# Fourth axis: Political OrganizationThe state

## 1- The Nature of the Political System
### ➢ Definition

Political system, the set of formal legal institutions that constitute a "government" or a "state." This is the definition adopted by many studies of the legal or constitutional arrangements of advanced political orders. More broadly defined, however, the term comprehends actual as well as prescribed forms of political behaviour, not only the legal organization of the state but also the reality of how the state functions. Still more broadly defined, the political system is seen as a set of "processes of interaction" or as a subsystem of the social system interacting with other nonpolitical subsystems, such as the economic system. This points to the importance of informal sociopolitical processes and emphasizes the study of political development.

A political system is a set of different formal legal institutions that constitute a government. In other words, a political system is the system of government in a nation .

The political system of a country has a direct influence on the economic development of a country and shapes its legal and economic systems. Therefore, we need to understand the structure of different political systems before discussing legal and economic systems and the economic development of countries.

Political systems are the formal and informal political processes by which decisions are made concerning the use, production and distribution of resources in any given society. Formal political institutions can determine the process for electing leaders; the roles and responsibilities of the executive and legislature; the organisation of political representation (through political parties); and the accountability and oversight of the state. Informal and customary political systems, norms and rules can operate within or alongside these formal political institutions. The development of democratic political systems that provide opportunities for all, including the poor, to influence decision-making, is a critical concern for donors.

### ➢ Types of Political Systems

The type of government under which people live has fundamental implications for their freedom, their welfare, and even their lives.

### -Democracy

The type of government with which we are most familiar is democracy, or a political system in which citizens govern themselves either directly or indirectly. The term democracy comes from Greek and means "rule of the people." In Lincoln's stirring words from the Gettysburg Address, democracy is "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

However, such direct democracies are impractical when the number of people gets beyond a few hundred. Representative democracies are thus much

more common. In these types of democracies, people elect officials to represent them in legislative votes on matters affecting the population.

### -Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism

Authoritarianism and totalitarianism are general terms for nondemocratic political systems ruled by an individual or a group of individuals who are not freely elected by their populations and who often exercise arbitrary power. To be more specific, authoritarianism refers to political systems in which an individual or a group of individuals holds power, restricts or prohibits popular participation in governance, and represses dissent. Totalitarianism refers to political systems that include all the features of authoritarianism but are even more repressive as they try to regulate and control all aspects of citizens' lives and fortunes. People can be imprisoned for deviating from acceptable practices or may even be killed if they dissent in the mildest of ways.

Compared to democracies, authoritarian and totalitarian governments are more unstable politically. The major reason for this is that these governments enjoy no legitimate authority. Instead their power rests on fear and repression.

### 2- Capabilities of the Political System

A political system's capabilities refer to its functions and effectiveness in governing. In every political system, there exist five capabilities :

✓ **Extractive:** Ability to gather resources (taxes, revenue, natural resources) for state functions.

✓ **Regulative:** Capacity to make, apply, and adjudicate laws, maintaining order and control.

✓ **Distributive**: Power to allocate resources, goods, and services (e.g., infrastructure, healthcare, education).

✓ **Responsive**: Skill in reacting to and fulfilling demands from citizens and groups, crucial for democratic systems.

✓ **Symbolic**: Ability to foster national identity, legitimacy, and unity through symbols and ideology.

### 3- Functions of the Political System

The chief objective of Almond was to make a comparative study of the major political systems and for that purpose what he has done ultimately became the foundation of general systems theory/analysis. For the purposes of comparison Gabriel Almond has divided the functions of political system into two broad categories—Input functions and output functions.

Easton and Almond have borrowed the terms—input and output from economics for the purpose of analysing the functions and behaviour of political systems and their different structures. This approach helps comparison considerably.

### -The input functions are :

✓ Political socialisation and recruitment.
✓ Interest articulation
✓ Interest aggregation

✓ Political communication.
  **-The output functions are:**
✓ Rule making
✓ Rule adjudication
✓ Rule application

**4- Components of the Political System: State Powers and the Separation of Powers**

Political power is the ability to influence or control the actions, behaviors, and decisions of individuals, groups, or a society, achieved through various means like authority, coercion, persuasion, or institutions, to shape policies and allocate resources, forming the core of governance and social order

Separation of powers, refers to the division of power responsibilities into distinct branches to limit any one branch from exercising the core functions of another. The intent is to prevent the concentration of power and provide for checks and balances.

The term "trias politica" or "separation of powers" was coined by Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, an 18th century French social and political philosopher. His publication, Spirit of the Laws , is considered one of the great works in the history of political theory and jurisprudence, and it inspired the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Constitution of the United States. Under his model, the political authority of the state is divided into legislative, executive and judicial powers. He asserted that, to most effectively promote liberty, these three powers must be separate and acting independently.

**The end**
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