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Political systems and regimes

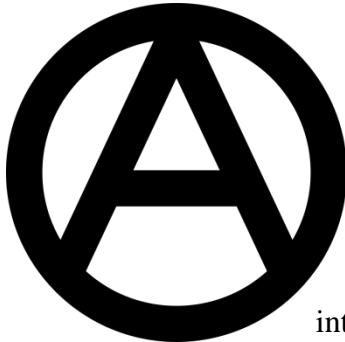
Absolutism



The notion of absolutism defines a political system of the early modern period which, from a traditional perspective, was defined as the reign of a king whose power was attached to his person and he reigned without the participation of state institutions.

The term "absolutism" is also used for the period of the European history between the religious wars of the 16th to early 17th century and the revolutions of the late 18th century, where we could find elements of this political regime. The sovereign relies on five pillars of power: its standing army, the judiciary and the police, the administration of which the king is the head, the nobility at the royal court, the Church of the State (the clergy) and mercantilism, a political and economic theory related to absolutism, whose objective is the health of the state budget. In order to achieve these goals, all means could be implemented.

Anarchy



The notion of anarchy defines a political system characterized by the absence of a government. It is a term used mainly in the political philosophy, where anarchism propagates such social order. On the contrary, in international relations, the concept describes, especially in realistic theories, the situation of the international system of states.

The reasoning about anarchy started already in antiquity. But the concept of anarchy was created only in the 19th century as an anti-movement and anti-political concept of the monarchy and democracy.

Originally, in ancient Greece, anarchy meant the absence of absolute sovereign, derived from the person of the archon * that was created after the royal dynasties.

** In most Greek cities, including Athens, the archons are the holders of the highest loads, which had important political and judicial functions.*

Aristocracy



In the history of political thinking, the notion of aristocracy refers to the governance of a small group of elites. This means that a relatively small number of particularly capable individuals manage the State. However, it is not defined what this capacity to rule consists of.

The original meaning of the word is « the rule of the best ». In political reality, it often went hand in hand with belonging to the noble class. For this reason, since antiquity, aristocracy is the rule of the nobility.

Autocracy



The term of autocracy means « who draws their power (cracy) from themselves (auto). » As a system or political system, autocracy unifies all the powers of the political system in a central force and does not include in no way participation of the people in state power. The possessor of these powers can be an individual (e.g. a dictator) or a group (party, junta or committee). Two of the examples of autocracy are absolute monarchy and dictatorship.

Democracy



In ancient Greece, democracy firstly meant the direct reign of the people. Since at that time, only a selected group of citizens had the right to political participation, the idea of the people was very limited and the Greek Polis popular meetings were reserved only for men.

Today, democracy is used mostly to denote the political systems, where the base of the reign comes from a broad and pluralistic understanding of the people and includes participation rights for all citizens.

For a decision to meet the democratic standards, in addition to the majority principle, other criteria must be satisfied. The actual realisation of these specific criteria depends on the respective electoral system.

- Universal suffrage: Each person having the right to vote can participate in elections and votes (direct or indirect suffrage).
- Equal suffrage: each voter has the same voting power (the same number of votes)
- Free suffrage: No penalty shall be exercised.
- Voting by secret ballot: To ensure free suffrage, the vote is often secret. In addition, enough time must be given to make a decision.

As a result of the freedom to stand for election (indirect election), it can happen that there is only one candidate. A real decision can be reached only if there are several alternatives. However, an election with only one alternative is also considered democratic, if the other democratic criteria are satisfied.

A democracy presupposes the guarantee of human rights. In particular, this applies to:

- Freedom of opinion and freedom of the press: A free exchange of opinions and points of view must be prior to a political decision.
- Freedom of organization / association: The freedom to form free political parties and organizations

Dictatorship



Dictatorship is a political system characterized by a single ruler, the dictator, or a group of governors (e.g. a party, a junta or a family) whose power is unlimited. Unlike democracy, a dictator does not justify his claim to rule (literally: the right to gain power) by free elections. The condition of the notion dictatorship is its illegitimacy. This means that either it has removed a legitimate political system, or that it has no legitimate or constitutional origin. The dictator draws his legitimacy usually from a particular danger or a state crisis that he could parry.

Monarchy



The concept of monarchy is defined as «*power in one*». It denotes a system or a political regime where a monarch is the head of state (and thus makes the difference from the republic). The competences of the monarch may vary depending on the type of the monarchy: the spectrum ranges from a minimum power (constitutional monarchy) through a power limited by a constitution (constitutional monarchy) to an unlimited, universal power (absolute monarchy).

Moreover, we distinguish the hereditary and elective monarchy.

In the former form of monarchy, the king is named according to the principle of hegemony and in the latter by election (in most cases for life). In hereditary monarchies, divine law generally legitimises the domination of the monarch. Similarly, a veneration of the monarch as a deity or person of divine origin is possible.

Military regime



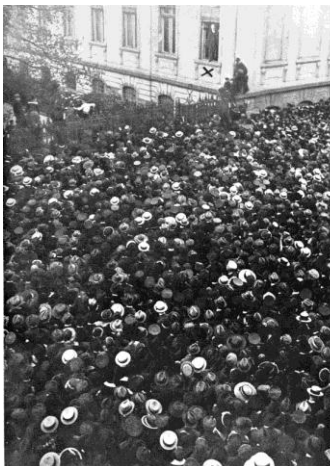
A military regime denotes a political system whose executive authority is derived from the army.

Pure military regimes are rare. Throughout the history, there were more cases combining the civilian regimes dominated behind the scenes by the army. Thus civilian governments do not get the complete political power and can be dismissed by a military intervention of their own

armed forces or be controlled otherwise.

Reasons for such an intervention can be the guarantee of stability or efforts to maintain the status quo. In countries dominated by the army, the level of its influence can go from the right of veto until the complete absorption of state power. The resulting military regime can be short duration (two to four years) until the desired state is restored by the army; but it can also be permanent.

Republic



The republic is a political system that focuses on the community and the common good. Since the Roman times, and especially since the French Revolution, it is primarily seen as a model opposing the monarchy. From the modern point of view, it is a political system where the people are the foundation of the State, what gives it legitimacy, and they hold the majority of powers in the State. Yet the inner workings of the republic may differ from state to state. The republics with democratic government form the majority, but are not the only model. The republican character

indicates only the absence of a monarch. Any other political system is possible. People's participation in the creation of the state will is not necessarily a republican criterion.

Totalitarianism



In political science, totalitarianism denotes a form of dictatorial rule, which, unlike an authoritarian dictatorship, claims to have an influence on all the social spheres. This principle is often linked to the desire to create a « new man ».

While an authoritarian dictatorship tries to maintain the status quo, a totalitarian dictatorship requires that citizens participate actively in political life and wants the political life to develop in a direction dictated by the respective ideology.

Thus, totalitarianism is generally based on the popular and mass organizations, which it is mobilizing all the time. It excludes any form of opposition, going until the moral and physical destruction of those who totally or partially object to the totalitarian claim for dominance (right to gain power).

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