

POLITICAL SYSTEM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

A political system is a system of politics and government. It is usually compared to the legal system, economic system, cultural system, and other social systems. However, this is a very simplified view of a much more complex system of categories involving the questions of who should have authority and what the government's influence on its people and economy should be. Political systems do not inherently require the institution of political parties to advance the politics of the political system. Political parties are formed after political systems are put in place. In the case of American politics, Article Two of the United States Constitution, specifically Section I, gives no mention to political parties when describing the presidential election process. It was only after the establishment of the government that the first political parties formed. This manuscript highlights various dimensions of political systems in assorted countries.

INTRODUCTION

The state, however, should not be confused with a specific balance of powers a particular status quo, a government. Governments may affect massive change in laws and roles while the state remains the same. Changed are the civil order, the polity, the particular law norms and authoritative roles through which the elite manifest their interest. At the outset, then, the political system of a state must be distinguished from the state itself. A political system consists of the formal and informal structures which manifest the state's sovereignty over a territory and people. It is the civil aspect of statehood. But a state through its lifetime may

have many different political systems, as have China, Russia, and France. As the political elite exercise more or less coercive power, we can call a state more or less powerful. As ideologies grant a political system more or less power, we can call these ideologies more or less statist. But this is not to confuse the state as a sovereign group with the particular balance through which this sovereignty is manifest

Washington was the only President not to be elected through a party oriented election process. Because of this, it is difficult to comment on an America without political party institutions. Washington's case does point to the original path of the American political system however, one lacking political parties. Both the U.S. Constitution and Washington provide support for the American political system, a Democracy and Republic, to be founded without political parties. The past has shown this type of system to work well with parties, but nonetheless, these two systems do not require political parties in their institutions.

Over the years the American political system has seen a sharp decline in voter turnout. In 1960, over 63% of the American population cast their presidential votes, whereas by 1996, there were less than 50% of Americans showing up to the polls.* Not only are the domestic voting numbers low, but the United States has one of the lowest voter turnout rates among other democratic nations.*Analysts say many factors play into these low numbers. For example, in many states felons are banned from poll booths. Also, if a citizen is abroad during the time of an election they are banned from voting as well. In the American political system, it is mandatory voters register weeks before the actual Election Day, so many citizens forget to register and are unable to cast their ballots.

SOCIOLOGY OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The sociological interest in political systems is figuring out who holds the power in the relationship of the government and its people and how the government's power is used. There are three types of political systems that sociologists consider.

Authoritarianism - In authoritarian governments, the people have no power or representation and it is characterized by absolute or blind obedience to [formal] authority, as against individual freedom and related to the expectation of unquestioning obedience. The elite leaders handle all economic, military, and foreign relations. Dictatorships are examples of authoritarianism.

Totalitarianism - Totalitarianism is the most extreme form of authoritarianism because it controls all aspects of life including communication between citizens, censors the media, and threatens by means of terror.

Monarchies - A monarchy is a government controlled by a king or queen determined by a predisposed line of sovereignty. In the modern world there are two types of monarchies, absolute monarchies and constitutional monarchies. An absolute monarchy works like a dictatorship in that the king has complete rule over his country. A constitutional monarchy gives the royal family limited powers and usually works in accordance with an elected body of officials. Social revolutions of the 18th, 19th, and 20th century overthrew the majority of existing monarchies in favor of a more democratic governments and the rise of the lower-class.

Democracy - A democracy is a form of government in which the citizens create and vote for laws directly or indirectly via representatives. The idea of democracy stems back from ancient Greece and the profound works of ancient academics. However, the presence of democracy does not always mean citizen's wishes will be equally represented. For example, in many democratic countries immigrants, and racial and ethnic minorities do not receive the same rights as the majority citizens.

