

Paraguay

Ethnicity in Paraguay

Group selection

According to the 2008 survey of indigenous households (⁴²⁶⁹), 2% (around 100'000) of the population is indigenous, belonging to 17 different ethnic groups with the majority, about 90%, speaking Guaraní. We identify **Tupi-Guarani and other indigenous peoples** and **Whites/Mestizos** as politically relevant ethnic groups.

⁴²⁶⁹ [Department for Statistics, Surveys and Census, 2008]

Power relations

1946-1992

Indigenous people were discriminated until the military coup in 1989 which toppled the regime of general Stroessner and initiated democratization. During the military regime, the indigenous peoples were not only constantly threatened by displacements but also almost systematically annihilated (⁴²⁷⁰, 464). Thus, they are coded as “discriminated” and Whites/Mestizos as “dominant”.

⁴²⁷⁰ [?]

1993-2021

In 1992, the new constitution recognized Paraguay as a “pluricultural and bilingual” country (⁴²⁷¹) and stipulated the official status of indigenous peoples, their right to own land communally and to preserve their own ethnic identity. Thus, the 1992 constitution marked a significant change for the country’s indigenous peoples (⁴²⁷², 464). Even though first indigenous organizations were created in the 1970s, their influence remained rather weak until the 1990s when there was a clear shift (⁴²⁷³) with the foundation of CAPI (Coordinadora por la Autodeterminacion de los Pueblos Indigenas), which comprises about 14 indigenous organizations. Still, they are poorly organized and, as their property rights being not yet fully recognized, they continue to suffer displacement from their ancestral lands.

⁴²⁷¹ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

⁴²⁷² [?]

⁴²⁷³ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

In 2008, the first indigenous person was appointed as a minister, signaling the change in indigenous peoples’ position and political possibilities since the enactment of the new constitution. However, after her dismissal only some months later in the same year the process of increasing integration of minority groups in governmental positions was discontinued (⁴²⁷⁴: 11). Disputes over land rights and various other problems that have accumulated in the context of

⁴²⁷⁴ [USDS, 2008]

large-scale cattle ranching is still affecting indigenous communities, mainly in the Chaco region (⁴²⁷⁵; ⁴²⁷⁶). In reality, the indigenous peoples in Paraguay still have very little access to legal and social services or control over their resources and land, although a solid legal framework to ensure those rights exists on paper (⁴²⁷⁷: 4; ⁴²⁷⁸: 23-24, ⁴²⁷⁹). The lack of access to roads and a comprehensive social protection system makes them especially vulnerable to climate change events, like flooding, which have worsened in the last years (⁴²⁸⁰). There are signs of improvement: In 2014, after a 20-year struggle, President Horacio Cartes signed a law that returned more than 55 square miles of land to the minority group of the Sawhoyamaza people.

Furthermore, the government of Mario Abdo approved in 2019 a decree allowing the prior and informed consultation and consent of indigenous peoples (⁴²⁸¹). However, his government and the administration of the Paraguayan Indigenous Institute (Indi) by Edgar Olmedo have increasingly privatized the process of territorial recovery and reduced the state's indigenist policies (⁴²⁸²). Although some parties fielded indigenous candidates for the national elections of 2013, none of them managed to get a position in the executive government of either the national or sub-national level (⁴²⁸³: 20; ⁴²⁸⁴: 15). The situation remained the same following the 2018 national elections as well. According to the U.S. State Department, there was no identifiable individual from the minorities or indigenous groups who served in either cabinet, legislature, or Supreme Court (⁴²⁸⁵)

⁴²⁷⁵ [USDS, 2013]

⁴²⁷⁶ [USDS, 2016]

⁴²⁷⁷ [Freedom House, 2016]

⁴²⁷⁸ [USDS, 2016]

⁴²⁷⁹ [IWGIA, 2020]

⁴²⁸⁰ [IWGIA, 2020]

⁴²⁸¹ [IWGIA, 2020]

⁴²⁸² [IWGIA, 2020]

⁴²⁸³ [USDS, 2013]

⁴²⁸⁴ [USDS, 2016]

⁴²⁸⁵ [USDS, 2019]

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Political status of ethnic groups in P

From 1946 until 1992

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.945	MONOPOLY
Tupi-Guaraní and other indigenous groups	0.02	DISCRIMINATED



Figure 818: Political status of ethnic groups in Paraguay during 1946-1992.

From 1993 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.945	MONOPOLY
Tupi-Guaraní and other indigenous groups	0.02	POWERLESS



Figure 819: Political status of ethnic groups in Paraguay during 1993-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Paraguay

From 1946 until 2021

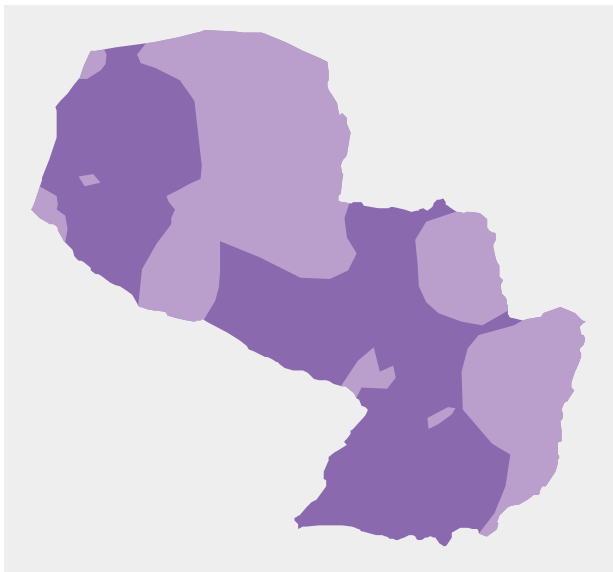


Figure 820: Map of ethnic groups in Paraguay during 1946-2021.

Group name		Area in km ²	Type
■	Whites/mestizos	398 802	Statewide
■	Tupi-Guaraní and other indigenous groups	189 116	Regionally based

Table 303: List of ethnic groups in Paraguay during 1946-2021.

Conflicts in Paraguay

Starting on 1947-03-06

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Paraguay	Opposition coalition (Febreristas, Liberals and Communists)	Whites/mestizos	1947-03-06	No	Yes, from EGIP	No
Government of Paraguay	Military faction (forces of Alfredo Stroessner)	Whites/mestizos	1954-05-04	No	Yes, from EGIP	No
Government of Paraguay	Military faction (forces of Andres Rodriguez)	Whites/mestizos	1989-02-02	No	Yes, from EGIP	No