

# Principles of Government

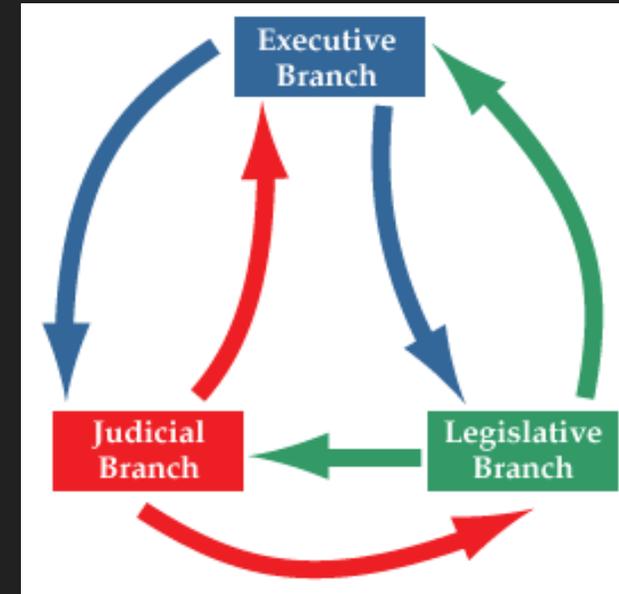
Unit 1- Foundations of Government

# Why learn about government?

- What are some things you could do if government did not exist?
- What are some things you could not do without the government?
- Why is 16 an important birthday? 18? 21?
- Whether you like it or not, the government shapes your life – what you can and cannot do – everyday.
- The best part? You can affect the government!

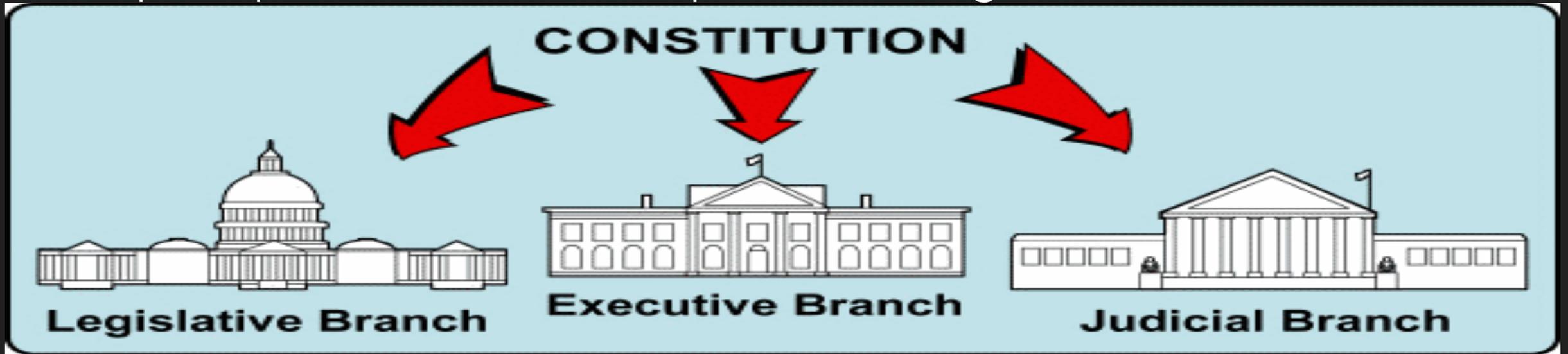
# What is government?

- Government - the institution through which a society makes and enforces its public policies.
- Public policies – all of those things a government decides to do
- Government is a power structure.
- Power: possession of control, or acting in accordance with another's intentions
- Structure: something arranged in a definite pattern of organization



# Our Power Structure

- Constitution: a body of fundamental laws setting out the principles, structures, and processes of government



Makes laws

Executes and  
enforces laws

Interprets  
laws

# The State

- ▶ State: a body of people, living in a defined territory, with an organized government, and with the power to make and enforce laws without the consent of any higher authority (sovereignty).
  - ▶ Examples: The United States, Mexico
- ▶ Nation: group of people with a common culture, language, or history.
  - ▶ Example: the Cherokee Nation, the Jewish people
- ▶ Country: a particular place with certain boundaries
  - ▶ Often the same as States
- ▶ state: a division of a State
  - ▶ Examples: Arizona, Quebec

# The State

- England is a country; the United Kingdom is a state.
- Somalia is a country but not a state; it has no functional government
- The Kurds are a nation without a state.
- Canada is a state with two nations.
- Japan, Germany, and France are nation-states.