DEVELOPING NATIONS

A developing country, also called a lower developed country, is a nation with an underdeveloped industrial base, and low Human Development Index (HDI) relative to other

countries. On the other hand, since the late 1990s developing countries tended to demonstrate higher growth rates than the developed ones. There is no universal, agreed-upon criterion for what makes a country developing versus developed and which countries fit these two categories, although there are general reference points such as a nation's GDP per capita compared to other nations. Also, the general term less-developed country should not be confused with the specific least developed country.

There is criticism of the use of the term developing country. The term implies inferiority of a developing country or undeveloped country compared to a developed country, which many countries dislike. It assumes a desire to develop along the traditional Western model of economic development which a few countries, such as Cuba and Bhutan, choose not to follow.^[4] An alternative measurement that has been suggested is that of gross national happiness, measuring the actual satisfaction of people as opposed to how industrialised a country is.

Countries with more advanced economies than other developing nations but that have not yet demonstrated signs of a developed country, are often categorized under the term newly industrialized countries.

According to authors such as Walt Whitman Rostow, developing countries are in transition from traditional lifestyles towards the modern lifestyle which began in the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Various terms are used for whatever is not a developed country. Terms used include less developed country (LDC) or less economically developed country (LEDC), and for the more extreme, least developed country (LDC) or least economically developed country (LEDC).

Criteria for what is not a developed country can be obtained by inverting the factors that define a developed country:

- people have lower life expectancy

- people have less education
- people have less money (income)

Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, defined a developed country as "one that allows all its citizens to enjoy a free and healthy life in a safe environment." But according to the United Nations Statistics Division, There is no established convention for the designation of "developed" and "developing" countries or areas in the United Nations system. The designations "developed" and "developing" are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process.

The UN also notes,

In common practice, Japan and South Korea in Asia, Canada and the United States in northern America, Australia and New Zealand in Oceania and western Europe are considered "developed" regions or areas. In international trade statistics, the Southern African Customs Union is also treated as a developed region and Israel as a developed country; countries emerging from the former Yugoslavia are treated as developing countries; and countries of Central Europe and of the Commonwealth of Independent States (code 172) in Europe are not included under either developed or developing regions.

On the other hand, according to the classification from International Monetary Fund (IMF) before April 2004, all countries of Central and Eastern Europe (including Central European countries that still belongs to the "Eastern Europe Group" in the UN institutions) as well as the former Soviet Union (USSR) countries in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) and Mongolia, were not included under either developed or developing regions, but rather were referred to as "countries in transition"; however they are now widely regarded (in the international reports) as "developing countries".

The IMF uses a flexible classification system that considers "(1) per capita income level, (2) export diversification—so oil exporters that have high per capita GDP would not make the advanced classification because around 70% of its exports are oil, and (3) degree of integration into the global financial system."

The World Bank classifies countries into four income groups. These are set each year on July 1. Economies were divided according to 2011 GNI per capita using the following ranges of income:

- Low income countries had GNI per capita of US\$1,026 or less.
- Lower middle income countries had GNI per capita between US\$1,026 and US\$4,036.
- Upper middle income countries had GNI per capita between US\$4,036 and US\$12,476.
- High income countries had GNI above US\$12,476.

The World Bank classifies all low- and middle-income countries as developing but notes, "The use of the term is convenient; it is not intended to imply that all economies in the group are experiencing similar development or that other economies have reached a preferred or final stage of development. Classification by income does not necessarily reflect development status."

Along with the current level of development, countries may be classified by how much this has changed over some amount of time. This may be by absolute numbers or country ranking.

- countries that were more less-developed, and are less less-developed (also developing country)
- countries that were less-developed, and are about the same (developing country)
- countries that were less less-developed, and are more less-developed (developing country)

TPOLOGY OF COUNTRIES

There are several terms used to classify countries into rough levels of development. Classification of any given country differs across sources, and sometimes these classifications or the specific terminology used is considered disparaging. Use of the term "market" instead of "country" usually indicates specific focus on the characteristics of the countries' capital markets as opposed to the overall economy.

