

Video Lesson #3

Unit 2: Types of Government

Use with ACTIVITY 2 - CHART: Unlimited Governments

Welcome back! Today we're going to define and categorize the various types of government. No documents are needed for this lesson, but you might want to open your workbook to Activity 2 while you watch the video.

All governments can be categorized based on their exercise of power. In other words, all governments have either limited power or unlimited power. Those types of government with unlimited power have no restraints on their power; those in power do what they please. On the other hand, governments with limited power have one or more means of limiting the government's power (a constitution, frequent elections, term limits, etc). It's important to note that limited governments can at times act in an unlimited manner. For instance, during the American Civil War, Congress acquiesced with President Lincoln's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, thereby allowing the national government to incarcerate critics of and alleged opponents of the war effort without needing to show just cause for their imprisonment. The 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion saw 7 of the 9 justices vote to overturn anti-abortion laws in 46 states. On the other hand, unlimited governments can have limits to their exercise of power. A nation ruled by an all-powerful oligarchy can be taken over by another nation (a limitation on their power) or the dictator with unlimited power could be assassinated. As Long John Silver used to say, "Dead men don't bite." What we're driving at is that there is no ideal type of government that fully acts in an unlimited manner or limited manner. Even communist governments known for their ruthless exercise of power may adopt the economic freedoms of capitalism (as the People's Republic of China has done) if they perceive an advantage in doing so. Let's begin today's study by looking at those governments with unlimited power.

Theocracy (rule by God) is our first type of government with unlimited power. The ancient Israelites had a theocracy until they asked God for a king like the nations around them. God was King, Lawgiver, and Judge over His chosen people and ruled them indirectly through men like Moses, Joshua, and the Judges. Since God is perfect and holy, a theocracy is the best form of government; He cannot make an error in judgment or fail to do what is right as the leader of His people. The problem in a theocracy is not with the Ruler but with the people. Sinful, self-serving human beings rebel against God's standards, so a theocracy fails not from corrupt leadership but from corrupt citizens. Just read the book of Judges for several case histories proving why a theocracy doesn't work

Another form of government with unlimited power is absolute monarchy. In an absolute monarchy the king or queen exercises unlimited power over their subjects. Louis XIV, who ruled France from 1643 - 1715, epitomizes the ideal absolute monarch. Reputed to have said, *L'état, c'est moi* (I am the state), Louis did his best to stamp out the last vestiges of feudalism in France, taking away the power of the nobility and concentrating it in himself as monarch. The extravagant palace of Versailles enabled Louis to keep close tabs on the aristocracy residing with him there in extreme luxury. While this form of government has the advantage of speedy decision-making crucial for international politics, basic human rights and freedoms are often

ignored or trampled upon. The desires of the monarch take precedence over the needs and desires of the people. Louis nearly bankrupted France with the construction and maintenance of Versailles and the wars he fought to expand French power and influence in Europe.

Dictatorship is a third form of government with unlimited power. Unlike absolute monarchy, where the position is hereditary, a dictator often seizes power and ruthlessly suppresses opposition to his rule and quashes any attempt to overthrow him. Think about Stalin's paranoia as Soviet dictator in the 1930's and 40's. He had his chief rival Leon Trotsky hunted down and murdered. Suspicious of the military high command, Stalin purges the army leadership prior to the Second World War. His forced collectivization of agriculture means death for those who resist these policies. Tens of millions of Russians die during Stalin's rule. A benevolent dictator may institute reforms benefiting the masses, but most dictators throughout history have used their power for personal gain and maintaining themselves in power. Disregard for human rights and freedom is another hallmark of dictatorship.

