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Consent of the governed definition simple

We consider these truths to be evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, which include Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. To guarantee these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their righteous powers from the Consent of the Governed . . . Declaration of Independence, United States of America, 1776The most fundamental concept of democracy is the idea that government exists to guarantee the rights of the people and must be based on the consent of the governed. Today, the above quote from the U.S. Declaration of Independence is considered a maxim of the ideal form of government. The essential meaning of the consent of the governed can perhaps be better understood by examining countries where it is lacking. China is an example. In the spring of 1989, university students organized a prolonged series of protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square to demand the truth, responsibility, freedom and democracy of their government. They adopted as a symbol a similarity of the Statue of Liberty, calling it the Goddess of Liberty. Millions of people joined students in Beijing and other cities across China to demand a voice in government that had long been used to deny people's freedom. Since the Communist Party took power in 1949, those who dared to owe their dictates were subject to arrest or worse. The regime's main authority to govern was the communist principle of democratic centralism, which means that the decisions of the party's central leadership - and ultimately the party leader - could not be questioned. The Communist Party's repressive policies and ideological campaigns have caused millions of deaths through starvation, execution and violent political purges. The Chinese people didn't agree to any of this. The communist regime had been built through revolution and terror; no free election had been held in the People's Republic. And in 1989 the Chinese people demanded democratic change. On June 4, Deng Xiaoping, the main communist leader, ordered the use of force to end demonstrations in Tiananmen Square and across China. The world saw the students standing in front of the tanks to resist, but ultimately they were helpless to avoid the mass murders and arrests that followed. Almost 30 years later, the Communist Party remains the supreme authority. Students and workers seeking democracy were arrested, expelled from school or dismissed from work, forced into exile, pressured to portray their opinions and even denied housing. So far, the repression of human rights has effectively prevented any resurgence of popular demand for democracy. It is a system based on the opposite of the governed. (For a more detailed treatment of the People's Republic of China and the repression of its democratic movement see Country Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association.) Before the Consent of the Governed Until the thirteen original American states affirmed the principle of the consent of the governed as evident, it had only been applied rarely in the annals of the world. For most of recorded history, people lived under different types of dictatorship, usually a form of autocracy, the rule of a single leader exercising unlimited power. Sometimes the ruler was the best warrior, able to take power over a group or nation (such as Genghis Khan in 13th-century Asia). Such leaders often founded hereditary monarchies, the most common form of autocracy. In most cases, the monarch was all-powerful, claiming his position by divine right (as in Europe) or by the mandate of heaven (as in China). The ruler was sovereign, the supreme authority of a state. People were not citizens, but subjects. They never consented to be governed, but owed their full obedience and loyalty to the ruler. Disobedience was punished, often with pain of death. In some countries, kings or emperors agreed to limit their powers in response to the demands of landowners and nobles who had obtained substantial wealth by establishing a system of consent by the aristocracy. The Magna Carta of England of 1215 is among the most famous agreements limiting the powers of a king. He assured that the king and his successors would not violate the recognized rights and privileges of the aristocracy, clergy, and owners of even more limited properties in cities (see also Section 3: Constitutional Limits). But even when their powers were limited, the monarchy meant an arbitrary and unrepresentative rule for most subjects, locking them in a life of servitude. The idea that the people were sovereign was - and in many places remains - revolutionary. Consent of the Governed: A Positive DefinitionThe United States of America was the first modern state formed around the principle of consent of the governed. The term implies that the people of a country or territory have the right to self-govern and must consent, either in a direct referendum or through elected representatives, to the establishment of their own government. In most modern cases, the form of the state is a republic, or rule by voting citizens within an agreed constitutional and legal framework. But some monarchies also operate with the consent of the governed, as in the United Kingdom, where over time the monarch has given up most of the political and administrative functions for elected officials and the government is formed through regular elections. The original consent of the governed - the adoption of a new constitution or the formation of a new state - is generally achieved through democracy as a referendum or plebiscite. But it can also be achieved through elected representative institutions, such as an existing or a special constitutional assembly. In some cases, the establishment of a new government system requires a supermajority, three-fifths to three-quarters, to convey an overwhelming popular assis, but often a simple majority is enough. (For example, the U.S. Constitution required the approval of ratifying conventions in at least nine of the thirteen states for it to take effect. An amendment to the Constitution must be approved by three-quarters of states, either by a majority of votes from their state legislatures or in the ratification of state conventions. However, many countries have used simple popular majorities in national referendums to establish national and supranational structures. What remains fixed is the principle that the people are sovereign and must provide their fundamental consent to be governed. The most common form of democracy is a parliamentary system, in which the executive branch is controlled by the political party or coalition of political parties that wins a majority of seats in parliament and is able to form a government. Unlike the U.S. presidential system, parliamentary systems have few constitutional controls and balances between the executive and legislative branches. The system relies heavily on the supervision of the opposition party or the parties in parliament. Once a form of

