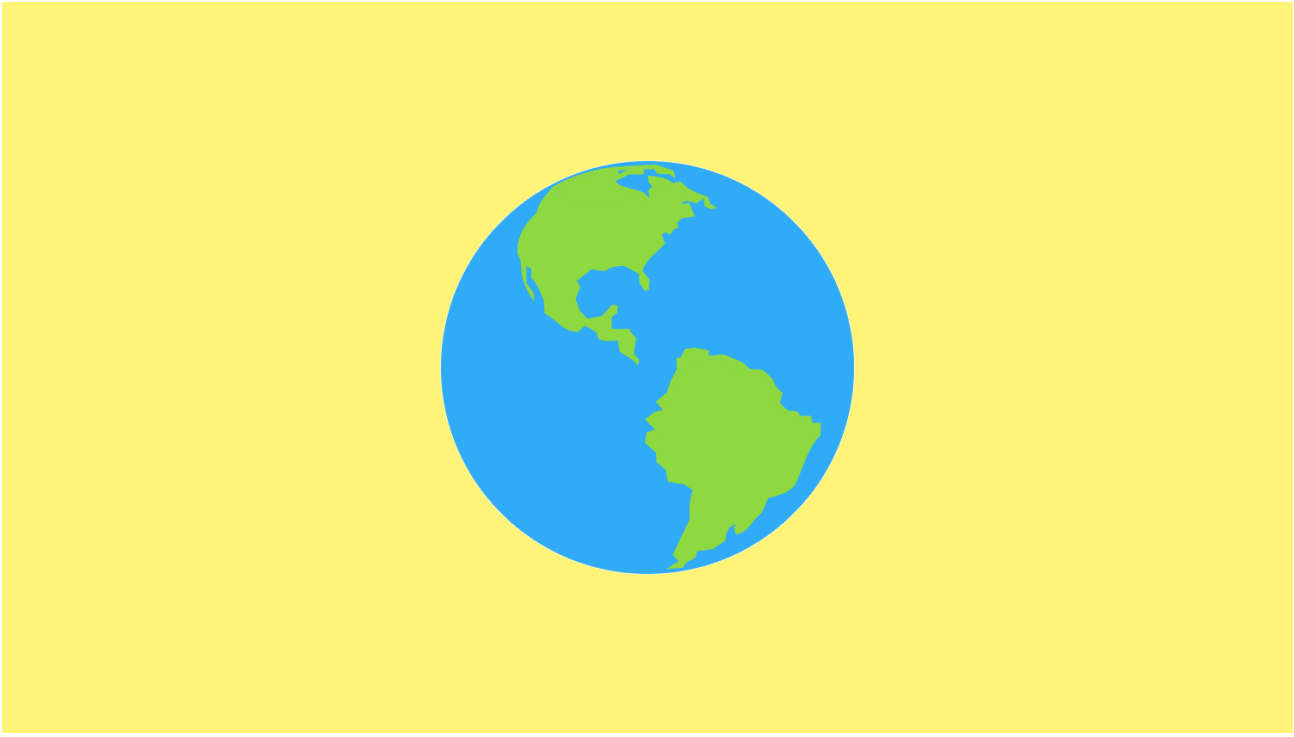
The Five Most Common Political Systems Around the World

After all, many political systems are similar, or have similar roots. Many countries actually have republics of some kind — variants of democracy. As you study political science, it can be helpful to understand some of the most common types of political systems from around the world.



1. Democracy

- [ ] We often hear the United States referred to as a democracy. Indeed, many refer to the U.S. as a representative democracy. A democracy in a more traditional sense is a political system that allows for each individual to participate. There are two rather popular types of democracy:
- [ ] **Direct Democracy:** Many scholars point to Athens as an example of direct democracy. Technically, every citizen has an equal say in the workings of government.
- [ ] **Representative Democracy:** In a representative democracy set-up, citizens elect representatives who actually make the law. The United States operates similarly to this principle. Citizens elect legislators who, in turn, make laws. In the U.S., even the president isn't elected directly; representatives called electors make the decision

2. Republic

- [ ] In theory, a republic is a political system in which the government remains mostly subject to those governed. Some scholars define any political system in which the citizens legitimize the government.In some cases, a representative democracy (or any form of democracy) might be considered a republic. Some of the types of republics that you might see include:
- [ ] Crowned (a constitutional monarchy might be considered a crowned republic)
- [ ] Single Party
- [ ] Capitalist

- [ ] Federal (the United States is often referred to as a federal republic)
- [ ] Parliamentary

3. Monarchy

- [ ] When most of us think of a monarchy, we think of the political systems of medieval European countries. In a monarchy, a ruler is not usually chosen by the voice of the people or their representatives. Often a monarch is the head of state until he or she abdicates or until death. In many cases a monarch is the final word in government.
- [ ] However, as with other political systems, there are different types of monarchies. The type that many of us think of as common is the **absolute monarchy**, in which the monarch truly has the ultimate say in matters of government. The U.K., Denmark, Kuwait, Spain, Sweden, Tuvalu, and many more are examples of constitutional monarchies. Other types of monarchies include duchies, grand duchies, **elective monarchy** (where the monarch is actually elected), and**non-sovereign monarchy.**

4. Communism

- [ ] In most cases, a communist state is based on the ideology of communism as taught by Marx and/or Lenin.

5. Dictatorship

- [ ] Another authoritarian form of government is the dictatorship. Normally, a dictator is the main individual ruling the country. While there are lackeys and others who work for the dictator, he or she makes most of the decisions, and usually has enforcers. In some cases, the political system is run by a small group of people.
- [ ] One of the more common types of dictatorship is the**military dictatorship**, in which a military organization governs, running the political system. Sometimes, the military just exerts a great deal of pressure on the government, running the country de facto.

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