

# Bolivia

## *Ethnicity in Bolivia*

### *Power relations*

The group of Guarani was included and merged with other very small ethnic groups from the Eastern part of Bolivia. They unify themselves under one common political organization (Confederación Indígena del Oriente de Bolivia, CIDOB), founded in 1982. Scholars often speak of the highland indigenous peoples and the lowland indigenous peoples, as their origin and lifestyle differ significantly<sup>(244)</sup>.

<sup>244</sup> [Albó, 1992]

The national revolution of 1952, led by a populist government, determined a change in the formal social and political status of the indigenous people. Rights were given to them as in political participation, education, health and access to land. Most importantly, the right to vote for illiterates was already introduced in 1952<sup>(245)</sup>, 49). Before that indigenous people were excluded from political participation<sup>(246)</sup>.

<sup>245</sup> [?]

<sup>246</sup> [Reyes-García et al., 2010]

The Kataristas, an Aymara movement, emerged in 1974. Although it gained influence in the peasant movement its performance in elections was poor, never surpassing a 3% electoral threshold between 1979 and 1989<sup>(247)</sup>, 23). In the legislative period from 1993 to 1997 one of the various Katarist parties, the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Katari Liberación (Revolutionary Movement of Liberation Tupac Katari – MRTKL) became the coalition partner of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), providing the newly elected government with an indigenous vice president, Víctor Hugo Cárdenas. Even though this was the first time in Bolivian history that an indigenous person assumed office on one of the highest political levels, Cárdenas and his MRTKL could neither count on the full support of the indigenous population (the MRTKL has its roots in the left, the MNR in the right political spectrum) nor was he able to substantially influence the government's politics (disregarding ideological concepts such as „social and cultural pluralism“). There are two important exceptions, though. The first being the reform of the educational system in which Cárdenas played a crucial role<sup>(248)</sup>, 70); the second being the promulgation of a new law in 1994 (Ley de Participación Popular) that gave local indigenous communities more independence from the traditional political parties and permitted the local participation of indigenous people. This kind of decentralization led to the creation of more successful indigenous parties. Due to

<sup>247</sup> [Gray Molina, 2007]

<sup>248</sup> [Albó, 1992]

the realization of these two reforms and also taking into consideration the important formal position of the vice president, we decided to code the Aymara group as "junior partner" for this period.

In 2002, indigenous parties gained some influence on the national level and in December 2005, Evo Morales won the absolute majority of votes and became the first indigenous president of Bolivia, being reelected in 2009 with an absolute majority. Evo Morales "brought to power representatives of those who had been excluded" <sup>(249)</sup>, even though only 4 of the appointed ministers were indigenous. A new constitution was approved which provides new power at the departmental, municipal and regional areas, as well as in the newly created indigenous autonomous areas.

The rich eastern departments, dominated by "Bolivians" (whites and mestizos), claim to be autonomous departments in order to protest against the loss of power. The lowland indigenous peoples, which live in the eastern departments, still do not have access to political power and continue to be dominated by the these departments' old elites.

Population figures – as in almost all Latin American countries – are a debated issue. The analysis relied on information given by the ILO <sup>(250)</sup> for the Quechua and Aymara groups, and on absolute numbers given by the Joshua Project website <sup>(251)</sup>, based on information in the World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples <sup>(252)</sup>, for the eastern/lowland groups. On the basis of these numbers, the indigenous peoples constitute about 59% of Bolivia's total population. Consequently, the size of the "whites/mestizo" group - labeled "Bolivians" here - should be about 41%.

<sup>249</sup> [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008]

<sup>250</sup> [ILO, 2014]

<sup>251</sup> [Joshua Project, 2014]

<sup>252</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

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## Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia

*From 1946 until 1952*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.41	MONOPOLY
Quechua	0.31	DISCRIMINATED
Aymara	0.25	DISCRIMINATED
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	0.03	DISCRIMINATED

*From 1953 until 1981*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.41	DOMINANT
Quechua	0.31	POWERLESS
Aymara	0.25	POWERLESS
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	0.03	IRRELEVANT

*From 1982 until 1992*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.41	DOMINANT
Quechua	0.31	POWERLESS
Aymara	0.25	POWERLESS
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	0.03	POWERLESS



Figure 64: Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 1946-1952.



Figure 65: Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 1953-1981.



Figure 66: Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 1982-1992.

*From 1993 until 1993*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.41	SENIOR PARTNER
Quechua	0.31	POWERLESS
Aymara	0.25	JUNIOR PARTNER
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	0.03	POWERLESS

*From 1994 until 1997*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.41	SENIOR PARTNER
Quechua	0.31	POWERLESS
Aymara	0.25	JUNIOR PARTNER
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	0.03	POWERLESS

*From 1998 until 2005*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.41	DOMINANT
Quechua	0.31	POWERLESS
Aymara	0.25	POWERLESS
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	0.03	POWERLESS

*From 2006 until 2013*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.41	JUNIOR PARTNER
Quechua	0.31	JUNIOR PARTNER
Aymara	0.25	SENIOR PARTNER
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	0.03	POWERLESS



Figure 67: Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 1993-1993.



Figure 68: Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 1994-1997.



Figure 69: Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 1998-2005.

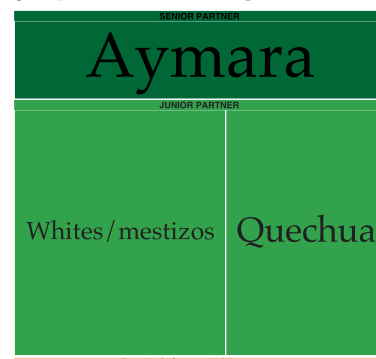


Figure 70: Political status of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 2006-2013.

## *Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Bolivia*

*From 1946 until 2013*

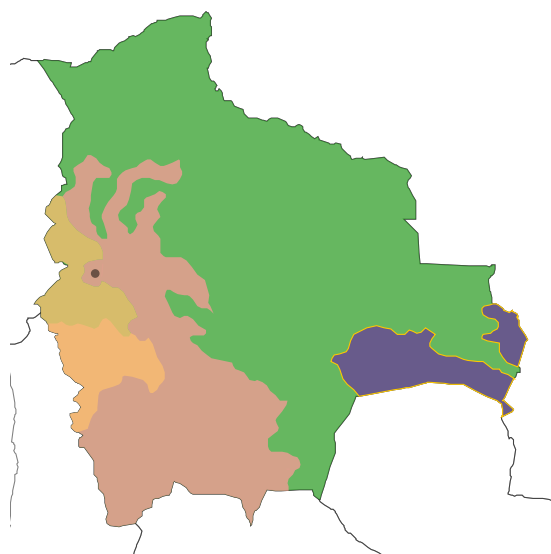


Figure 71: Map of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 2006-2013.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Whites/mestizos	1 090 257	Statewide
Quechua	319 294	Regional & urban
Aymara	91 510	Regional & urban
Guaraní and other eastern indigenous groups	66 569	Regionally based

Table 24: List of ethnic groups in Bolivia during 1946-2013.



## *Conflicts in Bolivia*

*Starting on 1946-06-30*

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Bolivia	Popular Revolutionary Movement	Whites/mestizos	1946-06-30	No	Yes, from EGIP	No
Government of Bolivia	MNR	Whites/mestizos	1952-04-09	No	Yes, from EGIP	Split
Government of Bolivia	ELN		1967-03-31			