

The dictatorial regime



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Dictatorial regimes (also known as dictatorships) are one of the most well-known forms of government. In a dictatorial regime, an individual assumes sole power over the state and will go to great lengths just to remain in power. Dictatorial regimes are synonymous with corruption and violence, as dictators often put and kept themselves in power by plundering the wealth of their respective nations and brutally suppressing legitimate political dissent. The despotic nature of dictatorial regimes was very much felt in the 20th century, as the political history of this era was characterized with the emergence of dictatorships throughout the world.

Definition and Structure According to Merriam-Webster (2008), a dictatorship is defined as “ a form of government in which absolute power is concentrated in a dictator or a small clique” or “ a government organization or group in which absolute power is so concentrated” (Merriam-Webster Online, 2008). In a dictatorship, a single leader or a small group of leaders control all aspects of social and economic life. Constitutional formalities such as parliamentary sessions, judicial courts and popular elections are suspended.

Dictators are often reliant on the military and the police to preserve their hold on power (Sedivy, n. d.). Role of the Government and the Citizen The role of the government in a dictatorship is to exert immense control over the affairs of the nation as a whole by using threat and force to interfere in the lives of its citizens. The citizens, in turn, are expected to swear allegiance to the government, particularly to the leader itself. In a dictatorial regime, it is believed that the individual existed solely for the good of the state.

Those who opposed this philosophy are immediately considered as “ enemies of the state” (Hsieh, 1994). The Anatomy of a Dictatorship Aside from threat and force, dictatorships also capitalize on nationalistic propaganda. Dictators often use patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols and songs in order to justify their iron-fisted rule. Under the guises of “ protecting national security” and “ defeating the enemies of the state,” dictators will then proceed to commit various human rights violations, such as torture, summary executions and warrantless arrests.

In order to make the people side with them, they will resort to scapegoating, or the identification of a perceived common “ enemy. ” The most common scapegoats in a dictatorship include ethnic or religious minorities, liberals, communists, socialists and terrorists (Britt, 2004). Since a dictatorship is reliant on the military for its survival, dictators allocate very large amounts of government funds to the defense forces (at the expense of the domestic agenda).

State censorship is likewise very rampant - mass media is subjected to government control, progressive militant organizations and labor unions are severely suppressed, free expression is openly attacked and artists and intellectuals who are against the government are arrested or even killed. To further protect their interests, dictators make cronies out of their countries' industrial and business aristocracy, appointing them to important government positions despite their lack of qualifications.

Dictators are also the masterminds behind bloody and fraudulent elections - they engage in vote buying, manipulate election results and even have their opponents assassinated just to emerge as the winner (Britt, 2004). The

Advantages and the Disadvantages of a Dictatorial Regime A dictatorship is often known to possess the advantages of efficiency and rationality. The dictator is also the decision-maker; hence, there is consistency and congruency between decisions and preference orderings. But a dictatorship, as discussed earlier, is more likely to result in the violation of individual rights and civil liberties.

In addition, the political and economic policies of a dictatorial regime will only benefit the cronies of the dictator (Rea, 2003). Conclusion It has often been said that if power corrupts, then absolute power corrupts absolutely. A dictatorship takes this argument to a higher level by showing how a government can turn against its own people just to keep one person in power. A dictatorship may appear strong and invincible, but it is actually afraid of its own people. That is why it sows fear and hate among the people - so that they will be too busy fighting and killing each other to notice the illegitimacy of its rule over them.