Socialism and communism, albeit economic systems, also fall under the heading of unlimited government, as the governments of these economic systems use their power to control the people via control of the economy. The American Heritage dictionary defines socialism as "any of various theories or systems of social organization in which the means of producing and distributing goods is owned collectively or by a centralized government that often plans and controls the economy." Don't try to write all that down; the definition is already printed on Activity 2 in your workbook. The advantage of this form of government is centralized planning with definable goals. The success or failure in meeting these goals is easily discernable and adjustments made accordingly. Yet what can be an advantage could also be a disadvantage resulting in economic inefficiency. Poor planning or planners not knowing what they're doing could create more economic problems than they solve. In the former Soviet Union, for example, you had non-farmers on the central planning board telling the peasant farmers (who were agricultural experts compared to the central planning committee members)-you had these committee members sitting in Moscow telling farmers in the Ukraine what to grow, when to plant, etc. Suppose, for example, that the U.S. government decided that every household in the U.S. should have an RCA 54" flat-screen color TV. The only TVs available in the electronics superstores, Wal-Marts, etc. are RCA 54" flat-screens. Now, suppose I want a 60" flat screen? Or suppose I like Magnavox better than RCA? Or what if Samsung has better picture quality? My options are gone in a socialist economy. Even if I was willing to pay more for a bigger screen or a different brand with better quality, USACOTA (that's the acronym for the United States of America Color TV Authority) will not let me legally pursue these options. I could try to obtain my desired TV on the black market, keeping it hidden from the authorities, or I can accept the smaller and in my mind inferior product produced under the planned economy. The central planners in socialism wield a great deal of power in determining what is available on store shelves.

Cousin to socialism is communism. Communism is defined as "a theoretical economic system characterized by the collective ownership of property and by the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members." Again, this definition is in your workbook. Note the coercive nature of this definition. Collective, not private, ownership of property AND the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members. Communism, as Karl Marx

envisioned it, would have produced a harmonious, classless society. But how would this be achieved if the “haves” in society would not willingly surrender their excess wealth to the “have nots?” Marx argued that a “dictatorship of the proletariat” would be needed as a transition to the ideal communist state. What history has shown us, however, is the failure of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” to achieve anything close to a perfect society. The Soviet Union tried for 70 years to achieve this nirvana and failed. Wherever implemented, communism simply replaces one set of oppressive rulers with a new set of oppressive rulers. Which leads us back to our foundational principles. Communism can only work if man is good, and because man’s sin nature makes man inherently evil, he cannot live in perfect harmony in a collective society doing everything for the benefit of society as a whole. His greed, selfishness, and self-interest will constantly interfere with the greater good leading to constant tension if not outright conflict with the common good. Theoretically, communism sounds great— equality and all that jazz-- but it is impossible to achieve. The early Christian church tried communism on a small scale, but even given these better-than-normal conditions, the system failed. In Acts Chapters 2 and 4, the believers were selling their possessions and sharing with their brothers and sisters in Christ. But how does Acts Chapter 5 begin? Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property and kept part of the sales price, trying to deceive the brethren into believing they gave 100% to the work of the ministry. They may have temporarily deceived their fellow church members, but God was not fooled, and lying about how much they put into the offering cost them their lives. Here’s the bottom line: socialist and communist systems must be coercive because their alleged goal of socioeconomic equality goes against human nature.

