

Monarchy or Republic?

Introduction

As of 2023, there are 43 sovereign states in the world with a monarch as head of state. There are 13 in Asia, 12 in Europe, 9 in the Americas, 6 in Oceania, and 3 in Africa.

Discussion points:

- various monarchies in existence today
- definitions of monarchy and republic
- popular arguments for and against
- monarchies that have been replaced with republics: English civil war. French revolution Bourbon restoration and Second republic 1848. US war of independence. February 1917 Russia. Spain Franco, restoration of the Monarchy in 1975.

The UK has one of the world's longest running monarchies.

Why has it endured? Thoughts please!

Does a republic offer a better alternative? As above: material for discussion....

Commonwealth Realms	Constitutional Monarchies	European mixed Monarchies	Muslim Monarchies
King Charles III is the monarch of fifteen Commonwealth realms. Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and the United Kingdom. They evolved out of the British Empire into fully independent states within the Commonwealth of Nations that retain the same King as head of state. All fifteen realms are constitutional monarchies and full democracies, where the King (or his representative) legally possesses vast prerogatives, but fulfils a largely ceremonial role.	Andorra, Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and Sweden are fully democratic states in which the monarch has a limited, largely, or entirely ceremonial role. Andorra is unique among all existing monarchies, as it is a diarchy, with the Co-Princeship being shared by the President of France and the Bishop of Urgell (a catholic diocese in Catalonia). This arrangement creates a unique situation among monarchies, as neither Co-Prince is of Andorran descent, one is elected by common citizens of a foreign country (France), but not by Andorrans as they cannot vote in the French Presidential Elections, the other, the bishop of Urgell, is appointed by a foreign head of state, the Pope.	Liechtenstein and Monaco are constitutional monarchies in which the prince retains many powers of an absolute monarch.	Absolute monarchs remain in Brunei, Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates and are classified as mixed, meaning there are representative bodies of some kind, but the monarch retains most of his powers. Malaysia and Morocco are constitutional monarchies, but their monarchs still retain more substantial powers than in European equivalents.

East and Southeast Asian Constitutional monarchies	Other sovereign monarchies	Non-sovereign monarchies
Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, and Thailand have constitutional monarchies where the monarch has a limited or ceremonial role. Thailand changed from traditional absolute monarchy into a constitutional one in 1932, while Bhutan changed in 2008. Cambodia had its own monarchy after independence from the French Colonial Empire, which was deposed after the Khmer Rouge came into power. The monarchy was subsequently restored in the peace agreement of 1993.	Five monarchies do not fit into one of the above groups by virtue of geography or class of monarchy: Tonga in Polynesia; Eswatini and Lesotho in Southern Africa; and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM), and Vatican City in Europe. Of these, Lesotho and Tonga are constitutional monarchies, while Eswatini and Vatican City are absolute monarchies. The Pope is the absolute monarch of Vatican City by virtue of his position as head of the Roman Catholic Church and Bishop of Rome; he is an elected rather than hereditary ruler. The Pope need not be a citizen of the territory prior to his election by the cardinals.	A non-sovereign monarchy or subnational monarchy is one in which the head of the monarchical polity (whether a geographic territory or an ethnic group), and the polity itself, are subject to a sovereign state. The non-sovereign monarchies of Malaysia, emirates of the United Arab Emirates and kingdoms of Uganda are examples of these.

MONARCHY Definition: constitutional/parliamentary/democratic	
The monarch exercises their authority in accordance with a constitution and is not alone in making decisions. Constitutional monarchies differ from absolute monarchies (in which a monarch is the only decision-maker) in that they are bound to exercise powers and authorities within limits prescribed by an established legal framework. The monarch acts as a non-party political head of state under the constitution. While most monarchs may hold formal authority and the government may legally operate in the monarch's name, in the form typical in Europe the monarch no longer personally sets public policy or chooses political leaders. "A sovereign who reigns but does not rule". In addition to acting as a visible symbol of national unity, a constitutional monarch may hold formal powers such as dissolving parliament or giving royal assent to legislation. However, such powers generally may only be exercised strictly in accordance with either written constitutional principles or unwritten constitutional conventions, rather than any personal political preferences of the sovereign. Walter Bagehot identified three main political rights which a constitutional monarch may freely exercise: the right to be consulted, to encourage, and the right to warn.	Three important factors distinguish monarchies such as the UK from systems where greater power might otherwise rest with Parliament. These are: • the Royal Prerogative, under which the monarch may exercise power under certain very limited circumstances; • Sovereign Immunity, under which the monarch may do no wrong under the law because the responsible government is instead deemed accountable; and • the immunity of the monarch from some taxation or restrictions on property use. Other privileges may be nominal or ceremonial (e.g. where the executive, judiciary, police or armed forces act on the authority of or owe allegiance to the Crown).

