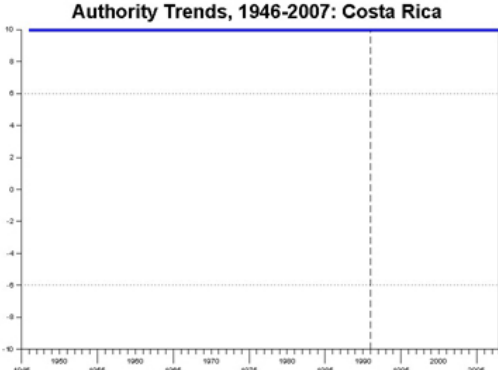


## Polity IV Country Report 2007: Costa Rica

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2006</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2007</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Polity:</b></td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Democ:</b></td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Autoc:</b></td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Durable:</b></td> <td colspan="3">88</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tentative:</b></td> <td colspan="3">No</td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change	<b>Polity:</b>	10	10	0	<b>Democ:</b>	10	10	0	<b>Autoc:</b>	0	0	0	<b>Durable:</b>	88			<b>Tentative:</b>	No			
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<b>Tentative:</b>	No																								
SCODE	<b>COS</b>	CCODE	<b>094</b>	Date of Report	<b>1 November 2008</b>																				
<b>Polity IV Component Variables</b>																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	3	4	7	5	5																				
<b>Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)</b>																									
End Date		30 June 1890		Begin Date																					
				1 July 1890																					
<b>Polity Fragmentation: No</b>																									
<b>Constitution</b>	1949																								
<b>Executive(s)</b>	President Oscar Arias Sanchez (PLN); directly elected, 5 February 2006, 40.9%																								
<b>Legislature</b>	Unicameral: Legislative Assembly (57 seats; proportionally elected; most recent election, 5 February 2006) National Liberation Party (PLN): 25 Citizen's Action Party (PAC): 17 Other parties: 15																								
<b>Judiciary</b>	Supreme Court																								

### Narrative Description:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)**

Costa Rica is a long-standing democracy. Despite two short interruptions in 1917 and 1948, democratic institutions have held a position of prominence in this country for over 100 years. Under the terms outlined in the 1949 constitution, the president is the chief executive of the country. The president is directly elected every four years through a multiparty electoral process. In the presidential election of February 2002, none of the candidates was able to secure the 40 per cent vote required to avoid a second round run-off. The run-off between the two strongest candidates, the first under the current constitution, had been forced by the performance of Ottón Solís Fallas, the candidate of the Citizens' Action Party, who secured a record vote for a third party candidate. Under the terms of the constitution, the incumbent President, Miguel Angel

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Rodríguez Echeverría of the Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC), was not allowed to stand for a second term of office. The PUSC candidate, Abel Pacheco de le Espriella, won the April 2002 run-off election with 58 percent of the vote. Former-President Oscar Arias, representing the National Liberation Party (PLN), was returned to power in an extremely tight electoral contest in February 2006.

**Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)**

The 1949 constitutions provided for a system of strong checks and balances between the three branches of government in Costa Rica. Based on the US presidential system, the legislative branch of government is provided with strong powers, including the right to veto presidential initiatives, override presidential vetoes, and select members of the judicial branch. The judiciary is autonomous from executive influence.

**Political Participation: Institutionalized Open Electoral Competition (10)**

Costa Rica has a long history of stable, multiparty democratic competition. Contributing to the stability of politics in Costa Rica was the elimination of a standing army in this country in 1949. Two parties, the National Liberation Party (PLN) and the Social Christian Party (PUSC), have dominated the political landscape for over 50 years. Freedom of speech and assembly are constitutionally protected and the civil rights of citizens are generally respected.