

Guinea-Bissau

Ethnicity in Guinea-Bissau

Group selection

The Peul and the very small 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 (¹⁹⁶⁴).

¹⁹⁶⁴ [Nations Encyclopedia, 2014]

Power relations

1974-1980: Luiz Cabral's rule

After the independence war, the tiny 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 (¹⁹⁶⁵). 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 (¹⁹⁶⁶; ¹⁹⁶⁷).

¹⁹⁶⁵ [Forrest, 1992]

¹⁹⁶⁶ [Forrest, 1987]

¹⁹⁶⁷ [Galli, 1987]

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 (¹⁹⁶⁸).

¹⁹⁶⁸ [Lopes, 1982]

As political power was still monopolized by the same elite after independence, there was increasing resentment among other ethnic groups (¹⁹⁶⁹; ¹⁹⁷⁰; ¹⁹⁷¹), 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 (¹⁹⁷²). The Cape Verdean minority was thus coded as "dominant" and all other ethnic groups as "powerless" in this time period.

¹⁹⁶⁹ [Enders, 1994]

¹⁹⁷⁰ [Galli, 1990]

¹⁹⁷¹ [Forrest, 1992]

¹⁹⁷² [Forrest, 1987]

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 (1973; 1974; 1975). They then stopped to play a significant role in the country's politics. Thus they are coded as politically irrelevant in all periods after the first one.

1973 [Forrest, 1987]

1974 [Enders, 1994]

1975 [Forrest, 1992]

The ruling institutions became now well balanced among the other ethnic groups (1976). 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) (1977, 1978, 1979). With the president and intermittently also the Vice-President from this group (and at the same time sharing their power with other groups) (1980), 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 (1981). 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.

1976 [Forrest, 1987]

1977 [Forrest, 1987]

1978 [Forrest, 1992]

1979 [Galli, 1990]

1980 [Forrest, 1987]

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 (¹⁹⁸²), his term constituted an improvement in democratic governance in Guinea-Bissau. In general, ethnicity still plays a significant role in national politics (¹⁹⁸³Freedom2006). 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 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 still coded as "irrelevant".

¹⁹⁸² [State Department, 1999-2016]

¹⁹⁸³ [Kohnert, 2010]

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 much political violence - military intimidation, torture, and killing of politicians (e.g. of a presidential candidate) - by which political opposition was effectively suppressed (¹⁹⁸⁴, Report 2009). Guinea-Bissau's army is largely dominated by the Balanta (¹⁹⁸⁵, Report 2008 & 2009; ¹⁹⁸⁶). According to the U.S. State Department HR Report from 2009 to 2011 (¹⁹⁸⁷), 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." ¹⁹⁸⁸).

¹⁹⁸⁴ [State Department, 1999-2016]

¹⁹⁸⁵ [State Department, 1999-2016]

¹⁹⁸⁶ [Freedom House, 2006]

¹⁹⁸⁷ [State Department, 1999-2016]

¹⁹⁸⁸ [Reuters, 2009]

After the homicide of Vieira, the President of the National Assembly, R. Pereira (PAIGC) was nominated interim President (¹⁹⁸⁹), to be succeeded by M. B. Sanha (PAIGC) (¹⁹⁹⁰) 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 Balanta-dominated 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 (¹⁹⁹¹; ¹⁹⁹²). Sanha is reported to belong to the Beafada ethnic group (¹⁹⁹³). Prime Minister's Gomes Junior's ethnic identity is unclear; he was born in Boloma, an area where Manjacos, Papels and Man-

¹⁹⁸⁹ [BBC, 2009]

¹⁹⁹⁰ [Jeune, 2009]

¹⁹⁹¹ [Temudo, 2008]

¹⁹⁹² [Dias, 2013]

¹⁹⁹³ [EUEOM, 2009]

canhas live (¹⁹⁹⁴); the International Crisis Group reports him to be decried as a member of the Christian Mestico minority (¹⁹⁹⁵). 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 (¹⁹⁹⁶), writes that all ethnic minorities are represented in the government. Although the military is 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 (¹⁹⁹⁷). Various motives for the coup have been cited, inter alia drug-trafficking interests (¹⁹⁹⁸), as well as personal interests and ethnic grievances (¹⁹⁹⁹). Shortly after the coup, a transitional government was established, including members of the PAIGC, the PRS and other small parties (²⁰⁰⁰). Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo (ex-member of PAIGC) 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 (²⁰⁰¹), states that all ethnic minorities are represented in the government. Considering that the office of the Prime Minister is formally more powerful (²⁰⁰²) and that the Balanta Army Chief of Staff, Antonio Indjai, has considerable power over the transitional government (²⁰⁰³), 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.