Our last unlimited government is fascism, which combines elements of the other forms of unlimited government. Again turning to the American Heritage Dictionary for a definition, fascism is “a system of government marked by centralization of authority under a dictator, stringent socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition through terror and censorship, and typically a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism; a political philosophy or movement based on or advocating such a system of government.” Let’s look at a well-known fascist state to see these 4 characteristics in action. Nazi Germany is without a doubt the best historical example of fascism. Hitler came to power through devious and illegal methods when his party was in the minority in the Reichstag (the German legislature), and once having seized and solidified his hold on power, Hitler abolished the Reichstag. He was now a true fascist dictator and began to implement his fascist policies to turn Germany into a powerful fascist nation—the Third Reich that was to last for a thousand years. I wonder if Hitler was thinking about Christ’s future millennial kingdom when he made this prediction about the Third Reich. (Having seen the chaos and destruction caused by the 12-year tenure of the Third Reich, I’m thankful it isn’t around today.) Anyway, back to Hitler’s fascist goals. He sought to end the economic depression in Germany and began to rearm Germany with his Four-Year Plans. Public works programs like the building of the autobahn not only provided work for Germany’s unemployed but also created an important transportation system for the Volkswagen (the people’s car) and an additional method of moving troops and supplies during Hitler’s upcoming war to provide lebensraum (living space) for the German population. These economic stimulus plans, along with the Hitler Youth, laws punishing homosexuality, and economic incentive plans for marriage and motherhood were all part of the total socioeconomic program designed to prepare Germany for Hitler’s expansionist plans. Book burnings, the Gestapo, and concentration camps enabled Hitler to silence his opponents. Finally,

Hitler preached the doctrine of “Aryan superiority” and the inferiority of other racial groups. He left the stadium at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin rather than shake the hand of Jesse Owens, a black American track and field star. Poles, Hungarians, and Slavs suffered greatly under Hitler’s regime, and his “Final Solution” to the Jewish question resulted in the Holocaust with the extermination of over 6 million Jews. Nazi Germany symbolizes the brutal nature of fascism as a form of government with unlimited power. Having covered the gamut of types of government with unlimited power, let’s pause for a few moments and give you time to complete Activity 2 in your workbook. Using what you’ve learned from our just-concluded video conversation and your knowledge of world history, see if you can add additional advantages and disadvantages to the chart. You may want to bounce your ideas off of your homeschool supervisor before writing them down. If you are taking this course in a coop setting, your leader may want to conduct a group discussion to assist the class in completing the assignment. At the beginning of our next class session, we will have a quiz over unlimited governments. To prepare for this quiz, be sure to study Activity 2 and any notes you took on Video Segment 3. You auditory learners may wish to re-watch the video prior to taking the quiz.

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ACTIVITY 2 CHART: Unlimited Governments – Used with video lesson 3

NAME _____ DATE _____

Directions: Add additional advantages and disadvantages to the unlimited types of government. You may wish to discuss your answers with your classmates or supervisor.

Type of Government	Definition	Advantages	Disadvantages
Theocracy	Rule by God	Perfect government	Impossible because of man's sin nature
Absolute Monarchy	King or Queen with unlimited power	Quick decision-making	Citizens' rights may be violated
Dictatorship	Ruler with unrestrained power	Quick decision-making	Citizens' rights may be violated
Socialism	Government ownership or control of a nation's industries and economy	Central planning	Economic inefficiency
Fascism	Centralization of authority under a dictator, stringent socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition through terror and censorship, and typically a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism	Uniformity in society	Will not tolerate dissent
Communism	Theoretical economic system characterized by the collective ownership of property and by the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members	Strives for equality among its citizens	Loss of personal freedom

Video Lesson #4

Limited Governments

No student worksheet for this video lesson.

I trust you did well on the unlimited governments quiz. Now it's time to move on to limited power governments. Governments with limited power tend to have a constitution or some other structure that limits their power. Citizens living under limited governments tend to enjoy more personal freedom; even the freedom to disobey the law if they so choose. Limited governments, as a rule of thumb, also have a greater respect for basic human rights – rights such as life, liberty, and property, to quote the English political philosopher John Locke. And whereas unlimited governments may make a show of letting their citizens participate by having them vote in rigged elections, limited governments allow citizens an active, meaningful role in government expressed through voting in regularly-held elections, getting involved in a political party or activist group, writing letters to the editor or contacting their representatives on issues, and even running for political office. The primary types of limited government are constitutional monarchies, democracies, and republics. Let's quickly discuss them in that order.