# The State of Nature

- A hypothetical condition of humanity before the creation of state, government, legitimate authority, and law.
- The State of Nature = Need for a legitimate authority
  - Hobbes political philosophy (**attempt to acquire knowledge by a logical means about topics that are not based in scientific fact**) or belief was that “the Leviathan” (great power) should be a Monarch (king).
  - Government serves to protect us from the natural state.
  - **Natural rights**- individuals are born with natural rights that their mind and body are capable of doing. Hobbes would argue that “every man has the right to everything” in the state of nature. Self-preservation is at the center of those powers.

# The State of Nature

- Law creates an obligation and duty to another (**to society**) because it forbids an action that we would otherwise “naturally” choose.
- We must give (**duty**) our natural rights (**freedoms and liberties**) to the government (**authority**) in order to be removed from the state of nature (**right**) and continues to promote our self-preservation.
- The State of Nature is why individuals submit to a government power.

# Who gets the power?

- The strongest – Force Theory
- The person chosen by god/ the gods– Divine Right
- The head of a family/clan– Evolutionary Theory
- The person chosen by the people – Social Contract Theory



# Social Contract Theory

- Living without government means we are free but life is very dangerous
- Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau
- To stay safe and to protect our property, we will give up some freedom in exchange
- Three key points
  - The State was created voluntarily by free people
  - Governmental powers are granted by the people
  - Governmental powers are limited by the people

# Forms of Government

- Who can participate?
- How is power distributed geographically?
- What is the relationship between the legislative and executive branches?
- What is the relationship between religious institutions and the government?

# Who can participate?

- Autocracy – a government in which a single person holds unlimited political power
- Autocracy subcategories:
  - Dictator - acquire power from fear and force, often depend on the military to stay in power
  - Monarch - rule inherited
    - Limited Monarch - rulers share authority with elected legislatures

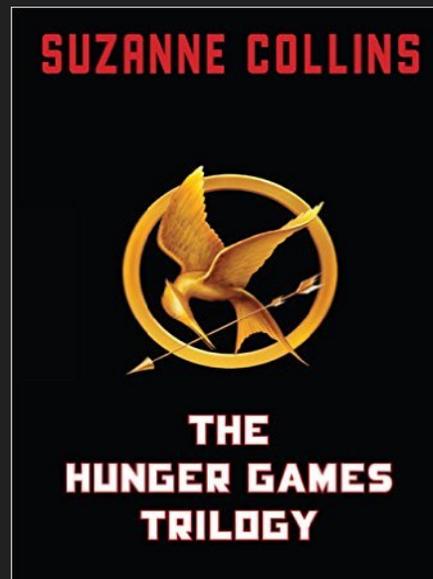


# Who can participate?

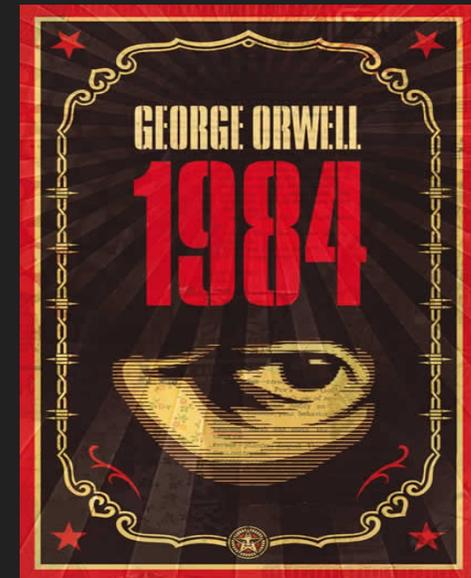
- Oligarchy – a government in which the power to rule is held by a small, usually self-appointed elite