¹⁹⁹⁷ [International Crisis Group, 2012]

¹⁹⁹⁸ [Dias, 2013]

¹⁹⁹⁹ [International Crisis Group, 2012]

²⁰⁰⁰ [Dias, 2013]

²⁰⁰¹ [State Department, 1999-2016]

2014-2017

The June 2014 general elections raised hopes in returning stability and an end to military interference in Bissau-Guinean politics ⁽²⁰⁰⁴⁾. 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 Somoès Pereira who became Prime Minister ^(2005, 162).

2004 [Wiafe, 2016]

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 ⁽²⁰⁰⁶⁾. 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 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 ^(2007, 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 ^(2008, 164-165). In remote areas, ethnic conviviality is common; where the post-colonial state is supported, however, conflicts grounded in ethnicity seem more apparent ^(2009, 36). In fact, ethnic discourse by politicians is not (yet) reflected in voter support ^(2010, 182-183).

2005 [Kohl, 2016]

2006 [State Department, 1999-2016]

2007 [Green, 2016]

2008 [Kohl, 2016]

2009 [?]

2010 [Kohl, 2016]

2011 [Kohl, 2016]

2012 [State Department, 1999-2016]

2013 [International Crisis Group, 2015]

2014 [Kohl, 2016]

The PRS portrayed itself clearly as a Balanta ethnic party in preparation of the 2014 elections, with Yala particularly relying on an ethnic rhetoric ^(2011, 177). However, according to the International Crisis Group it is seeking to redefine its exclusive and troublesome links with the army and Balanta community (International Crisis Group 2015). The dismissal of the army chief of staff Antonio Indjai (a force behind the 2012 coup ⁽²⁰¹²⁾) 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 ^(2013; 2014, 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, lose their position as more influential partner in government and share power with the equally influential Manjaco and Papel as equally influential ‘senior partners’ for the years 2014-2017.

The PAIGC is generally perceived as interethnic party ^(2015; 2016) and no evidence has been found that its rhetoric and orientation

2015 [Temudo, 2008]

2016 [Dias, 2013]

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 (Africa Research Institute 2016)) were based on ethnic grounds. Since November 2016 Umaro Sissoco Embaló 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’) for the years 2014-2017. In line with the previous coding, which was based on the expert assessment of Prof. Forrest, and the afore-mentioned 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 Human Rights Reports, that all ethnic minorities were represented in government throughout the period (²⁰¹⁷), they are coded as “senior partners”.

²⁰¹⁷ [State Department, 1999-2016]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau

From 1974 until 1980

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	POWERLESS
Peul	0.2	IRRELEVANT
Manjaco	0.14	POWERLESS
Papel	0.07	POWERLESS
Cape Verdean	0.02	DOMINANT

From 1981 until 1999

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	JUNIOR PARTNER
Peul	0.2	IRRELEVANT
Manjaco	0.14	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
Peul	0.2	IRRELEVANT
Manjaco	0.14	POWERLESS
Papel	0.07	POWERLESS
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

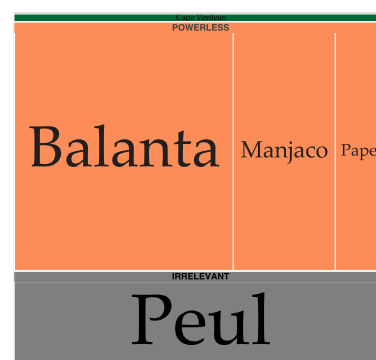


Figure 361: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1974-1980.



Figure 362: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1981-1999.



Figure 363: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2000-2005.

