

Authoritarianism

Governance based on rule by law, or rule by man

Regimes that rule by law have complete power and are not accountable to the people



Those in power impose a set of beliefs on the people who must conform. Individual freedom of thought or action is not tolerated. The governing authority has absolute control and demands complete submission.



[Video summary: Totalitarianism vs Authoritarianism](#)

Totalitarian

An *oppressive system of government* that demands obedience from the people. Absolute power is held over the lives of citizens and enforced through police terror, indoctrination, and persecution to maintain total control.

A totalitarian government claims to always work in the best interests of the people; however, it controls all aspects of individual life through coercion and repression. The state glorifies its aims and continually justifies government actions to avoid scrutiny from the people. All aspects of society are also controlled, such as business, housing, religion, education, and personal life. Examples of a totalitarian rule include dictatorship, communism, and fascism.

Dictatorship (autocracy)

This type of rule involves a *single person*, called a *dictator* who has absolute power over the people. One person is in control of all policies and decisions, including how the law of the land is made and enforced. Accountability does not exist as the people have no say and individual rights are severely restricted, or violently curbed. Free speech is banned and individual rights are severely restricted, or violently curbed. Elections are non-existent, or highly compromised.

Dictatorships are tyrannical and oppressive regimes. Military backing is used to force, threaten and suppress the peoples' freedom. Competitors and opponents of the regime are quickly and brutally dealt with to keep the dictator in power. Controlling media organisations and releasing *propaganda* material in mass communication is an effective tool that is used to deceive the people. A dictator goes to great effort to hide what is happening beyond the country's borders from the people.

Fascism is a form of government, usually headed by a dictator involving total government control of political, economic, cultural, religious, and social activities. Some industries may be owned by individuals but are managed under complete government control.

This form of government involves enforced patriotism, warlike policies, and extreme discrimination against minority groups.

Oligarchy

An oligarchy occurs when only a *few extremely wealthy and privileged people* hold power. Rulers are selected from a small class of elites who exercise control to benefit personal gain to the detriment of the rest of society. All decisions are made to enhance personal family wealth and influence with no accountability to the people. Oligarchies often persecute minority groups, but reward their own elite class in order to remain in power. This causes a lack of diversity and can stagnate the economic growth of the country creating a great divide in wealth distribution among the people, often leading to rebellion.

Authoritarian rule does not protect individual freedoms and human rights

Communism

Communism involves a *social organisation or political party that controls all economic aspects in the country*. Characterised by the rule of a single party which controls all activity, including what food crops are grown, goods manufactured, to whom they are sold, and at what prices. Ownership of private property is replaced with public ownership and communal control. Some personal freedom of individuals is allowed, including where they can travel and how they spend their money. However, this is limited and restrictions are introduced with little notice. True communism aims to create a society without conflicts and dissent. The need for rules or justice exists only in administrative processes. The creation of laws is deemed unnecessary as control of the people occurs through party rule.