

Monarchy

Where an autocrat or military dictatorship rules by force of arms, wealth, or the strength of supporters, a monarch is invested with a certain mystique of legitimacy. Some worlds retain a variation of the divine right of kings, while others have monarchs consecrated by simple length of tradition. A monarch is special by virtue of blood or anointed role, and a king without an army is still no less a king.

Societies that support monarchies are, by their very nature, inclined to a strong respect for tradition and customary legitimacy. The same spirit of acquiescence and respect tends to infuse the rest of the culture, with men and women keenly aware of their duties toward the society and deeply motivated by a respect for custom. There are very few cultures where only the monarchy itself inspires reverence beyond its actual power.

Crumbling monarchies tend to take down more than just the king. Where another claimant can be found with similar blood or right, a monarchy might survive with nothing more than the conventional scars of a succession war. But when the very idea of kingship is destroyed, it tends to take a great many other unquestioned verities with it, and cultures can find themselves suddenly sunk into mass confusion and a new and terrifying liberty.

Oligarchy

Monarchies have kings, autocracies have dictators, and military dictatorships have generalissimos and grand marshals. Oligarchies, on the other hand, have a less clearly visible apex. Authority might be invested in a formal council or it might be dispersed more informally through a collection of men and women capable of directing the society's strength.

Merchant houses, nobility individually as strong as the nominal king, controllers of mass media, great landowners or mighty barons of industry- these are the ones that usually form an oligarchy. Unlike in a feudalistic state, however, these oligarchs tend to all be part of the same system of power rather than each resting their authority on their own personal retainers. A merchant oligarchy might consist of several powerful corporations, for example, but all of them would rely on a shared military and legal system and the same basic channels of influence.

Oligarchies die quickly compared to the dispersed power centers of a feudal society. Once the fundamental structure in which they operate is destroyed, their individual standings cease to have meaning beyond whatever strength they can bring from their own wealth and retainers. Control of the courts, or the media, or the military ceases to be useful when those groups crumble away in the chaos of revolution.

1d6	MONARCHY EVOLUTIONS
1	Anarchy! The government collapses. On a 4+ on 1d6, it is replaced by a Tribalism centered around individual settlements or kinship groupings. On 3 or less, zealous revolutionaries are successful in entrenching their own ideals; roll randomly on the government type table.
2	The government weathers the change without essential alteration.
3	Important relatives of the monarch begin to form their own personal power bases, fragmenting the government into Feudalism .
4	The monarchy gradually cedes more and more power to representative councils and parliaments until the government is effectively a Republic .
5	A usurpation or contested bloodline robs the monarchy of its hereditary legitimacy, leaving it to rule by force of arms as a Military Dictatorship .
6	The monarch becomes so cloistered behind rite and custom that he or she loses control over the government, which becomes a bureaucratic Technocracy .

1d6	OLIGARCHY EVOLUTIONS
1	Anarchy! The government collapses. On a 4+ on 1d6, it is replaced by a Tribalism centered around individual settlements or kinship groupings. On 3 or less, zealous revolutionaries are successful in entrenching their own ideals; roll randomly on the government type table.
2	The government weathers the change without essential alteration.
3	The oligarchs are ruthlessly subdued by the strongest among them, who rises to found a persistent Autocracy .
4	The oligarchy calcifies until power and prestige become based on heredity, giving way to an eventual Monarchy of the foremost.
5	The oligarchy begins to factionalize on the basis of popular support and economic interests, giving way to the multiple power blocs of Corporatism .
6	The oligarchy fragments as the individual participants begin to refuse to cooperate, leading to a Feudalism among the survivors.