, also from the PAIGC. In April 2012 a Balanta-led military coup led to the imprisonment of Pereira and Gomes $(^{2313})$. Various motives for the coup have been cited, inter alia drug-trafficking interests (2314), as well as personal interests and ethnic grievances (2315). Shortly after the coup, a transitional government was established, including members of the PAICG, the PRS and other small parties (2316). Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo (ex-member of PAICG) was nominated interim president, and Rui Duarte Barros (PRS associate with a Balanta mother) serves as Prime Minister. For the year 2012 and 2013, the US State Department, in its yearly Human Rights Reports (2317), states that all ethnic minorities are represented in the government. Considering that the office of the Prime Minister is formally more powerful (2318) and that the Balanta Army Chieff of Staff, Antonio Indiai, has considerable power over the transitional government (2319), the Balanta are coded as senior partners, while the Manjaco and Papel are junior partners in the year 2013. Elections were severely delayed and are planned to be held on April 13, 2014.

2014-2021

The June 2014 general elections raised hopes in returning stability and an end to military interference in Bissau-Guinean politics (²³²⁰). The PAIGC candidate Jose Maria Vaz was elected president in the second round with 62% against the PRS candidate Nuno NaBian, supported by Antonio Indjai and former PRS chairman Kumba Yala, who had died unexpectedly shortly before the elections in April 2014. The PAIGC also won the parliamentary majority with 57 seats, led by Domingos Somoes Pereira who became Prime Minister (²³²¹, 162).

It is difficult to find the ethnic identities of the executive and administrative elite, which reflects the relative low importance of ethnicity and ethnic claims during electoral campaigns. The US State Department states in its yearly Human Rights Reports that all ethnic minorities were represented in the government throughout the period (²³²²). This does, however, not automatically imply that the representatives or political parties themselves necessarily put forward claims on behalf of their groups, one of the crucial coding criteria for groups to be coded as politically relevant. While some authors

²³¹³ [International Crisis Group, 2012]
 ²³¹⁴ [Dias, 2013]
 ²³¹⁵ [International Crisis Group, 2012]
 ²³¹⁶ [Dias, 2013]
 ²³¹⁷ [State Department, 1999-2016]
 ²³¹⁸ [International Crisis Group, 2012]
 ²³¹⁹ [Dias, 2013]

²³²⁰ [Wiafe, 2016]

²³²¹ [Kohl, 2016]

²³²² [State Department, 1999-2016]

contend that there has been a recent 'ethnicization' of politics in Guinea-Bissau as a symptom of the neo-patrimonial nature of the political system and the competition for access to rents $(^{2323}, 13)$ there seems to be a general consensus in the literature that ethnic discourse is relegated to the political sphere, while in the informal sphere other ties (family, ancestral, neighbourly, professional) are more important $(^{2324}, 164\text{-}165)$. In remote areas, ethnic conviviality is common; where the post-colonial state is supported, however, conflicts grounded in ethnicity seem more apparent $(^{2325}, 36)$. In fact, ethnic discourse by politicians is not (yet) reflected in voter support $(^{2326}, 182\text{-}183)$.

The PRS portrayed itself clearly as a Balanta ethnic party in preparation of the 2014 elections, with Yala particularly relying on an ethnic rhetoric (2327, 177). However, according to the International Crisis Group it is seeking to redefine its exclusive and troublesome links with the army and Balanta community (2328). The dismissal of the army chief of staff Antonio Indjai (a force behind the 2012 coup (2329)) and his replacement by Biague NaNtam, a former personal guard of the president Vaz, led to a consolidation of civilian control over the armed forces and restored the government's electoral legitimacy (2330; 2331, 163). Consequently, the Balanta, which have been linked to the military since the 1970s and have previously been coded as single 'senior partner' because of army involvement in government matters, loose their position as more influential partner in government and share power with the equally influential Manjaco and Papel as equally influential 'senior partners'.

The PAIGC is generally perceived as inter-ethnic party (2332; 2333) and no evidence has been found that its rhetoric and orientation underwent 'ethnicization' of any kind since 2014. There is, consequently, also no evidence that the internal PAIGC party divisions (which erupted right after the 2014 elections and led to a series of five consecutive dismissals of Prime Ministers and a government crisis in 2015/16 (²³³⁴)) were based on ethnic grounds. Since November 2016 Umaro Sissoco Embalo from the (Balanta-affiliated) PRS is Prime Minister. There was no evidence of any nationally relevant political organization putting forward claims for the Cape Verdeans or the Peul (both, as previously, coded 'irrelevant'). In line with the previous coding, which was based on the expert assessment of Prof. Forrest, and the aforementioned continuous relevance of ethnic discourse in the political sphere of Guinea Bissau, the Papel and Manjaco are continuously coded as relevant. Based on the statement of the US State Department's Human Rights Reports, that all ethnic minorities were represented in government throughout the period (2335), they are coded as "senior partners".

