

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Botswana

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>44</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	Polity:	8	8	0	Democ:	8	8	0	Autoc:	0	0	0	Durable:		44		Tentative:		No		<p style="text-align: center;">Authority Trends, 1966-2010: Botswana</p>
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Tentative:		No																							
SCODE	BOT	CCODE	571	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	2	4	7	2	4																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date				Begin Date																					
				30 September 1966 (Ind.)																					
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution																									
1966																									
Executive(s)																									
President Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama (BDP); first assumed power upon the resignation of President Mogae, 1 April 2008; indirectly elected by parliament, 20 October 2009																									
Legislature																									
Bicameral: National Assembly (63 seats, 57 members are directly elected by popular vote, 4 are appointed by the majority party, and 2, the President and Attorney-General, serve as ex-officio members; most recent elections, 16 October 2009) Botswana Democratic Party (BDP): 45 Botswana National Front (BNF): 6 Botswana Congress Party (BCP): 4 Other parties: 2 House of Chiefs (15 seats; 8 are principal tribe chiefs, 4 elected sub-chiefs, and 3 members selected by the twelve other members) <i>Note: The House of Chiefs is an advisory body and has no legislative powers.</i>																									
Judiciary																									
High Court																									

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Transitional or Restricted Elections (7)

The political hegemony of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in Botswana politics has given this country the reputation as the beacon of political stability on the African continent. However, while this stability has allowed democracy to persevere, it has not exactly flourished. Since gaining independence from Britain in 1966, Botswana has recruited its chief executive through competitive multiparty elections. In this recruitment process the majority party in the National Assembly selects the president for a five-year term. Members of the legislature are popularly elected. Under this electoral system the BDP has dominated the National Assembly since independence and, therefore, has controlled the executive office for over 30 years.

Historically, top leadership positions within the BDP have been designated rather than democratically challenged. Democracy has been applied to the lower ranks of the party only. In 1966 Botswana gained independence from Britain and Seretse Khama, leader of the BDP, became the country's first president. In 1980 President Khama died and was succeeded by Ketumile Masire. BDP leader Festus Mogae assumed the office of president in 1998 and was re-elected by Parliament following general elections on 30 October 2004. On 1 April 2008, President Mogae voluntarily stepped down and handed over power to the vice president, Lt-Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, in preparation for new legislative elections to be held in 2009. Khama, the son of the country's first president, was appointed vice president in 1998 and was elected chairman of the BDP in 2003. Khama retained the presidency after the October 2009 legislative elections provided the BDP with another majority. Despite this victory, the BDP has experienced increasing divisions in recent years. Prior to the 2009 elections, President Khama suspended his main rival in the ruling party, BDP secretary general Gomolemo Motswaledi, preventing him from running for office. This action, along with the authoritarian leadership style of President Khama, has begun to fracture the leadership ranks of the party.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

The type of presidential system found in Botswana places significant constraints on the political autonomy of the chief executive. While the president is not directly accountable to the legislature (as is in the case in a traditional parliamentary system), nevertheless, s/he is chosen by the National Assembly and is an *ex officio* member of it. A second chamber, the House of Chiefs, represents all of the country's major tribes and some smaller ones but has no legislative power. The House of Chiefs is a consultative body whose primary role is limited to cultural affairs. The judiciary is independent from executive influence.

Despite the historic power of the legislative branch in Botswana, in recent years the power of the executive, under the presidency of Seretse Khama, has increased. The president of Botswana enjoys significant powers under the Constitution. However, historically the presidents have chosen not to abuse their substantial powers. President Khama, unlike his predecessors, has increasingly rejected their preference for consulting the cabinet and the legislative branch before making policy and administrative decisions. Surrounding himself with loyalists in top party, government and military positions, Khama has expanded his capacity to act unilaterally. This increasing centralization of power has produced serious rifts within the ruling BDP.

Political Participation: Political Liberalization: Limited and/or Decreasing Overt Coercion (9)

Botswana is a stable, multiparty constitutional democracy characterized by one-party dominance. The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has won every national election since 1966. Support for the BDP lies mainly in the rural areas. Its leadership is drawn primarily from richer rural dwellers and older members of the urban middle class. Despite the political hegemony of the BDP, every election since independence has been fairly contested by the opposition Botswana National Front (BNF) and two other smaller parties. The BNF derives its political support mainly from the rapidly growing urban areas and among the younger middle and working class. All legislative elections since 1996 have been viewed as free and fair despite some constraints on opposition access to the media and allegation of campaign finance improprieties by the BDP. Opposition parties have long argued that the BDP uses its political position to manipulate the

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

electoral process to its advantage. In recent years the BNF has been subject to internecine fighting and has been unable to mount an effective electoral challenge to the ruling BDP, receiving only twelve of fifty-seven seats in the 2004 general election. In the October 2009 elections the BDP won 45 of 57 seats with 53% of the vote while the BNF could muster only six seats despite winning 22% of the vote. The Botswana Congress Party garnered 19% of the vote and 4 seats. Increasing divisions within the ruling BDP emerged in March 2010 when a faction led by Botsalo Ntuane declared that there was no room for them in the ruling party and that they were going to start their own party. This decision was made after the suspension of numerous senior party members by President Khama in recent years.

Freedom of speech and assembly are constitutionally protected and the civil rights of citizens are generally respected. However, in recent years ethnic tensions have begun to increase. Some smaller ethnic groups who are not part of the eight “principle tribes” of the majority Tswana nation have argued that they continue to suffer economic discrimination and remain marginalized from the political process. In recent years these groups (e.g., the Basarawa/San, Herero, Baloi and Bayei) have sought representation in the House of Chiefs. In December 2001 the government released a policy report that recommended including these groups within this consultative body. Despite this positive policy statement, the government has continued discriminating against these minorities. In particular, the Kalahari Bushmen have faced increasing discriminatory policies from the government since diamonds were discovered in their traditional homeland in the early 1980s. Thousands were evicted from Goge in 2002. In 2006 the Botswana High Court later judged the evictions to be unconstitutional.