

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Brazil

<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>25</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:		25		Tentative:		No		
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SCODE	BRA	CCODE	140	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	3	4	6	2	4																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date	15 January 1985		Begin Date	16 January 1985																					
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution	1988																								
Executive(s)	President Dilma Rousseff (PT); directly elected 3 October 2010, 56.0% of vote																								
Legislature	<p>Bicameral Legislature: Chamber of Deputies (513 seats; proportionally elected; most recent election, 3 October 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers Party (PT): 87 Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB): 80 Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB): 53 Democrats (DEM): 43 Progressive Party (PP): 41 Republic Party (PR): 41 Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB): 34 Democratic Labor Party (PDT): 28 Brazilian Labor Party (PTB): 21 Social Christian Party (PSC): 17 Communist Party of Brazil (PCB): 15 Green Party (PV): 15 Socialist People's Party (PPS): 12 Other parties: 26 <p>Federal Senate (81 seats; 3 members from each state or federal district, directly elected; most recent elections, 3 October 2010)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMDB: 19 PT: 15 PSDB: 11 Other parties: 36 																								
Judiciary	Supreme Federal Court																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

Brazil has a long history of civilian rule interrupted by long periods of military dictatorship. Most recently, the military ruled Brazil from 1965 until 1985. The 2002 election of Luis Inacio da Silva of the Workers' Party (PT) to the office of President marks the fourth time since the end of military rule that "free and fair" elections have been held. The 2002 electoral victory of the PT candidate came in the midst of a popular anti-corruption campaign that saw dramatic decreases in support for Brazil's established party structures in the 2002 general elections. Despite its campaign to rid the political system of corruption, the ruling PT was rocked by its own corruption scandal in 2005. Top members of the PT, although not the President himself, have been accused of paying monthly bribes to other political parties to secure votes for the government's legislative projects. President da Silva was reelected to a second term in office in October 2006.

Executive Constraints: Near Parity (6)

The balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government is a function of (1) the institutional guidelines established in the 1988 constitution, (2) the political skills of the president to circumvent these guidelines, and (3) the weakness of the Brazilian party system. The 1988 constitution transferred considerable power from the President to the Congress. Under the terms of the 1988 constitution the Congress gained added power in regard to budget preparation, foreign debt agreements, and the drafting of legislation. The judicial system also gained substantial administrative and financial autonomy. The 1988 constitution also granted provisions for referenda and "popular vetoes" on proposed and enacted legislation as well as for "popular initiatives" of direct bills for congressional consideration. Despite these changes, the President continued to exert considerable power, particularly in the realm of economic policymaking, through the use of "temporary measures." Up until 1992 President Collor frequently used these "temporary measures" to circumvent the power of Congress. However, in 1991 the Chamber of Deputies restricted the use of "temporary measures" and rejected President Collor's attempts to reform the constitution (these reforms were widely seen as an attempt to reduce the powers of the Congress). While this struggle between the executive and legislative branches continued through early 1992, the strength of Congress, a factional and typically fragmented body composed of parties tied to labor, big business and regional interests, demonstrated its collective weight by removing President Collor from power. However, while Congress has come to reassert itself in many areas of policymaking throughout the 1990s, it has not done so consistently. Its antiquated internal procedures and party factionalism often renders it unable to keep up with a legislative agenda largely defined by the executive branch. Like President Collor, President Cardoso had been criticized for the excessive use of "temporary measures" to circumvent Congress. However, while President Cardoso largely defined the policymaking agenda, nevertheless, he had difficulty at times gaining sufficient support for some of his legislative priorities despite the fact that his coalition held an overwhelming majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The judiciary only provides a modest check on executive autonomy.

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

The party system in Brazil remains fragmented to the degree of chaotic. Numerous parties reflecting a diverse assortment of class, regional and personalist interests participate in the electoral process and tend to aggravate rather than aggregate social divisions. Also contributing to the factional nature of politics are the deep racial and class divisions in the body politic. Violence between rich landowners and poor peasants in the rural countryside is a persistent problem, with over 1,300 killed in the last two decades. In May 2005 over 12,000 landless activists marched through the capital to protest the slow pace of land reform in Brazil. According to these activists, the government has failed to live up to its election promise to find homes for 400,000 landless peasants by 2006 (as of mid-2005 he had only been able to find homes for 80,000). While freedom of assembly and speech are constitutionally protected, these ideas are only weakly enforced in the rural areas and urban slums of Brazil where human rights violations and killings at the hands of death squads

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.

and the police are common. 2006 witnessed an increase in lawlessness in Sao Paulo as over 170 were killed in clashes between the police and armed gangs.