

# THEORIES OF GOVERNMENT

# CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Define different types of governments
- Contrast different types of governments
- Compare and contrast limited governments versus unlimited governments
- Identify historical and contemporary examples of limited and unlimited governments
- Compare and contrast unitary, confederal, and federal systems of government
- Describe the sources of authority from ancient to modern times that provided government with legitimacy

# Important players in the development of government

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679):

Wrote *Leviathan* (pictured)

Argued that the natural state of man without government is war

“man in the state of nature seeks nothing but his own selfish pleasure, but such individualism naturally leads to a war in which every man's hand is against his neighbour. In pure self-interest and for self-preservation men entered into a compact by which they agreed to surrender part of their natural freedom to an absolute ruler in order to preserve the rest. The State determines what is just and unjust, right and wrong; and the strong arm of the law provides the ultimate sanction for right conduct.”



# Hobbes

Hobbes felt that democracy (rule by the will of the majority) would spell ruin for a country.

“The most part are too busy in getting food, and the rest too negligent to understand.”

“As water upon a plain Table is drawn which way any one part of it is guided by the finger.”

As a result democracy should be avoided and monarchy is the preferred type of government

“The government it self, or the administration of its affairs, are better committed to one, then many.”

# Monarchy

- Rule by a king or queen

Usually included life time rule for the king or queen

Usually was acquired by birth i.e. you were the first born son of the current king or queen

In an absolute monarchy as the name implies the monarch had absolute power—this certainly has led to historical abuses

Which differs from a constitutional monarchy which has constitutional limitations on the monarch

# Monarchy

Historically monarchies have been the most common type of government—this started to change with the overthrow of the English Monarchy by the English Parliament in 1649, the American Revolution in 1776, and the French Revolution of 1792