democratic government has been established, elections are the main vehicle for renewing the consent of the governed. Every election is an opportunity for the people to change their leaders and state policies. When a particular government loses the trust of the people, they have the right to replace it. The legislator can pass laws to reform the system within the limits of the Constitution; if the laws are insufficient, the people and their representatives may choose to modify or replace the Constitution itself. Parliamentary systems provide more direct consent to those governed through elections, either in systems first after office such as the United Kingdom (where seats in parliament are won by the person with the most votes, whether or not a majority) or in proportional representation or mixed systems (where the majority of seats are determined proportionally according to the national vote by party list). Strangely, the United States of America, the oldest continuous democracy in the world, does not offer direct election, but indirect for its national office through an Electoral College. Although the Electoral College vote coincided with the national vote in 2016 for the second time in 16 years, the national winner (for 2.85 million) was denied the office of president in favor of the winner of the electoral college vote, which was achieved by several victories by little won in key states. Consent of the Governed: A Negative DefinitionAs noted above, in the consent, it is useful to examine cases in which it is absent. Modern Modern schemes offer many clear examples of what it means to have a system without the consent of the people. As reviewed in the Country Studies of Democracy Web, these regimes take various forms, including autocracy (such as Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan), monarchy (such as Morocco and Saudi Arabia), theocracy (such as the Islamic Republic of Iran), military rule (common to Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s and 80s, such as Bolivia, Chile and Guatemala), and apartheid (or government by a racial minority as occurred in South Africa). But it is typical of all forms of authoritarian government to deny freedom to most people, exercise power arbitrarily, and act mercilessly to stay in power. A distinct category of dictatorship is totalitarianism, which is based on a comprehensive ideology (such as fascism or communism) and a disciplined partisan apparatus. These regimes are defined by their total social control over the population, typically achieved through purges of public institutions, general repression and mass execution. Historical examples include Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China under Mao Esé-Tung. Current examples are Cuba and North Korea.Many modern authoritarian rulers have taken power citing the need to safeguard the integrity of the state against alleged external threats or maintain political stability against unruly elements in society. Communist dictatorships sought to achieve economic and social rights of the population by exercising the former ruling elites. What both types of regimes generally achieve is oppression and poverty. Often, this arbitrary rule has led to famine, war and even genocide. Although most authoritarian rulers take power through a violent revolution or a coup d'état, they claim to have the consent of the governed. But they rarely allow free and fair elections or referendums to test their claims —so-called elections are controlled and manipulated by fraud. When a relatively free election or referendum is actually allowed by a dictatorship, the people usually vote against it (as in Chile in 1988, Poland in 1989 and Serbia in 2000). There are some cases, such as Nazi Germany, in which a modern dictatorship was described as coming to power through fair elections. In fact, the Nazi Party won only a parliamentary minority in the 1933 elections. Hitler, once appointed, took full power through intimidation and treason in what amounted to a coup d'état (see Study of the Country of Germany). The Right to RebellionBased on the principle of the consent of the governed is the right to withdraw that consent — overthrow a regime that abuses the people through protocol, arbitrary, incompetent or non-representative rules. This was the right that the British philosopher John claimed to be intrinsic to a system of natural law (see History), History), that the thirteen American states invoked against King George III in 1776. Two centuries later, the people of Eastern Europe stood up to assert the same right against an oppressive communist system. But Locke's principle is not a general right of rebellion or revolution; he did not defend anarchy. The cause of rebellion — or withdrawal of consent — must fall on the violation of citizens' natural rights, that is, on the establishment of tyranny. Thus, in 1860, President Abraham Lincoln affirmed the opposite principle that a minority of states could not rebel to preserve slavery (the tyranny of a minority) and thus destroy a constitutional system established in a representative and democratic system of governance. Such a republic had to be preserved against an anti-constitutional and anti-democratic rebellion. Today, violent rebellion came to be seen as a last resort. In most modern cases of the overthrow of the dictatorship, from anti-colonial to anti-communist movements, peaceful protest and civic resistance has been a more successful form of rebellion than the violent overthrow of a government, especially with the purpose of establishing a democracy based on the consent of the governed. Minorities withdrawing consent What happens when a subdued minority asserts the right to withdraw their consent to be governed by the will of the majority? This has occurred in several places where ethnic or religious minorities desire independence from dominant and generally oppressive ethnic or religious majorities. In general, the world recognized the right of self-determination for oppressed peoples to form their own self-governing regions or independent states, as was the case recently in Kosovo and East Timor. Also in Sweden, Italy and other countries, minorities gained greater autonomy without demanding independence. But for some minorities seeking independence or autonomy, the world has been less supportive of asserting the right to self-determination and has failed to prevent the suppression of rebellions, even when the government resorted to mass killings or genocide. This was the case in Chechnya and Darfur in Sudan. Despite several international treaties and documents defining the nationality and rights of minorities, world nations have shown little consistency in this area (see also the Majority Rule, Minority Rights and Human Rights). Rights).

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