PICK A GOVERNMENT

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Living in a democracy, we are periodically cursed (blessed?) with election year mania. Occasionally, it all seems to amount to naught, and people have been heard to ask: "Isn't there another way?" Of course there is. Different types of government abound. More than eighty varieties are presented below. As you read through them, perhaps you'll find one that sounds a little better than democracy. On the other hand, a look at these alternatives might be enough to renew everyone's faith in the electoral process.

For the sake of this discussion, I have limited consideration to forms of government ending in -archy (Greek "arkhos" = ruler) and -ocracy (Greek "kratos" = strength, power). Admirers of dynasticism, feudalism, tribalism, and related governments needn't fear -- there are regimes here bound to please anyone. To begin with, my personal favorite is LOGOCRACY, "a community or system of government in which words are the ruling power" (OED).

By The Numbers

Everyone knows that a monarchy is a state headed by a single ruler. Lesser-known appellations referring to a specific number of leaders are listed here:

- AUTOCRACY, MONOCRACY one ruler
- BIARCHY, DIARCHY (DYARCHY), DUARCHY two rulers
- TRIARCHY three rulers
- TETRADARCHY (TETRARCHY) four rulers
- PENTARCHY five rulers
- HEPTARCHY, SEPTARCHY seven rulers
- OCTARCHY eight rulers
- DECARCHY (DEKARCHY, DECADARCHY) ten rulers
- DODECARCHY twelve rulers
- HECATONTARCHY (HECATONARCHY) one hundred rulers

Oddly, the term HEXARCHY refers to a group of six states, not a government of six leaders. A "nine-archy" appears to be missing altogether; I have checked both the OED and Webster's Third, but have found no listing. I see no good reason why there cannot be a government of nine persons. Perhaps such a government has never existed, but it certainly could in theory. I thus propose NONARCHY (derived from nonary, a notation having nine as its basis).
Additional governments are named in accordance with the percentage of the populace involved. If you think democracy means majority rule, then this list is for you:

**ARITHMOCRACY** rule of the numerical majority  
**DEMOCRACY** state vested in the people as a whole  
**ISOCRACY** government where all have equal power  
**OLIGARCHY** government by the few  
**PANTARCHY** state vested in the people as a whole  
**PANTISOCRACY** Utopian community where all are equal and rule  
**POLYARCHY (POLARCHY, POLYGARCHY, POLYCRACY)** government by the many, or by a number of persons  
**SOCIOCRACY** government by society as a whole

**The Good And The Bad**

Some of the governments listed here sound too good to be true. Others, though undesirable, sound suspiciously familiar. The good and the bad are:

**ANGELOCRACY** by angels  
**ARISTARCHY** by the most qualified people  
**ARISTOCRACY** in the literal sense, government of a state by its best persons  
**BOBOCRACY** by boobs  
**DIABOLARCHY (DIABOLOCRACTY)** by devils  
**FOOLOCRACTY** by fools  
**KAKISTOCRACY** by the worst citizens  
**MOBOCRACY** by a mob  
**NEOCRACY** by amateurs  
**OCHLOCRACY** by a mob or by the lowest of the people  
**PEDANTOCRACY** by pedants

**For The Religious**

The Moral Majority and friends would probably approve of the governments in this category. But if these are not for you, then you might prefer living in a STATOCRACY: government by the state alone, uncontrolled by ecclesiastical powers. The religious governments are:

**HAGIARCHY (HAGIOCRACY)** rule by persons considered holy  
**HIEROCRACY (HIERARCHY)** rule by priests or members of the clergy  
**JESUITOCRACY** rule or government of Jesuits  
**PAPARCHY** rule by a Pope  
**PARSONARCHY** rule by parsons  
**THEARCHY** rule by God or a god  
**THEOCRACY** rule by a priestly order claiming divine commission
By Wealth Or Class

This category provides for everyone, regardless of their economic status:

- CHRYSOCRACY by the wealthy
- DULOCRACY (DOULOCRACY) by slaves or servants
- ERGATOCRACY by workers
- MESOCRACY by the middle class
- MILLOC RACY by mill-owners; the body of mill-owners regarded as a dominant class
- PLANTOCRACY by planters
- PLUTARCHY (PLUTOCRACY) by the wealthy
- PT OCHO CRACY by the poor
- SHOPOCRACY by shop-keepers
- SLAVOCRACY (SLAVEOCRACY) by slave-owners
- SQUIREARCHY by the landed gentry
- TIMOCRACY rule by the wealthy (Aristotle); rule by those who love honor (Plato)

By Sex

Both feminists and male supremacists will find a polity to their liking here:

- ANDROCRACY government with men as the ruling class
- GYNAOCRACY (GYNEOCRACY, GYNAEOCRACY) government by a woman or women
- GYNO CRACY government with women as the ruling class
- HETAERO CRACY government by concubines (hetaerae); government by college fellows!
- M ATRIARCHY, METROCRACY society organized with the mother as head, with descent traced through the female line
- PATRIARCHY society organized with the father or oldest male as head, with descent traced through the male line
- PORNOCRACY government by profligate women

By Age

This category is quite small, but nonetheless worthy of separate consideration:

- GERONTOCRACY by old people
- PAEDARCHY by a child or children

Miscellaneous

Here are all the unique governments that defy categorization. Some intriguing concepts appear in this final selection:

- ATHLETOCRACY government by athletes
- AUTARCHY government with absolute power
COSMOCRACY rule over the whole world
HAMARCHY ruling together (distinct parts have individual action, but all parts work together)
IDEOCRACY government founded on theories or abstract ideas
KRITARCHY rule of judges in ancient Israel
NOMOCRACY government founded on system or code of laws
PANARCHY rule over the entire universe
PAPYROC RACY government by paper (by newspapers or literature)
RIOTOCRACY government in which violence and disorder prevails
STRATOCRACY military government
SYNARCHY government by joint rule (people have a share in power with their rulers)
TECHNOCRACY government by experts following rules laid down by technicians
THALASSOCRACY sovereignty of the sea
THEATROC RACY absolute power exercised by ancient Athenian democracy

Conclusion

To my mind, democracy is as good as any of these other governments. But if absolutely none of the above sound good to you, I leave you with one final entry:

ANARCHY no government at all