

Direct Democracy	Representative Democracy	
	Presidential Democracy	Parliamentary Democracy
<i>Example: Switzerland</i>	<i>Examples: USA, France</i>	<i>Examples: UK, Germany, Spain, Italy</i>
Head of State	Head of State	Head of State
Any member of the government in turn (for one year), no practical importance.	The President is head of state and leader of the government	Has a different function from the prime minister, it may be a monarch or an elected person.
Government	Government	Government
Ministers of the government directly elected by the parliament, representing all major parties	President elected by the people nominates the ministers [members of government]	Government elected by the parliament based on a majority, may be dismissed by the parliament, especially when in a coalition of several parties
Parliament	Parliament	Parliament
Elected for a fixed legislative period, no dissolution; changing coalitions, sometimes even extreme right and extreme left join together against the centre	Elected for a fixed period, clear institutional separation of parliament and government (but the president may cooperate as closely as in the other systems, if he thinks it is right)	Elected for a legislative period, dissolution and early new elections possible if a clear majority cannot be established.
Government members	Government members	Government members
Government members <i>need not be</i> members of parliament	Government members: need not be members of parliament	Government members <i>must be</i> elected members of parliament
Who has the strongest power	Who has the strongest power	Who has the strongest power
Strong position of the people (frequent referendums on single laws)	Strong position of the president (veto)	Strong position of the political parties
Legislation	Legislation	Legislation
Laws are created in four steps: 1. Draft by the administration; 2. Consultation of federal states, political parties, entrepreneurs, unions and other interested groups; 3. Parliamentary debate and final version passed; 4. Possibility of a referendum	Laws are debated and passed by parliament. Lobbyists do not have a formal right to be heard, but in reality have some influence. The president may block a law by veto and rely or not on a majority of the parliament. Sometimes, like in France, a president may be forced to "co-habitate" with members of the opposition	Laws are proposed by the government and debated and passed by parliament. Lobbyists have some influence on the shape of the law. If there is a solid majority, compromises are sought within the coalition the opposition may be ignored until the next elections but then previously passed laws may be revoked or changed by a new majority
Government stability	Government stability	Government stability
If a strong party threatens to call for a referendum, the parliament might be inclined to compromise. A formal consultation process gives the public a clear view of pros and cons of law at an early stage. The process of making laws is slow. History shows that from time to time the Swiss people do correct decisions of parliament and government that gives in too much to lobbyists, so Direct Democracy seems to offer effective checks and balances. But sometimes it just takes a long time until a new idea is finally broadly accepted.	A strong president may act immediately, but there is a certain risk that he may rush to conclusions too quickly and then it may be politically hard for him to withdraw the law. Although the separation of powers, might seem very clear in theory, it does not automatically provide more effective checks and balances between parliament and government than in a Parliamentary Democracy.	If there are many parties in a country, the dependence of the government's parliamentary majority even on a tiny party (e.g. in Israel) may undermine the stability of the government. If there are only two relevant parties and one has a comfortable majority, the parliamentary system offers few effective checks and balances.
Adaptability (pace of change)	Adaptability (pace of change)	Adaptability (pace of change)
A slow pace of change is the price for a consensus politics	Pace of change can be quite fast if the president's party has the majority, like now in France under Macron	The pace of change when a government has a clear majority can be quite fast, like in the UK under Blair's first government.
Suitability for fighting existential risks	Suitability for fighting existential risks	Suitability for fighting existential risks
The direct democracy system is definitely unsuitable for making quick decisions in near emergency situations, or when the risk has actually materialized.	The Presidential system, with some caveats seems to be the most suitable for mitigating existential risks and fighting catastrophic crises. However, the presidential powers would have to be controlled much more than today. The best example is the election of Donald Trump as the US President. To minimize the risk of a catastrophic decision by a president, the top executive powers should be in the hands of three presidents. Each of them would have equal power, represent one of the three major sections of a nation, and each decision would have to be taken by at least two presidents.	Parliamentary democracy is the second best option regarding its suitability for fighting existential risks. However, it could be adapted by creating a long list of exceptional circumstances, where the Prime Minister gets extraordinary powers and could rule by decrees, subsequently debated and voted in the Parliament. Since such risks exist right now and mitigating measures should be applied straight away, in practice it would mean such Prime Minister would very soon become de facto President. It would have been a political fudge and therefore such system should be avoided, if possible.