

Political Parties

James Madison FEDERALIST 10

The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed . . . when he contemplates their tendency toward faction. . . .

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

The causes of faction are sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity. . . . A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points; an attachment to different leaders, ambitiously contending for preeminence and power, or to persons of other descriptions, whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided man into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them likely to vex and oppress each other, than to cooperate for their common good. So strong is this tendency of mankind, to fall into mutual animosities, that . . . the most frivolous and fanciful differences have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold, and those who are without property, have even formed distinct interests in society. . . . A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views.

. . . A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, promises a cure for which we are seeking. The effect of delegating authority to a small number of citizens elected by the rest would be 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 in 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.

. . . [Another advantage of republican government] is the greater the number of citizens, and extent of territory. . . . In smaller societies [as opposed to the whole United States], the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interest, 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 they will 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. . . .

- Questions -
- ① What is a faction? what are the causes of faction?
 - ② what are the advantages of having a ~~large~~ large territory?
 - ③ How can ~~factions~~ the effects of faction be minimized?