

Cuba

Ethnicity in Cuba

Power relations

According to the 2012 Census, 9.3% of Cuban population identify as black, 26.6% as mestizo (also including mulattos which make up the majority of this group) and 64.1% as white (⁹³⁷). Due to the fact that ethnic discussions in Cuba are dominated by a Black-White differentiation and mulattos face similar problems as the black population (⁹³⁸, ⁹³⁹), I opted for a black/white-codification including mestizos/mulattos in the black group. It is important to take into consideration that for official purposes, Cubans seemingly prefer to self-identify as "white" rather than as "mulatto" (or the government prefers "white" identifications) because earlier estimations put the "Blacks"/"Mulattos" at a much higher number (cf. ⁹⁴⁰).

Until 1959, Cuban politics were dominated by a small, upper-class "white" circle. Afro-Cubans were socially and politically excluded (⁹⁴¹, 343). After the revolution, Castro implemented anti-discrimination measures and declared the ethnicity/race problem as solved. Indeed, people's sense of ethnic identity has been weakened and a more overarching Cuban identity formed, and Afro-Cubans certainly benefited from the wide-reaching economic and social reforms in post-revolution Cuba (⁹⁴², 343-4; ⁹⁴³). The traditional white elite has been replaced by a more representative government (⁹⁴⁴, 344).

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, which affected the Cuban economy enormously, ethnic discrimination began to reappear more obviously (⁹⁴⁵, 699), so that by the end of the 1990s Cuban leaders acknowledged the existence of ethnic differences in Cuban society. It was mostly political representation that was focused on in this context, leading to surprising election outcomes in the 2008 National Assembly elections, where 35% of the elected representatives were Afro-Cubans or mulattoes (⁹⁴⁶, 718).

However, Afro-Cubans still need to be seen as economically and socially neglected and are thinly represented in the higher echelons of the ruling Communist Party and the civil service, having always – since the era of slavery in the plantation society – formed the lowest strata of Cuban society. But discourses of racial discrimination are confined to side spots (like arts) (⁹⁴⁷). Ethnic mobilization/representation is hardly possible in the absence not only of political movements but civil society in general. (The World Direc-

⁹³⁷ [Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información, 2012]

⁹³⁸ [Fuente, 2000]

⁹³⁹ [Schmidt, 2008]

⁹⁴⁰ [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

⁹⁴¹ [Levinson, 1998]

⁹⁴² [Levinson, 1998]

⁹⁴³ [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

⁹⁴⁴ [Levinson, 1998]

⁹⁴⁵ [Fuente, 2008]

⁹⁴⁶ [Fuente, 2008]

⁹⁴⁷ [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

tory of Minorities does not list a single organization for Afro-Cubans in its – usually opulent – account of "Minority Based & Advocacy Organizations"; ⁹⁴⁸.) Thus, from the victory of the revolution up to 2013 ethnicity is coded as irrelevant in Cuban politics.

⁹⁴⁸ [Minority Rights Group International, 2011]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Cuba

From 1946 until 1959

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites	0.641	DOMINANT
Blacks	0.359	POWERLESS

From 1960 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites	0.641	IRRELEVANT
Blacks	0.359	IRRELEVANT



Figure 212: Political status of ethnic groups in Cuba during 1946-1959.

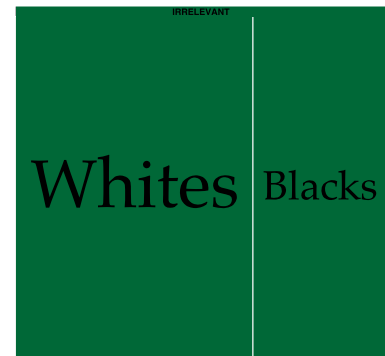


Figure 213: Political status of ethnic groups in Cuba during 1960-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Cuba

From 1946 until 2009

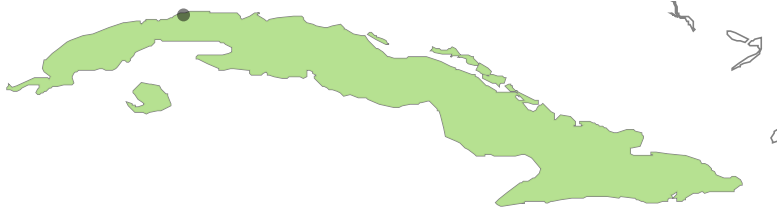


Figure 214: Map of ethnic groups in Cuba during 1960-2013.

	Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■	Whites	109 496	Statewide
■	Blacks	109 496	Statewide

Table 63: List of ethnic groups in Cuba during 1946-2009.

Conflicts in Cuba

Starting on 1953-07-26

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Cuba	M-26-7	Whites	1953-07-26	No	No	No
Government of Cuba	Cuban Revolutionary Council	Whites	1961-04-17	No	No	No