

Polity IV Country Report 2007: United Kingdom

<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> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>127</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change		Polity:	10	10	0		Democ:	10	10	0		Autoc:	0	0	0		Durable:		127			Tentative:		No			
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SCODE	UKG	CCODE	200	Date of Report	1 November 2008																										
Polity IV Component Variables																															
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																										
3	3	4	7	5	5																										
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																															
End Date	28 April 1880		Begin Date	29 April 1880																											
Polity Fragmentation: No																															
Constitution	Unwritten																														
Executive(s)	Prime Minister Gordon Brown (Labour); appointed as leader of majority party in Parliament, 27 June 2007																														
Legislature	Bicameral: House of Commons (646 seats; directly elected; most recent elections, 5 May 2005) Labour Party: 356 Conservative Party: 197 Liberal Democrats: 62 Other parties: 29 Non-partisans: 1 Vacant: 1 House of Lords (675 seats; 557 life peers and 118 hereditary members)																														
Judiciary	House of Lords																														

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

The British prime minister is elected through a competitive multiparty political system. The majority party (or majority coalition) in the House of Commons elects the chief executive. Members of the House of Commons are popularly elected.

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.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

The parliamentary structure of government found in the United Kingdom places significant constraints on the autonomous actions of the chief executive. The prime minister is elected by, and is directly accountable to, the legislature. Although Britain does not have a written constitution, historical conventions and norms, as well as legal precedents, serve as the foundations of horizontal accountability in this country. The judiciary, while weaker than in many OECD countries, is autonomous from executive interference.

Political Participation: Institutionalized Open Electoral Competition (10)

The United Kingdom is a competitive multiparty democracy dominated at the national level by two major parties: the Labour Party (center-left) and the Conservative Party (center-right). Smaller ideological-based and ethnolinguistic-based parties actively compete at both the national and regional (in Scotland and Wales) levels. Freedom of speech and assembly are constitutionally protected and the civil rights of citizens are generally respected.