

# Example of essay on britts fourteen elements of fascism

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



According to the political scientist Lawrence Britt, there are fourteen elements that make up fascism. Governments that can be described as fascist, according to Britt, have the following characteristics: powerful and continuing nationalism, disdain for the recognition of human rights, identification of enemies or scapegoats as a unifying cause, supremacy of the military, rampant sexism, controlled mass media, obsession with national security, intertwining of religion and government, protection of corporate power, suppression of labor power, disdain for intellectuals and the arts, obsession with crime and punishment, rampant cronyism and corruption, and fraudulent elections (Britt). While a government must exhibit most or all of these characteristics to be considered a truly fascist regime, Britt suggests that America itself does exhibit many of these characteristics in a variety of different ways.

The issue of nationalism and the identification of enemies and scapegoats as the underlying cause of problems is, perhaps, the easiest category to see in the United States. Since the attacks on 9/11, the level of nationalism within the country has skyrocketed, and the media has been more than willing to paint countries in the Middle East as the enemy. President Bush even referred to those nations as the "Axis of Evil," which certainly set them apart from the United States.

In addition, the existence of the prison at Guantanamo Bay and the reported abuses there easily fill the category of "disdain for human rights." While the United States does not blatantly ignore the Geneva Convention on Human Rights in ways that are immediately obvious to the international community, the government has accepted that torture is an acceptable method for

interrogation in the military. Although many people in the government (and the citizenry at large) believe that torture is not appropriate for use, the military has enough power and sway in the government to convince the government to allow the use of torture. In addition, the military-industrial complex is hugely powerful, and receives large sums of money from the government each year.

Since the attacks on 9/11, the American government and the American people have become increasingly concerned with national safety. The government, with the Patriot Act, has restricted many of the freedoms that Americans previously enjoyed. This easily fulfills the characteristic of the obsession with national security. However, it is also linked to the control of mass media: the media willingly parrots everything the government says, and is willing to further the hype and hysteria over potential terrorist threats, thus increasing people's obsession with national security. The media also feeds into the public's desire for drama by sensationalizing large trials, furthering the obsession with crime and punishment. The large numbers of crime dramas on television can also be seen as the American public's obsession with crime and punishment, although many of these are fictionalized. The American public's willingness to consume drama regarding crime and punishment on a large scale indicates that the culture as a whole does have an obsession with crime and punishment.

The American government has also, especially in recent years, begun an attack on women's rights. Women are paid less than men for the same job all around the country, and now they are offered fewer health care options. The wage gap in the United States is larger than it is in many other

industrialized nations, and women make up a tiny percentage of high-level business people in American corporations. In addition, women are not afforded maternity leave in many places, which is standard in most industrialized nations. Arguments against gay marriage and teaching evolution in schools always take on a religious tone, indicating that despite the First Amendment, religion-- particularly Christianity-- and government are closely intertwined in American society.

As for corporate power and the suppression of labor, the financial crisis that occurred as a result of rampant cronyism and corruption in the financial sector very nearly destroyed the economic stability of the United States. The Occupy Wall Street protests demonstrated that most of the wealth in the United States is concentrated among very few, and that those individuals are protected from consequences by the government. Thus, the American government also fulfills the corruption and cronyism requirement.

The final two requirements for a fascist regime are the disdain for intellectuals and the arts, and fraudulent elections. While there is not open disdain for intellectuals, there has been a movement in politics in recent years towards politicians who are just like the average person. Being average and not " elite" or " intellectual" is something that many politicians aspire to-- indeed, it is a personality that allowed President Bush to be elected twice. Finally, the American government demonstrated that it is not above tampering with elections when President Bush lost the popular vote in 2004 and yet gained the presidency anyway.

Is America a fascist regime? One could argue that no, it is not. However, it does share many of the characteristics that other fascist regimes were

known for in the past. Without careful attention, the American government could quickly slip into more restrictive forms of fascism.

## **Works cited**

Britt, Laurence. " Fascism, Anyone?." Free Inquiry magazine 2004 Online.