Sparta  
2 kings  
28  
member  
council of  
elders



The Hunger  
Games  
The Capitol



1984  
Oceania  
The Party

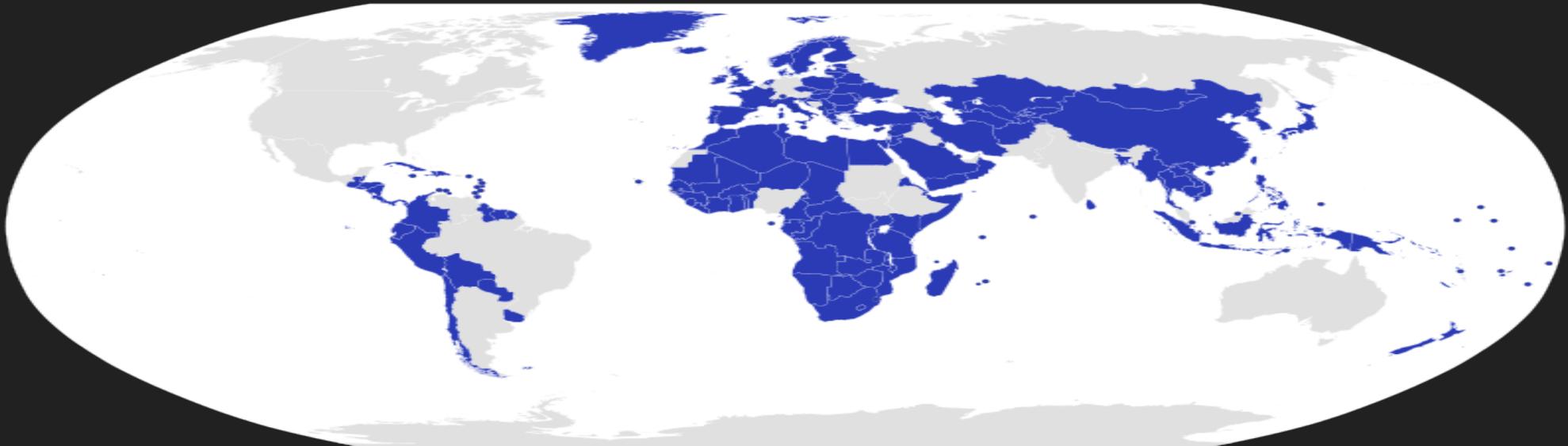
# Who can participate?

- Democracy- rule by the many; political authority rests with the people
  - Direct democracy - a type of government in which people collectively make decisions for themselves
  - Representative democracy - a type of government in which the citizens delegate authority to elected representatives



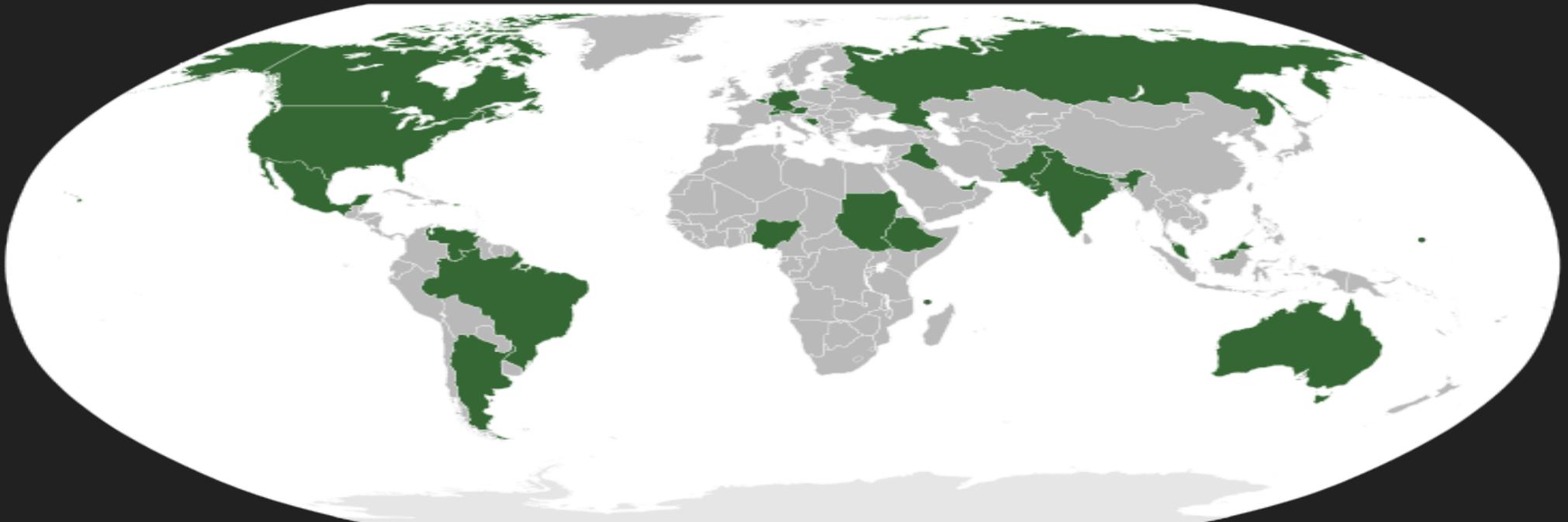
# How is power distributed geographically?

