

Uruguay

Ethnicity in Uruguay

Power relations

According to the 2011 national census, 90,8% identify themselves as white, 7,8% as black and 0,5% as indigenous (³⁶¹¹).

³⁶¹¹ [Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2011]

The political struggles in Uruguay have to do with class rather than with ethnicity. Since the beginning of the XX Century, Uruguay is the Latin American country with the largest European population that, by now, is well integrated with the first wave of migrants. Ethnicity among European immigrants does not play any role.

Amerindians are almost non-existent. In the last years, the Uruguayan Indigenous Association was created and the interest in the indigenous past of the country has risen. But still political participation is not a relevant issue.

In the 1930s some Afro-Uruguayan leaders tried to form a party, but most group members preferred to vote for the traditional parties. The first Afro-Uruguayan organization, the Asociación Social and Cultural Uruguay (Social and Cultural Association Uruguay - ASCU), was created in 1941. Of the several organizations that were founded in those years it is the only one that still exists (now under the name Asociación Social and Cultural Uruguay Negro). Its principal goal consisted in the full participation of Afro-Uruguayans in the newly evolving but rapidly expanding Uruguayan middle class. Given that, at least in the first years after its foundation, it excluded ethnic claims completely from its agenda (entirely in accordance with the general conviction that racial discrimination did not exist in Uruguayan society at that time) and even later focused more on cultural topics the coding for Afro-Uruguayans and Whites is "irrelevant".

In the 1980s, internal conflicts began to become more salient and in 1988 a new Afro-Uruguayan organization – the Organizaciones Mundo Afro (World Afro Organizations – Mundo Afro) – was founded by a group of the younger generation. As its name indicates it is intended to be the umbrella organization of various organizations that promote Afro-Uruguayans rights. It identified three principal problems face by the Afro-Uruguayan community: the lack of recognition of Afro-Uruguayan culture and its contribution to the Uruguayan society, racial prejudice and discrimination, and poverty. During the 1990s and the 2000s Afro Mundo became the most active Afro-Uruguayan organization managing to place its

claims successfully on the political agenda. So, in 2005, when Tabaré Vázquez from the left party Frente Amplio – that same party, by the way, was the first to introduce anti-discrimination policies on the local level from 2003 on – became president, the Afro-Uruguayan issue was transported to the level of national politics. This led to the creation of several new offices: the Instituto Nacional de la Mujer – National Woman Institute – devoted to Afro-Uruguayan women; the Instituto Nacional de la Juventud – National Youth Institute – devoted to Afro-Uruguayan youth; and the Special Advisor on Afro-descendent issues occupied by one of the founder of Afro Mundo, Romewro Rodríguez (³⁶¹², 106-107). "These Afro-Uruguayan spaces in the municipal and federal government are without doubt historic achievements and testimony both to Mundo Afro's negotiating and lobbying skills and its ability to put the question of race on the national political agenda. The ability of these [aforementioned] offices to affect policy, however, is extremely limited" (³⁶¹³, 152).

³⁶¹² [Andrews, 2010]

³⁶¹³ [Andrews, 2010]

In the legislative period of the Vázquez government also fall the first debates on affirmative action programs. Egardo Ortuño, the first Afro-Uruguayan elected to parliament, "(...) made great efforts to increase general awareness of and pride in the country's African ancestry and cultural heritage. As a result of the work of Afro-Uruguayan artists, intellectuals, and grassroots organisations, racial discrimination is now at least recognised and debated by an increasing number of Uruguayans. However, it continues: according to human rights reports, racism inhibits the advancement of Uruguayans of African descent in school and in the labour force; the majority of Afro-Uruguayans continue to make up the poorest strata of national society" (³⁶¹⁴).

³⁶¹⁴ [Minority Rights Group International, 2014]

In 2013, affirmative action legislation was enacted establishing a quota of 8% for state jobs, requiring that future student support programs and scholarships include quota and granting financial incentives for companies that hire Afro-Uruguayans. Further actions included the appointment of an ambassador-at-large for Afro Affairs, the creation of a follow-up commission to eradicate discrimination and racism and the removal of discriminatory expressions from Uruguay's dictionary (³⁶¹⁵).

³⁶¹⁵ [United States Government State Department, 2013]

Bibliography

- [Andrews, 2010] Andrews, G. R. (2010). *Blackness in the White Nation: a History of Afro-Uruguay*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008] Bertelsmann Stiftung. (2008). Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2008 — Uruguay Country Report. Retrieved on 18.12.2014 from: http://www.bti-project.de/uploads/tx_tao_download/BTI2008Uruguay.pdf
- [CSP2010] Center for Systemic Peace. (2010). Polity IV Country Report 2010 Uruguay. Retrieved on 18.12.2014 from: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Uruguay2010.pdf>
- [Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2011] Instituto Nacional de Estadística. (2011). Censos 2011. Cuadro 3: Población por Sexo y Ascendencia Étnico Racial, según departamento. Retrieved on 5.5.2014 from: <http://www.ine.gub.uy/censos2011/resultadosfinales/pais%20poblacion.html>
- [IWGIA, 2010] International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). (2010). *Indigenous World 2010*. Copenhagen: IWGIA. Retrieved 18.12.2014 from: http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0001I2010EB.pdf
- [Minority Rights Group International, 2014] Minority Rights Group International. (2014). *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: Uruguay Overview*. Retrieved on 18.12.2014 from: <http://www.minorityrights.org/5212/uruguay/uruguay-overview.html>
- [Paschel Sawyer, 2008] Paschel, T. S., Sawyer, M. Q. (2008). Contesting politics as usual: black social movements, globalization, and race policy in Latin America. *Souls*, 10(3), 197-214.
- [Sans, 2009] Sans, M. (2009). "Raza", Adscripción Étnica y Genética en Uruguay. *RUNA XXX*(2), 163-174.
- [United States Government State Department, 2013] United States Government State Department. (2013). *Country Reports Uruguay*. Retrieved on 18.12.2014 from: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/>
- [Van Coot, 2007] Van Cott, D. L. (2007). Latin America's Indigenous Peoples. *Journal of Democracy*, 18(4), 127-142.