A constitutional monarchy has a written (or unwritten) plan of government that restricts the king or queen's power. Unlike Louis XIV during the Age of Absolutism, a constitutional monarch cannot do whatever he or she wants. England's Charles I is a good example of the checks and balances on the king's power in a constitutional monarchy. Charles' attempts to increase his power at the expense of Parliament resulted in the English Civil War lasting from 1631-1639. Parliament prevailed, and Charles I paid with his life for refusing to submit to limits on his power.

Democracy, our second form of limited government, comes to us from the ancient Greeks. The term comes from the Greek words (*dêmos*) meaning, "people" and (*krátos*), meaning "rule or strength." Democracy is, simply put, "rule by the people." According to an article in Wikipedia, there are more than a dozen different forms of democracy. Write their definitions down quickly and we'll have a quiz over them tomorrow. Just kidding! The common thread that ties these varying types of democracy together is their decision-making process based on majority rule. This can be both a good thing and a bad thing. Decisions of a democratic government, while reflecting the will of the majority, may completely ignore the wishes of the minority. Suppose, for example, that in a New England town meeting (a form of direct democracy), 89% of the people voted to ban all farming within the town boundaries to eliminate the unpleasant odors that occasionally emanate from the Brewster Brothers barns on the edge of town - a virtual paradise for the cows, chickens, and pigs residing on 200 acres of rolling pastureland. 11% of the citizens, mostly family and relatives of the Brewster Brothers, opposed the ordinance, but it was passed in spite of their protests and opposition. Now the town enjoys better air quality, but everyone complains about the lack of fresh homegrown produce at the supermarket, because all of the vegetable gardens had to go along with the Brewster Brothers' herds. This ridiculous scenario illustrates for us the main problem of democracy – what if the majority is in the wrong, especially about more serious matters such as the legalization of abortion or limitations on private property rights? The tyranny of the majority can be just as oppressive as the tyranny of the dictator, and that is one of the reasons our Founding Fathers

shied away from democracy in favor of a republican (small r) form of government, a concept which they borrowed from the Romans.

The Romans established a republic in 509 B.C., a form of government better suited to ruling a large territory than the direct democracy of the geographically-small Greek city-states. This representative form of democracy enables the citizenry to participate in the governing process via their elected representatives. In a republic, the rulers are subject to the will of the people; that is, if the people have the will to hold their leaders accountable. Periodic elections enable the electorate to reaffirm their confidence in the current representatives or replace them with individuals better qualified or more responsive to the will of the electorate. For a republic to work, the Romans believed that the citizens needed to possess character qualities such as hard work, frugality, and honesty – qualities that they referred to as “civic virtues.” Study the demise of the Roman Republic and you will see a correlation between the decline of these virtues and the death of the Republic – a fact that should cause us to shudder as we examine our society and government.

So, which type of government, (limited or unlimited), would you rather live under? Personally I prefer limited government with its respect for human rights and individual freedom. God help us to preserve, protect, and defend these freedoms. The next video segment focuses on our American political heritage. Before we tackle that topic, be sure to study for and take Test #1 over the Foundational Principles and Unlimited/Limited Governments. Then prepare for Video Segment 5 by printing out the American Political Heritage excerpts from the course CD. This is a rather lengthy reading assignment, but it will greatly facilitate your understanding of the topic.

NAME _____ DATE _____

QUIZ: UNLIMITED GOVERNMENTS

Score: _____/25

Matching: Match the form of unlimited government with its definition. (1 point each)

A. Dictatorship B. Communism C. Socialism D. Fascism

- _____ 1. government control of a nation's industry and economy
- _____ 2. a single ruler with unlimited power
- _____ 3. **theoretical economic system characterized by the collective ownership of property and by the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members**
- _____ 4. **centralization of authority under a dictator, stringent socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition through terror and censorship, and typically a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism**

Short Answer: Write a 3-5 sentence response to the following questions.

