

Mixed races in brazil

Business



Introduction Brazil has been described as a racial democracy due to the lack of a clear color distinction and a strong cultural tradition of tolerance and cordiality of its people. This is mainly due to different mixed races that have intermarried such that most people are not counted as belonging to a certain race but by their color.

This research paper will be on the race and ethnicity in Brazil. Race and ethnicity in Brazil The best way to view the question of race and ethnicity in Brazil is to see the country in terms of three fused ethnic groups: white, black and American Indians. That is the general case although it is more complicated by the great variety of ethnicities that do exist in these three major groups. The study of racial relations in Brazil has been characterized by acrimonious debates by those who see Brazil as a racial democracy or who decry the glaring unequal conditions of Brazilians with different ancestry. Brazil is home to mainly mixed-races known as free-Coloreds. There were hundreds of tribes as languages then but now there are about 230 tribes with more than ninety languages and who speak about 300 dialects.

At the time of contact with Europeans in the sixteenth century, the population of the original Amerindian population in Brazil was about 2-5 million. Violence and disease reduced the Amerindian population to about 150, 000 by the earlier twentieth century. By the mid-1990s, the Amerindian population had begun to recover to about 300, 000. Genetically, most Brazilians have some Amerindian ancestry especially in the Amazon region where they used to stay.

Here, the inhabitants of mixed Indian and white descent are called caboclos. The ancestry is especially strong in the Amazon area where mixed Indian and white descent are called caboclos. But an objective definition of an "Indian" is impossible in Brazil because of widespread miscegenation and acculturation. The only useful definition could be: Indians are those who consider themselves as such and are considered by others as Indians (Hudson, R. A. 1997).

The first European immigrants to Brazil were those of the Iberian origin who were mainly Portuguese. To the Northeast in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Dutch immigrants arrived. The Portuguese intermarried with the original ethnic group, the Amerindians, who were decimated by diseases and conflicts. During the colonial period when Indian slavery became difficult to enforce, the colonialists imported several thousands of slaves from Africa to work on the mines, sugar plantations and coffee plantations. About two-thirds of the six million Africans who survived the Atlantic crossing went to Brazil.

There is a time the number of black slaves outnumbered the white settlers but this greatly changed as the blacks suffered high mortality rates with low fertility rates and thus their numbers reduced considerably. In 1850, slavery became both politically and economically less feasible and at the same time the British blocked the slave trade. Italian immigrants therefore started replacing the slaves on the coffee plantations especially in Sao Paulo. At the same time, European settlers especially from Germany, Italy and Poland established farming in parts of the south (Hudson, R. A.

1997). All the whites, blacks and Indians blended such that by the end of the colonial period, it was hard to identify many Brazilians as purely European. The racial mix in Brazil was made more diverse and the arrival of Japanese and Middle Eastern immigrants in the early twentieth century. At first, the Japanese worked in Sao Paulo as agriculturalists while the Turks, Syrians and Lebanese were into trade in many parts of the country. In the earlier nineteenth century, more European immigrants arrived in Brazil such that the population of Brazil became more “ whiter” than it was during the colonial period. Majority of these immigrants were from such countries as Portugal, Germany and Italy.

Others were from Spain, Czech, Russian, Ukraine, Poland and Switzerland. During the 1900s, the Japanese descendants constituted the largest community of Japanese outside Japan. They later became mainly urban residents and settled mainly in Sao Paulo. In 1970s, the intermarriage with non-Japanese was a common feature. In the nineteenth century as waves of European immigrants had begun arriving in Brazil, the population of Brazil became markedly whiter than it was during colonial periods.

A Brazilian professor and author , Gilberto Freyre, argued that the country’s racial mixture of Africans, Indians and Europeans could be seen in the positive light and that as such, Brazil was an example of the world of racial harmony hence the widespread belief of Brazil being a “ racial democracy” hence he coined the words racial harmony in Brazil. The reason is that the various ethnic groups have intermingled to an extent that race is not such a big issue. Despite all this, there are various terms that refer the degree of American-African ancestry. Terms such as branco fino means fine white to <https://assignbuster.com/mixed-races-in-brazil/>

Negro retinto meaning very dark black are used. Terms like branco da Bahia, Moreno, sarara, mulato claro, pardo, mulato escuro, cabra and preto refer to the Brazilians on a white to black continuum (Race and class in Brazil). Many Brazilians today regard their country as largely devoid of racial discrimination.

According to the global census, in the 2000 census, Brazilians were supposed to chose their races from white (branca), black (preta), yellow (amarela), brown (parda), native or undeclared (Global census). Like the US, Brazil has a considerable historical similarity with regard to race with relatively low indigenous population, large scale European population and importation of African slaves. But unlike Brazil the US designates racial mixture between black and white. In Brazil all the racial and ethnic groups that arrived in here intermingled and intermarried except for a few. This resulted to increasingly a high number of mixtures of many possible combinations and degrees.

Due to this, many of the people in Brazil are hard to classify in racial terms. In Brazil's demographic census of 1940, 1950, 1980 and 1991, color questions were included. The answers given were self classification and from them, it was clear that the black proportion to population had decreased while that of mulattoes increased. There seemed to be a simultaneous process of whitening. In the 1991 census, the self declared whites were 55.

3 percent, 39.3 percent mulatto, 4.9 percent black and 0.6 percent Asian. Brazil has thus been touted as a racial democracy due to the lack of a clear color distinction and a strong cultural tradition of tolerance and cordiality(Hudson, R.

A. 1997). Racism and discrimination in Brazil There are also longstanding laws against discrimination on racial basis. But again, racial democracy is just but in the books. There is evidence of a strong correlation between the color of individuals and their social status, education as well as income. Few blacks reach higher positions of wealth, power and prestige but they excel in sports and arts.

In Brazil, discrimination does not seem to be that explicit but it does appear in subtle forms. There are unspoken attitudes, unwritten rules, and references to have a good appearance than the color or by valuing individuals of color; white or nearly white individuals seem to be more valued (Hudson, R. A. 1997). Unlike in some societies, Brazil has never had separate facilities for different races and never has a race riot occurred there. A law was passed in 1951 to prohibit racial discrimination as well as a 1988 clause in the constitution.

However, blacks are few in military ranks, diplomatic corps and in major corporations but by far the majority in such low occupations as porter, laundress and dock workers. Whites also outnumber non-whites in professionals by a margin of one to three. But generally, Brazilians are bewildered by the American view of race (Race and class in Brazil). The African descents in Brazil have been feared by the controlling class who saw their dance, religion and culture to be alien and bewitching. These days, the blacks are feared mostly from the legend of violence and crime that bedevils the poor neighborhoods, which have a strong black population.

Therefore racism in Brazil is not a violent abusive variety that is found in most parts of the world especially in Europe and America but rather an unspoken prejudice that few admit exists. Languages in Brazil In Brazil, language is one of the country's strongest elements. Portuguese is the commonest and is spoken by about 100 percent of the population except some few Amerindians and few immigrants who have not learned Portuguese. English has also replaced french as the second official language among the educated (FloridaBrasil. com) Conclusion Brazil has had a complex racial ancestry.

From the original Amerindians, the mix of race has greatly changed since the arrival of Iberians mainly the Portuguese and other Europeans. Later black Africans were brought in as slaves and Japanese later arrived with Middle East people who later intermarried such that we a complex racial mix. Brazilians are sometimes referred as to how white or black they appear hence such words as branco fino, mulato and Negro retinto.