- Developed countries and developed markets
- Developing countries include, in decreasing order of economic growth or size of the capital market:
 - Newly industrialized countries
 - Emerging markets
 - Frontier markets
 - Least developed countries

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The list of developing countries shown below is adhered to by the ISI, effective from 1 January till 31 December 2015.

Developing countries are defined according to their Gross National Income (GNI) per capita per year. Countries with a GNI of US\$ 11,905 and less are defined as developing (specified by the World Bank, 2013).

Afghanistan	Guatemala	Pakistan
Albania	Guinea	Palau
Algeria	Guinea-Bissau	Panama

Angola	Guyana	Papua New Guinea
Argentina	Haiti	Paraguay
Armenia	Honduras	Peru
Azerbaijan	India	Philippines
Bangladesh	Indonesia	Romania
Belarus	Iran, Islamic Rep.	Rwanda
Belize	Iraq	Samoa
Benin	Jamaica	São Tomé and Principe
Bhutan	Jordan	Senegal
Bolivia	Kazakhstan	Serbia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kenya	Seychelles (Transitional)
Botswana	Kiribati	Sierra Leone
Brazil	Korea, Dem Rep.	Solomon Islands
Bulgaria	Kosovo	Somalia
Burkina Faso	Kyrgyz Republic	South Africa
Burundi	Lao PDR	South Sudan
Cabo Verde	Lebanon	Sri Lanka
Cambodia	Lesotho	St. Lucia
Cameroon	Liberia	St. Vincent and the

		Grenadines
Central African Republic	Libya	Sudan
Chad	Macedonia, FYR	Suriname
China	Madagascar	Swaziland
Colombia	Malawi	Syrian Arab Republic
Comoros	Malaysia	Tajikistan
Congo, Dem. Rep	Maldives	Tanzania
Congo, Rep.	Mali	Thailand
Costa Rica	Marshall Islands	Timor-Leste
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritania	Togo
Cuba	Mauritius	Tonga
Djibouti	Mayotte	Tunisia
Dominica	Mexico	Turkey
Dominican Republic	Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	Turkmenistan
Ecuador	Moldova	Tuvalu
Egypt, Arab Rep.	Mongolia	Uganda
El Salvador	Montenegro	Ukraine
Eritrea	Morocco	Uzbekistan

Ethiopia	Mozambique	Vanuatu
Fiji	Myanmar	Vietnam
Gabon	Namibia	Palestine, State of
Gambia, The	Nepal	Yemen, Rep.
Georgia	Nicaragua	Zambia
Ghana	Niger	Zimbabwe
Grenada	Nigeria	

Countries that are slightly over the amount of US\$ 11,905 will be considered a developing country for the year 2015 and their situation will be reviewed for 2016. The names of the countries are based upon United Nations sources. The designations employed and the presentation of country or area names in this list do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the ISI concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

SINGLE PARTY PARADIGM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Some of the communist parties in power in developing countries did not differ significantly from their counterparts in industrialized countries. This is certainly true of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the Workers' Party of North Korea. There have always been, however, countries in which the single party in power could not be characterized in terms of a traditional European counterpart. This observation applied to, for example, the former Arab Socialist Union in Egypt and the Democratic Constitutional Rally (formerly the Neo-Destour Party) during its period of dominance of Tunisian politics (1956–2011).

Most of these parties claimed to be more or less socialist or at least progressive, while remaining far removed from communism and, in some cases, ardent foes of communism.

Pres. Gamal Abdel Nasser attempted to establish a moderate and nationalistic socialism in Egypt. In Tunisia the Democratic Constitutional Rally was more republican than socialist and was inspired more by the example of the reforms in Turkey under Kemal Atatürk than by Nasserism. In sub-Saharan Africa, single parties have often claimed to be socialist, but with few exceptions they rarely are in practice.

