

The Types of Government

There are three major types of governments:

1. Anarchy: no government
2. Limited government: constrained by constitutional law and deriving its power from the people
3. Totalitarian government: arbitrary and unconstrained, deriving its power by force

All sub-categories of government fit under one of these three or are mixed, but leaning toward one or the other.

Some major subcategories of government are:

- Democracy: rule by the majority of the people in direct votes, with no safeguards to protect the minority (this type of government was popular in ancient Greece and always led to anarchy followed by tyranny).
- Constitutional Monarchy: a monarch with severely limited powers and elected officials under a constitution that protects the rights of the people from government.
- Constitutional Republic: elected officials and a Constitution that protects the people from the government.
- Monarchy/Empire: A powerful monarch who rules with the help of an aristocracy and has total power over the people and may arbitrarily enact laws or punish subjects.
- Oligarchy/ Dictatorship: In practice all dictatorships, though they may have one person at their head, are ruled by a small elite group, an oligarchy. They hold power by force and laws are made at the whim of the rulers.
- Theocracy: a dictatorship which claims its authority comes from God and that they act under the direction of God.

The Types of Economies

Sometimes economic systems are confused with government types and though they are closely related to government types they are not synonymous. For example a constitutional monarchy may practice either socialism or free market economics.

There are two major types of economic systems:

1. Free-market

- Capitalist: individuals retain all control and power and responsibility in this type of economy, with very little government involvement.

2. Controlled economies

- Socialist: Government takes wealth from citizens by force in order to redistribute it to others for purposes such as education, health care, retirement funds, food banks, child care and so on. Government also regulates industries and standards heavily to meet the goals of the political elite.
- Communist: Government owns the means of production and controls all the wealth.
- Fascist: Government controls the means of production, sets prices and quotas, while ownership ostensibly remains to the people, though the people have no power to buy, sell, or trade freely.
- Mixed: Economies that contain elements of one or more of the above major systems. For example the United States is partially capitalist, partially socialist, and partially fascist in some sectors, leaning most heavily toward capitalism, but moving toward more controlled economies.