

ANALYTICAL READING ACTIVITIES
TOPIC 1.3

AP United States Government and Politics

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Topic 1.3: Government Power and Individual Rights

Source Analysis

Before You Read

Recall what you know about the debates between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. What were the fundamental differences in their beliefs on the function of government? Use the table below to organize your knowledge by specific categories.

Category of Comparison	Federalists	Anti-Federalists
Proper role of government		
Size and power of the central government		

Required Document:
Excerpts from The Federalist No. 10
by James Madison

Paired with Required Document: *Excerpts from Brutus No. 1, October 18, 1787*

Related Concepts:

- Direct or Pure Democracy
- Republic
- Federalism
- Pluralism
- Balance Between Order and Individual Rights

Comparison

Identify similarities and differences.

Source Analysis

Describe the author's claim(s), perspective, evidence, and reasoning.

The Federalist No. 10

As you read *Federalist No. 10* through a political science lens, you will focus on the argument for why a republic is a suitable government for a large country. Pay attention to how Madison supports this claim. Political scientists focus their analysis on the defense of the Constitution by those men who constructed and then advocated for it.

Consider how Madison develops an argument about how a large republic can best ensure individual rights. Consider the counter-argument he is answering or rebutting and how doing this reflects an awareness of comparison. *Brutus No. 1* is paired with this text. Try and predict what the arguments are in opposition to Madison's defense of the then-new government created at the Constitutional Convention.

Federalist 10

From the New York Packet.

Friday, November 23, 1787.

Author: James Madison

To the People of the State of New York:

AMONG the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate, as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice. ...

By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. ...

aggregate: collected

Academic Vocabulary

Paraphrase Madison's definition of a *faction* in the space below the text.

What danger does Madison say factions present to the rights of other citizens?

From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert result from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from pure democracy, and we shall comprehend both the nature of the cure and the efficacy which it must derive from the Union.

Check Your Understanding

What is a “pure democracy” according to Madison?

Source Analysis

Highlight or underline the claim Madison makes regarding a *pure democracy’s* ability to handle factions.

Academic Vocabulary

Paraphrase what Madison means by a *republic* in the space below the text.

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are more favorable to the election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations:

In the first place, it is to be remarked that, however small the republic may be, the representatives must be raised to a certain number, in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that, however large it may be, they must be limited to a certain number, in order to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence, the number of representatives in the two cases not being in proportion to that of the two constituents, and being proportionally greater in the small republic, it follows that, if the proportion of fit characters be not less in the large than in the small republic, the former will present a greater option, and consequently a greater probability of a fit choice.

factious: caused by a faction; inclined to form a faction

cabal: a group of people secretly united in a plot

Source Analysis

Highlight or underline the claim Madison makes about why a republic is the best form of government.

Source Analysis

Circle the evidence on this page that Madison uses to support his claim about the best form of government.

Connect to the Content

How is what Madison describes on this page evident in the structure of the U.S. Government?

*In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practice with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to centre in men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters.

It must be confessed that in this, as in most other cases, there is a mean, on both sides of which inconveniences will be found to lie. By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representatives too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal Constitution forms a happy combination in this respect; the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the State legislatures.

Check Your Understanding

According to Madison, how does the larger number of voters lead to a better class of representatives?

Source Analysis

How does Madison continue to develop the idea he introduced earlier regarding the “just right” proportion of representatives to citizens or constituents?

The other point of difference is, the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked that, where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.

Source Analysis

Here, Madison is expanding on an earlier point about the advantages of a large republic over a smaller one.

Underline what he is saying about how factions will be better managed in a large republic than in a small one.

How is that connected to protecting the rights of the people?

After You Read

Thinking Like a Political Scientist

Reasoning Process: Comparison

Use the table below to outline the comparison Madison made during his argument.

	Republic	Pure Democracy
Dealing with Factions		
Structure of Government		

How does Madison use comparison to bolster his argument?

Political Science Disciplinary Practices

Source Analysis

What was Madison's purpose in defining terms such as *faction*, *pure democracy*, and *republic*? How does this strategy help to further his purpose?

Cite the evidence that was most useful in supporting Madison's claim about the best form of government.

Brutus No. 1

Brutus No. 1 is another required foundational document. It represents the Anti-Federalist point of view. As you read the text, consider how the author develops an argument about his concerns about the Constitution and the threat it presented to the states and the people. Compare this argument to Madison's argument in *Federalist No. 10*.

Source Information: *Brutus No. 1*, October 18, 1787

When the public is called to investigate and decide upon a question in which not only the present members of the community are deeply interested, but upon which the happiness and misery of generations yet unborn is in great measure suspended, the benevolent mind cannot help feeling itself peculiarly interested in the result ...

... Many instances can be produced in which the people have voluntarily increased the powers of their rulers; but few, if any, in which rulers have willingly abridged their authority. This is a sufficient reason to induce you to be careful, in the first instance, how you deposit the powers of government.

abridged: reduce, cut back on

Check Your Understanding

Why does Brutus think that people should care about the form of government?

... This government is to possess absolute and uncontrollable power, legislative, executive and judicial, with respect to every object to which it extends, for by the last clause of section 8th, article 1st, it is declared “that the Congress shall have power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this constitution, in the government of the United States; or in any department or office thereof.” And by the 6th article, it is declared “that this constitution, and the laws of the United States, which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and the treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, any thing in the constitution, or law of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.” It appears from these articles that there is no need of any intervention of the state governments, between the Congress and the people, to execute any one power vested in the general government, and that the constitution and laws of every state are nullified and declared void, so far as they are or shall be inconsistent with this constitution, or the laws made in pursuance of it, or with treaties made under the authority of the United States. — The government then, so far as it extends, is a complete one, and not a confederation. ...

