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Hello everyone. In today's lecture, we are going to talk about the history of republics. Firstly, I'll give you some information about Roman Republic. Secondly, I'll be talking about the features of the Roman Republic. After that, I will talk about the concept of equality in Rome. Finally, we'll focus on the different types of republics today and how they operate. If you are ready, let's begin.

Like many things in history, Romans are the founders of the concept of the republic. It is also true that there were some other civilizations like Athens and Sparta that practiced a republic-like government. However, Rome is the origin of the republic as we know it today. So, how did it all begin? In order to answer this question, we need to look at ancient Roman history a little bit further.

Before Rome became a republic, there was a monarchy; in other words, there were kings to rule the country. These kings were elected by the citizens of Rome and they ruled until they died. The king alone held all the power, but he was not alone; there was also a senate.

The last king of Rome was Tarquin Superbus. He ordered many senators to be killed and created a complete despotism. Senators were aware that his actions would get worse. So, they united the people of Rome and together they rebelled and forced Tarquin to leave Rome. In this way, Rome learned that life-time monarchy was not a good idea. The first thing the senate did was to form a government. In this new government, there was no king. Of course they needed a leader, so, instead of one leader, they thought two leaders at the same time would serve the country better. With the leadership power divided into two, they would avoid dictatorship. In short, the senate elected two equal leaders and they called them consuls. In order to avoid permanent power, consuls could only rule for a year. The senate was always there for advice. The consuls would discuss the matters with the senate and make decisions together. In other words, the senate was as strong as the consuls themselves. So, this is how the republic of Rome was formed.

Rome was ruled by the Roman Republic for 500 years. The republic was quite a complex structure, so it would be a good idea to look at all of its bodies separately. We will start from the most important body and go down to the least important one. First let's talk about the consuls in more detail. The consuls were the head of the government; in other words, they were the most powerful people in Rome. Because they had great power, there always had to be two consuls at the same time. They could be in power for one year only. They were responsible for making laws, deciding on going to war and deciding on the amount of tax to collect from people. Let me repeat that. Consuls were responsible for law making, deciding on going to war and the amount of taxes.

Now, the second important body: the senate. The senate consisted of nearly 300 men. Unlike consuls, senate members kept their place until they died. In order to become a senate member, people had to come from ancient noble families. Their duty was to advise the consuls and most of the time, the consuls followed their advice. The consuls and the senate ruled Rome together.

The third body, Plebeian Council, also had an important place in the government. This Plebeian Council was simply the council of the people of Rome. When I say the people of Rome, I mean the common citizens of Rome. These common citizens of Rome were business and landowners. Plebeian Council had some rights such as choosing their local judges. They also had the right to make some laws for their communities like deciding the price of bread or where to set the street markets.

Another important body of the republic was the Tribunes. Tribunes were aristocrats whose duty was to protect the common people because it was their duty to defend people's rights. In other words, they acted as an opposing party in a democracy. They had the right to reject the senate's decisions.

As Rome conquered new places, the republic needed to control these new places. In order to control these places, they created The Office of Governorship. Governors' duty was to collect taxes from the conquered lands. They were also responsible for keeping the peace in the new lands. They had a local Roman army under their control.

Let me summarize what I've said so far. There was a well-constructed republic and distribution of powers in Rome. The two consuls and the senate ruled Rome together, and after them came the Plebeian Council, then the Tribunes and then the governors. There were also some other important bodies but these were the most important ones.

Some people think that the Roman Republic was a truly democratic country. However, ancient Rome was not democratic because people were not treated equally. First of all, women had no right to vote at all. They also could not do business or own land. As you can see, there was no gender equality in Rome. Secondly, people were valued according to their bloodline. By bloodline, I mean the family that they came from. All the people who ruled the country came from ancient and noble families. Wealth also meant a lot for citizenship rights. If a person was wealthy, then he had the right to vote. Not everyone who lived in Rome was a citizen of Rome. There were also people with very few rights and there were also slaves, who had no rights at all. To repeat, there were three kinds of people in Rome: citizens, non-citizens and slaves.

OK... so far, we've talked about one of the earliest forms of republic. Now, let's focus on the types of republics today.

Before we start, let's remember what a republic is. It is a form of government where citizens choose the representatives to govern them. To start, there isn't only one form of republic, but in all its forms, people choose their representatives. Throughout history, countries have adopted the best ways of government they saw fit. Of course, not every country in the world is a republic; there are other ways of governments too. However, we will only focus on republics this time.

First of all, there are federal republics. In a federal republic, there are states. This means, the country consists of subdivisions. There are 21 federal republics in the world. All of them show important similarities in terms of government and in most of them there is a president at the top of the country. There are also some differences among federal republics. For example, Switzerland is the only federal republic that does not have a president. Instead of a president, there is a council that governs the country. In the USA and in Argentina, there is a senate, just like there was one in Rome. However, in many other federal republics, there is no senate. Instead, there is a parliament to make laws.

The most important example for a federal republic is the United States of America. In total, there are fifty states in America. In the USA, the states can decide on various things. For instance, you can carry a gun in Arizona, but it is forbidden in California. Another example is same sex marriages. In 2004, the state of Massachusetts allowed same sex marriages. Yes, in 2004, same sex marriage was allowed in the state of Massachusetts. However, in all other states it was forbidden. Another example of law differences is death penalty. In 31 states of the USA death penalty is applied. In states like Arizona, Texas, Kansas and Washington the death penalty is quite commonly applied. However, in the rest of the 19 states there is no death penalty. Some of them banned it long ago. In Minnesota, for example, the death penalty was banned in 1911, and in Hawaii, it was forbidden in 1957. Yes, in 1911 Minnesota banned the death penalty and in 1957 the death penalty was banned in Hawaii. Despite these differences in laws, there is one important condition that all states in the USA have to obey: the unity of the country. In other words, the states in the USA can have different laws as long as they don't harm the unity of the country.

Although the states can make their own laws, some laws are the same in all states. For instance, some security laws are national in the USA. I'm sure you all know what the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the FBI is. It is the organization that deals with federal security; this means the security of all America. All the states in the USA have to give support to the FBI whenever needed. Laws about the tax system are also national in the USA. In all states, there are rules and regulations about taxes. This means that each and every individual has to pay taxes to the government. International business policies are also subject to national laws. The USA is not the only federal government, Germany is another federal republic.

Like the USA, Germany is also subdivided into states. It consists of sixteen states and like the USA, all states have their own laws but also they are connected to the federation.

Now that we talked about federal republics, we can continue with another kind of republic: Islamic Republics. Basically, these republics are governed by Islamic laws. Some examples of these republics are Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Although these are all Islamic republics, they show quite a number of differences in terms of government types and human rights. For example, women in Iran gained the right to vote in 1963. Although they cannot become presidents, they can still be a member of the parliament. On the other hand, In Afghanistan, women are still trying to use their right to vote. Interestingly, Afghanistan was one of the first countries that gave women the right to vote in 1919. However, they have lost this right twice so far. They re-gained the right to vote in 2004.

Today, I talked about two types of republics; the Federal Republics and Islamic Republics. Of course there are other types of republics but we will talk about them another time. That's all for today. Thank you for listening.