

Differences Between Democratic and Non-Democratic Government

Activity

Directions: Read the following information and answer the questions. Place your answers in the “Democratic and Non-Democratic” drop box when complete.

Democratic vs Non-Democratic Government

Difference between democratic government and non-democratic government is an interesting topic to discuss. All the countries of the world have their own political or a ruling system. Democracy can be taken as one of those political systems. Some countries in the world are adhered to this democratic government system. The main feature of democracy is that the public gets the chance to elect the country's representatives for ruling. Also, the common people get the freedom to choose their representative and to depose those elected people if they are not satisfied with the ruling system. While, in non democracy, interests of the general public are not taken into consideration. Let us see the two types government in detail.

What is a Democratic Government?

As mentioned above, democratic government shows the interests of the general public. The term “democracy” has been derived from the two Latin words Demo (people) and Kratos (power) which signifies that it is a type of government which is by the people, of the people and for the people. The countries that have a democratic government hold elections and through them people select their interested candidates for the government. These elections are mostly free and independent. The general public can vote for anybody whom they like. The people's representatives go to the parliament and then they become the rule making party of the country. Mainly there are two types of democracies can be seen. Direct democracy allows all the eligible citizens to have control and power over the government and in decision making. In contrast, democratic republic or representative democracy entertains elected candidates of the general public and only they have the power over the government and ruling. However, most of the democratic countries are democratic republics.

Another significant feature in democracy is that the majority gets the ruling power over the other parties. That means when there are more than one party for an election, the party that contains the higher number of elected candidates will get the ruling authority.

What is a Non-Democratic Government?

Non- democratic governments do not have democracy but have other ruling methods. For example, dictatorships, aristocratic ruling, socialism, communism, authoritarianism, military power and so on. In these types of non-democratic ruling systems, the interests of the general public are not taken into consideration. When only one individual rules the whole country, it is called as an absolute monarchy. When the power is held by only a few number of people, it is called oligarchy. The equality, freedom and interests of common people are not considered significant in these types of government systems.

What is the difference between Democratic and Non-Democratic Government?

When we look at both instances, we see some similarities. Both are related to power and ruling over somebody. Also, there can be weaknesses in both situations and nobody can say one is better to the other.

- In terms of the difference, we see that the democratic government respects peoples' interests and freedom whereas non-democracies play the reverse of that.
- Democracies allow peoples' freedom, equality and the general public becomes a part of the decision making process of the country.
- However, in non-democracies, the general public has no role to play in decision making process of the country.
- Democracies are mostly based on elections in which public has the ability of changing the ruling party.
- In non-democratic systems, usually, the power is inherited by generations and there are no elections and there may be no changes in the ruling party as in democratic governments.

Questions to answer from the reading and then turn into the correct drop box:

1) What is the main feature of a democracy?

Democracies are primarily characterized by the political involvement of the public, that being that the people themselves are endowed with the power to make political decisions or elect officials to positions of power in government, thereby giving the general public a degree of control over the government.

2) How is a direct democracy different from a representative democracy?

Under a direct democracy, political decisions and power in government are determined by eligible voters; representative democracies see eligible voters select individuals to represent their interests in government, wherein they then make political decisions determined by the interests of their constituents.

3) What is the Latin meaning of "democracy"?

"Demo" means "people" and "kratos" means "power"; thus, democracy is taken to mean "people power" or "power by/of the people".

4) Who gets "ruling power" in a democracy?

In the case of a democracy, the majority (be it a party in a representative democracy, or a simple majority in a direct democracy) is invested with ruling power.

5) What are six different types of authoritarian rule? Briefly describe each one.

Authoritarian rule can include an Authoritarian Monarchy/Aristocracy, Old Oligarchy, New Oligarchy, Socialist Authoritarianism, Military Dictatorship, and Theocracy. The first system sees an individual of

ostensibly 'royal' heritage, or a class of elites, rule with absolute or near-absolute authority over the country. Old Oligarchies are systems akin to neofeudalistic structures in which several important families hold control over the government. New Oligarchies differ in that its power derives from a bureaucracy and formal single-party structure; leadership is centralized and personalistic; Ferdinand Marcos' Philippines is an example of this. Socialist Authoritarianism have not only a formal single-party system, but an effective one that rules over a centralized government, controlling the people through egalitarian ideology; they differ from Communist authoritarian regimes in their lack of total authoritarian and social control, for Communist regimes are characterized by totalitarianism and a near total grip on society. The Military Dictatorship is what many people picture for Authoritarian government, and it is a government in which a 'strong man' of the military seizes control, ostensibly to restore order, and enforces control through the backing of the military. Theocracy is authoritarian because it places a religious cabal at the top of the political hierarchy, and from that pulpit the religious elite are made the political elite and govern with authoritarian power.

6) Of the six focus countries in this class, pick one Democratic Country and one Non-Democratic country and describe at least three ways each one practices "democratic characteristics" or "non-democratic characteristics".

The United Kingdom can be considered a Democratic Country, characterized by such democratic qualities as representative government, popular referendum (such as Brexit), and general freedoms reserved to the people. Citizens of the United Kingdom elect members to Parliament, giving them control over the government. The government also stages referendums in which the citizens are enabled to vote on key issues, in some major cases. The English Bill of Rights of 1689 is still in effect in the United Kingdom, along with the Magna Carta, Petition of Right, and Habeas Corpus Act of 1769, all bestowing the British citizenry with public freedoms and powers the government is not allowed to curtail.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, despite having some features of democratic government, is considered to be a non-democratic country. It is a Theocracy, and with that comes control of the government and society by religion. Until 1987, there was only one political party in the country; even since then, the Supreme Leader and Guardian Council still, practically, choose what candidates may run and win. As such, the authoritarian regime remains in place. The people are allowed to vote in elections, but the final word in government is given to the Supreme Leader, not the Parliament. Another non-democratic feature is that the Islamic Republic of Iran limits criticism against the government, freedom of the press often curtailed to ensure this; eight journalists remained in prison at the end of 2016 for example.