Political status of ethnic groups in Uruguay

From 1946 until 1988

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.908	IRRELEVANT
Afro-Uruguayans	0.078	IRRELEVANT

From 1989 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Whites/mestizos	0.908	MONOPOLY
Afro-Uruguayans	0.078	POWERLESS

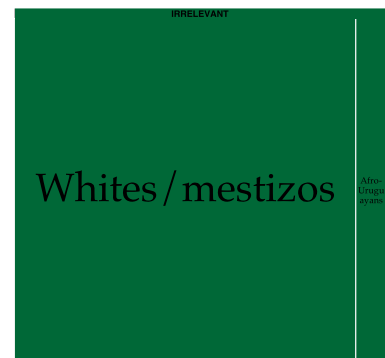


Figure 810: Political status of ethnic groups in Uruguay during 1946-1988.

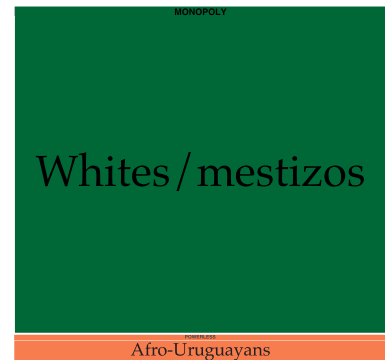


Figure 811: Political status of ethnic groups in Uruguay during 1989-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Uruguay

From 1946 until 1988

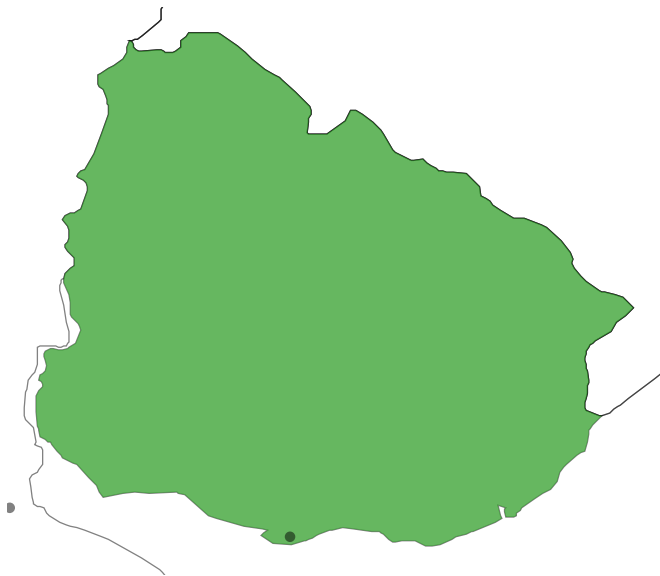


Figure 812: Map of ethnic groups in Uruguay during 1989-2013.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Whites/mestizos	177 959	Statewide

Table 238: List of ethnic groups in Uruguay during 1946-1988.

From 1989 until 2013

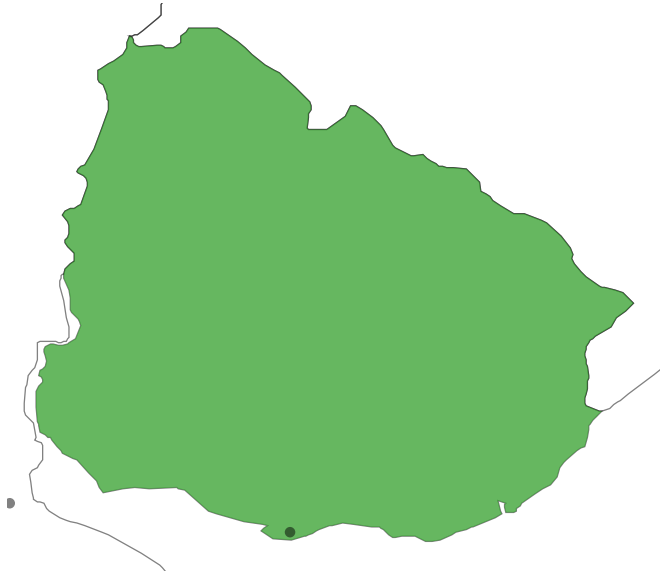


Figure 813: Map of ethnic groups in Uruguay during 1989-2013.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Whites/mestizos	177 959	Statewide
Afro-Uruguayans		Urban

Table 239: List of ethnic groups in Uruguay during 1989-2013.

Conflicts in Uruguay

Starting on 1970-04-13

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Uruguay	MLN/Tupamaros		1970-04-13			