

Autocratic system of government assignment



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Autocracy is defined as a form of government in which supreme political power is held by one person. The term autocrat is derived from the Greek word autokrator, auto meaning self, and kratia meaning rule. It implies self-rule, where one can do whatever they want if they have power.

Totalitarianism is considered a modern form of an autocratic government, where the government controls all aspects of the society. A totalitarian political party seeks to control not only all economic and political matters but the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the people, eliminating the distinction between state and society.

According to Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski there are six key elements of totalitarianism and without these elements totalitarianism cannot exist: 1) an official ideology, 2) a single party typically led by one man, 3) a terrorist police, 4) a communications monopoly, 5) a weapons monopoly, and lastly 6) a centrally directed economy. The ultimate goal of a totalitarian government is to establish a “ perfect” society in the eyes of the political party. Three major historical totalitarian states include the Soviet Union under Stalin, Italy under Mussolini, and Nazi Germany under Hitler.

Totalitarianism is an attempt to change the society as a whole, which is implemented by a single political party that controls all aspects of the society. The government would control all lines of communications, and used terror to intimidate society in hope that the society would only hear the political party’s ideology without any outside distractions. Totalitarianism states had full control the mass media. For example, newspapers, radio stations, and publishing houses were all run by the political party. Computers

& photo copy machines were prohibited as well as foreign newspapers, books, and magazines.

This was done to ensure that all means of communication would support the “ official” political ideology so that only their ideology was heard and no one could doubt the party. A totalitarian state is regulated by a secret police; the police exercise power on behalf of the executive and the conduct of the police cannot be effectively challenged. In such regimes there is no significant distinction between the law and the will of the executive; there is no rule of law. Groups such as The Nazi Gestapo & the Soviet KGB, used means of terror in Totalitarianism rule.

These groups would use intimidation, random arrests, torture and even execution in effort to solidify their political ideology in the minds of the people and so that no resistance movements would gain steam. The political police was a separate identity from the regular police force; they had their own prisons, mental hospitals, and labor camps. These facilities were specialized for those who didn't follow the political ideology, and were much harsher than a normal jail cell. The totalitarian state aspires to control a planned economy.

A controlled economy is essential in a totalitarian state; there can be no liberal economy where each individual can pursue private enterprise. A totalitarian state has public ownership, with communism in the Soviet Union, or state supervision of private enterprise, in Nazi Germany or fascist Italy. Individual interests and goals must be according to the state. Communist Russia, Nazi Germany, and Fascist Italy each had a planned economy, all

political parties involved had ideals and beliefs they believed would make a perfect or utopian society.

Pseudo-Democratic rule was also a prominent theme, it meant the leader of political party maintained their power by force but rationalized their rule with pseudo-democratic arguments. It is a very integral part of totalitarianism, because the society is being remade it lets the society participate but at the same time making sure that people cannot change their rulers. For example, there was only one candidate person position on a ballot. Immediately after World War I, Russia became a Communist state while Italy and Germany became Fascist states.

A communist state is one that has a sole political party running it, while a fascist state attempts to impose state control over all aspects of life: political, social, cultural, and economic. Stalin achieved dictatorial status as the sole leader of the Soviet Union. As dictator, he controlled almost all aspects of social life, as well as the economic and political aspects. For example, he initiated the Great Purge, where he used violence and aggression to sustain absolute control over the Soviet Union.

However, unlike the totalitarian governments of Italy and Germany, Stalin implemented a democratic constitution that was identical to any Western European country's system. In Italy, a totalitarian government came to power after World War I because of the lack of productivity and stability in the parliamentary regime. Mussolini's regime brought stability and rejuvenated the economy; however it was at the expense of the people's

political and economical independence. Additionally, his regime directly affected the social aspects of Italian life.

For example, he instituted Fascist ideas into the youth through public education system and controlled the mass media to only let his Fascist ideas be heard. Like most other totalitarian regimes, under Mussolini Italy used many acts of violence and aggression to insure political power and eradicate any revolutionary conspiracies or resistance movements. Meanwhile, in Germany, Hitler created a totalitarian Nazi Party. Like the other totalitarian systems, Nazi Germany came about because of its promise of economic and political stability, but at the expense of individual rights and freedoms much like Mussolini and Stalin.

Hitler did more than just manipulating the mass media and implementing strict discipline and traditionalism to the society. He publicly voiced hostility towards Jews and called them Germany's enemies to strengthen his totalitarian ideas of nationalism and white Aryan superiority. He blamed the Jewish race for all of Germany's economic problems and strongly believed in anti-Semitism where he took away the rights and property of Jews. His use of violence aggressions towards the Jews established racism as the underlining factor in his totalitarian regime. Totalitarian regimes are extremely negative for a society.

A single political party implements their ideals and beliefs on the society as a whole. Individuals are stripped of their freedom of speech as well as personal rights; they are constantly bombarded with the political party's ideals. This is easily done by the state because they control all mass media including

newspapers, radio stations, and magazines. Bans are placed on all foreign material limiting the people of the society to only read and hear the political party's ideals. The society is controlled by violence and intimidation; people are basically living in a fish bowl where they are constantly being judged.

The society is almost hollow, in that they can only do and believe what the government wants, because if they speak out against the party they will either be injured severely or even killed. Totalitarianism is characterized by strong central rule that attempts to control and direct all aspects of individual life through coercion and repression. In conclusion, although there was control of individual life, it did not stretch to all aspects of individual life. Despite the distinct differences between these totalitarian states, they all shared several common characteristics.

The Soviet Union, Italy, and Germany all tried to control all aspects of life with the use of manipulation through mass media and rallies as well as the use of violence to get rid of their political enemies. They were all generally led by a single dictator, who controlled all aspects of the society including the police, military, mass media, and the educational systems. Though totalitarianism regimes aren't as prominent in the 21st century, two prominent leaders are Kim Jong Il of North Korea and Fidel Castro of Cuba still run their respective states in a totalitarianistic manner.

Finally, all these political regimes required their citizens to strictly follow the regimes ideals and not have any social, economical, or political freedoms.

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