- Unitary government – all powers held by the government belong to a single, central agency.
  - Local units only have those powers that the central government chooses to give them.



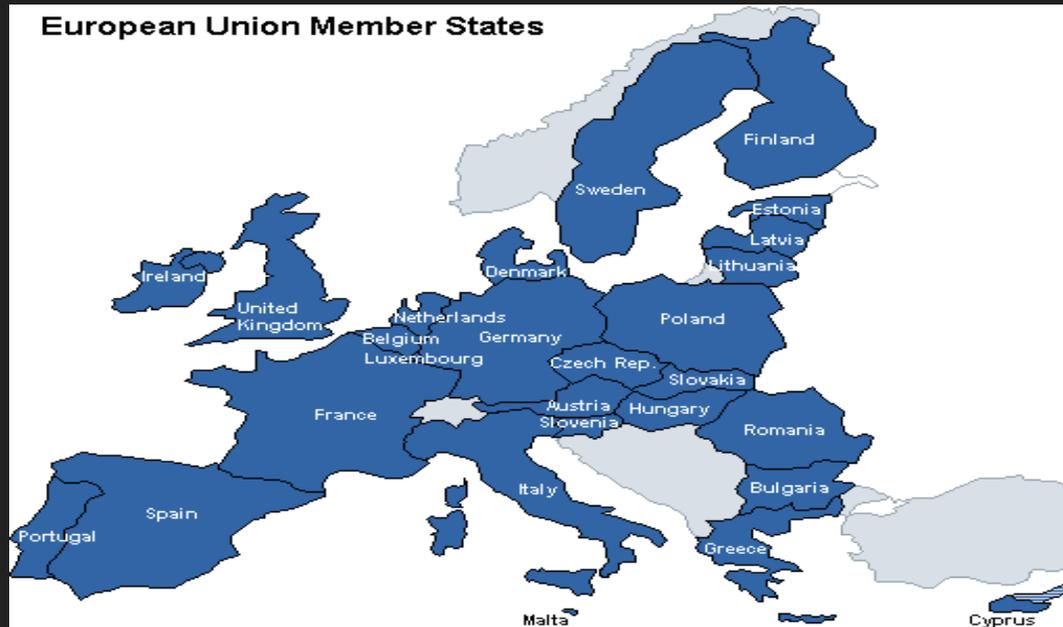
# How is power distributed geographically?

- Federal government – the powers of the government are divided between a central government and several local governments.