Single parties in developing countries are rarely as well organized as communist parties. In Turkey the Republican People's Party was more a cadre party than a mass-based party. In Egypt it was necessary to organize a core of professional politicians within the framework of a pseudoparty of the masses. In sub-Saharan Africa the parties were most often genuinely mass-based, but the membership appears to be motivated primarily by personal attachment to the leader or by tribal loyalties, and organization is not usually very strong. It is this weakness in organization that explained the secondary role played by such parties in government.

Some regimes, however, have endeavoured to develop the role of the party to the fullest extent possible. The politics of Atatürk in Turkey were an interesting case study in this regard. It was also Nasser's goal to increase the influence of the Arab Socialist Union, thereby making it the backbone of the regime. This process is significant in that it represented an attempt to move away from the traditional dictatorship, supported by the army or based on tribal traditions or on charismatic leadership, toward a modern dictatorship, supported by one political party. Single-party systems can institutionalize dictatorships by making them survive the life of one dominant figure.

It has often been said in the West that political parties are in a state of decline. Actually, this has been a long-standing opinion in certain conservative circles, arising largely out of a latent hostility to parties, which are viewed as a divisive force among citizens, a threat to national unity, and an enticement to corruption and demagoguery. In certain European countries—France, for example—right-wing political organizations have even refused to call themselves parties, using instead such terms as movement, union, federation, and centre. And it cannot

be denied that to some extent the major contemporary European and American parties do appear old and rigid in comparison with their condition at the turn of the century or immediately following World War I. Even relatively new parties, such as the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (founded in 1945), seem somewhat lifeless.

In terms of size and number, however, political parties are not declining but growing. At the turn of the 20th century they were confined mainly to Europe and North America; elsewhere they were quite weak or nonexistent. In the early 21st century, parties were found practically everywhere in the world. And in Europe and North America there were generally far more people holding membership in parties than prior to 1914. Parties of the early 21st century were larger, stronger, and better-organized than those of the late 19th century. In the industrialized countries, especially in western Europe, parties have become less revolutionary and innovative, and this factor may explain the rigid and worn-out image that they sometimes present. But even this phenomenon is found only in a limited area and may, perhaps, pass.

The growth of parties into very large organizations may be responsible for the feelings of powerlessness on the part of many individuals who are involved in them. This is a problem experienced by people who find themselves part of any large organization, whether it be a political party, business enterprise, corporation, or union. The difficulties involved in reforming or changing political parties that have become large and institutionalized, coupled with the next-to-impossible task of creating new parties likely to reach sufficient strength to be taken seriously by the electorate, have resulted in much frustration and impatience with the party system. But it is difficult to imagine how democracy could function in a large industrialized country without political parties. In the modern world, democracy and political parties are two facets of the same reality, the inside and outside of the same fabric.

REPUBLIC OF INDIA

Politics in India take place within the framework of its constitution, as India is a federal parliamentary democratic republic in which the President of India is the head of state and the Prime Minister of India is the head of government. India follows the dual polity system, i.e. a

double government which consists of the central authority at the centre and states at the periphery. The constitution defines the organization, powers and limitations of both central and state governments, and it is well-recognized, rigid and considered supreme; i.e. laws of the nation must conform to it. There is a provision for a bicameral legislature consisting of an Upper House, i.e. Rajya Sabha, which represents the states of the Indian federation and a lower house i.e. Lok Sabha, which represents the people of India as a whole. The Indian constitution provides for an independent Judiciary which is headed by the Supreme Court. The court's mandate is to protect the constitution, to settle disputes between the central government and the states, inter-state disputes, and nullify any central or state laws that go against the constitution.

The governments, union or state, are formed through elections held every five years (unless otherwise specified), by parties that claim a majority of members in their respective lower houses (Lok Sabha in centre and Vidhan Sabha in states). India had its first general election in 1951, which was won by the Indian National Congress, a political party that went on to dominate the successive elections up until 1977, when the first non-Congress government was formed for the first time in independent India. The 1990s saw the end of single party domination and rise of coalition governments. The elections for the 16th Lok Sabha, held from April 2014 to May 2014, once again brought back single-party rule in the country, with the Bharatiya Janata Party being able to claim a majority in the Lok Sabha.

