Basic Concepts in Government

Power, Authority, Legitimacy, Sovereignty

- **Power**: the ability to influence or control the behavior of others.
  - **Types**:
    - Political.
    - Economic.
    - Military.
    - Social.
  - **Example**: Government uses power to enforce laws.
- **Authority**: the legal right to exercise power.
  - **Types**:
    - Traditional.
    - Charismatic.
    - Legal-Rational.
- **Legitimacy**: the acceptance of a government or ruler by the people.
  - **Sources**:
    - Tradition.
    - Law.
    - Consent of the governed.
  - **Sovereignty**: the supreme power of a state to govern itself.
  - **Types**:
    - Internal (control over citizens).
    - External (independence from other states).

Society, State, Nation, Nation-State

- **Society**: a group of people living together with shared culture and values.
- **State**: a political entity with sovereignty, population, government, and territory.
- **Nation**: a group of people sharing common language, culture, and history.
- **Nation-State**: A state where the boundaries of the nation and state coincide (e.g., Japan).

Political Processes

- **Political Socialization**: The process through which individuals learn political values and norms.
- **Political Participation**: Involvement in activities like voting, protests, or joining parties.
- **Political Culture**: The attitudes, beliefs, and values of people about politics (e.g., respect for democracy).

Forms of Government

Monarchy

- **Definition**: Government headed by a king or queen.
- **Features**:
  - Hereditary rule.
  - Ceremonial or absolute authority.
- **Merits**:
  - Stability.
  - Unity.
- **Demerits**:
  - Lack of democracy.
  - Potential abuse of power.

Aristocracy

- **Definition**: Rule by the privileged or noble class.
- **Features**:
  - Power based on birth or wealth.
- **Merits**:
  - Expertise in governance.
- **Demerits**:
  - Exclusion of common people.

Oligarchy

- **Definition**: Rule by a few powerful individuals.
- **Features**:
  - Concentrated power.
  - Economic or political influence.
- **Merits**:
  - Decision-making can be efficient.
- **Demerits**:
  - Exploitation of the majority.

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- **Autocracy**
  - **Definition**: One person holds absolute power.
  - **Features**:
    - Centralized authority.
    - Lack of checks.
  - **Merits**:
    - Quick decisions.
  - **Demerits**:
    - Tyranny.
    - Oppression.
- **Republicanism**
  - **Definition**: A government without a monarch, often with elected officials.
  - **Features**:
    - Popular sovereignty.
    - Rule of law.
  - **Merits**:
    - Representation of people.
  - **Demerits**:
    - Risk of corruption.

- **Democracy**
  - **Definition**: Government by the people, for the people.
  - **Features**:
    - Elections.
    - Majority rule.
    - Rule of law.
  - **Merits**:
    - Equality.
    - Accountability.
  - **Demerits**:
    - Slow decision-making.
    - Risk of manipulation.

Arms of Government

- **The Legislature**
  - **Types**:
    - Unicameral (one chamber).
    - Bicameral (two chambers).
  - **Functions**:
    - Lawmaking.
    - Budget approval.
    - Oversight of the executive.
  - **Powers**:
    - Impeachment.
    - Approval of appointments.

- **The Executive**
  - **Types**:
    - Single executive (e.g., president).
    - Plural executive (e.g., council).
  - **Functions**:
    - Policy implementation.
    - Defense.
    - Foreign affairs.
  - **Powers**:
    - Veto laws.
    - Command armed forces.

- **The Judiciary**
  - **Functions**: Interpretation of laws, settlement of disputes.
  - **Powers**: Judicial review, independence in decision-making.

❖ **Relationship**: Separation of powers ensures checks and balances among these arms.

Structures of Governance

- **Unitary System**
  - **Features**:
    - Centralized authority.
    - Uniform laws.
  - **Merits**:
    - Strong central government.
  - **Demerits**:
    - Ignorance of local differences.

- **Federal System**
  - **Features**: Power shared between central and regional governments.
  - **Merits**:
    - Local autonomy.
  - **Demerits**:
    - Risk of conflict between levels.

- **Confederal System**
  - **Features**:
    - Weak central authority.
    - Strong regions.
  - **Merits**:
    - Local independence.
  - **Demerits**:
    - Weak central coordination.

Systems of Governance

- **Presidential System**
  - **Features**:
    - Separation of powers.
    - President as head of state and government.
  - **Example**: USA.

- **Parliamentary System**
  - **Features**:
    - Fusion of powers.
    - Prime minister as head of government.
  - **Example**: UK.

- **Monarchical System**
    - **Features**: Rule by a king or queen

Political Ideologies

- **Communalism**: Shared ownership of resources.
- **Feudalism**: Land-based hierarchy.
- **Capitalism**: Private ownership and free market.
- **Socialism**: Public ownership and distribution of wealth.
- **Communism**: Stateless, classless society.
- **Totalitarianism**: Total control by the state.
- **Fascism/Nazism**: Authoritarian nationalism.

Constitution

- **Meaning**: Supreme law of a state.
- **Sources**:
    - Custom.
    - Legislation.
    - Judicial precedents.
- **Types**:
    - Written (e.g., USA).
    - Unwritten (e.g., UK).
    - Rigid.
    - Flexible.

Principles of Democratic Government

- Ethics and accountability.
- Separation of power.
- Rule of law.
- Representative government.
- Checks and balances.
- Constitutionalism.

Processes of Legislation

- **Enactments**:
    - Acts.
    - Edicts.
    - Bye-laws.
    - Decrees.
    - Delegated legislation.

Citizenship

- **Meaning**: Legal membership of a state.
- **Types**:
    - Birth.
    - Naturalization.
    - Marriage
- **Duties**:
    - Pay taxes.
    - Obey laws.
    - Vote.

Electoral Process

- **Suffrage**: Right to vote (universal, limited).
- **Election**: Free and fair principles.
- **Electoral System**:
    - Majoritarian.
    - Proportional representation.

Political Parties and Party Systems

- **Definition**: Groups seeking political power.
- **Types**:
    - Single-party.
    - Two-party.
    - Multi-party systems.

Pressure Groups

- **Definition**: Groups influencing policies.
- **Types**:
    - Economic.
    - Professional.
    - Religious.

Public Opinion

- **Formation**:
    - Media.
    - Education.

- **Functions**:
    - Guides governance.
    - Checks power.

Civil Service

- **Definition**: Administrative arm of government.
- **Functions**: Policy implementation.
- **Problems**:
    - Corruption.
    - Bureaucracy.