

BENIN

Polity5 regime codes:

fac	scode	polity	pers	bmon	bday	byear	emon	eday	eyear	exrec	exconst	polcomp
1X	BEN	2	3	8	1	1960	10	28	1963	8	3	6
1O	BEN	-88	2	10	29	1963	12	22	1965	-88	-88	-88
1Oa	BEN	-7	4	12	23	1965	5	1	1970	4	1	1
2X	BEN	-2	3	5	2	1970	10	26	1972	3	3	7
2O	BEN	-7	7	10	27	1972	12	31	1979	4	1	1
2Oa	BEN	-7	10	1	1	1980	2	25	1990	5	1	1
2Ob	BEN	-88	1	2	26	1990	4	3	1991	-88	-88	-88
2Oc	BEN	6	15	4	4	1991	3	18	2006	7	5	9
2Od	BEN	7	13	3	19	2006	99	99	9999	8	5	9

PITF Problem Events:

- 1) 10/63-12/65 (ARC 10/63-12/65)
- 2) 10/72-10/72 (ARC 10-72)

1X) Date of Change to Factional-Democratic: August 1, 1960 (independence)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Upon gaining independence from France on August 1, 1960, Dahomey (later renamed Benin) had a recent history of self-rule that was dominated by a struggle for power among three regional leaders: Hubert Maga, Sourou Migan Apithy, and Justin Ahomadegbe. The country's first general elections were held on December 12, 1960, and were won by a party alliance forged between Maga and Apithy who were elected the country's first President and Vice President. On May 31, 1961, allegations of a coup plot led to the arrest of Ahomadegbe and the banning of his party, the *Union Democratique Dahomeenne*; Dahomey became a one-party state under the *Parti Dahomeende l'Unite*. President Maga amnestied Ahomadegbe on November 3, 1962.

Identify Main Factions:

- *Regional-personalistic political organizations* — ethnic tensions in Dahomey/Benin largely followed a north-south split and three rival personalities: Hubert Maga (northern base centered on Parakou); Sourou Migan Apithy (southern base centered in Porto-Novo); and Justin Ahomadegbe (south-central base centered in Abomey). Political parties and alliances were quite fluid.
- *Trade Unions*, the *Union Generale des Travailleurs du Dahomey* (UGTD) — an activist organization that frequently called demonstrations and general strikes.
- *Dahomey military* — led by Col. (then Gen.) Christophe Soglo initially brokered disputes among the civilian “triumvirate” but grew increasingly powerful and activist due to the protracted power struggles.

1O) Date of Change from Factional-Democratic: October 29, 1963 (onset of political instability)

Brief Description of Change From:

Adverse Regime Change: October 1963 – December 1965

Transitional Government (-88): October 29, 1963

In the face of rising discontent, demonstrations, and a general strike led by the UGTD, President Maga resigned on October 28, 1963 and Col. Soglo assumed power, dissolving the government and National Assembly and suspending the constitution. On October 29, he set up a provisional government that included the three leading politicians, Maga, Apithy, and Ahomadegbe until a new constitution could be approved and new elections held. However, Maga was forced to resign all posts in November due to allegations he was plotting to seize control and in December 1963 a one-party state (Dahomeyan Democratic Union; PDD) was formed. On January 5, 1964, a new constitution was approved by popular referendum and general elections were held on January 19; Apithy and Ahomadegbe became president and vice president. The elections triggered serious unrest among supporters of Maga in the north. Unrest continued through 1965 and in November 1965 both Apithy and Ahomadegbe resigned. The President of the National Assembly Tairon Congacou assumed office and on December 4, 1965, he dissolved the PDD and allowed the formation of political parties.