FEATURES OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

Compared to other democratic countries, India has a large number of political parties. It has been estimated that over 200 parties were formed after India became independent in 1947. Some features of the political parties in India are that the parties are generally woven around their leaders, the leaders actively playing a dominant role, and that the role of leadership can be transferred, thus tending to take a dynastic route. Such parties include both national and regional parties, such as the Indian National Congress (INC), which has been led by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty since independence, beginning with Jawaharlal Nehru who dominated

the INC and led it to victory in three consecutive elections, and continuing with, after a brief interlude of the prime ministership of Lal Bahadur Shastri, Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi. After the split in the Congress party in 1969 she formed her own Indian National Congress faction called the Indian National Congress (Ruling). After a further split, she formed the Congress (Indira) or Congress(I). Indira remained the leader of the party until her death in 1984, handing power to her son Rajiv Gandhi, who, after his death, his widow Sonia Gandhi, the current leader of INC, took command. As a result of such dominance, the leaders of political parties of the country tend to take an autocratic tone.

One other major feature of the political parties is that, except for the communist parties, most of the political parties of India lack an ideological basis. Instead political parties in India are formed on the basis of race, religion, language, caste etc. factors, thus the high number of political parties.

There are two types of political parties in India - National Party and Regional/State party. Every political party must bear a symbol and must be registered with the Election Commission of India. Symbols are used in Indian political system so that illiterate people can also vote by recognizing symbols of party.

In the current amendment to the Symbols Order, the Commission, has infused the following five principles, which, in its view, should govern the polity in the country, situate as it is in its present state:

1. Legislative presence is a must for recognition as a National or State party.
2. For a National party, it must be the legislative presence in the Lok Sabha and for a State party, the legislative presence must be reflected in the State Assembly.
3. In any election, a party can set up a candidate only from amongst its own members.
4. A party, that loses its recognition, shall not lose its symbol immediately, but shall be given the facility to use that symbol for some time to try and retrieve its status.
[However, the grant of such facility to the party to use its symbol will not mean the

extension of other facilities to it, as are available to recognised parties, like, free time on Doordarshan/AIR, free supply of copies of electoral rolls, etc.]

5. Recognition should be given to a party only on the basis of its own performance in elections and not because it is a splinter group of some other recognised party.

Criteria -

- A political party shall be eligible to be recognised as a *National* party if :-
 1. it secures at least six percent(6%) of the valid votes polled in any four or more states, at a general election to the House of the People or, to the State Legislative Assembly; and
 2. in addition, it wins at least four seats in the House of the People from any State or States.

OR it wins at least two percent (2%) seats in the House of the People (i.e., 11 seats in the existing House having 543 members), and these members are elected from at least three different States.

- Likewise, a political party shall be entitled to be recognised as a *State* party, if :-
 1. it secures at least six percent (6%) of the valid votes polled in the State at a general election, either to the House of the People or to the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned; and
 2. in addition, it wins at least two seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State concerned.

OR

it wins at least three percent (3%) of the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State, or at least three seats in the Assembly, whichever is more. At present there are 3 national parties and 57 state parties.

ALLIANCES

There are three alliances on a national level in India, competing with each other for the position of Government. The member parties work in harmony for gratifying national interests, although a party can jump ships whenever it may deem fit.