Source Analysis

Highlight or underline the claim Brutus makes about the government established by the Constitution.

Check Your Understanding

Circle where Brutus references the “Necessary and Proper” clause and the Supremacy clause.

Source Analysis

Use the space below the paragraph to explain how the author uses these clauses to support his sub-claim here.

Let us now proceed to enquire, as I at first proposed, whether it be best the thirteen United States should be reduced to one great republic, or not? It is here taken for granted, that all agree in this, that whatever government we adopt, it ought to be a free one; that it should be so framed as to secure the liberty of the citizens of America, and such an one as to admit of a full, fair, and equal representation of the people. The question then will be, whether a government thus constituted, and founded on such principles, is practicable, and can be exercised over the whole United States, reduced into one state?

If respect is to be paid to the opinion of the greatest and wisest men who have ever thought or wrote on the science of government, we shall be constrained to conclude, that a free republic cannot succeed over a country of such immense extent, containing such a number of inhabitants, and these encreasing in such rapid progression as that of the whole United States. Among the many illustrious authorities which might be produced to this point, I shall content myself with quoting only two. The one is the baron de Montesquieu, *spirit of laws*, chap. xvi. vol. I [book VIII]. "It is natural to a republic to have only a small territory, otherwise it cannot long subsist. In a large republic there are men of large fortunes, and consequently of less moderation; there are trusts too great to be placed in any single subject; he has interest of his own; he soon begins to think that he may be happy, great and glorious, by oppressing his fellow citizens; and that he may raise himself to grandeur on the ruins of his country. In a large republic, the public good is sacrificed to a thousand views; it is subordinate to exceptions, and depends on accidents. In a small one, the interest of the public is easier perceived, better understood, and more within the reach of every citizen; abuses are of less extent, and of course are less protected." Of the same opinion is the marquis Beccarari. ...

The territory of the United States is of vast extent; it now contains near three millions of souls, and is capable of containing much more than ten times that number. Is it practicable for a country, so large and so numerous as they will soon become, to elect a representation, that will speak their sentiments, without their becoming so numerous as to be incapable of transacting public business? It certainly is not.

Source Analysis

Circle what the "great thinkers" the author quotes have to say about a republic governing a small area and a large area.

Source Analysis

Explain how the Brutus uses the "great thinkers" to support his argument?

Why is it significant that he describes them as "great thinkers"?

Source Analysis

Circle the places in this paragraph where Brutus uses the size of the United States to support his argument.

In a republic, the manners, sentiments, and interests of the people should be similar. If this be not the case, there will be a constant clashing of opinions; and the representatives of one part will be continually striving against those of the other. This will retard the operations of government, and prevent such conclusions as will promote the public good. If we apply this remark to the condition of the United States, we shall be convinced that it forbids that we should be one government. ...

... The laws and customs of the several states are, in many respects, very diverse, and in some opposite; each would be in favor of its own interests and customs, and, of consequence, a legislature, formed of representatives from the respective parts, would not only be too numerous to act with any care or decision, but would be composed of such heterogeneous and discordant principles, as would constantly be contending with each other.

...

In a republic of such vast extent as the United-States, the legislature cannot attend to the various concerns and wants of its different parts. It cannot be sufficiently numerous to be acquainted with the local condition and wants of the different districts, and if it could, it is impossible it should have sufficient time to attend to and provide for all the variety of cases of this nature, that would be continually arising. ...

In so extensive a republic, the great officers of government would soon become above the control of the people, and abuse their power to the purpose of aggrandizing themselves, and oppressing them. ... the collecting of all the public revenues, and the power of expending them, with a number of other powers, must be lodged and exercised in every state, in the hands of a few. When these are attended with great honor and emolument, as they always will be in large states, so as greatly to interest men to pursue them, and to be proper objects for ambitious and designing men, such men will be ever restless in their pursuit after them. They will use the power, when they have acquired it, to the purposes of gratifying their own interest and ambition, and it is scarcely possible, in a very large republic, to call them to account for their misconduct, or to prevent their abuse of power.

These are some of the reasons by which it appears, that a free republic cannot long subsist over a country of the great extent of these states. If then this new constitution is calculated to consolidate the thirteen states into one, as it evidently is, it ought not to be adopted.

Source Analysis

Highlight or underline the claim Brutus is making here.

Source Analysis

For each of the remaining paragraphs, circle the evidence that the author uses to support the claim you identified above.

Source Analysis

Restate the conclusion of the argument.

After You Read

Thinking Like a Political Scientist

Reasoning Process: Comparison

List at least two categories of comparison that could be used to compare the arguments in *Federalist No. 10* and *Brutus No. 1*.

Describe Brutus' claim that states are better at protecting individual rights.

Political Science Disciplinary Practices

Source Analysis

Brutus raised concerns about the elements of the Constitution that proposed moving from a confederation to a federal system. Evaluate the evidence the author used to support these concerns. How well does it support his claims?

Making Connections

Let's now analyze the two readings in this lesson.

Complete the table using specific claims and evidence from the arguments by Madison and Brutus.

Category of Comparison	Madison	Brutus
Proper role of government		
Size and power of the central government		

What connections can you make to government and politics today? How is power balanced in our republic?