REPUBLIC Definition	
A republic (from Latin <i>res publica</i> public affair) is a state in which political power rests with the public and their representatives, in contrast with a monarchy. Representation in a republic may or may not be freely elected by the general citizenry. In many historical republics, representation has been based on personal status and the role of elections has been limited. This remains true today; among the 159 states that use the word "republic" in their official names as of 2017, and other states formally constituted as republics, are states that narrowly constrain both the right of representation and the process of election. The term developed its modern meaning in reference to the constitution of the ancient Roman Republic, lasting from the overthrow of the kings in 509 BC to the establishment of the Empire in 27 BCE. This constitution was characterized by a Senate composed of wealthy aristocrats wielding significant influence; several popular assemblies of all free citizens, possessing the power to elect magistrates and pass laws; and a series of magistracies with varying types of civil and political authority.	Most often a republic is a single sovereign state, but there are also subnational state entities that are referred to as republics, or that have governments that are described as republican in nature. The term republic originated from the writers of the Renaissance as a descriptive term for states that were not monarchies. These writers, such as Machiavelli, also wrote important prescriptive works describing how such governments should function. These ideas of how a government and society should be structured is the basis for an ideology known as classical republicanism or civic humanism. This ideology is based on the Roman Republic and the city states of Ancient Greece and focuses on ideals such as civic virtue, rule of law and mixed government.

Criticism of Monarchy	
Aristotle felt that monarchy was only suitable for populations that lacked the ability to govern themselves, and believed that power should alternate among populations that were generally equal. He also felt that it was easier to corrupt one individual than a multitude. Aristotle criticized monarchies for tending to become hereditary which to him carried the risk of conferring power on someone incapable and bringing ruin to the nation. John Milton characterised monarchy as "a government burdensome, expensive, useless and dangerous." Algernon Sidney argued that monarchy was "founded upon human depravity." He attacked the French monarchy as corrupt and unpopular and held up republican Switzerland as one of the most peaceful and successful nations in Europe. In the early nineteenth century, Jeremy Bentham argued that "the only good act which a monarch was capable of accomplishing was to abolish his own office.". Bentham viewed monarchy as an absurd institution which had established itself through force of custom, noting that "almost all men are born under it, all men are used to it, few men are used to anything else; till of late years nobody ever dispraised it. In the early twentieth century, James Bryce contested the notion that monarchy tended to produce stable and capable rulers, arguing from history historical example that most hereditary European monarchs for the previous five centuries had been mediocre.	The selection of sovereigns generally does not involve democratic principles, such as in elective monarchy in states they head. For hereditary monarchies, royal power transmission is carried from generation to generation, with the title and associated power passing down to an heir. Several royal families are criticized in the world and their legitimacy challenged for example: The public debate around republicanism has centred around the core republican argument that a republic is more democratic and compatible with the notion of popular sovereignty. The advocacy group Republic argues: The monarchy is not only an unaccountable and expensive institution, unrepresentative of modern Britain, it also gives politicians almost limitless power. It does this in a variety of ways: • Royal prerogative: Royal powers that allow the Prime Minister to declare war or sign treaties (amongst other things) without a vote in Parliament. • The Privy Council: A body of advisors to the monarch, now mostly made up of senior politicians, which can enact legislation without a vote in Parliament. • The Crown-in-Parliament: The principle, which came about when Parliament removed much of the monarch's power, by which Parliament can pass any law it likes – meaning our liberties can never be guaranteed.

Arguments for monarchy	
Not inherently undemocratic: the current system is still democratic as the Government and MPs of Parliament are elected by universal suffrage and as the Crown acts only on the advice of the Parliament, the people still hold power. Monarchy only refers to how the head of state is chosen and not how the Government is chosen. Provides a focal point for unity and tradition: a constitutional monarch with limited powers and non-partisan nature can provide a focus for national unity, national awards and honours, national institutions, and allegiance, as opposed to a president affiliated to a political party. Monarchy provides for a nonpartisan head of state, separate from the head of government, and thus ensures that the highest representative of the country, at home and internationally, does not represent a particular political party, but all people. Monarchies can play a helpful unifying role in a multinational state, noting that "In Belgium, it is sometimes said that the king is the only Belgian, everyone else being either Fleming or Walloon" and that the British sovereign can belong to all of the UK's constituent countries (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland), without belonging to any particular one of them. Helps avoid extreme politics: European constitutional monarchies "have managed for the most part to avoid extreme politics" – specifically fascism, communism, and military dictatorship – "in part because monarchies provide a check on the wills of populist politicians" by representing entrenched customs and traditions. Feeny notes that, "European monarchies – such as the Danish, Belgian, Swedish, Dutch, Norwegian, and British – have ruled over countries that are among the most stable, prosperous, and free in	the world" Such countries achieve a national stability of special value in times of extremist party strife – because the monarch has never been elected. Nobody has ever had to take sides to vote for or against him, and so the constitutional monarch provides a symbol of unity above and outside politics." Does not cost more than a republic would: Some argue that if there were a republic, the costs incurred in regard to the duties of the head of state would remain more or less the same. This includes the upkeep and conservation of the royal palaces and buildings which would still have to be paid for as they belong to the nation as a whole rather than the monarch personally. On top of that, the head of state would require a salary and security, state visits, banquets and ceremonial duties would still go ahead. Arose from disillusionment with a failed republic: Some people point out that a republican government under the Commonwealth of England and then the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland has already been tried when Oliver Cromwell installed it on 30 January 1649. Yet by February 1657 some people argued that Cromwell should assume the Crown as it would stabilise the constitution, limit his powers and restore precedent. He declined and within three years of his death the Commonwealth had lost support and the monarchy was restored. Later, during The Glorious Revolution of 1688 caused partially by disillusionment with the absolutist rule of James II and VII, Parliament and others, such as John Locke argued that James had broken "the original contract" with the state. Far from pressing for a republic, which had been experienced within living memory, they instead argued that the best form of government was a constitutional monarchy