The three alliances -

- National Democratic Alliance (NDA) - Centre-Right coalition led by BJP was formed in 1998 after the elections, NDA formed the government although the government didn't last long as AIADMK withdrew support from it resulting in 1999 general elections, in which NDA won and resumed power. The coalition government went on to complete the full five years term, becoming the first non-Congress government to do so. In the 2014 General Elections NDA once again returned to power for the second time, with a historic mandate of 336 out of 543 Lok Sabha seats. BJP itself won 282 seats thereby electing Narendra Modi as the head of the government.
- United Progressive Alliance (UPA) - Centre-Left coalition led by INC, this alliance was created after the 2004 General Elections, with the alliance forming the Government. The alliance even after losing some of its members, was reelected in 2009 General Elections with Manmohan Singh as head of the government.
- Third front - The coalition of parties which do not belong to any of the above camps due to certain issues. They are not bound together due to any ideological similarities but primarily due to their stand of maintaining distance with both major parties. One of the party in the alliance CPI(M), prior to 2009 General Elections was a member party of the UPA. The alliance has no official leading party and generally smaller parties keep coming and leaving the alliance as per political convenience. Many of these parties ally at national level but contest against each other at state level.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

On April 24, 1993, the Constitutional (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 came into force to provide constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions. This Act was extended to Panchayats in the tribal areas of eight States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan from 24 December 1996.

The Act aims to provide 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj for all States having population of over 2 million, to hold Panchayat elections regularly every 5 years, to provide reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women, to appoint State Finance Commission to make recommendations as regards the financial powers of the Panchayats and to constitute District Planning Committee to prepare draft development plan for the district.

POLITICS OF THE PHILIPPINES

The Politics of the Philippines take place in an organized framework of a presidential, representative, and democratic republic whereby the president is both the head of state and the head of government within a pluriform multi-party system. This system revolves around three separate and sovereign yet interdependent branches: the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch. Executive power is exercised by the government under the leadership of the president. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the two-chamber Congress: the Senate (the upper chamber) and the House of Representatives (the lower chamber). Judicial power is vested in the courts with the Supreme Court of the Philippines as the highest judicial body.

Elections are administered by an independent Commission on Elections every three years starting 1992. Held every second Monday of May, the winners in the elections take office on the following June 30.

Local government is produced by local government units from the provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays. While the most regions do not have political power, and exist merely for administration purposes, autonomous regions have expanded powers more than the other local government units. While local government units enjoy autonomy, much of their budget is derived from allocations from the national government, putting their true autonomy in doubt.

LEGISLATURE

Congress is a bicameral legislature. The upper house, the Senate, is composed of 24 senators elected via the plurality-at-large voting with the country as one at-large "district." The senators elect amongst themselves a Senate President. The lower house is the House of Representatives, currently composed of 292 representatives, with no more than 20% elected via party-list system, with the rest elected from legislative districts. The House of Representatives is headed by the Speaker.

Each bill needs the consent of both houses in order to be submitted to the president for his signature. If the president vetoes the bill, Congress can override the veto with a two-thirds supermajority. If either house voted down on a bill or fails to act on it after an adjournment sine die, the bill is lost and would have to be proposed to the next congress, with the process starting all over again. Congress' decisions are mostly via majority vote, except for voting on constitutional amendments and other matters. Each house has its own inherent power, with the Senate given the power to vote on treaties, while the House of Representatives can only introduce money bills. The constitution provides Congress with impeachment powers, with the House of Representatives having the power to impeach, and the Senate having the power to try the impeached official.

The Liberal Party, Nationalist People's Coalition, the National Unity Party (Philippines), the Nacionalista Party, the Lakas-CMD and the United Nationalist Alliance are the parties with largest membership in Congress. The party of the sitting president controls the House of Representatives, while the Senate has been more independent. From 1907 to 1941, the Nacionalistas operated under a dominant-party system, with factions within that party becoming the primary political discourse. During World War II, the Japanese-sponsored Second Philippine Republic forced all the existing parties to merge into the KALIBAPI that controlled the party as a one-party state. From 1945 to 1972, the Philippines was under a two-party system, with the Nacionalistas and their offshoots Liberals alternating power, until President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law. Political discourse was kept into a minimum, until Marcos then merged the parties into the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL),

which dominated elections until 1986 when Marcos was overthrown as a result of the People Power Revolution. The political climate ushered in a multi-party system which persists into this day.

