Unit 2 Key Concepts

Types of Governments
Social Scientists use analyses of political institutions to develop typologies of political regimes. One such typology, which is widely used, was developed by J. Denis and Ian Derbyshire (1996). They classify national regimes into these categories:

1. **Liberal Democracies.** These regimes are marked by multiparty elections, competitive parties, separation of powers, and guarantees of the rights of minorities and individuals. Examples are the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, Brazil and Japan.

2. **Emergent Democracies.** These have constitutions that specify all or most of the institutions and processes of fully establishing democratic processes caused by one-party dominance, insurgencies, corruption, and so forth. They are often viewed as “liberal democracies on trial.” Examples are Chile, Ivory Coast, Mali, Haiti, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Philippines.

3. **Communist regimes.** These are run by a “revolutionary dictatorship” and a single communist party that in principle is serving the interests of the working class. There are very limited guarantees of individual or minority rights. Political command over economic institutions is widespread but subject to market experimentation. China, North Korea, and Cuba are examples of existing communist regimes.

4. **Nationalistic socialist regimes.** These are similar to communist regimes, with a single socialist party; however, they are more inclined to promote the interests of one national group over others and to allow private commerce. There is little or no protection of individual or minority rights. Examples are Iraq, Libya, Tanzania, and Syria.

5. **Authoritarian nationalist regimes.** The extreme nationalism of these regimes leads to intolerance and the exclusion of other races and creeds, often in the most brutal or genocidal fashion as in Nazi Germany or contemporary Zimbabwe.

6. **Military regimes.** These are ruled by a military elite or junta, usually with extremely limited protection of citizens’ rights and no free elections. Current examples are Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Myanmar, although many emergent democracies and liberal democracies are plagued by problems of civilian control over the military.

7. **Islamic nationalist regime.** These are ruled by nationalistic political regimes devoted to fundamentalist Islam. Afghanistan under the Taliban and Iran are examples of this type of regime.

8. **Absolute regimes.** These are usually ruled by an absolute monarch who passes power to successors through a hereditary line. Constitutional forms of government, popular assemblies, judiciary rules that counter the executive power, and political parties are banned. Sultanates, emirates, and traditional monarchies such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Swaziland are examples of this type of regime.