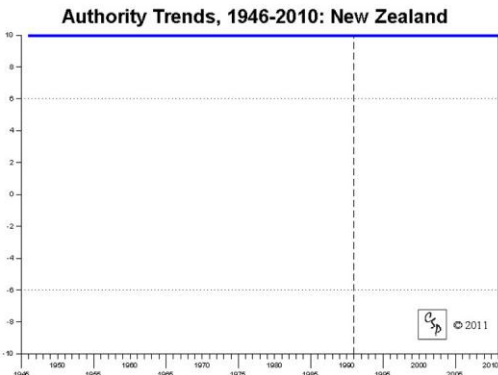


## Polity IV Country Report 2010: New Zealand

<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><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></td> <td>133</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tentative:</b></td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	<b>Polity:</b>	10	10	0	<b>Democ:</b>	10	10	0	<b>Autoc:</b>	0	0	0	<b>Durable:</b>		133		<b>Tentative:</b>		No		
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<b>Polity:</b>	10	10	0																						
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<b>Durable:</b>		133																							
<b>Tentative:</b>		No																							
SCODE	<b>NEW</b>	CCODE	<b>920</b>	Date of Report	<b>1 June 2011</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 1877		Begin Date	1 July 1877																					
<b>Polity Fragmentation: No</b>																									
<b>Constitution</b>	Partly codified in the Constitution Act of 1986																								
<b>Executive(s)</b>	Prime Minister John Key (NP); initially selected by the largest party in Parliament, 19 November 2008																								
<b>Legislature</b>	Unicameral: Parliament (120 seats; 69 directly elected, 51 proportionally elected; most recent elections, 8 November 2008; <i>note – total number of seats increased to 122 in 2008, as the Maori Party won two seats more than its entitlement under the party vote</i> ) National Party (NP): 58 Labour Party (LP): 43 Green Party: 9 ACT New Zealand: 5 Maori Party: 5 Other parties: 2																								
<b>Judiciary</b>	Supreme Court; Court of Appeal; High Court																								

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

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

The prime minister is selected, and the government is formed, by the majority party or coalition in parliament. In 1999 elections, the conservative National Party, which had maintained power for more than a decade, was voted out of office and was replaced by the Labour Party. For the first time in New Zealand's history, the prime minister's post was contested by two women. The policies of the new Labour

<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.

government, who also won the 2002 and 2005 elections, have increasingly taken into account the demands of the indigenous Maori legislators and environmental interests promoted by the Green Party. Recruitment and promotion of civil servants is under the control of the State Services Commission, which is independent of partisan politics. Heads of departments and their officials do not change with a change of government, thus ensuring the continuity of administration. The National Party regained control of the government in 8 November 2008 elections; party leader John Key was elected prime minister and assumed office on 19 November 2008.

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

As in other consolidated parliamentary democracies, New Zealand government depends on continued support of the accountability group (parliament majority) to remain in office. Allied parties are regularly involved in consultations with the government on important policy issues. The office of parliamentary commissioner for investigations (ombudsman) serves as a check upon possible administrative injustices. The Official Information Act of 1982 permits public access to government documents. The judiciary is independent and has begun to play a more significant constitutional and political role, contending that certain common law rights might override the will of Parliament.

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

The country has institutionalized universal suffrage for those eighteen years of age and older. Electoral districts are redrawn after every five-year census, their number increasing with population growth. A recent electoral reform introduced a mixed member proportional system of voting (MMP) that has given more advantage to previously less represented groups, especially indigenous Maori. The system has also loosened legislators' ties to the party seniority.