

Authoritarian Governments

Aristocracy / Oligarchy

Aristocracy refers to a form of government in which wealthy nobles are given power over those in lower socioeconomic strata. Positions of leadership are reserved for those of an elite ruling class.

Dictatorship

A dictatorship is a nation ruled with absolute power, in the absence of a democratic process, and typically under the thumb of a single authority figure.

Monarchy

Monarchy refers to a form of rule in which absolute power and authority are held by a single member of a royal bloodline. In a monarchical society, power is inherited within a line of succession that relates to one's bloodline and birth-order within the ruling royal family.

Totalitarian

Totalitarianism is an authoritarian form of government in which the ruling party recognizes no limitations whatsoever on its power, either in the public life or private rights of its citizens. Power is often vested in the hands of a single figure

Theocracy

Theocracy refers to a form of government in which a specific religious ideology informs the leadership, laws, and customs of a nation.

Governments that allow the People a voice

Republic

Republicanism, the form of government — not to be conflated with the Republican political party specific to U.S. politics — refers to a system in which power is vested in the citizenry. In technical definition, a republic is a nation in which the people hold popular sovereignty through voting in elected officials known as representatives.

Democracy

Democracy refers to a form of government in which the people are given a direct role in choosing their leadership. A system in which no single force or entity can exercise unchecked control or authority. The result is a system which requires discourse, debate, and compromise to satisfy the broadest possible number of public interests. Democracy is typified by fair and free elections, civic participation, protection of human rights, and the rule of law.

Types of Democracy

Direct Democracy

A Democratic government where all citizens directly participate in each decision.

Representative Democracy

A Democratic government where citizens choose representatives, who then govern on the behalf of the citizenry.

Democracies that use Constitutions

Constitutional Democracy

Constitutional government is defined by the existence of a constitution—which may be a legal instrument or merely a set of fixed norms or principles generally accepted as the fundamental law of the polity—that effectively controls the exercise of political power.

When there is no Government

Anarchy

Anarchism refers to the absence of government, a condition in which a nation or state operates without a central governing body.

Economic Systems used by Governments

Capitalism, Free Enterprise or Market Economy

Capitalism refers to a form of economy in which production is driven by private ownership. Capitalism promotes the idea of open competition and extends from the belief that a free market economy — one with limited regulatory control — is the most efficient form of economic organization. Its advocates argue that capitalism promotes economic growth, improved standards of living, higher productivity, and broader prosperity, whereas critics argue that capitalism inherently promotes inequality, exploitation of the labor class, and unsustainable use of resources and land.

Socialism

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Economic Systems used by Governments (cont)

Socialism refers to a form of economy in which the people own the primary means of production. A counterpoint to the competitive nature and unequal proclivities of capitalism, socialism has existed in many forms and to widely variant degrees of strictness throughout history and around the world. From small communal societies to state-level governments that provide encompassing public services such as universal healthcare, the concept of socialism permeates governments the world over.

Communism or Command Economy

In its purest form, Communism refers to the idea of common, public ownership of the economy, including infrastructure, utilities, and means of production. Communism, as idealized by thinkers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, denotes an absence of class divisions, which inherently requires the subversion of the ruling class by the working class. As such, communism often incorporates the idea of revolutionary action against unequal rule. Communism often positions itself as a counterpoint to the economic stratification underlying capitalism.

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