# Historical Monarchies

Historical monarchies have been absolute monarchies

England, Spain,

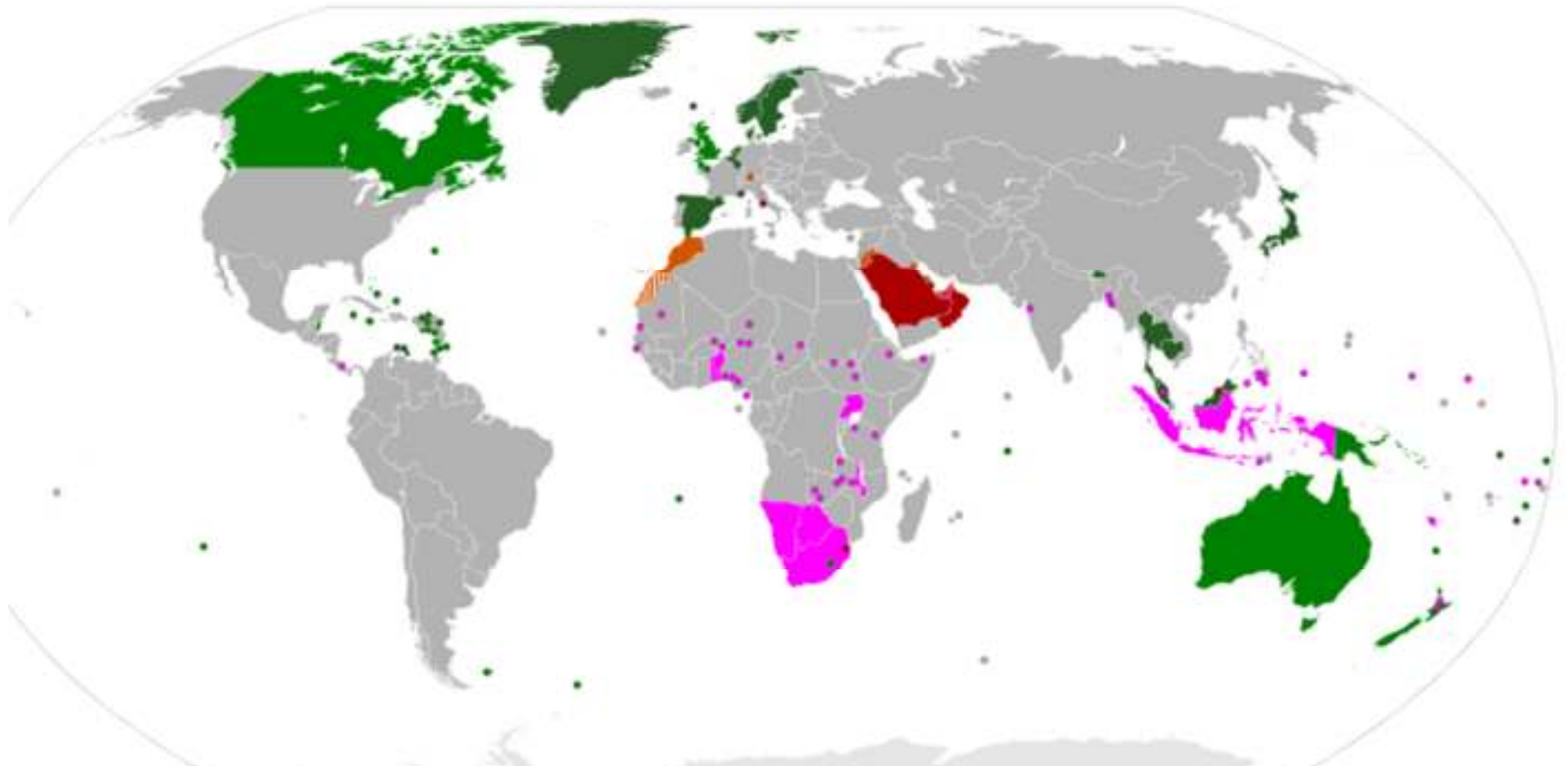
Egypt, Roman

Empire, China,

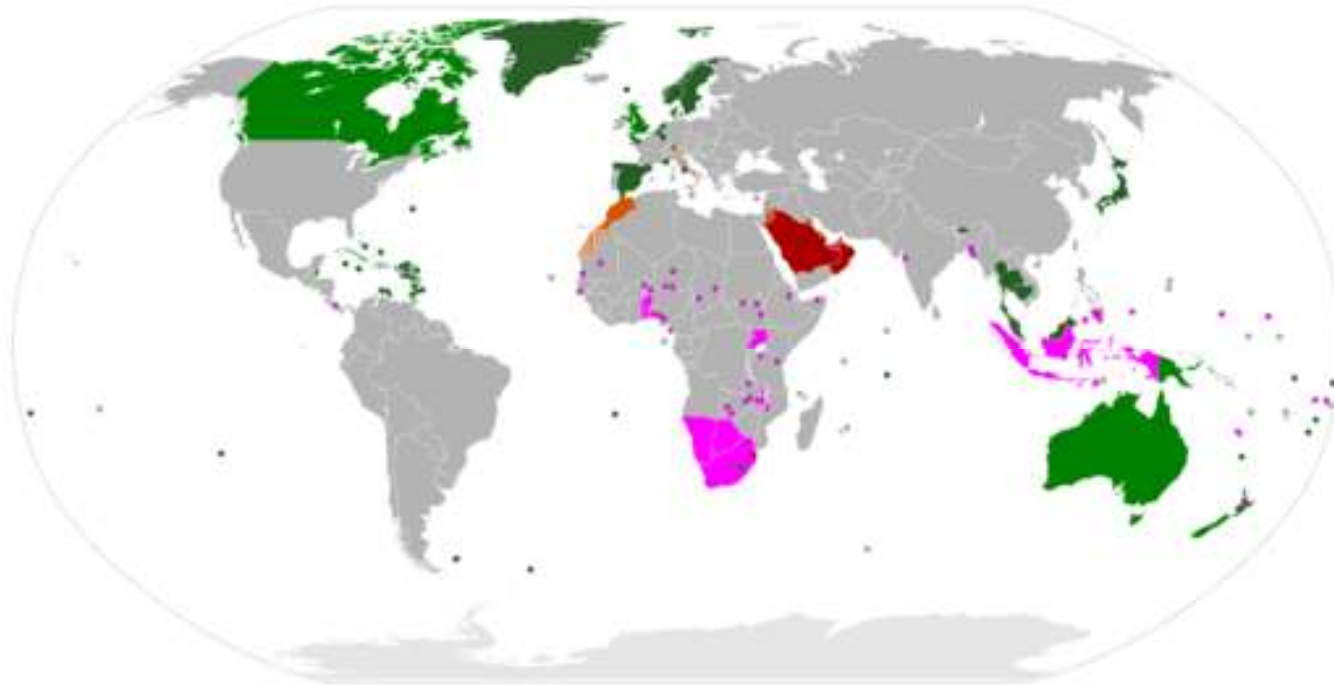
and Japan to

name a few

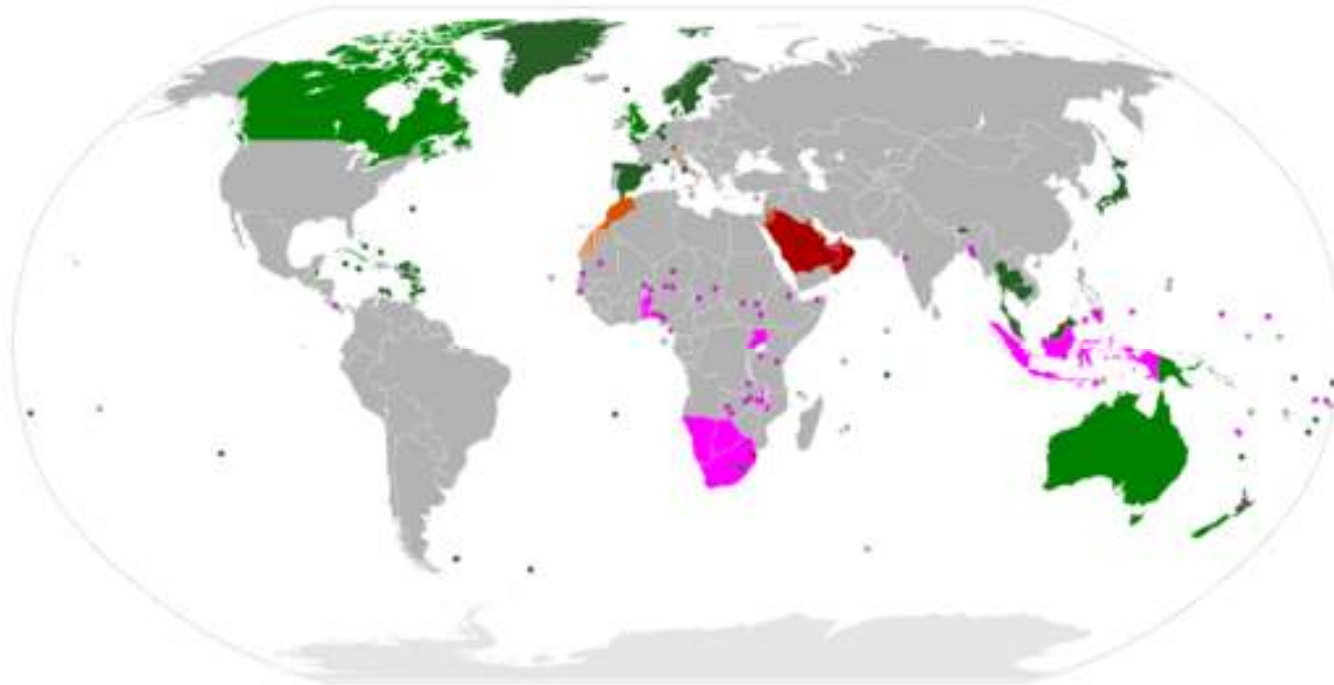
# Contemporary Monarchies



Dark red are absolute monarchies, orange semi-constitutional monarchy, green is constitutional monarchy, pink subnational monarchies in the modern world



absolute monarchies: Bahrain, Brunei, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Liechtenstein, Monaco and the United Arab Emirates



## Constitutional monarchies:

Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Australia, Japan, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Thailand, New Zealand, and Cambodia

# John Locke

- *Wrote Two Treatises on Government* in 1689

Rejects the divine right of kings

Identifies an individual's natural rights

Argues for a limited constitutional government that promotes liberty

“Every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The Labour of his Body, and the Work of his Hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property.”

John Locke *Two Treatises on Government*

# John Locke

Believed in the social contract and that human nature allowed men to be selfish

Locke also believed that people were born with a tabula rasa (blank slate) and that the outlook people would hold as adults was the result of their accumulated experiences

Much of Locke's work centered around religion, this was central to the ideas held by the writers of the Constitution

# John Locke

- He held three arguments regarding religion
  1. Neither the state or individuals had the ability to evaluate the claims made by various religions
  2. Even if they could evaluate it would be ineffective because people will not change religious beliefs due to the threat of violence
  3. Less social disorder would be created by allowing religious diversity

Hopefully that provides some context for the discussion of religion in the United States

# John Locke

- Lastly to take away from John Locke (without delving into a political philosophy class) is the concept of property

Locke believed that property rights were essential and that property rights come before the rights/interests of government

Ultimately Locke's ideas led the world towards democracy or at least a form of democracy

# Democracy

A Greek word which means “rule of the people”