In favour of Republics	
More democratic: Republicans argue that monarchy devalues a parliamentary system insofar as monarchical prerogative powers can be used to circumvent normal democratic process. It is further argued that monarchy contradicts democracy insofar as it denies <i>the people</i> a basic right, that of the people of any nation to elect their head of state and for every citizen to be eligible to hold that office. Fairer and less elitist; does not demand deference: no one should be expected to defer to another simply because of their birth. It is argued that the way citizens are expected to address members, however junior, of the royal family is part of an attempt to keep subjects "in their place". Based on merit and arouses aspiration: The order of succession in a monarchy specifies a person who will become head of state, regardless of qualifications. The highest titular office in the land is not open to "free and fair competition". Although monarchists argue that the position of Prime Minister, the title with real power, is something anyone can aspire to become, the executive and symbolically powerful position of Head of State is not. Compatible with a multiracial and multicultural society: Some critics have argued that the monarchy of the United Kingdom is incompatible with the multiracial and multicultural British society of the 21st century. The campaigner Peter Tatchell argues that the institution of the British monarchy is unintentionally a racist institution due to a non-white person being unable to become head of state for the foreseeable future.	Does not impose a state religion: The Church of England is an established church, and the British Sovereign is the titular Supreme Governor. The church is tax exempt and provides the House of Lords in Parliament with 26 unelected bishops as its representatives. Does less harm to those who would be monarchs: Republicans argue that a hereditary system condemns each heir to the throne to an abnormal childhood. Some argue that every member of the royal family has suffered psychologically from the system of monarchy. Favours accountability and impartiality: Republicans argue that monarchs are not impartial but harbour their own opinions, motives, and wish to protect their interests. Republicans claim that monarchs are not <i>accountable</i>. Costs less: Republicans claim that the total costs to taxpayers including hidden elements (e.g., the Royal Protection security bill and lost rental income from palaces and state-owned land) of the monarchy are £345 million per annum. Would make the country not appear "backward": Republicans argue that the monarchy is to be considered embarrassing: as a concept it is archaic, too reminiscent of medieval feudalism, with a history linked to colonialism and slavery, and whilst the UK has a hereditary head of state it cannot claim to be a modern nation. The monarchy is out of touch with the public: It is argued that the monarchy with its vast wealth and luxurious assets (such as Charles III having 12 homes, including a palace, castles and estates) is not in touch with the lives of its everyday people, such as those suffering from the cost of living crisis. The monarchy represents the idea of superiority due to blood lineage: The institution of monarchy exemplifies and pushes the myth that some people are superior to others due to genetics and ancestry.

Monarchies in Europe and their underlying concepts, such as the Divine Right of Kings (asserts that a monarch is not accountable to any earthly authority (such as a parliament or pope) because their right to rule is derived from divine authority. Thus, the monarch is not subject to the will of the people, of the aristocracy, or of any other estate of the realm. It follows that only divine authority can judge a monarch, and that any attempt to depose, dethrone, resist, or restrict their powers runs contrary to God's will and may constitute a sacrilegious act. It does not imply that their power is absolute)., were often criticized during the Age of Enlightenment, which notably paved the way to the French Revolution and the proclamation of the abolition of the monarchy in France. Earlier, the American Revolution had seen the Patriots suppress the Loyalists and expel all royal officials. In this century, monarchies are present in the world in many forms with different degrees of royal power and involvement in civil affairs.	The twentieth century, beginning with the 1917 February Revolution in Russia and accelerated by two world wars, saw many European countries replace their monarchies with republics, while others replaced their absolute monarchies with constitutional monarchies. Reverse movements have also occurred, with brief returns of the monarchy in France under the Bourbon Restoration, the July Monarchy, and the Second French Empire, the Stuarts after the English Civil War and the Bourbons in Spain after the Franco dictatorship.
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