

### TEXT SUMMARY

Early European monarchs claimed that their rule was legitimate because of the **divine right of kings**—they said God gave them the authority to rule. People started to challenge this idea, and soon the principle of popular sovereignty, that the government's legitimacy comes from the people themselves, became more important.

Countries have taken many different paths towards popular sovereignty. In Britain, the government gradually changed from an absolute monarchy into a democracy. As a result change came very slowly. By contrast, in France the change came by revolution over the course of just a few years. The revolution was violent, and many old French institutions and traditions were abandoned.

In Latin America, under the **encomienda** system, power was centered on the

**haciendas**, or large estates. This system made it difficult to build strong central governments when Latin American countries became independent.

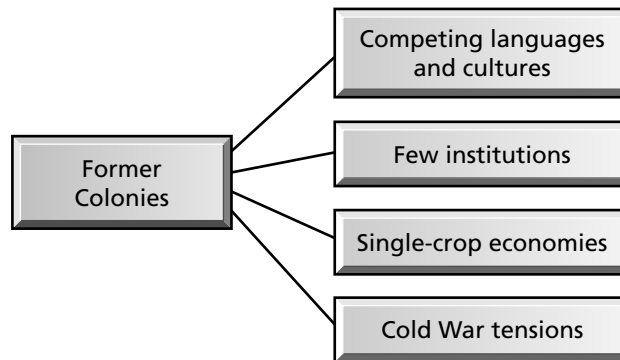
In Africa, the problems faced have been even more complex. Many African countries, such as Nigeria, include multiple ethnic groups that speak many different languages and observe different religions. The problem of building stable governments in Africa is worsened by difficult economic conditions.

Communism and **fascism**, two systems in which state power is strongly centralized and people have no say in their government, caused great violence in the 20th century. These systems are very different, but they both twist the idea of popular sovereignty, claiming that the state governs in the name of the people. In fact, both systems of government are dictatorships.

### THE BIG IDEA

**Popular sovereignty is the basis for most modern governments, including both democracies and dictatorships.**

### GRAPHIC SUMMARY: *The Challenges of Independence*



Many former colonies struggled after independence.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What arguments did communist and fascist governments use to claim that their dictatorships govern on behalf of the people? How did their arguments differ?

2. **Diagram Skills** How has colonialism made it harder to build stable governments in Africa?