

Federalist Number 10

Large Republic: Best Control of Effects of Faction

The important tendency of a well-constructed Union to break and control the violence of faction deserves careful examination. The propensity for this dangerous vice alarms every friend of popular governments. Therefore, they will appreciate any plan providing a cure that doesn't violate the principles of liberty he so values.

Public councils rife with instability, injustice, and confusion are the mortal diseases that have killed popular governments everywhere. The adversaries of liberty continue to use this excuse for their most specious declamations.

The American State constitutions make valuable improvements on the popular governing models, both ancient and modern, that cannot be too much admired. But claiming they effectually obviate the danger as was wished and expected would be an unwarranted partiality.

Our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally friends of public and private faith, and public and personal liberty, complain our governments are too unstable. They say the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties. Too often, measures are decided by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority rather than the rules of justice and the rights of the minority party.

We may fervently wish these complaints had no foundation, but the evidence shows they are in some degree true.

A candid review shows that some of our distresses have been erroneously blamed on the operation of our governments. However, other causes, alone, will not account for many of our heaviest misfortunes. Specifically, the prevailing and increasing distrust of public engagements and alarm for private rights echoed from one end of the continent to the other. These must be largely, if not totally, the effects of distrusting the injustice that a factious spirit has tainted our public administrations.

Faction Defined: Group Acts Against Community Interests

2 By a faction, I mean a group of citizens, either a majority or minority, united and actuated by some common passion or interest adverse to the rights of other citizens or to the aggregate interests of the community.

Faction Cure: Remove Causes or Control Effect

3 There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: remove its causes or control its effects.

Remove Causes: Destroy Liberty or Equalize Passions

4 There are also two methods of removing the causes: destroy the liberty essential for it to exist or give every citizen the same opinions, passions, and interests.

Destroy Liberty: Worse Than Factions

5 The first remedy is far worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire. Without the nourishment of liberty, faction instantly dies. But abolishing liberty, an essential of political life, because it nourishes faction is as silly as the wish to annihilate air, an essential of animal life, because it gives fire its destructive energy.

Equal Passions: Impossible

6 The second cure is impractical as the first is unwise. As long as man's reasoning remains fallible and he's free to use it, different opinions will be formed. As long as a connection between reasoning and self-love exists, opinions and passions will influence each other. Especially, passions will sway opinions.

Property rights originate from the people. But the diversity in men's abilities is an insurmountable obstacle to equality of acquisitions. Protection of these abilities is government's primary function. Because government protects different and unequal abilities to acquire property, the people end up owning properties of varying value and kind. This diversity of property ownership divides society into groups with

different interests and concerns.

Faction: Inherent in Human Nature

7 Therefore, faction is part of the very nature of man. We see different degrees of it in different circumstances. Differing opinions on religion and government in both theory and practice, the various ambitions of leaders, human passions, and diversity of interests have, at various times, divided mankind into parties and inflamed animosity, making them more apt to oppress each other than cooperate for their common good.

Mankind's propensity toward mutual animosities make even frivolous and insubstantial differences a sufficient excuse to kindle unfriendly passions and excite violent conflicts.

But the most common and durable source of factions is the unequal distribution of property. Those who have property and those who are without property always have different interests. Likewise, creditors and debtors.

From necessity, civilized nations develop property owners, manufacturers, merchants, bankers and many less defined occupations creating different classes with different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and conflicting interests is the principal task of modern legislation. Therefore, factions are a part of the ordinary operations of government.

Legislators: Both Advocates, Parties to Causes

8 No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause because his interest would certainly bias his judgment and probably corrupt his integrity.

For even greater reasons, a group of men are unfit to be both judges and litigants at the same time. Yet the most important legislative acts are basically judicial determinations, not about the rights of individuals, but about the rights of large bodies of citizens. And the different classes of legislators are but advocates and parties to the causes they determine.

Does a proposed law concern private debts? Creditors are parties on one side; debtors on the others. Justice ought to hold the balance between them. Yet the parties are, and must be, themselves the judges. The most numerous party or, in other words, the most powerful faction must be expected to prevail.

Should domestic manufacturers be encouraged, and how much, by restrictions on foreign manufacturers? Landowners would answer differently than manufacturers. Neither would probably use justice and the public good as sole motivators.

The apportionment of taxes on different types of property would seem to require the most exact impartiality. Yet there is, perhaps, no legislative act with greater opportunity and temptation for the predominant party to trample on the rules of justice. With every dollar they overburden the minority party, they save a dollar in their own pockets.

All Private Interests Never Ignored

9 It is naive to say that enlightened statesmen will adjust the clashing interests, making them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Besides, to make such an adjustment indirect and remote effects must be considered. And they will rarely prevail over the immediate interest one party may have in disregarding the rights of another or the good of the whole.

Effect Must Be Controlled

10 The obvious inference is that the causes of faction cannot be removed and relief can only be sought in the means of controlling its effects.

Majority Faction: Downside of Popular Government

11 If a faction isn't a majority, relief comes from the republican principle that enables the majority to defeat sinister views by vote. The minority faction may clog the government systems and convulse society, but under the Constitution it can't execute and mask its violence.

