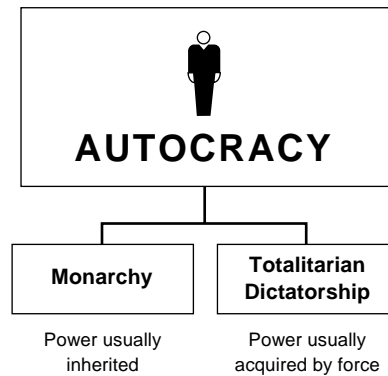


Categories of Government According to the Number of Rulers: Overview (1-08)

In their writings, Plato and Aristotle described and analyzed the state in terms of autocracy, oligarchy, and democracy—the rule of one, several, or many. Both Plato and Aristotle advocated the type of government that was ruled by an educated elite, that is, an aristocracy; however, throughout the city-states of Greece they observed all forms of government. Still used today, these categories are outlined below.

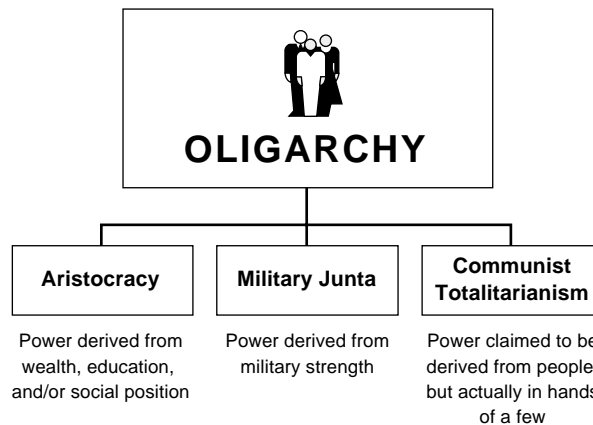
Autocracy

The power and authority to rule are in the hands of a single individual. Sovereignty is in the hands of one—the king, queen, emperor, tsar, dictator, etc.



Oligarchy

A small group holds the power to govern. The power is derived from wealth, military power, social position, education, or some combination of these. Sovereignty is in the hands of a few.



Democracy

A government in which the people hold the power to rule, either directly or through elected officials, i.e., "rule by the ruled." Sovereignty is in the hands of the people.