José Mario Vaz, president of the country between June 2014 and February 2020, has been the only president to complete a term in Guinea-Bissau. Thus, this period has been marked by a relatively surprising stability, given the recent history of the country. No evidence was found of any change in the power balance. The latest

²³²³ [Green, 2016]

²³²⁴ [Kohl, 2016]

²³²⁵ [Green, 2016]

²³²⁶ [Kohl, 2016]

²³²⁷ [Kohl, 2016]

²³²⁸ [International Crisis Group, 2015]

²³²⁹ [State Department, 1999-2016]

 $^{2330}\left[\text{International Crisis Group, 2015}\right]$ $^{2331}\left[\text{Kohl, 2016}\right]$

²³³² [Temudo, 2008] ²³³³ [Dias, 2013]

²³³⁴ [Africa, 2016]

 2335 [State Department, 1999-2016]

report of the Bertelsmann Stiftung (²³³⁶) says that the most recent period was marked by the internal instability of the PAIGC, its conflict with Vaz, and the expulsion of 15 PAIGC members of the parliament (who would later form a new party: Madem G-15), but it does not mention any conflict along ethnic lines. Indeed, the report acknowledges that "the main political cleavages in Guinea-Bissau separate forces that are often considered 'reformers' ... and those who support President Vaz and his political supporters" (²³³⁷, 27). Although the PRS continues to be Balanta-based, the other parties, notably the PAIGC, are regarded as multi-ethnic. No evidence of political relevance regarding the Peul and the Cape Verdean was found.

In late 2019, new elections were held, this time without violence or coercion. Vaz ran as an independent candidate. Embaló, the former prime minister previously affiliated with the PAIGC and the PRS, ran as the candidate of the newly-formed party Madem G-15 and won with over 50% of the votes in the second round. This new government was inaugurated in February 2020. Considering that the new party has emerged out of the PAIGC, there is no evidence of any change in the distribution of central political power among the ethnic groups of the country.

 $^{2336}\left[\text{Bertelsmann Stiftung, }2020\right]$

²³³⁷ [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020]

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Political status of ethnic groups in G

From 1974 until 1980

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	POWERLESS
Manjaco	0.14	POWERLESS
Papel	0.07	POWERLESS
Cape Verdean	0.02	DOMINANT

From 1981 until 1999

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta Manjaco	0.3 0.14	JUNIOR PARTNER JUNIOR PARTNER
Papel	0.07	SENIOR PARTNER
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

From 2000 until 2005

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	DOMINANT
Manjaco	0.14	POWERLESS
Papel	0.07	POWERLESS
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

From 2006 until 2009

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	JUNIOR PARTNER
Manjaco	0.14	JUNIOR PARTNER
Papel	0.07	SENIOR PARTNER
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

From 2010 until 2012

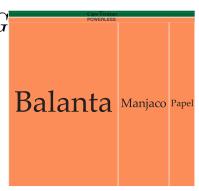


Figure 424: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1974-1980.



Figure 425: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1981-1999.



Figure 426: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2000-2005.



Figure 427: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2006-2009.

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Manjaco	0.14	SENIOR PARTNER
Papel	0.07	SENIOR PARTNER
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

From 2013 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Manjaco	0.14	JUNIOR PARTNER
Papel	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

From 2014 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta Manjaco	$0.3 \\ 0.14$	SENIOR PARTNER SENIOR PARTNER
Papel Cape Verdean	$0.07 \\ 0.02$	SENIOR PARTNER IRRELEVANT



Figure 429: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2013-2013.



Figure 430: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2014-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau

From 1974 until 1974

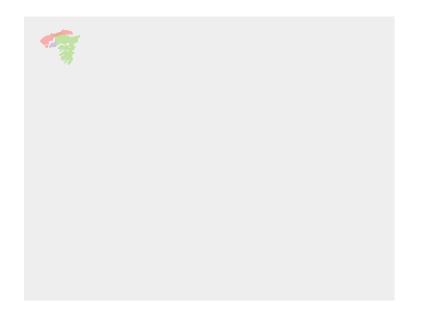


Figure 431: Map of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1974-1974.

Group name	Area in $\rm km^2$	Type
Balanta	11 716	Regionally based
Manjaco	4698	Regionally based
Papel	864	Regionally based
Cape Verdean	0	Urban

Table 152: List of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1974-1974.

From 1975 until 1980

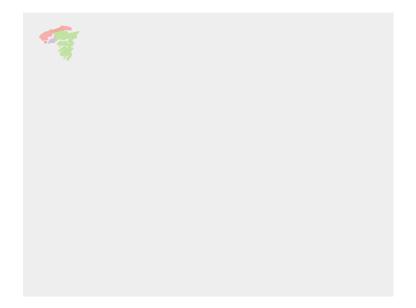


Figure 432: Map of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1975-1980.

Group name	Area in $\rm km^2$	Type
Balanta	11 716	Regionally based
Manjaco	4698	Regionally based
Papel	864	Regionally based
Cape Verdean	0	Urban

Table 153: List of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1975-1980.

From 1981 until 2021

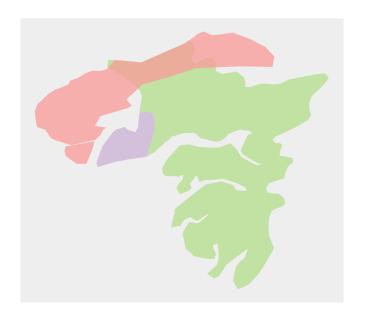


Figure 433: Map of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1981-2021.

Group name	Area in $\rm km^2$	Type
Balanta	11 716	Regionally based
Manjaco	4698	Regionally based
Papel	864	Regionally based

Table 154: List of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1981-2021.

$Conflicts\ in\ Guinea-Bissau$

Starting on 1963-02-27

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Portugal	PAIGC		1963-02-27			

$Starting\ on\ 1998-06-06$

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Guinea-Bissau	Military Junta for the Consolidation of Democracy, Peace and Justice		1998-06-06			