First established in Greece (Athens) and dates back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

In theory the Greek democracy was to be rule by the people which was in opposition to the rule by the elite (aristocracy)

The early Greek “democracy” continued to be rule by the elite as only free men were allowed the vote in Greece. This meant that a percentage of the population probably in the 25-30 percent was actually eligible to vote in the “Greek democracy”

# DIRECT DEMOCRACY

All the citizens (eligible voters) will  
vote on all of the issues that come

Ancient Greeks

advantages? Brings the people in direct contact with the  
political process

Is the truest form of democracy which is both a positive and negative

Disadvantages? Dependent on an informed electorate

Dependent on a motivated electorate

Time consuming

# Representative Democracy

The citizens will elect professional politicians who will represent their views when voting on issues

Advantages?	Creates distance between the citizens and the politicians	Allows those who presumably are experts on politics to be the ultimate decision makers
Disadvantages?	Creates distance between the citizens and the politicians	Leads to increase influence of special interests? Creates a disengaged citizenry?

# OLIGARCHY

A governmental system which involves rule by a “few”

These few can be any selected group i.e. the rich, property owners, males , etc

In practice oligarchies usually involve rule by money

A current theory is that all forms evolve into oligarchy particularly democracy due to the lack of involvement politically of the majority of the citizenry—this is known as the Iron Law of Oligarchy

Examples would include the Soviet Union (only communist party members could hold office and South Africa prior to the end of apartheid

Paul Krugman editorial

# Totalitarianism

A governmental system in which the state (government) hold all of the power over the citizens

Is often confused with authoritarianism

“Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state”

Benito Mussolini

# Dictatorship

- For any type of government we must ask ourselves one question...Who controls the factors of production?

Do we remember what the factors of production are?

Land    labor    Capital-2 types    Human and physical

# Dictatorship

- In a Dictatorship the dictator controls the factors of production

Historically Dictatorships have been hereditary

Closely related to totalitarianism

Dictatorships has to do with the source of power- usually via the military-where as totalitarianism has to do with the role of government in peoples lives

# Dictatorships

- Inherently they suppress individual freedom and liberty-thus requiring a strong military to force people to behave against their will

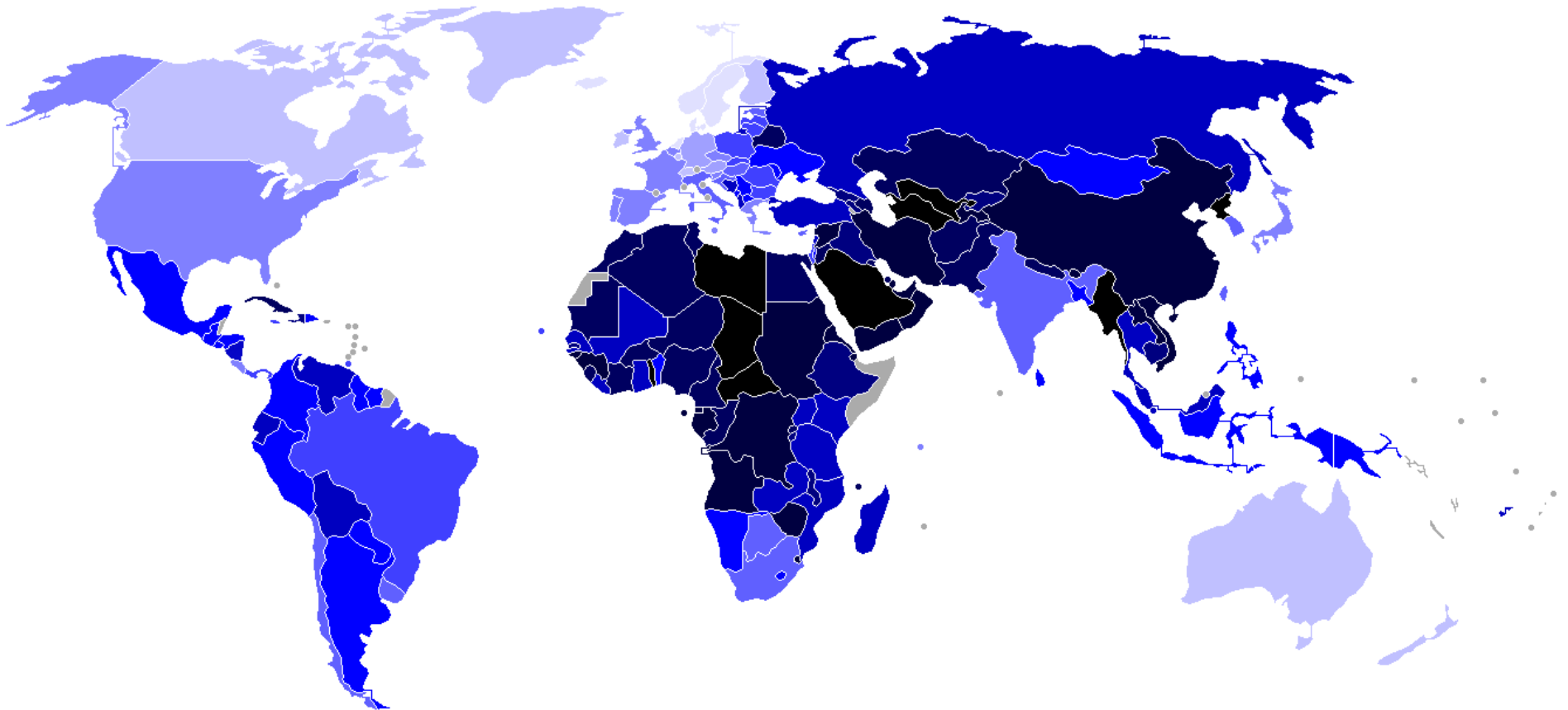
Have leaned heavily on propaganda to maintain support examples of this include but are not limited to the titles that they give themselves:

Fuhrer (leader/guide) Hitler    Duce (guide) Mussolini

Vozhd (chief ) Stalin

# Dictatorship

- In the post World War II world have become most commonplace in Latin America, Asia, and Africa



“Republics end through luxury; monarchies through poverty.”

Charles de Montesquieu

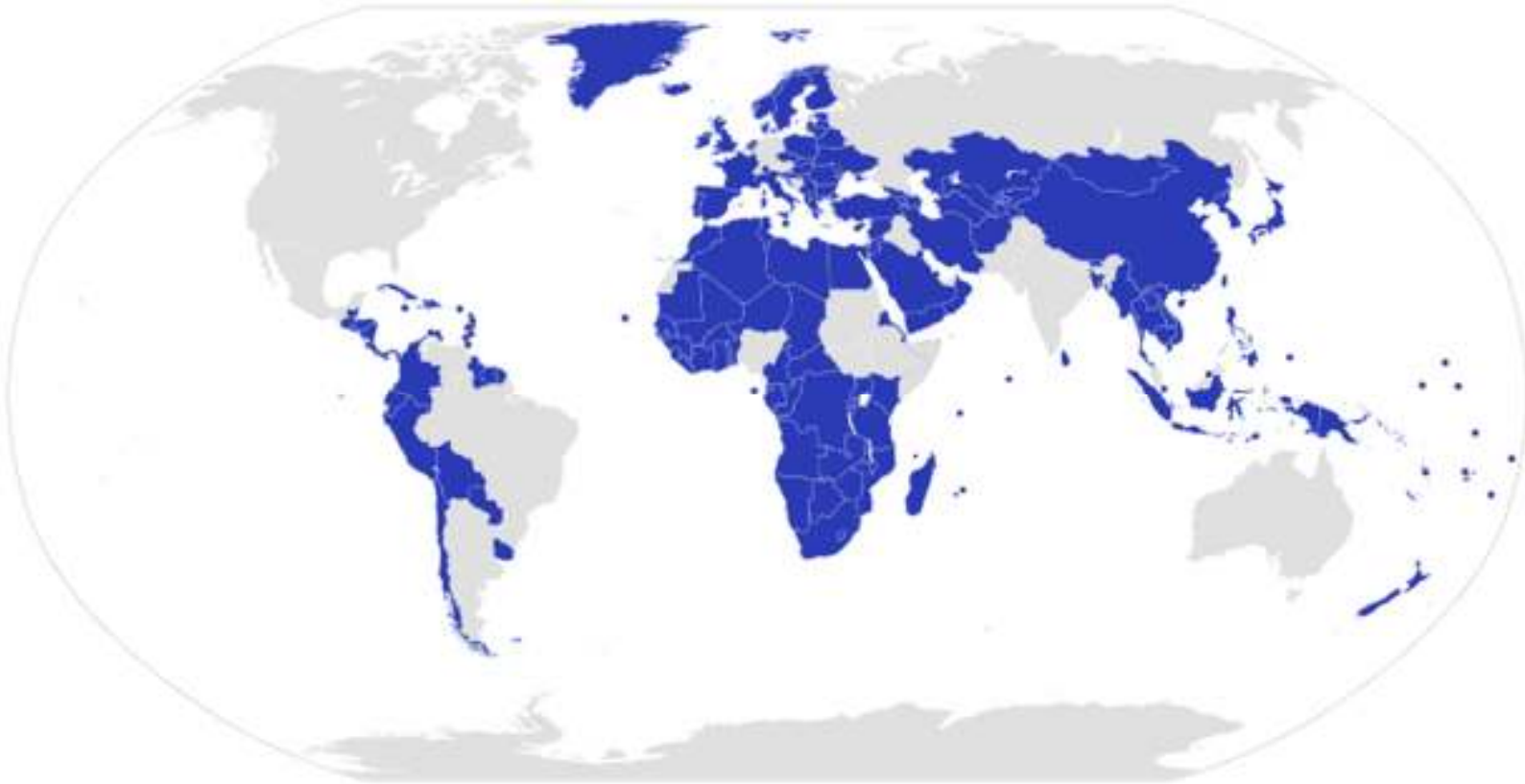
Is this a natural trend of societies? And if so what can be done about it?