When a faction is a majority, popular government enables it to sacrifice public good and the rights of other citizens to their passions and interests. To secure the public good and private rights against the

danger of such a faction and, at the same time, preserve the spirit and form of popular government, is the objective of our discussion. Let me add that our most fervent desire is to rescue popular government from the disgrace of shameful conduct under which it has so long labored and recommend it be appraised and adopted by mankind.

Prevent Majority Faction's Passions Or Actions

12 How is this objective obtainable? Evidently, by only one of two ways. Either the negative passions and interests in a majority faction must be prevented or that faction must be rendered unable to effect schemes of oppression. If the desire and opportunity coincide, neither moral nor religious motives can be relied on as adequate control. Moral values don't control the injustice and violence of individuals and their efficacy decreases proportionately to the number of people involved. In other words, the effectiveness of moral values decreases as their need increases.

Pure Democracy Magnifies Violent Effects of Faction

13 It may be concluded from this view of the subject that pure democracy, by which I mean a society of citizens who assemble and administer the government in person, won't cure the harm caused by faction. In a pure democratic government, a common passion or interest will, almost always, be felt by a majority of the whole. There is nothing to check the inducement to sacrifice the weaker party or obnoxious individual.

Therefore, such democracies are always spectacles of turbulence and contention. They are incompatible with personal security or property rights. Their lives are as short as their deaths, violent. Political theorists who support this type of government erroneously suppose that after people are reduced to perfect political equality, their possessions, their opinions, and their passions will also be equal.

Republic vs. Pure Democracy

14 A republic, by which I mean a government with a representation plan, suggests a different expectation and promises the cure we are seeking. Let's examine the points it varies from pure democracy and we will understand both the nature of the cure and the efficacy it derives from the Union.

Representatives, Larger Area

15 The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, in a republic, a small number of governmental delegates are elected by the rest of the citizens; secondly, a republic can be composed of a greater number of citizens over a larger country.

Representatives: Guard Public Good

16 The first difference, representation, refines and enlarges public views by passing them through the chosen body of citizens. The representatives' wisdom may discern the true interest of their country and their patriotism and love of justice will make it less likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under this system, the public voice, as pronounced by the representatives of the people, may be more in line with the public good than if all the people gathered and spoke for themselves.

On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men with local prejudices or sinister designs may, by intrigue, corruption, or other means, be voted into office, then betray the interests of the people.

The question becomes whether small or extensive republics elect better guardians of the public good. For two obvious reasons, extensive republics do.

Large Nation: Qualified People

17 In the first place, no matter how small the republic may be, there must be enough representatives to guard against the plots of a few. However, in a large republic the number must be limited to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence, the number of representatives in the two cases are not in the same proportion to their constituents, with the larger proportion in the small republic. If the proportion of qualified people is the same in a large as a small republic, the large republic will present greater options and, consequently, result in a greater probability of a fit choice.

Large Republic: More Qualified Men

18 Since each representative is chosen by a greater number of citizens in a large than a small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to successfully win through election fraud. And with wide voter freedom, elections will more likely center on men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established character.

Representative/Constituent Ratio

19 It must be confessed that, as in most things, inconveniences will be found. Too large a number of electors (voters) leaves the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser issues. Reducing the electorate too much renders the representative unduly attached and unfit to comprehend and pursue great and national issues. The federal Constitution forms a happy combination in this respect. The great and aggregate issues are referred to the national government, local issues referred to State legislatures.

Large Area: Conspiracy Harder

20 The second difference between a pure democracy and a republic is that a republic can encompass a greater number of citizens and larger territory than a democracy. This circumstance makes factious combinations difficult.

The smaller the society, the fewer the distinct parties and interests, and the more frequently they will be a majority. The smaller the number of individuals composing a majority and the smaller area they inhabit, the more easily will they combine and execute their plans of oppression.

Expanding the size adds a greater variety of parties and interests. It becomes less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens. Even if a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for those holding it to discover their combined strength and act in unison with each other.

Besides other impediments, when a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes exists, communication is limited by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.

Union Controls Effects of Faction

21 Hence, it clearly appears that the same advantage a republic has over a democracy, controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic, and enjoyed by the Union over the States composing it. Is the advantage the result of substituting enlightened, virtuous representatives who are above local prejudices and schemes of injustice? It won't be denied that Union representatives will most likely possess these requisite endowments. Is it the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, so one party can't outnumber and oppress the rest? Does the increased variety of parties within the Union increase this security? Is a large republic safer because it has more obstacles to the accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust majority? Again, the large size of the Union gives it the most obvious advantage.

Factious Passions: Effect on Union

22 Factious leaders may kindle a flame within their specific States, while not able to spread a general conflagration through the other States. A religious sect may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the Confederacy. But the variety of sects dispersed over the entire country secures the national councils against danger from that source. A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the Union than a specific member of it, just like a malady is more likely to taint a specific county or district than an entire States.

Positive Effects of Size, Structure of Government

23 In the size and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we see a republican remedy for the most common diseases of republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being a republic, we will cherish and support the character of Federalists. **PUBLIUS**