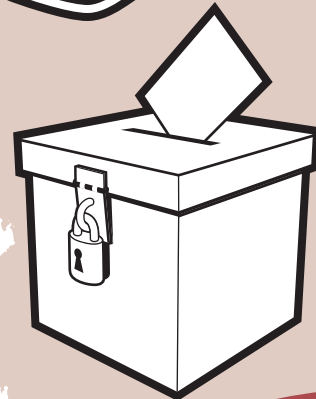


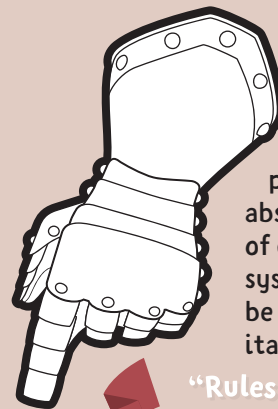
The rise of populist politics has led some to wonder about the health of modern democracy. That presents an opportunity to explore the various terms that compete with "democracy" to explain how the state works or should work: the "-ocracies" of our political discourse.



The suffix **-eracy** comes from the Greek **kratos** (strength) and **kratia** (power over) while perhaps connoting **krisi** (wisdom, good judgement). The suffix now means "rule or government by."



Democracy means "rule by the people." A "direct" democracy offers citizens involvement in legislating, whereas a "representative" one vests power in elected representatives.



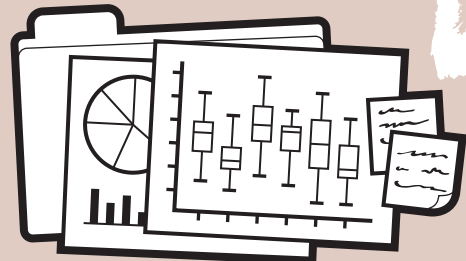
Autocracy is the rule by a person or group who hold absolute power. That lack of constraint is why such systems are thought to be domineering, authoritarian, or dictatorial.



Plutocracy is rule by the wealthy. That elite can be a stable class ("Aristocracy") or group of landholders ("Timocracy").



CONVERSELY, Ergocracy is rule by organized workers.



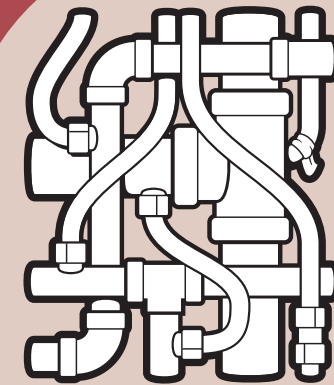
Technocracy is governance by specialists who treat policy issues as technical problems to be solved with evidence and practical knowledge.



Bureaucracy is a system of hierarchical control that organizes offices of functional specialists.



Vetocracy is Francis Fukuyama's term (Political Order & Political Decay, 2014) for a system which enables competing political factions to obstruct change.



Kludgeocracy is an system tied down by red tape that is circumvented by complicated work-arounds. Steven Teles (Kludgeocracy in America, 2013) notes that this arrangement empowers insiders with knowledge and connections.



Kakistocracy is rule by the least capable or most unscrupulous, usually because of widespread cronyism. The opposite, **Meritocracy**, is a system of rules to promote only the most capable to suitable positions.

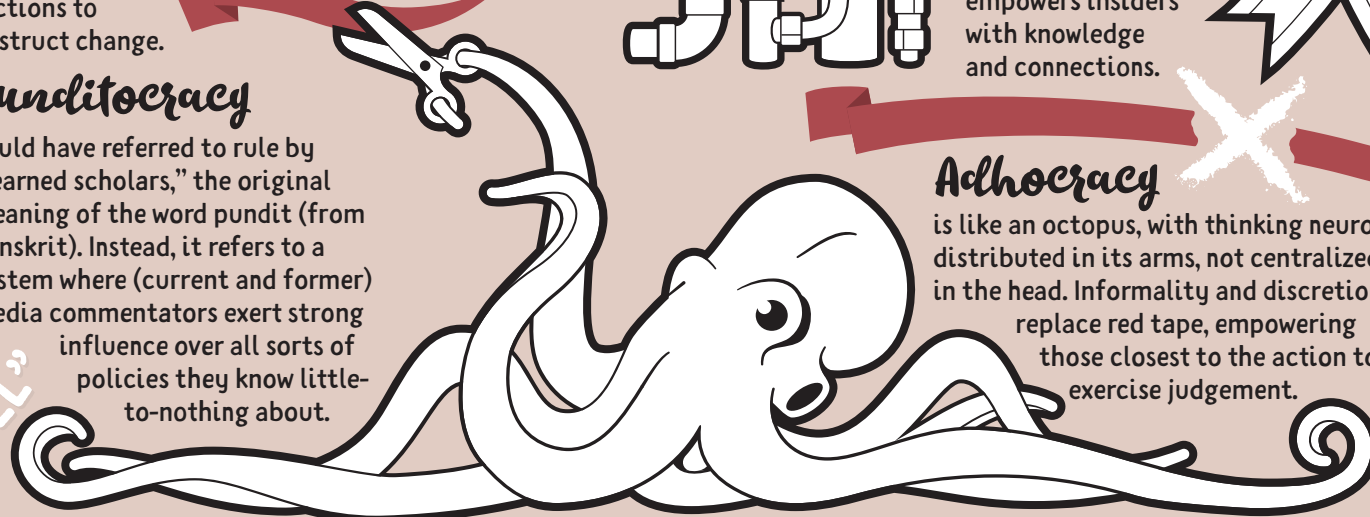


BUT WHAT IF only well-informed citizens could vote? Then you'd have what Jason Brennan (Against Democracy, 2016) calls **Epistocracy**. If only wise intellectuals called the shots, that is a **Noocracy**, coined by Plato from "noos" meaning mind or intellect.



Not quite the same as a **"KNOW-IT-ALL"**

Punditocracy could have referred to rule by "learned scholars," the original meaning of the word pundit (from Sanskrit). Instead, it refers to a system where (current and former) media commentators exert strong influence over all sorts of policies they know little-to-nothing about.



Adhococracy is like an octopus, with thinking neurons distributed in its arms, not centralized in the head. Informality and discretion replace red tape, empowering those closest to the action to exercise judgement.

AND YET A Socioeracy is composed of distributed teams ("circles") with rules structuring joint decision-making (also called a "Holacracy")



RULE OF LAW

"Rules for thee but not for me."

RED TAPE

PROCEDURES