From 2006 until 2009

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	JUNIOR PARTNER
Peul	0.2	IRRELEVANT
Manjaco	0.14	JUNIOR PARTNER
Papel	0.07	SENIOR PARTNER
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

From 2010 until 2012

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Peul	0.2	IRRELEVANT
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
Peul	0.2	IRRELEVANT
Manjaco	0.14	JUNIOR PARTNER
Papel	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT

From 2014 until 2017

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Balanta	0.3	SENIOR PARTNER
Peul	0.2	IRRELEVANT
Manjaco	0.14	SENIOR PARTNER
Papel	0.07	SENIOR PARTNER
Cape Verdean	0.02	IRRELEVANT



Figure 364: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2006-2009.

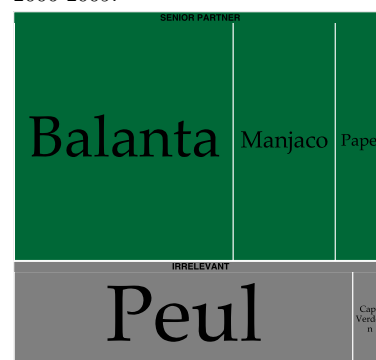


Figure 365: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2010-2012.



Figure 366: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2013-2013.



Figure 367: Political status of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 2014-2017.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau

From 1974 until 1980

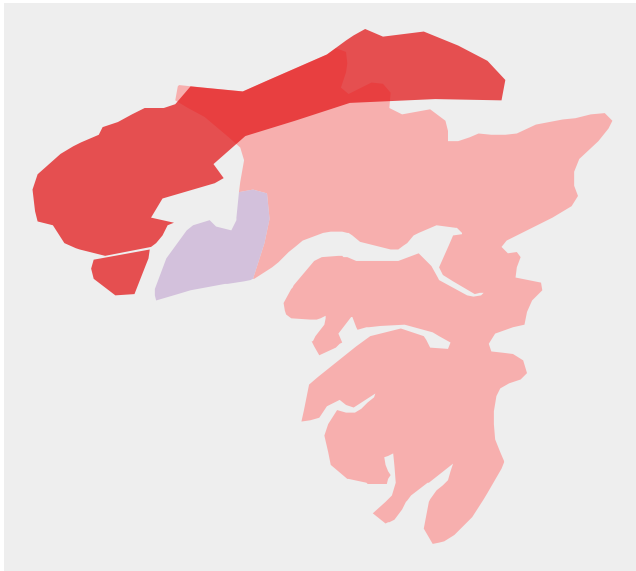


Figure 368: Map of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1974-1980.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Balanta	11 716	Regionally based
Manjaco	4698	Regionally based
Papel	864	Regionally based
Cape Verdean		Urban

Table 119: List of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1974-1980.

From 1981 until 2017

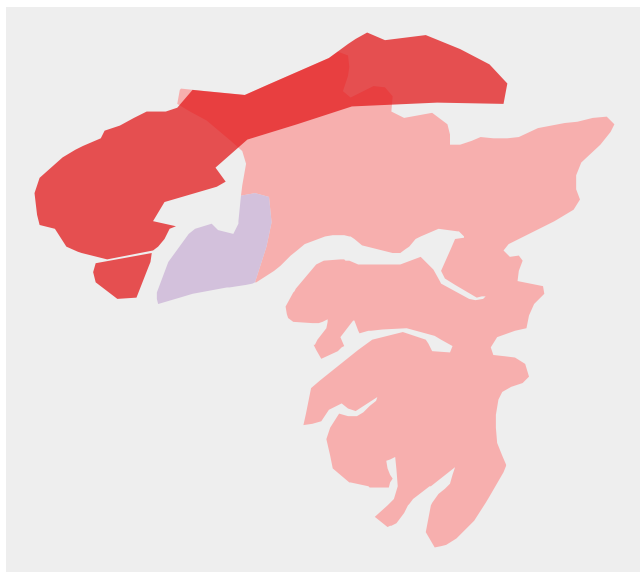


Figure 369: Map of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1981-2017.

	Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■	Balanta	11 716	Regionally based
■	Manjaco	4698	Regionally based
■	Papel	864	Regionally based

Table 120: List of ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau during 1981-2017.

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			