5. Why is theocracy the best form of unlimited government? (3 points)
6. Even unlimited governments have some limitations on their exercise of power. Based on our video discussion, identify some of these limitations. Try to include historical examples in support of your answer. (5 points)
7. Central planning is a characteristic of socialist government. Why does this type of government often fail to produce what consumers want? (3 points)

TEACHER KEY

ACTIVITY 2 CHART: Unlimited Governments

Directions: Add additional advantages and disadvantages to the unlimited types of government. You may wish to discuss your answers with your classmates or supervisor.

Type of Government	Definition	Advantages	Disadvantages
Theocracy	Rule by God	Perfect government <i>God's preferred method of government</i>	Impossible because of man's sin nature <i>Responses will vary</i>
Absolute Monarchy	King or Queen with unlimited power	Quick decision-making <i>No need for periodic elections</i>	Citizens' rights may be violated <i>Monarch not financially accountable Monarch could misuse their power</i>
Dictatorship	Ruler with unrestrained power	Quick decision-making <i>Responses will vary.</i>	Citizens' rights may be violated <i>Responses will vary.</i>
Socialism	Government ownership or control of a nation's industries and economy	Central planning <i>Could limit individual greed found in capitalism.</i>	Economic inefficiency <i>Success based on abilities of the planners</i>
Fascism	Centralization of authority under a dictator, stringent socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition through terror and censorship, and typically a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism	Uniformity in society <i>Good of the nation more important than individual achievement</i>	Will not tolerate dissent <i>Loss of individual rights</i>
Communism	Theoretical economic system characterized by the collective ownership of property and by the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members	Strives for equality among its citizens <i>Responses will vary</i>	Loss of personal freedom <i>Responses will vary</i>

TEACHER KEY

QUIZ: UNLIMITED GOVERNMENTS

Score: _____/15

Matching: Match the form of unlimited government with its definition. (1 point each)

A. Dictatorship B. Communism C. Socialism D. Fascism

 C 1. government control of a nation's industry and economy

 A 2. a single ruler with unlimited power

 B 3. **theoretical economic system characterized by the collective ownership of property and by the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members**

 D 4. **centralization of authority under a dictator, stringent socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition through terror and censorship, and typically a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism**

Short Answer: Write a 3-5 sentence response to the following questions.

5. Why is theocracy the best form of unlimited government? (3 points)

- *Answers will vary, but may contain the following concepts. Theocracy is rule by God. Since God is perfectly holy and just, theocracy is a perfect form of government. Even though the One ruling has unlimited power. He can never make a mistake. His character and judgment are above reproach. Although it is the ideal type of government, sinful men and women cannot live under this type of government, refusing in the long run (as the children of Israel did) to submit to God's demands on those living under His rule.*

6. Even unlimited governments have some limitations on their exercise of power. Based on our video discussion, identify some of these limitations. Try to include historical examples in support of your answer. (5 points)

- *Answers will vary, but may contain the following concepts. A dictator's hold on power is limited to his tenure in office. Death by natural causes or assassination removes the dictator from power. A nation with an unlimited government may be conquered by another nation and a more benevolent government established. An absolute monarch like Louis XVI may be removed from power by a popular uprising (the French Revolution). A military coup d'etat could overthrow the existing government and usher in a transition to a more democratic form of government. As in the case of the Soviet Union in the late 1970's, economic crises could trigger the collapse of a dictatorial government.*

7. Central planning is a characteristic of socialist government. Why does this type of government often fail to produce what consumers want? (3 points)

- *Answers will vary, but may contain the following concepts. The success or failure of central planning hinges on various factors such as the ability levels of the planners, knowledge of consumer wants, and willingness of the planners to meet consumer desires. Often central planning is used to control the populace through limiting the types and quantities of consumer goods available. For instance, there were waiting lists in the Soviet Union for popular items such as radios. Consumers would bribe store officials to move their names up on the lists to guarantee getting the item next time it became available. Limiting production proved to be an effective means of manipulating the populace.*

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