EXECUTIVE

The Malacañang Palace, as viewed from the Pasig River, is the official residence of the President.

Executive power is vested to the President; in practice however, the president delegates his power to a cabinet. The president, who is both the head of state and head of government, is directly elected to a single six-year term via first past the post. In case of death, resignation or incapacitation, the Vice President acts as the president until the expiration of the term. The Vice President is elected separately from the president, and may be of differing political parties. While the vice president has no constitutional powers aside from acting as president when the latter is unable to do so, the president may give the former a cabinet office. The cabinet is mostly composed of the heads of the executive departments, which provide services to the people, and other cabinet-level officials.

The president is also the commander in chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, thereby ensuring civilian supremacy over the military. The president is also given several military powers, although once exercised, Congress is able to prolong or end it. The president also proposes a national budget, in which Congress may adopt in full, with amendments, or a complete revision altogether. The president wields considerable political power and may be able to influence other branches via the so-called Padrino System.

JUDICIARY

The judiciary is composed of the Supreme Court and other lower courts. The Supreme Court is the court of last resort, and decides on constitutionality of laws via judicial review. The president selects justices and judges from nominees given by the Judicial and Bar Council.

The Court of Appeals is the second highest appellate court, the Court of Tax Appeals rules on tax matters, and the Sandiganbayan (People's Advocate) is a special court for alleged government irregularities. The Regional Trial Courts (RTC) are the main trial courts. The Regional Trial Courts are based on judicial regions, which almost correspond to the administrative regions. Each RTC has at least one branch in each province and handles most of the criminal and civil cases; several branches of an RTC may be designated as family courts and environmental courts. Metropolitan Trial Courts try lesser offenses.

The Ombudsman investigates and prosecutes government officials on crimes while in dispensing powers given by the government. The Office of the Solicitor General represents the government in legal cases.

POLITICS OF ROMANIA

Politics of Romania takes place in a framework of a semi-presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the Prime Minister of Romania is the head of government and the President of Romania exercises the functions of head of state. Romania has a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and the two chambers of parliament, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature. Romania's 1991 constitution, amended in 2003 proclaims Romania a democratic and social republic, deriving its sovereignty from the people. It also states that "human dignity, civic rights and freedoms, the unhindered development of human personality, justice, and political pluralism are supreme and guaranteed values".

The constitution provides for a President, a Parliament, a Constitutional Court and a separate system of lower courts that includes The High Court of Cassation and Justice. The right to vote is granted to all citizens over 18 years of age.

The President is elected by popular vote for a maximum of two 5-year terms (4-year terms until 2004). S/he is head of state (charged with safeguarding the constitution, foreign affairs, and the proper functioning of public authorities), supreme commander of the Armed Forces and chairperson of the Supreme Council of National Defense. According to the constitution, s/he acts as mediator among the power centers within the state, as well as between the state and society.

The president nominates the Prime Minister, following consultations with the party that holds the absolute majority of the Parliament or, if there is no such majority formed, with all the parties in the Parliament.

The ambiguity of the Constitution of Romania (Article 85 (1), Article 103 (1) ^[1]) may lead to situations where a coalition of parties obtaining an absolute majority in the Parliament, or a party that holds the relative majority in the Parliament would not be able to nominate the Prime Minister because the President would refuse to accept the nomination. The president argued that there is no party with absolute majority in Parliament. Article 103(1) states that "unless no such majority exists" which was interpreted by the President as "unless no such party exists" although the absolute majority might be formed by one party, a coalition of parties or an alliance.

In the 2008 general parliamentary elections ^[2] PSD-PC won 33,09 of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 34,16 of the seats in the Senate, and PNL won 18,57 of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 18,74 of the seats in the Senate, together holding over 50% of both the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Nonetheless, speculating the Constitution, the President decided to nominate a member of PDL which won less than 32.36 of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 33,54 of the seats in the Senate - thus not even holding a relative majority in the parliament.