1Oa) December 23, 1965 (coup and military-led government) – On December 22, 1965, Gen. Soglo seized control of the government; he immediately issued a proclamation declaring that he had dissolved the National Assembly, all regional and municipal councils, and all political parties, and had annulled the Constitution. A new government was formed on December 23, 1965, with Gen. Soglo as President and Prime Minister. On December 17, 1967, a group of junior officers staged a coup and removed Gen. Soglo. A Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) was set up to run the government. A new constitution was written and approved by referendum on March 31, 1968, and new presidential elections were scheduled. However, only candidates approved by the military were allowed and so the three main politicians, now living in exile, called on supporters to boycott the election held on May 5, 1968. The boycott was successful in thwarting the election, so, the MRC named Dr. Emile Devlin Zinsou president and tasked him with setting up a civilian government. The MRC was dissolved on August 1, 1968. The Zinsou government was ineffective and was subsequently deposed by the military on December 10, 1969, and a Military Directorate was established to run the government. New presidential elections were held in March 1970 with the three principal political leaders and Dr. Zinsou as candidates but the military abruptly cancelled the process on March 28.

2X) Date of Change to Factional-Autocratic: May 2, 1970 (rotating presidency)

Brief Explanation of Change To:

Following cancellation of the March 1970 presidential elections, the Military Directorate held talks with the main politicians and, then, announced on May 1, 1970, that an agreement had been reached with Maga and Ahomadegbe to establish a rotating presidency, the Presidential Council; the agreement was subsequently joined by Apithy while Zinsou withdrew.

Identify Main Factions:

Same factions as the earlier period of factionalism (1X above), except military activism from late 1967 through early 1972 was generally led by Maj. Maurice Kouandete. Also, Zinsou and Soglo are added to the stable of personalistic leaders.

2O) Date of Change from Factional-Autocratic: October 27, 1972 (adverse regime change – stabilization)

Adverse Regime Change: October 1972

On October 26, 1972, the rotating presidency was overthrown in a military coup led by Maj. Mathieu Kérékou, who announced that the Presidential Council and the National Consultative Assembly were dissolved and the Constitution was suspended. In September 1973, Kérékou established the National Council of the Revolution as the governing body. On November 30, 1974, Kérékou declared the formation of a socialist society based on Marxism-Leninism. On December 1, 1975, he declared that the country would be henceforth known as Benin and led by the Benin People's Revolutionary Party (PRPB).

Changes within Stabilization Period:

2Oa) January 1, 1980 (establishment of one-party state) – Government administration in Benin gradually moved away from the direct authority of Kérékou's personalistic dictatorship to a broader administration ruled by the PRPB. On August 31, 1979, the party decided to begin a process leading to national elections (November 1979) and the establishment of a National Revolutionary Assembly. On December 6-7, 1989, the PRPB dropped Marxism-Leninism and constituted a National Conference of Active Forces of the Nation to decide the country's future direction.

2Ob) February 26, 1990 (transitional government) – On February 25, 1990, the National Conference, having been convened in 1989 following the country's abandonment of Marxist-Leninist ideology, declared itself the country's sovereign authority. Nicéphore Soglo was elected as interim Prime Minister and charged with guiding the country until elections could be held in February 1991; Kérékou remained head of state during the transition period. Legislative authority was vested in the High Council of the Republic, which included Maga, Ahomadegbe, and Zinsou.

2Oc) April 4, 1991 (peaceful transfer of executive office) – Presidential elections held on March 14 included 13 candidates and a runoff election was held on March 24 between top vote-getters Soglo and Kérékou. Nicéphore Soglo was declared the winner with nearly 70% of the vote and assumed office on April 4, 1991. On March 24, 1996, the Constitutional Court declared that former military dictator Gen. Mathieu Kérékou was the victor in the presidential elections completed on March 18. He narrowly defeated incumbent President Nicéphore Soglo, who had led the field after the first round on March 3. The elections were marred by irregularities. Incumbent President Kérékou was again the victor in presidential elections held on March 4 and March 22, 2001, after second place finisher Soglo withdrew from the runoff election citing electoral fraud; Soglo asked supporters to boycott the runoff election and turnout was low.

2Od) March 19, 2006 (presidential elections) – Presidential elections held on March 5, 2006, were contested by 26 candidates; both incumbent President Kérékou and former President Soglo were constitutionally barred from running. Independent candidate Yayi Boni won the runoff election over Adrien Houngbédji with nearly 75% of the vote. Boni appointed a new Cabinet on April 8; it was made up mainly of technocrats and did not include any party leaders or former ministers.