

# The Status of the Global Oligarchy

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*The term oligarchy is derived from the Greek words meaning “rule or command by a few.” The term is generally used in the derogatory sense to describe a tyrannical system that practices oppression to ensure obedience. While oligarchies are generally associated with antiquity and as being localized, many of today’s larger democracies can justifiably be called oligarchies. The following is a brief discourse on how modern oligarchs manage control over societies, using power exercised through economic and political means. Today the global oligarchy is controlled by a few hundred families.*

Many modern democracies are systems where the actual differences between political rivals are very small, and in these systems the oligarchic elite impose strict limits on what constitutes an acceptable and respectable political position. As for the “politicians”, their careers depend heavily on unelected economic, political, and media elites. Therefore, we have the popular saying, “*There is only one political party.*” An oligarchy, as we know, is a governing structure in which power effectively rests with a small number of people. These people could be distinguished by royalty, wealth, family ties, education, corporate, or military control, and so on. In these governing structures control is maintained by a few prominent families who typically pass their influence from one generation to the next. But, inherited power is not the only means of transference.

While oligarchies are often controlled by a few powerful families whose children are reared and mentored to become inheritors of power, this power is not always exercised openly, and most oligarchs prefer to remain “the power behind the throne,” so to speak. Perhaps the best example of such a family, the Rothschild’s continue the long tradition of innovation based on a steady accrual, over more than two centuries, of expertise, experience, and immeasurable wealth. Their businesses continue to be at the forefront of global financial and commercial activities.

There are other “oligarchs” also in control however, but in addition to the “old money” influences, the oligarchs have now created a “new money” cabal of influencers who play an ever-increasing role economically, politically, and at the structural level as well. “Unlimited” money, whether it is old or new, exerts a massive force. As an example of how money plays a role in the American system, a radio interview on the Thom Hartmann Program in July 2015 featured former president Jimmy Carter saying that the United States is now an oligarchy in which “*unlimited political bribery*” has created “a complete subversion of our political system as a payoff to major contributors.” According to the former president, both Democrats and Republicans, Carter said, “*look upon this unlimited money as a great benefit to themselves.*”

President Carter is not alone in his assertions. Other contemporary authors have also characterized current conditions in the United States and Western Europe as being

oligarchic in nature. One, Jeffrey A. Winters, PhD Yale, 1991, professor of political science at Northwestern University and author of *Oligarchy*, argues that

“oligarchy and democracy operate within a single system, and American politics is a daily display of their interplay.”

Of course, there are many others among today’s great thinkers who profess oligarchs essentially rule us. Through the watchful eyes of independent media and academics willing to voice their dissent, the reality of the global oligarchy comes into view. While most people have always understood that the rich rule, most shy away from believing in a truly Orwellian control conspiracy. The fact is, oligarchies exist in small towns, large cities, and in countries today, and we really do have an alliance of oligarchic dynasties that is global.

Not only do these modern oligarchs exert control over the governmental tiers, they also influence the philosophy and ideas nurtured in academia, through social institutions, and especially the policy institutions of the world. One example was recently outlined by Author Steven MacMillan, who’s editor of the Analyst Report, who [went so far](#) as to suggest that institutions like the Council on Foreign Relations, are in fact *“part of a shadowy network of private organizations that stretches across the globe to influence policy of most nation states.”*

While the mainstream insists anti-oligarch voices are merely conspiracy theorists, hundreds of experts are now revealing the truth of this “1984” system bent on complete takeover. In [a Guardian piece](#) from 2015, author Seumas Milne framed the argument that:

“Escalating inequality is the work of a global elite that will resist every challenge to its vested interests.”

He goes on to briefly outline the dysfunctional systems these oligarchs have set in place for decades now, but what’s significant about his report is the ever increasing greed of these elites. As world systems, markets, and resources contract and become depleted, the oligarchs feel the pressure to extract still more from us. The simple way of putting this is to frame them as “addicts of growth”, or insatiable tyrants when all is said and done. When solutions for rising inequality are suggested, those in power balk at every turn these days. Austerity, increased tax burdens on the middle and lower classes, still more borrowing at the national and corporate level, even war with Russia over resources seem to be on the table to prop up this oligarchy. Many experts contend that it was this global elite’s unrealistic response to the changing global landscape that caused most of today’s geo-political crises.

There is some good news however. Although the global oligarchy aims to have total control of the world, it has not yet reached that goal. This oligarchy is not monolithic, there is competition among them and turf warfare. This can be seen in the competition for resources and wealth worldwide, and especially in the new anti-Russia propaganda. The oligarchs are infighting in many cases, the Ukraine situation represents a good case study for this. So, this infighting, along with individual opposition via economic and political factions, tends to block the global oligarchy from cementing full control. Furthermore, grassroots citizen movements are attempting to oppose these modern aristocrats as well, and together the movements have the ability awaken the greater citizenry and challenge the oligarchy.

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