The nominated prime minister chooses the other members of the government and then the government and its program must be confirmed by a vote of confidence from Parliament. The prime minister is head of government, executive power is exercised by the government.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest has housed the Chamber of Deputies since 1996 and also the Senate since 2005. The national legislature is a bicameral parliament (Romanian: Parliament), consisting of the Chamber of Deputies (Camera Deputaților) and the Senate (Senat). Members are elected for 4-year terms by universal suffrage under party list proportional representation electoral systems. Starting last election (November 2008) members are elected using a mixed member proportional representation.

The number of senators and deputies has varied in each legislature, reflecting the variation in population. As of 2008, there are 137 senatorial seats and 334 seats in the Chamber of Deputies; of the 334 deputy seats, 18 are held by the ethnic minorities representatives that would not pass the 5% electoral threshold that all the other parties and organizations must pass.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

For other political parties see List of political parties in Romania. An overview on elections and election results is included in Elections in Romania.

Romania has a multiparty system, which makes a majority government virtually impossible. The last eight years saw a settlement of the political scene, with merging of small parliamentary parties with larger ones. Despite that, the politics of Romania are still vivid and unpredictable. Currently there are five parliamentary parties (excluding the 18 ethnic minorities parties that have one representative each):

POLITICAL SYSTEM OF MALAYSIA

Malaysia is a federal parliamentary monarchy, the Prime Minister of Malaysia is the head of government, and there is multi-party system. The Malaysian political system refers to all those regulations and practices and the structure of laws that show how the government is run. Malaysian political system has a unique foundation on which the country's machinery functions.

The Constitution of Malaysia was drafted based on the advice of the Reid Commission which conducted a study in 1956. The Constitution came into force on August 27, 1957.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Malaysia, a federal constitutional elective monarchy, is nominally headed by the Paramount Ruler or Yang di-Pertuan Agong , commonly referred to as the King of Malaysia. Selected for a term of five-years from among the nine Sultans of the Malay states, the king also is the leader of the Islamic faith in Malaysia. The other four states, which have titular Governors, do not participate in the selection. The political system of Malaysia is closely modeled on that of Westminster parliamentary system, a legacy of British colonial rule. Abdullah bin Ahmad Badawi has been the Prime Minister since 31 October 2003 chosen from the lower house of parliament. The Executive power is vested in the cabinet led by the prime minister. The members of the cabinet are all chosen from among members of both houses of Parliament and are responsible to that body.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Malaysia has a bicameral Parliament consisting of the Senate or Dewan Negara with 70 seats; 44 appointed by the paramount ruler, 26 appointed by the state legislatures and the House of Representatives or Dewan Rakyat with 219 seats; members of which are elected by popular vote to serve a term of five-years. The legislative power of the political system of Malaysia is divided between the federal and the state legislatures.

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Malaysian legal system is based on English common law and most of the laws and the constitution are adapted from Indian law. There are the Federal Court, Court of Appeals, high courts, session's courts, magistrate's courts, and juvenile courts. The judges of the Federal Court are appointed by the paramount ruler on the advice of the prime minister. The federal government has authority over external affairs, defense, internal security, justice, federal citizenship, finance, commerce, industry, communications, transportation, and other matters.

The ruling party, which is also a coalition, is the Barisan Nasional (National Front) consisting of United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and 13 other parties, most of which are ethnically based. Other parties include Democratic Action Party (DAP), Parti Islam se Malaysia (PAS) and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR). In total there are more than 30 registered political parties, all of which are represented in the federal parliament.

STATE GOVERNMENTS

The state governments are led by chief ministers, nominated by the state assemblies and advising their respective sultans or governors. There are 13 states and three federal territories which are Kuala Lumpur, Labuan Island and the Putrajaya federal administrative territory. Each of these states has an assembly and government headed by a chief minister. Nine of these states have hereditary rulers, generally titled 'sultans', while the remaining four have appointed governors in counterpart positions.

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