

Haiti

Ethnicity in Haiti

Power relations

95% of Haiti's population is black and 5% is mulatto or white (¹⁴⁴⁸).

¹⁴⁴⁸ [CIA, 2014]

Haiti was the second country in the New World (after the USA) that gained independence (as early as 1804) due to the uprising of African slaves that began in 1791 (¹⁴⁴⁹). In fact, it was the first country in the world to gain independence due to a victorious slave revolution (¹⁴⁵⁰, 137). Since then, Haiti has struggled to establish and maintain a democratic political system (¹⁴⁵¹).

¹⁴⁴⁹ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

¹⁴⁵⁰ [Charles, 1995]

¹⁴⁵¹ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

Fundamental class divisions have traditionally overlapped with differences in skin color. Since 1945, however, black middle and upper classes have emerged and they have successfully challenged the mulattos' dominance. Levinson (¹⁴⁵², 357) probably goes too far stating that Haiti's population "is ethnically homogenous and free of ethnic conflict". Skin color has been of certain significance in politics with the mulatto minority making up half of the elite (Minority).

¹⁴⁵² [Levinson, 1998]

It definitely became a more important issue under the first part of the Duvalier dictatorship (1957-1971: Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier who was succeeded by his son, Jean-Claude „Baby Doc“ Duvalier, in 1971 and stayed in power until 1986). Haiti's political system is characterized by an extreme cleavage between power and powerlessness. Power is concentrated in the hands of the french-speaking commercial elite of Port-au-Prince, the military and the church.

The major rest of society, the Kréyol-speaking peasants, were traditionally excluded from this trinity of power. In this context Papa Doc was rising to power on a noiriste platform, his doctrine consisting mainly in (¹⁴⁵³, 42-45) "(...) wresting power from the mulatto elite by creating a rival Afro-Haitian elite. His efforts to remodel the Haitian power structure comprised both suppressive as well as promotional activity" (¹⁴⁵⁴, 45). Duvalier put special emphasis on Haiti's folk religion, the vodou, to control the population (¹⁴⁵⁵, 46). Nevertheless, it still appears to be appropriate to code ethnicity as "irrelevant" for this period. Mostly because Duvalier focused his efforts principally on cultural aspects of Afro-Haitianism (taking into consideration that cultural, social, and economic discrimination is not considered as a valid variable in the EPR). In addition, there was no black movement that backed Duvalier so that he can not be characterized as the representative of (segments of) Afro-Haitians.

¹⁴⁵³ [Lewis, 2004]

¹⁴⁵⁴ [Lewis, 2004]

¹⁴⁵⁵ [Lewis, 2004]

Apart from the Duvalier period, Haiti is not marked by any sig-

nificant ethnic or religious cleavages (¹⁴⁵⁶) and there has never been a black movement. Thus, it is most appropriate to code the country here with "ethnicity irrelevant".

Haitis' civil society can be broadly divided into three blocks: a) the social-democratic, pro-Aristide Lavalasian bloc that appeals to the Haitian poor; b) the neo-liberal "reformist" bloc with its middle-class supporters; and c) the "neo-Duvalierist" faction comprised of former military officers, warlords and politicians bent on preserving the social inequalities in Haiti (¹⁴⁵⁷).

¹⁴⁵⁶ [Bertelsman Stiftung, 2008]

¹⁴⁵⁷ [Center for Systemic Peace, 2010]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Haiti

From 1946 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Haitians	1.0	IRRELEVANT

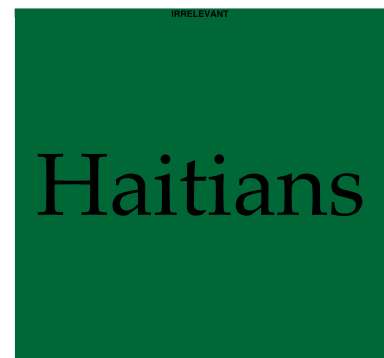


Figure 324: Political status of ethnic groups in Haiti during 1946-2013.

Conflicts in Haiti

Starting on 1989-04-03

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Haiti	Military faction (forces of Himmler Rebu and Guy Francois)		1989-04-03			
Government of Haiti	Military faction (forces of Raol Cédras)	Haitians	1991-09-30	No	No	No
Government of Haiti	FLRN	Haitians	2004-02-05	No	Yes, from EGIP	Split
Government of Haiti	OP Lavalas (Chimères)		2004-09-30			