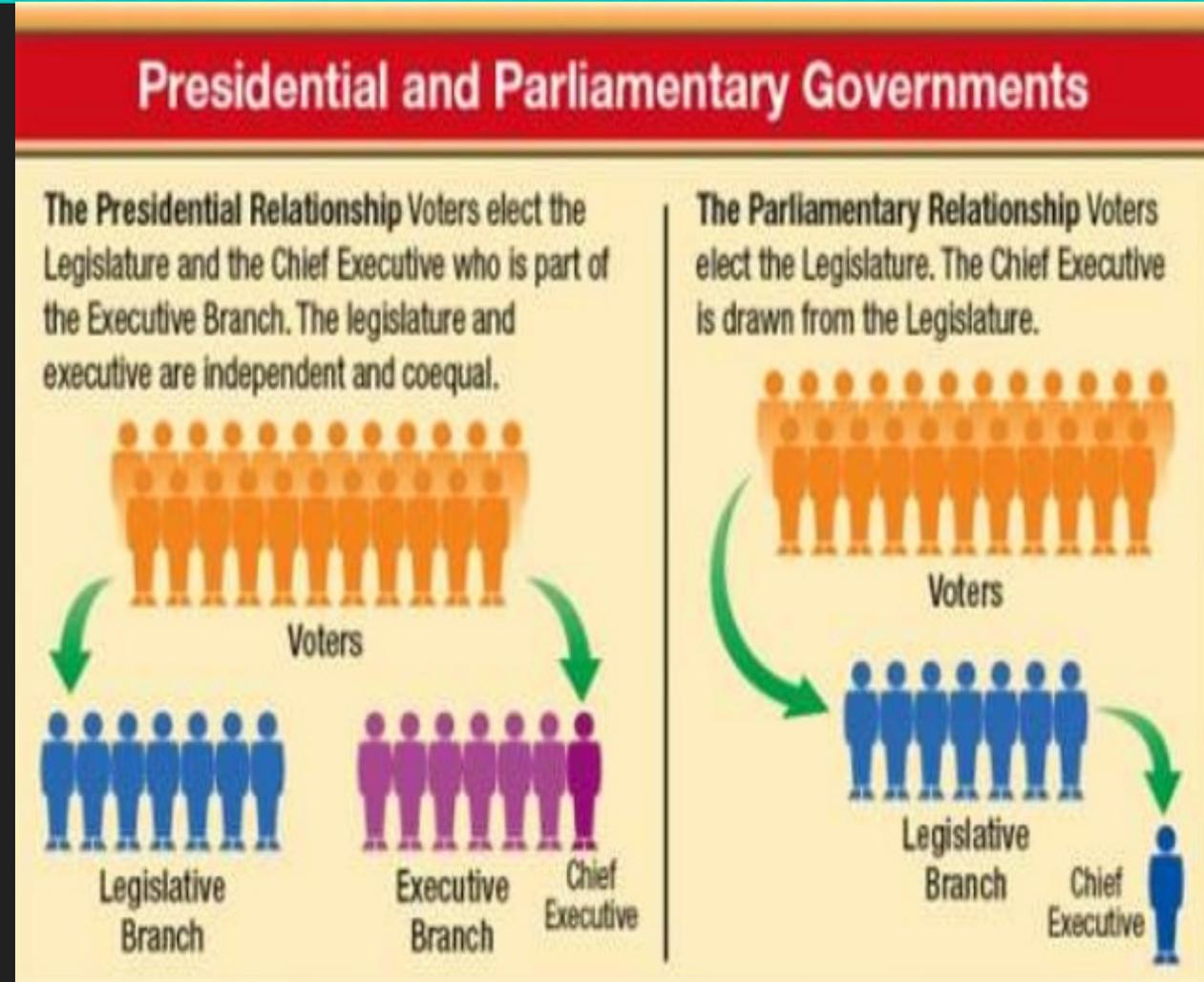
# How is power distributed geographically?

- Confederate government – an alliance of independent states
  - A central organization had the power to handle only those matters that the members states have assigned to it.



# What is the relationship between the legislative and executive branches?

- Presidential government – features a separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches
- Parliamentary government – the executive is made up of the prime minister or premier, and that official's cabinet. The prime minister and his cabinet are members of the legislative branch, the parliament.



# What is the relationship between religious institutions and the government?

- Theocracy - a form of government in which official policy is governed by immediate divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as (or claim to be) divinely guided



# American Concept of Democracy

- Worth of the individual
- Equality of all persons
- Majority rule, minority rights
- Necessity of compromise
- Individual freedom