“The trend away from individualism and towards totalitarianism is everywhere unmistakable“  
E.H. Carr

# GOVERNMENTAL POWERS

- **Unitary governments:**

The central government has all the power...the local levels of government only have the powers that the federal government allows them to have.



# GOVERNMENT POWERS

## Confederations:

A permanent union of in essence states for common defense or common economic interests

The confederation is linked together either through a treaty or a constitution

European Union is the best modern example of this

Canada is another example—the early United States was a confederation (Articles of Confederation)

# Government Powers

**Federation:** Partially self-governed states who voluntarily agree to a central government

This creates a separation of powers between the various levels of government



# Where does government get power?

This has been debated by political philosophers for centuries for example; Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Hobbs, Locke, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Madison, Hamilton, and Jefferson

These philosophers, incidentally, greatly influenced the American Experiment

We have already touched on Hobbes and Locke's thoughts on Government. We will move towards the founding fathers thoughts in the next chapter

As this is not a political philosophy class, we will just touch on thoughts of the origin of government by looking at some governmental philosophers quotes on government

# Montesquieu

- “Useless laws weaken the necessary laws.”
- “There is no greater tyranny than that which is perpetrated under the shield of the law and in the name of justice.”
- “...when the laws have ceased to be executed, as this can only come from the corruption of the republic, the state is already lost.”
- “If I knew of something that could serve my nation but would ruin another, I would not propose it to my prince, for I am first a man and only then a Frenchman...because I am necessarily a man, and only accidentally am I French.”
- “The Tyranny of a prince in an oligarchy is not so dangerous to the public welfare as the apathy of a citizen in a democracy.”
- “Liberty is the right of doing whatever the laws permit.”
- “But constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go.”

# Montesquieu

- “When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or in the same body of magistrates, there can be no liberty; because apprehensions may arise, lest the same monarch or senate should enact tyrannical laws, to execute them in a tyrannical manner.”
- “[Britain is] a nation that may be justly called a republic, disguised under the form of a monarchy.”

# Rousseau

- “Plants are fashioned by cultivation, man by education. If a man were born tall and strong, his size and strength would be of no good to him till he had learnt to use them; they would even harm him by preventing others from coming to his aid.”
- “Since no man has a natural authority over his fellow, and force creates no right, we must conclude that conventions form the basis of all legitimate authority among men.”
- Every man has a right to risk his own life in order to preserve it.
- What then is government? An intermediate body set up between the subjects and the Sovereign, to secure their mutual correspondence, charged with the execution of the laws and the maintenance of liberty, both civil and political.
- There are two general courses by which government degenerates: i. e. when it undergoes contraction, or when the State is dissolved.

# Rousseau

- **From whatever aspect we regard the question, the right of slavery is null and void, not only as being illegitimate, but also because it is absurd and meaningless. The words slave and right contradict each other, and are mutually exclusive. It will always be equally foolish for a man to say to a man or to a people: “I make with you a convention wholly at your expense and wholly to my advantage; I shall keep it as long as I like, and you will keep it as long as I like.”**
- **The very right to vote imposes on me the duty to instruct myself in public affair, however little influence my voice may have in them.**
- **Good laws lead to the making of better ones; bad ones bring about worse.**
- **A country cannot subsist well without liberty, nor liberty without virtue.**